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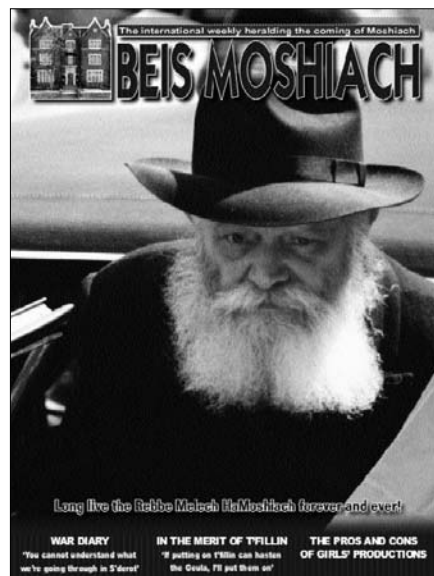
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RABBI AVROHOM LEVITANSKY A"H

Obituary



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WHY THE EMPHASIS ON G-D'S CHARIOT? G-D HIMSELF WAS REVEALED!

Likkutei Sichos Vol. 23, pg. 18-25
Translated by Boruch Merkur

[Continued from last issue]

The above runs parallel with what is explained in the book *Avodas HaKodesh*⁴³ regarding the Chariot of Yechezkel, which reads as follows: "From his vision and grasp of the Chariot of the Lower Realm, he knew of the Supernal...for there is a Throne above a Throne and a Chariot above a Chariot and a Rider above a Rider and Glory above Glory. From his vision of four [angels known as] Chayos [as they appeared to him] Below, he knew and recognized that there is a primordial representation of them Above in the true Unity, for so is the tradition. From his vision Below of Energy surrounding the Throne, which is called the External Energy, he knew that there is a primordial representation of it Above, Inner Energy, etc. Similarly with regard to all that he saw Below, he knew that there is a representation of it Above." The author of this work (*Avodas HaKodesh*⁴⁴) proceeds to expound how all the [relevant] verses in Scripture "speak about the Lower

Realm but allude to the Supernal Realm."

That is to say that the meaning and significance of the Chariot of Yechezkel is that matters of the **Lower Realm** are "likenesses of their Supernal counterparts,"⁴⁵ for which reason (Yechezkel) enumerates at length about all the details of the Chariot and its manner, emphasizing, "From its midst was the likeness, etc., the likeness of a man ... the likeness of their faces, etc. And the likeness of the Chayos, etc."⁴⁶

We may assert that this explains the precise usage of the term "likeness," which [paradoxically] signifies something and its opposite. In one sense, seeing a likeness indicates that one does not see the thing [itself], just its "likeness." For example, one who looks in a mirror sees just a reflection [i.e., a representation or likeness, not the thing itself]. In another sense, though, the term "likeness" indicates that it does not possess [or express] anything apart from the likeness of the thing. That is, not only through seeing the likeness is it possible to know exactly how the thing itself appears, but the entire existence of the likeness is nothing more than its portrayal of the thing.

Indeed, that which Yechezkel saw, with all the details of the matters of the **Lower Realm**, their entire

significance is nothing other than the fact that they are “likenesses of their Supernal counterparts.”⁴⁷

Whereas Yeshayahu, being a city person, did not comment on and enumerate all the details of the Chariot, for from the outset he did not behold a “likeness” as it exists Below but the essence of the matter **Above**. Being that he was a “city person” who “grew up in a palace,” all matters except the King [Himself] bore no significance to him, to the extent that they were not even perceived by him as existing. Thus, he says, “I saw the L-rd sitting on a high and exalted throne,” and mentions only the [angles known as] S’rafim, which “stood above for Him,” insofar as this was a detail of the vision of “the L-rd sitting on a...throne.”

3. Accordingly, the connection is understood between the Haftora of the Chariot of Yechezkel and the reading from the Torah of the section that speaks about the Giving of the Torah on [Shavuot] the day when the Torah was given:

The revelation of the Divine Presence at the Giving of the Torah was not only a passing moment in history but [an event that is eternally relevant]. Namely, it permits the Jewish people, through their service of G-d,⁴⁸ to ascend and cleave to the Holy One Blessed Be He. Indeed, the power to do so was granted to them in virtue of the revelation of G-d at the Giving of the Torah, implanting in our hearts permanently “the assembly at Mount Sinai – that our eyes saw and not [the eyes of] a stranger, etc.”⁴⁹

This is also the meaning of the Midrash⁵⁰ which says that the descent of G-d upon Mount Sinai was not only a temporary revelation but the **advent** of a totally new state of the world, insofar as the permanence of the decree that the Supernal Realms should not descend to the Lower Realms and the Lower Realms should not ascend to the Supernal realm was rescinded. The results of the nullification of this decree and its overt manifestation depends upon and comes about through the Divine service of the Jewish people.

The explanation of the matter.

It is understood from the very fact that the terms used in this discussion are “Supernal Realms” and “Lower Realms” that in essence there is a connection and even a bond between them, especially in light of what is explained in several places – that regarding the existence of every creation Below, its root and source is Above and from there it is derived (*nishtalshel*). The source of an ox, for example, that exists Below [in our world] is from the face of the ox in the Chariot, and so on, to the extent that its [ultimate] root and source is the word of G-d and the breath of His mouth, may He be blessed, which bring it into being and enlivens it every single instant.⁵¹ Even its growth [and development] thereafter comes about from its [spiritual source known as] mazal **Above**, as our

Sages say, “There is no blade of grass, etc., that does not have a mazal above it telling it, ‘**grow!**’”⁵²

However, since before the Giving of the Torah there was a “decree” (*g’zeira*) – a term meaning “cut” (*gazar*, *chatach*) – [separating] the creation Below from its Supernal source, and (at the Giving of the Torah) when the decree was rescinded, the capacity was given for every single Jew, through his service of G-d,⁵³ to draw down and “see” in every creation Below its root and source Above, to the extent that in so doing he reveals the truth of its being – that it only exists in virtue of the true Existence⁵⁴ [i.e., G-d].

Since all beginnings are difficult, etc.,⁵⁵ therefore, at the Giving of the Torah (when “I am the One Who begins”⁵⁰) there was an extremely lofty revelation [in order to provide the power required to overcome the challenge of beginning an entirely new era].

[To be continued be”H]

NOTES:

⁴³ Part 4 Ch. 18, end.

⁴⁴ Ibid Ch. 19

⁴⁵ Wording of *Avodas HaKodesh* ibid in explaining the verse, “From its midst was the likeness of four Chayos.”

⁴⁶ 1:5-13

⁴⁷ See Footnote 50 in the original.

⁴⁸ To note from *Seifer HaSichos* 5705 (pg. 102) that three things were given at the time of the Giving of the Torah: 1) the revealed dimension of the Torah, 2) the esoteric dimension of the Torah, 3) the power to serve G-d. See there.

⁴⁹ See Rambam Laws of the Foundations of the Torah Ch. 8; Ramban’s commentary on the Torah, Parshas Yisro 20:7, among others.

⁵⁰ Tanchuma VaEira 15; Shmos Rabba 12:3.

⁵¹ See *Tanya – Shaar HaYichud V’HaEmuna* Ch. 1 and Ch. 3.

⁵² B’Reishis Rabba 10:6; Zohar II 171b, etc. See Footnote 55 in the original.

⁵³ See the words of the Rebbe Maharash (*HaTamim* Issue #3, pg. 27 (130a)) – that the fact that the Alter Rebbe writes in *Shaar HaYichud V’HaEmuna* (Ch. 3, beg.), “were the eye given permission to behold, etc., the physicality of the creation, its materialism and its tangibility, would not be seen at all to our eyes” – the intent with the reference to the vision of the eyes is only without Divine service, but through the service of G-d it is within the capacity of everyone to see, etc. Look it up there.

⁵⁴ Rambam’s Laws of the Foundations of the Torah, beg.

⁵⁵ See Mechilta and the commentary of Rashi on Parshas Yisro 19:5.

A DAILY DOSE OF MOSHIACH & GEULA: 22-28 SIVAN

*Selected daily pearls of wisdom from the Rebbe
MH”M on Moshiach and Geula.*

Collected and arranged by Rabbi Pinchas Maman
Translated by Michoel Leib Dobry

22 SIVAN: REGARDING THE DOUBTS THAT WILL ARISE IN THE TIMES OF MOSHIACH – DO WE LISTEN TO THE SANHEDRIN OR MOSHE RABBEINU?

Regarding the doubts that will be aroused in the time of Moshiach, we have found in the Gemara (Nidda 70b) that people will ask Moshe and Aharon.

The specific point here is that people will ask Moshe and Aharon regarding “matters learned by tradition,” “words of kabbala,” received according to oral transmission, dating back to Moshe Rabbeinu, “halacha to Moshe from Sinai” – whether they were received from Sinai or not.

However, that which is learned from Torah law, “by one of the rules through which the Torah is derived,” since this depends upon the majority ruling of the Great Rabbinical Court – “after the majority” – clarifying the matter with Moshe Rabbeinu won’t help, nor with Moshe and Aharon, as they are only two. Rather, there is a need for a majority decision by the Great Rabbinical Court of seventy-one judges.

(yechidus, MarCheshvan 6, 5752)

23 SIVAN: RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD IN THE FUTURE TO COME – ETERNAL LIFE, SOUL IN BODY

Removal of the vitality of death is for the purpose of adding and renewing vitality as a soul within a body at the Resurrection of the Dead, when the life of the soul within a body will be eternal life.

Furthermore, as in the conclusion of Tractate K’suvos (111b), “tzaddikim in the future will sprout forth and go up [at the Resurrection of the Dead] to Yerushalayim... tzaddikim in the future will stand up in their garments, we learn this from a *kal v’chomer* reasoning from wheat, etc.” – souls within physical bodies in this physical world, as all matters within it will then be at their ultimate perfection.

(Shabbos Parshas VaEira 5752)

24 SIVAN: RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD ON EREV SHABBOS

The time of the Resurrection of the Dead is on Erev Shabbos, as is brought in the Zohar (Sec. I,

127b): “On Friday evening, Erev Shabbos, which is the time to revive the dead...when the water drawers – these are the wise scholars who draw from the waters of Torah...the time to go out and shake the dust off from ourselves.”

(Shabbos Parshas VaEira 5752)

25 SIVAN: WRITING A LETTER IN THE SEIFER TORAH HASTENS THE REDEMPTION

One of the mitzvos that the Jewish People were commanded at the conclusion of the forty years in the Sinai desert is the mitzva of writing a seifer Torah, “And now, write for yourselves this song” (D’varim 31:19) – “a positive commandment upon every Jew to write a seifer Torah for himself” (Rambam, Hilchos Seifer Torah 7:1).

...Furthermore, it can be said that in different generations and times, and in situations where not everyone can write his own seifer Torah, the way to

27 SIVAN: AT THE MOMENT OF THE REDEMPTION, ALL THE JEWISH PEOPLE AND G-D HIMSELF WILL BE REDEEMED

...and immediately mamash “G-d shall continue to apply His hand a second time, etc., and He shall gather the lost of Israel, and the scattered ones of Yehuda He shall gather from the four corners of the earth” (Yeshayahu 11:11-12), “With our youth and with our elders, etc., with our sons and with our daughters (Shmos 10:9), as (G-d) Himself...literally holds the hand of each person in his place, as is said (Yeshayahu 27:12), “And you, children of Israel, shall be gathered, one by one” – and He returns you and returns with you (“And Hashem, your G-d, will return your exiles,” “He dictated Redemption for Himself so that He will return with them”).

(Shabbos Parshas VaYechi 5752)

28 SIVAN – THE DAY THE REBBE MH”M AND THE REBBETZIN WERE RESCUED FROM THE FIRES OF EUROPE AND ARRIVED SAFELY IN THE UNITED STATES: WE RECEIVE TODAY ADDITIONAL STRENGTH TO ACCEPT THE TRUE AND COMPLETE REDEMPTION

Chaf-Ches Sivan is an auspicious day because of a good thing that occurred on this day, and regarding our discussion – Chaf-Ches – the letters that form the word, “Ko’ach” – of the month

is an indication of the strength of the whole month, and Chaf-Ches Sivan emphasizes and indicates the strength of the entire third month, the month of Mattan Torah, meaning that Chaf-Ches Sivan indicates the strength of Mattan Torah.

All this teaches us as we stand at an auspicious time and place – in the third month...on the day of Chaf-Ches Sivan, with the strength of the entire third month – when the concept of drawing down and revealing G-dliness down below in a lasting manner, stands in a revealed state, every Jew receives additional power and strength to fulfill the shlichus of our generation – the shlichus and the command...to stand, “Stand ready all of you,” and accept the True and Complete Redemption, and at their head – Moshiach Tzidkeinu, Dovid Melech Yisroel.

(Seifer HaSichos 5751, Vol. 2, from p. 635)

By all Jews having a letter in a seifer Torah, since the mitzva of writing a seifer Torah is the “conclusion” of all 613 mitzvos, we will merit very soon mamash the conclusion of the exile, from which all Jews will go out at the coming of Moshiach Tzidkeinu.

fulfill the mitzva from the outset is through purchasing a letter in a communal seifer Torah.

...And by all Jews having a letter in a seifer Torah, since the mitzva of writing a seifer Torah is the “conclusion” of all 613 mitzvos (Seifer HaChinuch, Mitzva 613), we will merit very soon *mamash* the conclusion of the exile, from which all Jews will go out at the coming of Moshiach Tzidkeinu.

(Likkutei Sichos, Vol. 24, p. 215)

26 SIVAN: JUST WAKE HIM FROM HIS SLUMBER

...We therefore understand that there is no need to create (in another Jew) the desire to overcome and do activities to hasten the morning light of the Redemption, rather we simply have to wake him up from his slumber.

Therefore, every single Jew will surely do his part to bring the Redemption, immediately mamash.

(sicha of the Rebbe shlita)

WAR DIARY FROM SDEROT

Prepared for publication by Nosson Avrohom

*“Whoever does not live here, cannot understand what we’re going through.” * Beis Moshiach asked Rabbi Moshe Zev Pizem, shliach in Sderot, to write a journal of what has been happening in recent weeks, about the work of Chabad, the mixed feelings, the miracles, the mass migration, the hope and despair.*

We are going through extremely difficult times, we the residents of Sderot and its environs, including the extended Chabad family. Before anything else, it’s important to say that the hail of Kassams landing on the city morning, noon, and night, did not start two weeks ago, but seven years ago.

The criminal expulsion of the Jews of Gush Katif from their homes, the destruction of their flourishing yishuvim and the army’s withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, only significantly intensified the missile attacks against us. Lately, these attacks have become fatal and more precise.

As the numbers of missiles increase and there are fatalities, the fear – the daily lot of the residents here – has reached new highs.

THE LATEST ATTACKS

I will never forget the moment the latest massive attack began. It was Tuesday afternoon, 27 Iyar. In

the morning, we woke up to another day of Code Red alarms, as we do every morning. After the missiles landed, we thought we were done with our attack for the day, but we quickly saw we were mistaken.

As on every Tuesday, the Chabad house hall bustles with life as dozens of children come with their parents for a few hours respite. The children read books and play games as niggunim play in the background. The parents can watch videos of the Rebbe.

That Tuesday began as usual, then suddenly, we heard a Code Red, and after a few seconds, we heard the sound of big explosions.



The missiles had landed very close to us, raising the tension and fear in the room. The parents took their children and instinctively fled for home.

About a half an hour later, I got a phone call from one of the gabbaim in the big shuls in Sderot, asking me to come and speak at a memorial for one of the distinguished members of the city who had passed away. He said he had not yet managed to get a rav who would say divrei Torah and I happily agreed to fill in.

That day was a nightmare for me. Before the gabbai came to pick me up, another salvo rained down on Sderot, and the gabbai hid in the Chabad house. While I gave my speech, another salvo fell, and during Maariv, another one. We saw that the situation had changed. Up until then, we had gotten used to some missiles in the morning and sometimes in the evening. This time, it was a large and well-prepared attack.

The next day, the missiles continued to fall every few hours. In the afternoon, a missile fell near my house and shocked the entire area. In the past, we used to hear the explosion from a distance, but now we were in the thick of things. My house, miraculously, was unharmed, but my neighbors' windows shattered.

Like a well-practiced ritual, after a few minutes many people showed up at the site. It was miraculous that nobody was electrocuted by the live electric cable that had been torn down by the missile.

By Wednesday evening and Thursday, the first flight of residents out of the city took place, whether on their own or with the help of volunteers. On the one hand, I know that the residents here are tough, the type who would be willing to stick it out. The problem is that our politicians spout nonsensical





platitudes like, “There is no magic solution for Kassams,” or “There are no easy solutions.”

The Defense Minister and Prime Minister make unsubstantiated threats. The feeling is that this time too, they are not willing to do what it takes to cut the terrorists off at the root. This feeling definitely sows despair among the residents, for they have nothing to hope for.

As time passes, the city fills up with police, rearguard command troops and people from Magen Dovid Edom. When you see all this you think, why don't they put this effort into an attack?

MIRACLES

I am writing this entry in great sorrow. A few minutes ago, I heard

When the people of his shul asked him whether they should cancel the Hachnasas Seifer Torah, he said firmly that Chabad educated him not to run. If it was a mitzva, it should be done with mesirus nefesh. And that's what they did.

the tragic news that another Jew, a computer technician, not from our city, was murdered al kiddush Hashem when a missile made a direct hit on his car. And yet, even in the midst of the horror and the disgust over the government's weakness, we clearly see the hand of G-d. Miracles upon miracles. Those who don't live here cannot understand it.

On Thursday (Isru Chag in Eretz Yisroel), in the depressive atmosphere of mass flight and people hiding in their homes, with the streets empty except for photography teams and journalists from here and the world over, we had a Hachnasas Seifer Torah. Hundreds of residents and guests

took part in it, as it went through the streets.

There is a central Sephardic shul which is led by Rabbi Shimon Avitan, who is also secretary of the religious council and a graduate of Chabad schools in Morocco. When the people of his shul asked him whether they should cancel the Hachnasas Seifer Torah, he said firmly that Chabad educated him not to run. If it was a mitzva, it should be done with mesirus nefesh. And that's what they did.

Hundreds of participants, despite the tension, participated in the Tahalucha and Hakafo, with some holding torches, as the music played. I participated and felt tremendous Jewish pride. Come what may, Am Yisroel Chai, and despite the

persecution and danger, a Jew will always cling to his Judaism and be proud of his ancestors' legacy.

The people from the media covered the Tahalucha extensively. After hundreds of marchers danced in the street, we all entered the shul, where there was a festive seudas mitzva. There was a feeling that even a Code Red couldn't interrupt the simcha. It was a demonstration of emuna and bitachon.

I was asked to speak at this event and amongst other things I spoke about the Rebbe's prophecy of “*hinei hinei Moshiach ba*” – that we are sure that this will be fulfilled just as the other prophecies were fulfilled. At the end of the event, I went to the branch of the Chabad house located



in a bomb shelter in the municipal marketplace. People joke that this is the only bomb shelter in the city which has spiritual protection in addition to physical protection.

Whenever there is an attack, passerby duck into this bomb shelter, where in addition to refreshments, there are also t'fillin and brochures. The shelter is open 24-hours-a-day, as the Rebbe said, a Chabad house is the private home of every Jew.

Why did I go to the shelter? Every Rosh Chodesh there is an interesting farbrengen in which some of the musicians in Sderot take part, along with young people, businessmen, some of whom sport earrings and long hair. The clothes that some of them wear indicate that these people are on a spiritual search. The farbrengen takes place in different places, and now, because of the situation, we decided we would hold it in the shelter. We said l'chaim and farbrenged, happy and relaxed for several minutes.

Then we heard an explosion. At first we were sure that the missile had landed on the bomb shelter. After we recovered somewhat, we went out to the scene of the attack. It turned out that the missile had landed on the shul's sanctuary, in which so many people had been celebrating just a short while before, including myself.

The miracle was so big and tangible that it was reported and

discussed in all the media. The line, "Torah protects and saves" was something I personally experienced. Minutes before the attack, about forty people from the family who had donated the Torah were still in the shul. One of the women urged them all to leave in a way that was uncharacteristic of her.

It was such a big miracle that many thanked and praised Hashem. The missile penetrated the ceiling of the building and exploded within the sanctuary of the shul, wreaking havoc!

I was still standing there, stunned by the enormity of the miracle, when someone by the name of Maor, a barber who participates in Chassidus classes at the Chabad house, came over to me. He was holding an infant seat with his year old baby in it. Glass had fallen on his son but miraculously, he was not injured.

The missile destroyed the wood and stones in the shul. The tables and benches were broken, the windows were shattered, but the bookshelves with sifrei kodesh, and even the doors to the bookshelves which are partially made of thin glass, were not scratched!

The police who came were also dumbfounded by what they saw. They were the ones who pointed it out to me. It was an incredible miracle, the type that has you saying afterwards, "*Ma rabu maasecha Hashem*" (how wondrous are Your works, Hashem). And if the missile had landed just an hour earlier, what would have happened...

A few days ago I saw a truck which said on it, "On our way to another satisfied customer." I thought that each missile says on it, "On the way to another miracle..." Despite the tragedies, which we

DELEGATION FROM THE MATTEH HA'OLAMI

Director of the Committee to Save the Nation and the Land, Rabbi Sholom Dov Wolpo, visited Sderot with a delegation, as the Kassams fell, in order to support the shliach Rabbi Moshe Pizem and the remaining residents of the city. His tour began at the Chabad house where R' Wolpo was shown what Chabad is busy with.

During his visit, R' Wolpo met with Mayor Muell, who signed to a petition calling for a government investigative committee to examine the tragedy of the Disengagement. Muell spoke about the dire situation and about his warnings on the eve of the Disengagement.

During the visit, Kassam rockets landed nearby. R' Wolpo said that the solution to the situation is for everybody to acknowledge that the Disengagement was a disaster, and for the former residents of Gush Katif to be returned to their yishuvim with full Israeli rule of Gaza.

The mayor told the delegation that Sharon was the worst leader in the history of the Jewish people, and that the Disengagement led to the devastation he had warned about.

"When the army made the ceremony of closing the gates of Gaza at the conclusion of the Disengagement, I told them – you will have to return here with your hands tied."

Muell said that he had been visited by the ranking command officer of the region who told him that according to decisions made in the political arena, he did not have good news regarding the Kassams.

"Sderot is falling apart," added Muell, and he said that the residents leaving the city lessened the pressure on the government to do something about the missile attacks.

cannot ignore, for each Jew is an entire world, we cannot ignore the missile, for example, that landed Erev Shabbos Naso on a building, did a lot of damage including to the electricity, but nobody in the building was hurt.

17 rockets landed on Shabbos Naso within the city and caused damage. Many rockets fall every day within the city and hit buildings and homes, rendering them uninhabitable, but people walk out without a scratch.

When any resident is injured or killed, it is so terrible that, to a certain extent, it overshadows the miracles. A woman was killed two weeks ago, an older single woman who lived with her mother. She left a store to get something and, without the Code Red alert, she was

I spoke about the Jewish blood that was spilled. I mentioned that the despair people feel is not because of the Arabs, but because of our leaders who treat our lives cheaply and have no real intentions of stopping the murder and mayhem.

suddenly struck by a rocket and killed on the spot. She was a familiar person in town, from a family living under difficult circumstances.

My oldest son saw her just two hours earlier and she sadly asked him, "What's going to be? Everybody will die here in the end." How chilling. I took part in her funeral along with many others. The family asked the politicians not to speak. One of the relatives said, "I

see public figures here. We ask you not to speak. This is not the theater. We expect action from you."

I spoke, following the rav of the city, Rav Bar Chen, about the Jewish blood that was spilled. I mentioned that the despair people feel is not because of the Arabs, but because of our leaders who treat our lives cheaply and have no real intentions of stopping the murder and mayhem. I quoted the Rebbe, that when the admonition, "when someone comes to kill you, rise up and kill him" is not followed, in the end, there will be many korbanos even amongst the enemy.

GREATER THAN WELCOMING THE SH'CHINA

Hundreds of residents of Sderot are guests at hotels or their relatives in the center of the country. Shluchim all over the country are helping the refugees. Dozens of people from Sderot went to Netanya, for example. Activists from Matteh Moshiah, which is run by Rabbi Elazar Peretz in Netanya, got busy helping them.

Last Friday (Erev Shabbos Naso) they held a Tzivos Hashem rally for the children of Sderot. The children got ices, sweets, prizes and Moshiah flags. The mayor of Netanya, Mrs. Miriam Fireberg, was present and she praised the work of Chabad.

The Chabad house in Chadera, which is run by Rabbi Yochanon Butman, responded to the request of Rabbi Pizem and greeted the refugees from Sderot.

"It's so touching," said a woman from Sderot. "When we left Sderot, R' Pizem accompanied us, and as soon as we arrived here, before we even had a chance to unpack, the Chabadnikim of Chadera were waiting for us with a smile, sweets, and balloons for the children, cheering us up. It's not easy for us to be away from home and the children are fearful, and it's so important to us that you came to encourage us."

"As soon as we knew that nearly 500 people were coming here from Sderot," said R' Butman, "we went into high gear. Within two hours we had donations of hundreds of bags of treats, Shabbos candles, s'farim, T'hilim, brochures about Shabbos and t'fillin, and the Chabad house staff went to bring cheer to the refugees."

"We put t'fillin on with dozens of people, had the children give tz'daka, and the women of Sderot were so impressed by the Lubavitchers who didn't forget a thing."

WHEN THE SIREN SOUNDS WE RUN, WE DON'T ALWAYS KNOW WHERE

Fear is an emotion we have to contend with daily. Those who left Sderot wander amongst friends, relatives, and hotels like homeless people. Those who stay and are unwilling to leave, suffer from the constant fear and tension. We try to convey and instill trust in Hashem, but we are human, after all. When we hear the Red Alert, it doesn't give us time, not even a minute. We have seconds, no more. Not knowing where the missile will land is nerve wracking.

When you walk down the street in Kfar Chabad, Crown Heights, or anywhere else in the world, you think about the chinuch of your children or parnasa. A resident of Sderot walks down the street and

wonders whether there will be a Red Alert and thinks of where he will run and what will happen to his wife and children.

This is not a matter of a week or a month, but *seven years in succession!*

The missiles fall primarily early in the morning or at sunset, when there are many more of them and they are more precise. Whoever has to go out at that time, walks in a zigzag pattern. On Motzaei Shabbos Naso I walked with my son from my house to the Chabad house, for Mincha and Maariv. I was talking about the parsha but I was thinking and looking around for a place to run to in case there was a Red Alert.

While I was thinking this, there was a Red Alert. We ran to a house that was located nearby and stood close to the wall. We didn't know if we were doing the right thing or not, but it was our only option. When there's an alert everybody runs, though we don't always know where to run.

After a few seconds we heard a sharp whistling sound right over our heads and a missile exploded in the center of the city with a frightening boom. After a few seconds I checked myself and my son to see whether we were still alive and then continued walking. The Lubavitcher broadcaster, Uri Revach, who was a guest of mine for Shabbos, watched us from the second story window of the Chabad house and began to sing "Yechi Adoneinu" and "Hoshia Es Amecha," in order to encourage us.

Those who don't live here don't understand what we experience day after day.

FINANCIAL AND MORAL SUPPORT

Yes, I know the picture in which you see the residents of Sderot escaping the city with the help of philanthropists. It's not because they're timid people. On the

contrary, the residents of this city are tough, but when the government doesn't offer any solution, and does nothing, it's hard.

My friend, the mayor Eli Muell, who was elected with the Rebbe's bracha, has completely despaired of the situation. In conversations that I had with him he said clearly that this government has to resign because it's accomplishing nothing. In the past he was strongly opposed to the Disengagement. Sharon was angry at him because of this and even punished the municipality by delaying its funding.

Muell is forceful when he constantly demands a military action to stop the Kassams, but in the upper echelons of government they laugh at him and ask him to be patient. Practically speaking, they don't plan on doing anything until X number of Jews are murdered r"l.

Muell has thrown up his hands when it comes to running the city. He cannot deal with the situation. Just today they announced that students are going back to school when actually, all the students of Sderot study outside the city.

If the residents of the city knew that there was a plan to put an end to the Kassams, and it would take a month or two and then it would be quiet, they could handle that. They would stay home and wait for it to be over. But when they see there is no plan and Hamas shoots rockets and we bomb empty houses in retaliation, then they are frustrated. It causes people to give up.

The Defense Minister himself is a resident of Sderot and the truth should be said – he and his family have not fled and they deal with the missiles too, but his views are extreme Left, which don't allow him to respond strongly enough to stop the terror. His morality says he cannot attack those who are (supposedly) innocent of any crime, and therefore he looks for



roundabout means, which doesn't end up helping us.

If they listened to the Rebbe – that they should only consider the views of the Security experts and not mix in politics – they would have stopped the Kassams long ago.

Hamas rules Sderot. Period.

It's not just a breakdown of morale, but also a financial ruin. Today, for example, there was supposed to be a Market Day. It is usually teeming with people and thousands of people from Sderot and from yishuvim in the area come. For two weeks now, the place is not active. There are no buyers or sellers and the merchants are out of work. There are no lines in the grocery stores like there used to be. The media does its part to depict the situation and, wittingly or not, increases the feeling of despair.

A family in Sderot recently



contacted a real estate agent and asked that he try and sell their apartment because they are moving to Chadera. After a day they called and told him not to try and sell it. As they drove into Chadera the driver

lost control of their car and the entire family was injured. They came to the conclusion that if it was decreed that they would be injured, it would happen anywhere.

LIKE ANGELS

Five Kassam rockets, which were launched Friday morning towards Sderot, didn't stop the people at the Chabad house, led by shliach R' Moshe Zev Pizem and his brother Chananel, from continuing their tremendous work of chesed among the residents of Sderot.

R' Pizem was helped tremendously by Tzeirei Agudas Chabad. Rabbi Aharon Pruss and Rav Moni Andar came with two trucks packed with 1500 challos, bottles of wine and drinks, to distribute to the residents. The joined R' Pizem and went to hundreds of homes and distributed the challos and wine. Many people were afraid to leave their homes to shop for Shabbos.

The shluchim encouraged the residents and the touched residents thanked them from the bottom of their hearts for their assistance. They said that the fact that despite the dangerous situation, there are Jews who left the center of the country in order to bring them what they needed for Shabbos and cheer them up, boosted their morale.

R' Pizem thanks Rabbi Sholom Duchman of Kollel Chabad for the large donation of treats and toys for the children. He has this to say to Anash:

"Chassidim know that when you sow gashmius, you reap ruchnius. Those who can donate food, which will be distributed to the residents, will be blessed. Think about a situation in which a family sits terrified in their homes as the shluchim come in with food and treats to delight the children. Their eyes suddenly light up. Someone is thinking of them! The Rebbe is thinking about them and reaching them through his shluchim."

CHABAD'S WORK

Despite the intolerable situation, Chabad's work is ongoing. Every day we go out on Mivtza T'fillin, we visit the sick and lonely who cry out for help; we do Mivtza Mezuzah and give out food to the needy and sweets and games to the children, in order to cheer them up. A tremendous effort is made in order to maintain the shiurim in Chassidus, even though so few people attend them.

My brother Chananel, who does tremendous work, wrote to the Rebbe before Shavuot about the situation and asked what we should do. The answer was clear: It has already been said, "The Guardian of Israel does not slumber nor sleep," check mezuzos.

We plan on launching a large Mivtza Mezuzah in the city. Last Motzaei Shabbos (Naso) I spoke about the mivtza on the radio on Uri Revach's program, and I've already gotten dozens of phone calls from Anash offering money for this mivtza.

People here admire the work of Chabad. They know that we don't come to make merry and leave, but we stay here with them. I am pleased and proud that not one minyan at the Chabad house was cancelled and the t'fillos, despite the small numbers at some of the t'fillos, go on as usual.

Last Shabbos (Naso) some groups from Mizrahi came to strengthen the shuls. Many of them, realizing that the shuls they were sent to were closed, came to the Chabad house. They all know that the Chabad house is the last place to close.

Last Shabbos, despite the anxiety, was very special. Guests and volunteers came and we farbrenged and davened together. It was wonderful.

Many Chassidim from Eretz Yisroel and abroad, call and ask how they can help. First, any of you who want to come and work in the name of Chabad, whether with Mivtza T'fillin or other mivtzaim, does not have to okay it with me. Just come and do! Second, Chassidim who live in the area (and even those who don't), our businesses are failing. Please come and shop here and support your fellow Jews. Third, because of the Rebbe's answer, we need generous donations towards Mivtza Mezuzah.

During these difficult times, it's not easy to knock on the door of someone in Sderot and ask them to pay a lot of money for mezuzos. Maybe those who are traditional will appreciate it, but even they will be willing to keep their non-mehudar mezuzah. The local population is comprised of many Jews from the CIS, third generation Israelis, and those from kibbutzim, who will say you want to make money off them...

Dozens of mezuzos were sent to me lately, especially since I was interviewed on the radio. If you can donate mezuzos or money for

mezuzos, it's an important inyan. Mezuzos have a protective quality and serve to protect even when a Jew is not home.

Along with the fear there is also a spiritual awakening. Many Jews that did not put on t'fillin for decades are asking to do so now. Last Friday a man came over to the t'fillin stand and said for two weeks already he had been trying to put on t'fillin at home after many years of not doing so, and he gets confused...

WEEKS UNDER FIRE

Shavuot was mixed. Although many shuls were not active, our mikva was operative. The minyan for Tikkun was very small. For days we went around and invited the children to shul to hear the Ten Commandments, but very few showed up. After they were read, we decided to go to them. We took bags of surprise treats and Chananel and his son Yona and my son Nachum took a seifer Torah with them and went to the soldiers' shelter. One of the soldiers, who came from a religious home, was taken aback and very touched.

The next stop was the Magen Dovid Edom station. They said it was Yemos HaMoshiach, "You came here, we thought you wouldn't come." We explained we are emissaries of Melech HaMoshiach. We also went to the police station where there were many policemen and soldiers.

* * *

I will conclude with what I always say to the people who ask me what's going to be. First, it is obvious even to the skeptics that Hashgacha Pratis can be seen everywhere. Enormous miracles have taken place. True, it is not pleasant to live for a long time under these conditions, but we must be strong.

The Rebbe is about to come. If the Rebbe's negative prophecies came true, and good outweighs the

VISITING THE WOUNDED

Barzilai hospital in Ashkelon is where dozens of people wounded by Kassam rockets which landed in Sderot are taken. Many are lightly wounded and/or in shock. It is still too early to know what the long term emotional ramifications will be.

Rabbi Menachem Kutner, who works throughout the year with those injured by terrorist acts, and sees to them year round along with R' Chananel Pizem, visited the wounded. During the visit, they also inquired as to the basic needs for the wounded and their families.

Mrs. Timsis, who was seriously wounded along with her five-year-old son, was very moved by the visit and she thanked the shluchim for the pair of candlesticks she was given. Her son hugged R' Pizem, whom he knows from Chabad activities every Shabbos in his neighborhood.

"You are wonderful people. It gives me so much strength to see you, from Chabad, who think about me and come to visit us."

Mrs. Timsis underwent a lengthy operation and now has a period of rehabilitation ahead of her.

bad many times over, the Rebbe's prophecies of Geula will soon come true.

As Jews, especially observant Jews, and all the more so as Chassidim of the Rebbe MH"M, we must demonstrate bitachon and not weakness, and "Hashem gives strength to His nation."

HOW DO WE EXPLAIN IT? (TO BOLDLY GO WHERE NO MAN HAS GONE BEFORE)

By Rabbi Shimshon Goldstein, Shliach – Pushkar, India
Translated By Michael Leib Dobry

*How do we actually get Jews to be prepared to accept Moshiach, i.e., to believe that the Rebbe MH”M is ready to come and redeem the Jewish People? * Delivered at the conclusion of the first shluchim conference for the Rebbe’s emissaries in India.*

THE MOSHIACH CAMPAIGN IN OUR TIMES

The Moshiach Campaign is different from all the other mitzva campaigns, as the Rebbe didn’t start it with a one-time executive order, but through a stage-by-stage process.

From 5711 until 5748, the Rebbe spoke in general about how the Redemption is coming in the seventh generation, mentioning the

imminent Redemption at the conclusion of almost every sicha with a variety of expressions demanding more avoda and the final vital spiritual elevations to complete the avoda.

In 5748, the Rebbe began speaking about the end of an era. All the appointed times have passed in the simplest sense. We are standing at the conclusion of the forty-two journeys, after forty years in the wilderness, etc. Even the conduct of the Rebbe himself

changed on a variety of fronts, as we all know – no need to elaborate.

From the 28th of Nissan 5751 and onward, the Rebbe started using some marvelous expressions that had never been heard before. Anyone who peruses the sichos from that last year reveals this immediately, and the words are so clear and simple, stated and written dozens of times.

In any event, we will focus here on the sicha from the 5752 International Shluchim Conference (the last sicha to the shluchim for the present time). In contrast to the sichos of previous years, when the Rebbe spoke about the imminent Redemption, etc., the Rebbe discusses something new in this sicha:

...to the point that they have already completed the shlichus (in accordance with the aforementioned announcement by the leader of the generation), and nevertheless, the True and Complete Redemption has not yet come in actual deed. Thus, we must say that there still remains something to do in order to bring the Redemption in actual deed.

It is according to what is known – that “in every generation, there is born someone from the seed of Yehuda who is fit to be Moshiach to the Jewish People,” “one who is worthy due to his righteousness to be Redeemer, and when the time comes, G-d Almighty will reveal to him and send him, etc.,” and according to the announcement of my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, leader of the generation, the only shliach of our generation and the only Moshiach of our generation – that they have already completed all the avoda – it is understood that “Send, I pray, by the hand of the one You will send” is starting to be fulfilled, the shlichus of my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe. We thereby understand that the

only thing remaining now in the avoda of shlichus is to greet Moshiach Tzidkeinu in actual deed, in order that he can actually fulfill his shlichus and take all the Jewish People out of exile!

In other words, the Rebbe is speaking about the person and not the objective; Melech HaMoshiach, and not the Redemption per se. The Rebbe is saying that the avoda today is to prepare the people of the world to accept the person from “the seed of Yehuda,” “the leader of the generation,” who has already received the shlichus of “Send, I pray, by the hand of the one You will send” (and those who “stringently” believe that this is the Rebbe Rayatz will then prepare the world to accept the Rebbe Rayatz).

What the sicha brings out in the clearest way imaginable is how the regular avoda of shlichus has been completed. What can we do...when we have already accustomed ourselves to the regular course of shlichus, “ten Persian miles for a zuz,” and now they tell us that it’s changed to “eleven Persian miles,” requiring that we change something that is second nature? Furthermore, it is impossible and pointless to go back to the old routine, since “**they have already completed the shlichus.**” There is only one path, “**And it is according to what is known, etc.**”

Each of us has to open the sichos from the earlier Shluchim Conferences, and see the differences in expressions, style, practical instructions, etc. Therefore, the Rebbe is explicitly and categorically letting us know about a new type of avoda never encountered before.

HOW DO WE ACTUALLY GET PEOPLE TO ACCEPT THIS?

The question is: How do we do

this? How do we actually get Jews to be prepared to accept Moshiach, i.e., to believe that the Rebbe MH”M is ready to come and redeem the Jewish People? That he should accept it, and not just hear about it?

This too appears in the body of the sicha. The Rebbe says “**to prepare all the Jews in his place and in his city...to greet Moshiach Tzidkeinu by explaining the concept of Moshiach...and in particular, in a manner of wisdom, understanding, and knowledge.**”

In fact, using the experience of the Chabad Houses of India that invest a great deal in informational material, we can summarize that entire “avoda” with people as follows:

People who live the world (“*olam*,” derived from the word “*helem*,” concealment) have a difficult time accepting things that go against “*helem*,” i.e., irrational things, concepts that don’t make sense according to their intellect, emotions, or in tourist slang, “ego”... We, on the other hand, in contrast to these natural assumptions, try to give over things to them that at first glance seem devoid of any possible rationale.

Therefore, someone who comes from a totally “negative” environment will oppose any concept of G-d, **because this doesn’t make sense to him rationally or even emotionally; it goes against his ego...**

Someone who comes from a less extremist environment won’t mind accepting the concept of G-dliness, because he can live with that. But the difference between a Jew and a Gentile – that’s enough to drive him crazy. Why? **Because it doesn’t make sense to him rationally or even emotionally that there’s a difference between people.**

To pursue this point further, someone who comes from a

traditional home can even deal with the fact that there’s a difference between a Jew and a Gentile. Why not? After all, we have such a beautiful tradition. However, talk to him about details in Judaism, this sounds insane to him. Why? Because it doesn’t make sense to him rationally or even emotionally that G-d “searches in the details for him.”

When we’re talking about someone comes from an observant home, he can accept all this. But if the discussion is about tzaddikim – for example, Dovid HaMelech who never sinned, the fact that there’s a concept of someone completely righteous, a Rebbe, etc. – this sounds to him like baseless extremism. Furthermore, since he is also religious, he is certain that we’re falsifying something, **because it doesn’t make sense to him rationally or even emotionally that there’s such a thing as a tzaddik who never sins.**

And so it goes.

A chareidi Jew can accept all this. However, the concept of the Rebbe MH”M in its simplest sense? Someone among us in this generation “from the seed of Yehuda” who has already received the shlichus from G-d to redeem the Jewish People? This sounds like something from the “lunatic fringe element”... Why? **Because it doesn’t make sense to him rationally or even emotionally that the Rebbe is “incomparably higher than all the people of the generation.”**

Thus, we come to the main point. **We must explain to him rationally that it makes sense that there is something beyond reason.** As the Rebbe explains in his maamarim, even the brain is biased in the direction of “self-love” and anything that makes sense according to human intellect... Therefore, at the moment that they

channel the brain through intellect, understanding, and comprehension, and the brain itself will understand that there is something higher than reason, that there is something before intellect and that's G-dliness – then the brain will serve G-dly concepts and all the powers of the soul, and thus all the spiritual garments of the soul will be opened.

Here in India, we have many stories from all types of people who come from a variety of backgrounds. If they merely express a willingness to listen – it will be accepted. Just as this has relevance to all “rational” concepts within Judaism, similarly, we find with one of the main principles of the Jewish faith – Moshiach. Here too, the problem is that it is difficult for them to accept things that appear so irrational. We simply have to bring them to understand that there are things that exist despite the fact that they appear irrational.

All this is summed up in one word: Rebbe. A connection of irrational concepts, miracles, and wonders within the existing reality and the laws of nature, a connection of the unlimited and the limited. The inconceivable, all at once. Both a physical human being and one who is not... Both flesh-and-blood and someone who is infallible... Someone who eats and drinks, yet who also lives completely beyond nature. The more people understand the tremendous paradox embodied here, they'll understand that “he is incomparably higher” and can already be Moshiach and *chai v'kayam*, despite the fact that it appears to them that he's not among the living.

I was speaking once with one of the shluchim who also worked with Israeli tourists. While this particular shliach did not believe that we have to come out and publicize Moshiach, nevertheless, he did agree with me that for non-religious

Jews, it really makes no difference if it's the Rebbe is Moshiach or “*Shma Yisroel*,” if it's the Rebbe is *chai v'kayam* or was there really a *Krias Yam Suf*?

(As we were talking, a female kibbutznik involved in Chabad House activities in Pushkar joined the conversation. “You think that the concept of Moshiach is ‘not accepted’?” she said. “Have you considered how strange and difficult it was for someone just getting started to accept and learn about the ritual of washing our hands because they are ‘impure,’ or to see everyone eating matza on Pesach out of bags? So what? Everything's strange at first, yet everything can be accepted!”)

Once at the conclusion of a Shabbos meal with hundreds of tourists participating, where we told stories about the Rebbe, etc., a non-religious man in his fifties came up to me and said with great emotion about a miracle of the Rebbe that had happened to him personally that he simply didn't want to relate publicly in front of everyone. (I usually give such people the opportunity to speak at the meal.) He emphasized that if this story hadn't happened to him personally, he wouldn't have believed any other story that he heard at the meal. He then said: I personally believe everything you'll tell me about the Rebbe, even the idea that the Rebbe is here now in the physical sense...

Let's summarize: Someone with a non-religious background needs only – and sometimes this is a lot – to be shown that it is an actual reality for the world to contain things that are beyond logic. We tell him stories about the Rebbe, explain things to him, and the more we illustrate the story, the greater the chance that it will be accepted. But the main thing is to show him the Rebbe in a video. People see how the Rebbe encourages the singing of

“*Sh'Yibaneh Beis HaMikdash*” with both hands, and that's it – “as wax melts before fire.”

One of our visitors was a teacher whose methodology is called by a name that is forbidden to say or even write... After about a month of learning *Tanya* and chassidus together for a few hours each day, I showed him a video of the Rebbe. (NOTE: We have regular nightly video presentations of the Rebbe at the Chabad House, but he was always there only during the afternoon.) After ten minutes, he said to me with the utmost seriousness: Why are we learning out of s'farim? All you had to do was show this to me – and that would have been enough! Since then, he came every night to see the Rebbe. Today, two months later, he wears a “Yechi” kippa...

EACH PERSON AND HIS MEDICINE

So what do we do with those who think they know, i.e., those who come from a religious background? They make comparisons to rabbanim and other great Torah giants – there's this one, and that one, and then there's the Lubavitcher Rebbe. This is similar to the bachur, a resident of a little town in Russia, who came back from Lubavitch and tried to explain to the townsfolk what a “Rebbe” is. The young man had some difficulty explaining a concept that they simply didn't recognize. So the villagers tried to express this in words: To what can we compare this? We gave the rabbi of our little village a cow as a gift so he could enjoy its milk, but the Lubavitcher Rebbe has two cows!

So how do we explain to them “that he is incomparably higher than all the people of the generation”?

First of all, it must be clear to us: This is the objective that has

been placed upon us, **“to publicize to all the people of the generation,”** and we have no other avoda. For as mentioned above, the previous avoda has been completed, and now we must only **“bring the Redemption in actual deed. And it is according to what is known...,”** etc.

And how do we go about doing this? We must bring them to use their religious background in helping them to reveal this.

Here’s another story: Not long ago, a young religious man, a yeshiva graduate, came to us filled with objections to the Chabad idea in connection with Moshiach. Many arguments were conducted on the subject until the day when we simply sat and learned Rashi sichos

the concept of Moshiach in their own language.

SHOWING PEOPLE THE SICHOS THEMSELVES

As part of the idea of explaining this concept to religious people, it is important to emphasize that we must learn the words of the Rebbe MH”M inside. One can talk much, yet people still may not accept. However, when we open the “D’var Malchus” and learn inside, the matter becomes clear and is solved. It shows in print things that the Rebbe said himself, and as a result, people begin to have greater appreciation for Chabad and the Rebbe. There are central sichos in “D’var Malchus,” such as Shabbos

The more people understand the tremendous paradox embodied here, they’ll understand that “he is incomparably higher” and can already be Moshiach and chai v’kayam, despite the fact that it appears to them that he’s not among the living.

from the Rebbe MH”M with him. It took a little time, but after several sichos, he discovered that it’s not the same thing. Specifically because he has heard dozens of creative rabbanim interpreting and analyzing Tanach, he was able to grasp the fact “that he is incomparably higher.” Then, all that was missing was for him to study the sicha from Shabbos Parshas Shoftim 5751 or Kuntres Beis Rabbeinu Sh’B’Bavel to enable him to climb down the tree of philosophy and move to the Tree of Life... Eventually, still wearing his knitted kippa, he greeted all the “national religious” tourists, yeshiva graduates and scholars, and would explain to them

Parshas Shoftim 5751, Kuntres Beis Rabbeinu Sh’B’Bavel, Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sara 5752, and anyone who learns these sichos has a hard time evading the truth, particularly if he’s a Torah scholar with a little background.

This represents one of our biggest missed opportunities, i.e., after so many years, the majority within religious communities continue to buy the “story” that it was Chabad’s extremist wing that invented the whole idea that the Rebbe is Moshiach. Despite all the publicity, they simply don’t know that it was the Rebbe himself who said this.

As a result of learning these sichos, either the person accepts the

message and his questions are answered **or** he is simply unwilling to continue any further... It is clear that he can’t just shake his head and say that we’re talking about the delusion of the Lubavitchers – and that’s already half the battle.

A few years ago, I met with a Breslover chassid who was several years older than me, the principal of a school that spreads Judaism in India. I had doubts as to whether I should enter a discussion with him about the belief that the Rebbe is Moshiach, etc. On the one hand, I was very curious about what they really think about the Rebbe. On the other hand, they truly believe in tzaddikim, and the Rebbe is also a tzaddik.

By Divine Providence, I had to spend the night in some remote location together with this Breslover chassid, and I decided to have a straightforward talk with him on the subject. It was a very interesting experience. In short, he never dreamed that the Rebbe said such things. Yet, after he saw them for himself in several “D’var Malchus,” he was simply overwhelmed.

His first question: Were these sichos actually delivered by the Rebbe himself? After studying the material for a few more minutes, he asked: So how is it that Chabadnikim aren’t turning over the world? How is it that not everyone is familiar with these sichos? Why don’t all Lubavitchers speak this way?

Eventually, he wrote a letter to the Rebbe in *Igros Kodesh*, proclaimed “Yechi” after davening, and wouldn’t be satisfied until he traveled to 770 – Beis Rabbeinu Sh’B’Bavel. To this day, when he goes out on shlichus in India, he writes to the Rebbe MH”M via *Igros Kodesh*. This is yet another simple proof that at the moment people are shown the Rebbe’s words – and it doesn’t matter which words – they

are accepted.

At the beginning of the year, two “national religious” couples visited with us, and started arguing with us about “*is’chalta d’Geula*,” the Rebbe, Moshiach, etc. Then, the conversation turned to the question of whether the Rebbe said regarding himself that he is Moshiach or if this is some “contrivance” of the fringe element among chassidim...

In the heat of the argument, one of them proclaimed: I’ll stay here another two or three days with my wife to check into this matter thoroughly, while the other couple will continue touring and receive a report from us later.

The Jew that stayed was a very serious Jew, studying at Heichal Shlomo in Yerushalayim to become a rabbinical judge, and as mentioned before, the argument centered on the question of whether the Rebbe himself proclaimed that he is Moshiach. After learning “D’var Malchus” for a few hours, he gently closed the seifer and said to his wife: Do you want to continue learning? I’m already convinced. It’s a pity we waited so much time.

I don’t know what he’s planning to do with this information, but at the very least, he knows that there’s such a thing as “sichos from 5751-5752.”

There are those who stop at this point, close the seifer, and say “Enough.” In other words, they don’t want to go any further with studying the matter, because they have seen categorically where it’s heading. But this is already not our problem. By the way, this almost never happens, and on those rare occasions when it does, it takes the person about a month or two and eventually, he opens the s’farim and is caught in the sweetness of the honeycomb.

(Even within our own ranks, all the arguments could be avoided if

they would learn the sichos of 5751-5752. Furthermore, it is impossible to understand how after we have explicitly heard such clear statements, and everyone without exception understood back then what the Rebbe said on Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sara 5752 – yet today, they start philosophizing and diverting attention away from learning these sichos. But since this is such a painful subject – we can’t talk about it.)

THE SHLICHUS IN INDIA

Thank G-d that we are shluchim in India, a place that is difficult materially and easier spiritually. People who come into our Chabad Houses have plenty of time to listen, and that’s enough. By the

So how is it that Chabadnikim aren’t turning over the world? How is it that not everyone is familiar with these sichos? Why don’t all Lubavitchers speak this way?

way, this tends to create the impression as if all Israelis in India are spending every minute searching for the truth and how they land here, run to the Chabad House, and immediately do t’shuva. If only that were the case with us, and with them.

These are the same people with their same objections, who have a place here where they simply “must stop by,” merely for technical reasons. It sounds better anyway: a Shabbos meal in India with all the Israelis, having all the time in the world to talk, and this is our opportunity to quench and sometimes arouse their thirst. The price we pay in our lives through material difficulties gives us the possibility to do our spiritual avoda in a relatively easier manner. Gold

is found in the depths of the earth, and specifically where it is so difficult materially, it is much easier to give over spiritual things.

A chassid of the Rebbe Rayatz complained to the Rebbe that he’s giving too much of himself. He was well off, gave lots of money, and felt that everything was on his head and he couldn’t handle it any longer.

“Therefore, they think of you,” the Rebbe replied.

The story ended when he merited a life-saving miracle.

Anyone on this very difficult shlichus should know that **therefore, they think of him.**

This is also the whole concept of the sicha of the 28th of Nisan – stubbornness. The Rebbe isn’t talking there specifically to the

shluchim or even the T’mimim. He’s talking to each and every one of us and saying: Be stubborn – constantly without any other consideration, “go crazy on the matter”...

Every shliach in India surely cries out “*Ad Masai?*” at least regarding the material difficulties...

Someone once said that in the palace, they cry “*Yechi HaMelech*,” while on shlichus, they cry “*Ad Masai?*”

This year’s conference for the shluchim in India has taken place at the Chabad House in the Indian capital of New Delhi, and G-d willing, it will be held next year in the Chabad House of New Delhi, right next to the Third Beis HaMikdash.

TZITZIS: THE POWER TO REMEMBER ALL THE 613 MITZVOS

By Rabbi Yosef Karasik, Rav district Bat Chefer-Emek Chefer

*Why are they called “tzitzis”? Should the tallis katan be worn over or under clothes and how does either way help a person remember mitzvos? How did the Rebbeim and Chassidim wear tzitzis? * A fascinating look at the parsha of the week from the perspective of the Midrash, Kabbala, and Chabad Chassidus.*

HOW ARE TZITZIS TO BE WORN?

What’s a good method to remember important things? Write them down, make a mark, or maybe not. Maybe it’s better not to write things down or leave something to serve as a reminder, because then you rely on that and forget about it. Without any external means for remembering, you are forced to

make the effort and concentrate on remembering whatever it is you don’t want to forget.

The question arises in a Torah class. Should you take notes or just listen and commit the lecture to memory?

These different approaches can be seen in the various customs regarding the wearing of tzitzis:

The mitzva of tzitzis is unusual,

compared to other mitzvos, not only because it is the only mitzva which we read every day, morning and evening (along with the Shma), but also because of the reason for the mitzva. Most mitzvos in the Torah don’t give a reason but with tzitzis, the Torah says, “and you will see them and remember all the mitzvos of Hashem.” Wearing the tzitzis is in order to remember all 613 mitzvos, for the word “tzitzis” is numerically equivalent to 600, plus 8 strings, and 5 knots – totaling 613.

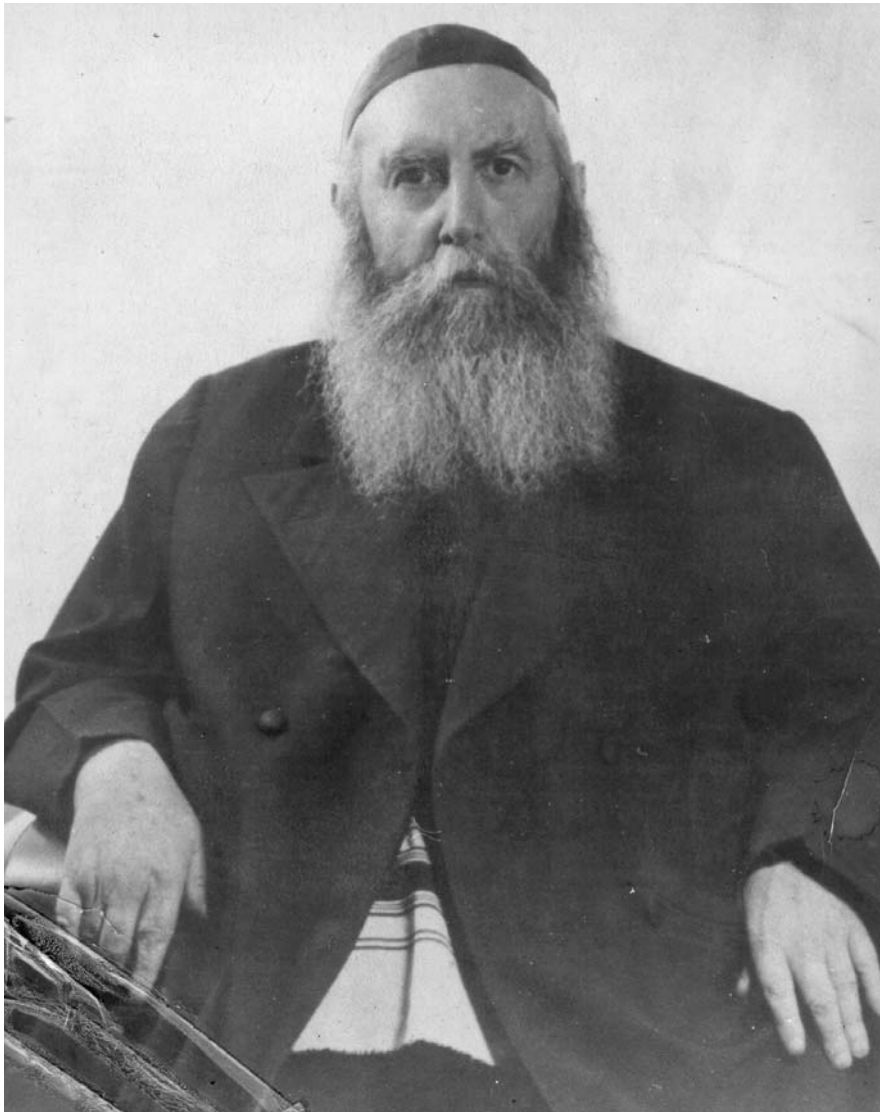
The question is: what is the best way to perform this mitzva in order to be reminded of all the mitzvos?

In *Shulchan Aruch* (siman 8) it says the tzitzis should be worn **over the clothing** so they are constantly visible, “since the reason for wearing tzitzis is in order to be reminded of the mitzvos, therefore ... one should be careful to wear them over his clothing so as to constantly see them and be reminded of the mitzvos.”

However, according to the kabbalists, they should be worn **under the clothing** (though not directly on the body, but over an undershirt). It says in the Zohar that there were two sages of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai’s circle, Rabbi Chiya and Rabbi Yosi, who wore tzitzis under the clothes so it was not visible on the outside. The Arizal also wore his tallis katan under his clothes.

The reason for the difference in opinion has to do with memory. According to the *Shulchan Aruch*, the best way to remember is when you make an external and visible sign. So it says to wear the tzitzis over the clothing so as not to forget the mitzvos and to remember that we are servants of G-d, which is why we wear a special uniform.

According to the Arizal it should be worn under the clothing, and the mitzva to see the tzitzis constantly is fulfilled by meditation on the holiness of the tzitzis, as the Rebbe



The Rebbe Rayatz with his tallis katan visible over his shirt and under his vest

view of the kabbalists, that tzitzis are fringes and that the word has nothing to do with “peeking/seeing.”)

THE CUSTOM OF CHASSIDIM

There is a third approach, which combines the other two approaches, which says to wear the tallis katan under the clothing, as the kabbalists say, but to have the fringes hanging out, as the *Shulchan Aruch* says. This is what the Alter Rebbe writes in his *Shulchan Aruch*, “The strings should be outside, as it says, ‘and you will see them.’”

Many Chassidim and G-d-fearing people follow this approach – that the tallis katan is worn underneath, with the fringes outside the pants, even if the fringes are hidden by a long outer coat (when the Rebbe Rayatz would open his coat, you would see not only the tzitzis, the strings, but the tallis katan itself).

There are other approaches and customs. Some wear two tallis katans, one over the clothing and one underneath, in order to satisfy all views.

IT DEPENDS ON A PERSON’S SPIRITUAL STATE

The Alter Rebbe told one of his great Chassidim, R’ Hillel of Paritch, that when there is a dispute between the Sages of Halacha and the Sages of Kabbala, he should follow the view of the kabbalists. Nevertheless, the Rebbe says regarding tzitzis, that even those who follow the custom of the Arizal and the kabbalists, should do as the Baalei Halacha say and at least wear the strings outside their pants (as in the third approach mentioned above). The reason being:

Despite the great advantage in the view of the holy Arizal, to wear

says on the words “and you shall see them,” that it means an “inner looking,” i.e., looking into the inner significance of tzitzis and its impact on the sanctification and elevation of the person himself to a higher level of mitzva observance.

Even according to the Arizal, two types of remembering are taking place: 1) an inner remembering, by wearing the tallis katan under the clothing, 2) an external remembering by wearing the tallis gadol over the clothing. This fits with the spiritual level of each of them, as the Arizal writes, “The tallis gadol over all the clothing and a

tallis katan under all the clothing, because the inyan of the tallis katan is the p’nimius of the World of Formation, and the tallis gadol is a manifestation of the external aspect of that world.

(The source of the dispute can be found in the translation of the word “tzitzis”: 1) from the root meaning “to peek,” as it says, “*meitzis min ha’charakim*” (peeking through the cracks), because the strands of tzitzis are seen on the outside, and this fits with the view of the Baalei Halacha that the tzitzis should be visible, 2) fringes on a garment are called “tzitzis” and this fits with the

the tzitzis underneath while fulfilling “and you shall see them” by constantly meditating on the holiness of the tzitzis and the 613 mitzvos – this approach is suitable only for special individuals who can fulfill the mitzva of “and you shall see them” through meditation, even when they don’t actually see the tzitzis. However, someone who is not on this level, who needs a tangible reminder to fulfill Torah and mitzvos and not to sin – as it says, “And you will not stray after your hearts and after your eyes” – should take out the strings of the tzitzis so he can see them throughout the day.

WRITING THE ORAL TORAH

There is a similar difference between the early generations and the later generations, regarding the Oral Torah:

Hashem desired that the Oral Torah be transmitted from teacher to student orally, “those things which are oral, you are not permitted to commit to writing” (Gemara Gittin). However, as time went by and there was a great spiritual descent, and the Jewish people were scattered in exile, there was no choice but to write down the Oral Torah, “so the Torah would not be forgotten from Israel” (and it was permissible to do so since it was done for the sake of Heaven).

So too with the strings of tzitzis. Despite there being a preference and advantage to following the approach of the Arizal, to conceal the strings under one’s clothes, due to the

descent of the generations, we need to take the strings out for protection, to contend with the Evil Inclination. The SM”G writes, “Since the Torah equates [tzitzis] with all the mitzvos, a person should be careful with this mitzva not only in shul but in the marketplace and streets, where you need greater care not to stray after your heart and eyes. There was an incident (cited in Gemara Menachos) in which a person got involved in a sin and while doing so, he saw the four tzitzis and he

Due to the descent of the generations, we need to take the strings out for protection, to contend with the Evil Inclination.

remembered and stopped sinning.”

TZITZIS IN THE GEULA

The Rebbe cites the s’farim which focus on Remez (Torah lessons derived by allusion), where it is explained that the four corners on the tallis of a Jew correspond to the four corners of the earth. When a Jew puts tzitzis on the four corners of his tallis, he causes, as it were, tzitzis to be put on all parts of the

world, i.e., the flow of Divine holiness.

Just as with tzitzis it says, “and you shall see them,” with physical eyes, as is the custom of most Chassidim today that their tzitzis are visible to all, so too in the spiritual sense as well, we need to make the G-dly holiness visible to physical eyes, in the four corners of the world, that there be a sanctification of G-d’s name in every corner of the world.

Building shuls and battei midrash all over the world, and especially Chabad houses which are buildings for Torah, T’filla, and G’millus Chesed, is the placing of strands of Divine holiness throughout the entire world. This causes the Divine sanctity to be manifestly revealed throughout G-d’s world as a preparation for the future Geula when the holiness will be seen by all, and then, the spiritual dimension of tzitzis will achieve its ultimate purpose.

The holy Sh’la says that “tallis” is numerically equivalent to “galuyos” (exiles), because in the merit of tzitzis, we merit to be saved from exile. In the Midrash Tanchuma it says that whoever fulfills the mitzva of tzitzis is like one who welcomes the Sh’china, and one merits the building of the Beis HaMikdash and Hashem shining the light on the tzaddikim with the complete Redemption, may it be soon.

Sources: Likkutei Sichos vol. 33, p. 95

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MIVTZA T'FILLIN: 40 YEARS – 40 STORIES

By Shneur Zalman Berger

*At the Kosel, under fire on the frontlines, in Miami and on a flight to Siberia, on a train in Israel and in a university, at the Central Bus Station and Beirut Airport, on a flight to the Rebbe and facing a volcano in Italy. * Miracles, stories of neshamos, and missions from the Rebbe. * 40 stories about mivtza t'fillin for 40 years since the Rebbe launched Mivtza T'fillin. * Part 2 of 2*

[Continued from last week]

ROADBLOCK

The following occurred during the Peace in Galilee campaign in Lebanon. On the streets of Beirut, a military truck veered to the center of the road and blocked the Mitzva Tank. The Lubavitchers on the tank

looked in surprise at the truck driver who jumped into the road and shouted, “You’re not passing through here until you put t’fillin on with me!”

The Tankistin dashed out and the driver showed them a row of bullet holes that had been shot precisely between him and the truck container

that was loaded with ammunition. If it had been hit a few centimeters to the side, the truck would have gone up in flames.

HASHEM IS IN CHARGE

R’ Shloimke Maidanchek described his involvement in Mivtza T’fillin in a newspaper interview:

“Over the years, in my work as a train engineer, I did mivtzaim in my free time. When I traveled to Dimona, for example, after working 16 hours, on the way back I was relieved by another driver, and I went into the compartment with two pairs of t’fillin that I had brought along with me. I offered them to the people on board.”

R’ Shloimke chuckled as he recalled an episode that took place while on mivtzaim:

“As I circulated around the train, a student asked me, ‘Are you the driver of the train?’ I said that I was and he asked in surprise, ‘Then who is in the caboose now?’ I told him, ‘You don’t understand that I am doing G-d’s work while He is doing my work and running the train?’

“The student was shocked and he rolled up his sleeve and said, ‘Hurry up, put on the t’fillin and get back to your place in the caboose!’”

ON THE WAY TO THE REBBE

In the newspaper *Panim el Panim*, journalist Shmuel Avidor, described Mivtza T’fillin during the flight to the Rebbe for Yud Shvat 5730, known as Yud Shvat HaGadol:

“The singing goes on. In the meantime, the chairman of the local council in Kfar Chabad, R’ Shlomo Maidanchek, begins Mivtza T’fillin. He goes among the members of the El-Al staff, who willingly bare their left arms so he can put t’fillin on them. Then he goes to the pilot with whom he has to argue a bit. He presents himself as a fan of Chabad but he doesn’t care for Mivtza



T'fillin.

"How can I do something I don't believe in?" he asks. Rabbi Dovid Chanzin, member of the chief rabbinate in Petach Tikva, gets involved. He explains to the pilot in a nice, literary Ivrit, the idea behind putting on t'fillin. He politely explains how there is no such thing as a Jew who does not believe. It's just that sometimes, the belief is covered over and then it has to be sought out.

"It's by putting on t'fillin that you can uncover the inner light within the soul," he explains. Perhaps the pilot does not appreciate t'fillin because he did not put them on. Go ahead, try it and you will begin to understand. The wellsprings that were closed, will open up."

"R' Chanzin is pleasantly persuasive. The pilot stands there openmouthed, absorbing everything he says.

"His left arm is slowly raised and he humbly holds it out to R' Chanzin so he can wrap on the t'fillin. R' Chanzin ties the black strap to the pilot's arm and gently places the head t'fillin in place. He opens the siddur and the El-Al pilot begins to recite the words of the Shma..."

FROM THE T'FILLIN STAND TO SHLICHUS

Rabbi Victor Atyah became involved in Chabad after putting on t'fillin on the street in Bat-Yam. He was born to a traditional family, and when he grew older he attended a public high school and excelled in sports. Yet something didn't seem right to him; it was t'fillin that lit up his soul: "Deep inside, I felt an emptiness. It's a feeling that is very hard to explain to someone who did not experience it himself."

Then came the turning point:

"It was a Friday afternoon in the center of Bat-Yam and a young Lubavitcher asked me to put on t'fillin. After I refused, he asked me what I had to lose by putting them on. At first, I had no response. An inner voice shouted within me, 'Victor, you know the truth, now is the time.' I agreed to do it, although I knew it meant dropping my plan for a party with friends.

"The letters in the siddur I was given shone. I still choke up when I remember that scene. After I removed the t'fillin, the Lubavitcher asked me what I was planning on doing on Shabbos and I answered that I would be partying with friends. He offered that I join him for the Shabbos meal instead.

"I agreed immediately and when it was Shabbos I went to the address he had given me, where I met baalei t'shuva. Each of them in turn said a thought on the parsha and I remember I was very enthused."

Victor began the t'shuva process, guided by Rabbi Zimroni Tzik, shliach in Bat-Yam, and he became a full-fledged Chassid. Today he is a shliach in Kiryat Arba and Chevron.

T'FILLIN ON A FLIGHT TO SIBERIA

Rabbi Shneur Zalman Zaklos, shliach to Novosibirsk, relates:

"On one of my trips from Israel to Novosibirsk, I met the singer Yisroel Parnes with two musicians who did not wear kippot. While having a friendly conversation with them, I suggested that the two of them put on t'fillin. One agreed immediately, while the other one refused.

"The first one began to pressure his friend until he gave in and put on t'fillin too. As he did so, he grew emotional and said that it was the first time he was putting on t'fillin. So we celebrated his bar mitzva in the skies. The two of them began to

play as Yisroel sang, and they could be heard throughout the plane.

“Apparently, these two had to travel to the ends of the world in order to put on t’fillin and become acquainted with their Judaism.”

FROM AFULA TO ITALY

R’ Moshe Garelik, director of the Rabbinical Center of Europe related a Mivtza T’fillin story that took place near the Mount Etna volcano in Italy, where he did outreach work together with Dovid Barber. Between rare encounters with Jews, they sat down near their car in order to eat something:

“Suddenly we heard people speaking Hebrew. We looked around and saw four Israelis, two men and two women, entering a restaurant. Fifteen minutes later we went into the restaurant to buy a Coke. I saw that the Israelis had noticed us and we decided to pass them as we walked out.

“As we approached them, the four were silent. I asked one of them whether he was Israeli and astounded, he asked how I knew. I said it was apparent on their faces. The man was flabbergasted and he looked at his friends and back at me and he blurted, ‘Are you from Chabad?’

“When I said that I was, he said, ‘Look at these Chabadnikim. They even come to Etna.’

“When the four left the restaurant, we asked the men to put on t’fillin, but they refused. One of them looked like a character, and I offered to take a picture of him in t’fillin with the volcano in the background. He was convinced. So was his friend. The first one said he hadn’t put on t’fillin since his bar mitzva.

“I usually write down the addresses of Jews I meet. I offered to send him the picture and they give me their addresses. The first one lived in Afula and I asked him

whether he was familiar with the Chabad house there.

“Of course, it’s opposite Egged, right near my pizzeria at the Central Bus Station.’

“I told him that I used to do the rounds of the stores in that area on Mivtza T’fillin, including his store, and he had refused me. He burst out laughing and said, ‘So you chased me here so I would agree to put on t’fillin!’”

YOU CAME ALL THE WAY HERE

R’ Garelik also related a story about a special encounter at the Israeli embassy in Athens, where he put t’fillin on with the employees. One of them, Koby, refused to do it.

One of them looked like a character, and I offered to take a picture of him in t’fillin with the volcano in the background. He was convinced. So was his friend. The first one said he hadn’t put on t’fillin since his bar mitzva.

“I sensed that something was bothering him and after everybody else agreed to put on t’fillin, I got into a quiet conversation with him in a side room where I explained the importance of the mitzva of t’fillin. He said he wanted to think it over for a few minutes. I left the room.

“When I returned, Koby was sitting there sobbing. To my utter surprise, he began speaking to me in Yiddish, ‘I am from a distinguished Yerushalmi family. All my relatives have long peiot and I used to have them too. For various reasons I left it all and cut myself off from the past. I decided to drop religion and go to places where there are no religious Jews, but you’ve come all the way here and have forced me to confront my past.’”

THE COOK SET THE EXAMPLE

Rabbi Nitzan Chalak, shliach in Beer Sheva, began to get involved in Chabad when he read about the Rebbe’s prophecy about the Gulf War. He realized that the Rebbe is a prophet and tzaddik. He began to look for Chabad books and tapes, and found a recording in which a sicha was reviewed. It included the Rebbe’s instruction to do Mivtza T’fillin everywhere, and mentioned the great merit of those who take part in it.

Having learned about the importance of putting on t’fillin with as many Jews as possible, Nitzan did just that. This was when he was serving in the army and one day, he took a table from the mess hall

where thousands of soldiers ate, and offered to put t’fillin on with people.

He was apprehensive about the reaction to his suggestion but was surprised when the head cook came out of the kitchen and happily put on t’fillin. The head cook was regarded as someone special by the soldiers and if he put on t’fillin, so could they!

The t’fillin stand at the Chatzerim base was very successful. On the first day, ten soldiers put on t’fillin. On the second day, the number doubled. As time went on, some of those who regularly put on t’fillin began helping Nitzan out. In addition, a t’fillin stand was set up near the officers’ mess hall and every day, and over 100 soldiers put on t’fillin at the two stands!

SO THE CHILDREN AT HOME SEE IT

In 5729/1969, one of the chareidi publications printed a photographic essay about the work of Rabbi Aharon Chazan of B'nei Brak at the t'fillin stand at the Kosel. Here's one of the stories:

Two tourists went to the Kosel, an old man and a young man, apparently a father and son. R' Aharon looked at them warmly and said, "Do a mitzva! Put on t'fillin!"

The father was taken aback. "I never did this before..." The son was enthusiastic and said he would do it. The father was embarrassed and said, "Because of my son, I'll do it too."

Father and son stood there and prayed and motioned to the photographer to take their picture. When R' Aharon wondered why, the father explained, "I have other children at home. They should see this!"

A LESSON IN JEWISH HONOR

Another story from the same article:

A soldier in the impressive blue uniform of a combat pilot came to the Kosel to pray. R' Aharon followed him, somewhat hesitantly. The grim faced pilot announced, "I am not Jewish."

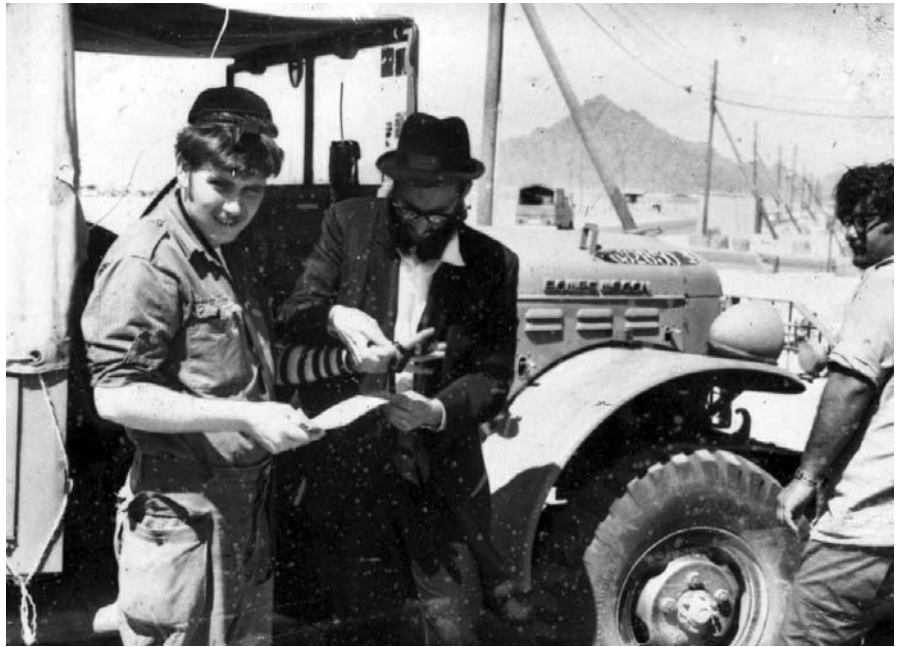
"Really?" R' Aharon asked him.

The pilot responded, "Yes, I am a gentile."

R' Aharon pleaded, "What harm can it do? Every pilot needs miracles and you give honor to the Jewish nation!"

The pilot was irritated and he responded, "Who is giving me a lesson in 'Jewish honor'?"

Said R' Aharon pleasantly, "I am from Moscow, a new immigrant," and the pilot tersely said, "Okay then."



Mitzva T'fillin with IDF soldiers

T'FILLIN FOR ONE LIRA

On Shabbos Parshas Chazon 5730/1970, during the War of Attrition, the Rebbe sent Rabbi Tuvia Peles on a special mission. He was to travel throughout Eretz Yisroel in order to sell t'fillin to soldiers for a token amount and to distribute mashke from the Rebbe. The Rebbe told him to go with other Lubavitchers, and if possible, to wear army uniforms on these visits. The Rebbe said he would pay the expenses involved.

R' Tuvia returned to Eretz Yisroel, recruited some fellow Chassidim, and got permission to enter army camps and bases. The army allowed them to wear IDF uniforms.

Rabbi Shimon Beckerman, one of the Chassidim involved, said the group put t'fillin on with many soldiers in the Jordan Valley area. In a report that R' Zushe the Partisan wrote to the Rebbe, he said that in only two days (the 29th and 30th of Av) they sold 58 pairs of t'fillin at the token price of one lira each. In addition, the soldiers gave a total of 12 liras to tz'daka. R' Zushe sent the

Rebbe 70 liros from the soldiers.

BAR MITZVA CELEBRATION

A 60-year-old man named Mr. Yechezkel Samuelov visited the replica of 770 in Kfar Chabad and was welcomed by Rabbi Shlomo Katz, who was learning in the kollel there. He gave Mr. Samuelov a tour of the building and when R' Shlomo suggested that he put on t'fillin, he learned that Mr. Samuelov had never put on t'fillin before.

R' Shlomo put the t'fillin on with him and they decided to celebrate his bar mitzva, which would include an aliya to the Torah as well as a Seudas Mitzva. They scheduled it for Yud Shvat.

On Yud Shvat, Mr. Samuelov came with his family and a large group of colleagues, pharmacists, doctors, and people who worked in the Department of Health, to the event held in the 770 building.

The event began with twenty men standing on line to put on t'fillin. Then there was the Torah reading in which the new Chassan Torah was

called up in honor of his bar mitzva. The singing and dancing went on for a long time, to the delight and amazement of the family and friends.

At that same event, a pidyon ha'ben ceremony was done for him and another person, and it was all thanks to putting t'fillin on with him.

THE T'FILLIN MIRACLE

A Lubavitcher Chassid in Kfar Saba had this miracle story to relate:

While involved with Mivtza Lulav, I approached a Russian Jewish immigrant. He willingly agreed to do the mitzva and when he finished he said, "Remember, you put t'fillin on with me half a year ago?"

Indeed, I remembered him. "You should know that it was the first time in my life that I put on t'fillin, but you don't know the reason I did so."

Then he told me why he put on t'fillin that day: "The day before I put on t'fillin, my wife underwent a series of tests. The doctor gave her the bad news that she had a malignant growth. The next day, I put on t'fillin and the day after that, my wife underwent additional tests. To the surprise of the doctors, there was no sign of any growth.

"I haven't told anybody how my putting on t'fillin led to the disappearance of the tumor until today."

BAR MITZVA AT THE MASAMYA JUNCTION

R' Moshe Simon of Nachalat Har Chabad related:

During the elections I went on Mivtza T'fillin at the Masamya junction, where people from the Leftist parties stood and handed out leaflets. I suggested to one of them that he put on t'fillin, and he nastily retorted, "We are not your brothers."

After talking with his friends,

they decided that if I would put one of their bumper stickers on my car, they would put on t'fillin. I agreed but they ended up not keeping their end of the bargain. Only one of them promised that if I would be there the following week, he would put on t'fillin.

The next week, I reminded him of what he had said and he put on t'fillin. As I was winding the straps on his arm, I noticed that he looked perturbed. He said he didn't know what to think of the whole thing. It turned out that he had never had a bar mitzva.

I suggested that we make him a bar mitzva then and there. The kibbutznik was touched, and when he read the Shma, he was overcome with emotion. He read it word by word with great feeling. In the meantime, I sent one of the T'mimim with me to buy mashke and cookies, and afterwards, we sat down together and celebrated his bar mitzva on a nearby bench.

When we were done, I said to him that, as per our agreement, he could put one of his stickers on my car. He dismissed that idea and said, "The main thing is the mitzva, which I was able to perform for the first time in my life."

I TOOK THE T'FILLIN AND TIED THEM ON

"For the first time since our conversation began, Arik Sharon blushed," wrote Geula Cohen in *Maariv*, "and you felt that behind the blush was hidden a completely clear ladder of priorities of positives and negatives. Arik has limits. There are things that are holy to him.

"They say you put on t'fillin at the Kosel when you were asked to do so by the Chabad Chassidim. May I ask: why did you agree?"

"Arik: Good question. Since I was 13 I did not put on t'fillin and I have no religious background, but I believe in people who believe...

When I was near the Kosel, when I saw Jews praying there, when I saw the faith burning in the eyes of the person who asked me to put on t'fillin, perhaps I felt a bit torn, but I took the t'fillin and put them on. See, I also felt the need to pray there, though I have no words, and a religious Jew does. My feelings and his are identical; it is just the expression which is different. I was coming from a nationalistic perspective and he was coming from a religious perspective, but we both met at the same Kosel."

THE T'FILLIN BURNING WITHIN ME

One day, two Lubavitchers were sitting in the Chabad library in Charson when they saw an old man playing simultaneous chess with five boys. He aroused their curiosity, and when they went over to talk to him, they discovered that he had never put on t'fillin before.

One of them tried to persuade him, but the man, who was brilliant as well as stubborn, found reason after reason to refuse. The Chassidim were stubborn too, and after a long discussion, he agreed to put on t'fillin on condition that everybody present leave the library, aside from him and the two Chassidim.

After Rosh HaShana, the shlucha said that the old man had come to shul on Rosh HaShana and after the davening he went over to her and said, "Do you know why I came here for the first time in my life to pray? Because of the t'fillin of these two young men, which still burn within me."

HE REVEALED THAT HE'S JEWISH

The Tamim, Avrohom Bazis relates:

I regularly did mivtzaim on Delancey Street on the Lower East Side. One of the places we visited

was a store that sold expensive suits. We put t'fillin on with the owner, who was favorably disposed towards Judaism. He had an Indian employee, to whom we gave a friendly nod, and left it at that.

One time, the store owner confided that his employee was Jewish and that for the past two weeks he had been trying to convince him of his being Jewish, though the man wasn't willing to accept it. After a brief inquiry, we learned that the man's maternal grandmother was a European Jew who even spoke Yiddish.

We explained to the surprised worker that Jewish law regarded him as a Jew. We put t'fillin on with him and made a bar mitzva then and there.

"My feelings and his are identical; it is just the expression which is different. I was coming from a nationalistic perspective and he was coming from a religious perspective, but we both met at the same Kosel."

A few weeks later, when he went to visit his family in India, we gave him the address of the nearest Chabad house. Afterwards we found out that he went to the Chabad house and that his interest in Jewish subjects is growing from visit to visit.

THANKS TO THE TU B'SHVAT FRUITS

Avrohom Makovetzky relates:

During the year 5764/2004 I went every Friday to 28th Street in Manhattan on Mivtza T'fillin. Each time I went, I met a young Israeli who welcomed us graciously but refused to put on t'fillin. I was surprised by his stubbornness when all his friends put on t'fillin and even tried to convince him to do so.

Erev Chamisha-Asar B'Shvat was on a Friday and we brought along fruits that we happily shared with everyone. Unexpectedly, the man came over and willingly put on t'fillin. We were flabbergasted. One of his friends, who saw how surprised we were, explained what happened.

Apparently, he had said to his friends that the Chabadnikim didn't really care about them. The friends rejected this thought and they decided, "If they really care, let's see whether they bring us Chamisha-Asar B'Shvat fruit next Friday." If they bring the fruit, he would agree to put on t'fillin.

When we came with the t'fillin and fruit, he saw he had been mistaken and he agreed to put on

t'fillin. Since then, he puts on t'fillin every week.

JUST LIKE HIS FATHER

The Tamim, Avrohom Fine related:

I go to Beth Israel hospital in Manhattan every day, where I put t'fillin on with an old man by the name of Yehoshua Moshe. One day, he was in the middle of treatment and I wasn't allowed to enter his room.

I was very unhappy about this since it was almost sunset and it would be a pity to have made the trip for nothing (there were usually no Jews in that department). Since it was time to daven Mincha, I stood on the side and davened.

When I finished Shmoneh Esrei,

a Russian Jew came over to me with tears in his eyes. He had seen my t'fillin bag and he pleaded with me to put the t'fillin on with him. Naturally, I was happy to do so. He cried as he said the Shma.

After removing the t'fillin, he told me that his father put on t'fillin and when he was a boy, he frequently saw him doing so, but he himself had never done so.

"That was the first time in my life that I put on t'fillin, like my father," he said, choked up with emotion.

And I realized that each day has its own shlichus, and there's no traveling for nothing.

CONVINCING THE SECURITY GUARDS

Dovid Trager relates:

We do mivtzaim on 10th Avenue and 60th Street in Manhattan, where many Israelis live and where they have many businesses. Up the street is a building, but throughout the years, none of the bachurim checked it out to see whether any Jews were interested in putting on t'fillin.

As we passed by, one night of Chanuka, we saw a menorah that was lit and we decided to visit. However, there were two security guards barring our entry.

In our broken English we tried to explain what we wanted, but they refused to let us in. A week later, we had a bachur with us who spoke fluent English and we tried our luck again. He explained to the men about the work of Chabad on behalf of Jews and on behalf of mankind. We learned that this building belonged to Fordham University.

One of the men, a Russian, said he was Jewish. He was impressed by what the bachur told him. In answer to our question, he said he had never put on t'fillin. We put t'fillin on with him and he was extremely moved.

A passerby who saw this, said "good Shabbos" to us. Then we

found out that he is one of the deans. With one thing leading to another, from that day on, we began doing mitzvaim regularly within the university. Many Jewish students agree to put on t'fillin there.

VICTORY OVER THE NAZIS

A bachur who stood at the t'fillin stand at the Kosel went over to Rabbi Aharon Chazan, who also does Mivtza T'fillin, and said,

"There's a man there who refuses to put on t'fillin. He says that after what he saw in the Holocaust, he cannot do mitzvos. Maybe you can convince him to put on t'fillin?"

R' Chazan went over to the man and asked him to put on t'fillin. As expected, the man refused and repeated what he had told the bachur.

"I definitely understand you, since I come from Russia," said R' Chazan. "I lost my entire family in the war. But it is because of that,

that I ask you to put on t'fillin. Think for a moment. What was the goal of the cursed Nazis? They wanted to annihilate the Jewish people and everything we represent. If you don't put on t'fillin, you are assisting them in their plan. On the other hand, if you put on t'fillin, this will be a response and an eternal proof that Am Yisroel Chai!"

The man rolled up his sleeve to put on t'fillin.

(sources: HaPartisan, 50 Shana L'Rebbe, Beis Moshiach, Kfar Chabad, Hiskashrus, Baruch Omer V'Oseh, Bit'a'on Chabad, Geza Chassidim)

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Obviously, these are very opportune days, especially when it is connected to the number ten, when one should again evaluate his or her "Hiskashrus" (connection) with the Rebbe, and more important, to utilize these special days to 'strengthen' the Hiskashrus to the Rebbe.

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GIRLS' PRODUCTIONS

By Molly Kupchik

*Many girls' schools hold annual performances which are produced by the girls. In recent years, these productions have become rather professional. * What are the pros and cons to having these events? What about the expenses involved and missing class? These and other questions are addressed by principals, coordinators, mothers and students.*

It's an annual phenomenon, whatever you call them: festivals, productions, performances, concerts. It used to be exclusive to Bais Rivka High School in Kfar Chabad and was a source of envy for those girls who attended schools that did not see fit to invest time and money into an evening's performance.

However, in recent years, the phenomenon has spread. It began in Tzfas with its famous production, then to Netanya, and as more schools are opening it has expanded to include schools in Yaffo, Ofakim, Dimona, etc.

When you walk into a school where a production is underway, you can feel it in the atmosphere, which is crackling with good spirits and energy. The girls aren't busy thinking up pranks at the expense of the teachers; they are immersed in action. Music plays, costumes and scenery are what people are preoccupied with. And the teachers are able to relax with a cup of coffee in the teachers' room.

Is this a good thing? Has it grown out of proportion? What are the pluses and minuses to this break in the middle of the semester? I did some investigating and am here to report my findings.

In the teachers' room, as expected, the atmosphere is lighthearted. The excitement permeates this room too. Rivka, the teacher, is talking with her counterpart in one of the groups. Rivka is a young teacher and her memories of being a student are no doubt, still fresh. She can look at things from both perspectives.

"A festival creates a serious *balagan* (chaos) in school. You don't know whether to prepare a lesson or not. It's not just about whether to prepare a lesson or not," she is quick to clarify, "but sometimes, you begin teaching and the lesson is cut short and the girls go out for rehearsals. The atmosphere of learning and seriousness disappears.

"At our school, there's no set thing. Some years we have a performance; there are years when the performance connected to the eighth grade's graduation takes place at this time. If we don't have either one, there is always some extracurricular activity for the girls to enjoy at that time of year (Adar), dancing, a small carnival, etc.

"Preparing for the performances takes us about ten days and there's isn't much learning. If you would ask me as a student, I would say I could do without it. It broke the momentum of the learning for me, and in general, I was very shy and didn't like performing.

"Today, as a teacher, I view it more positively. Out of the 32 girls in my class, 12 of them have some learning problem. At this time of the year, there's a sparkle in their eyes and they become more integrated with the rest of the girls. There are girls who don't shine in class but blossom when involved in a performance.

"One of the girls, for example, has a hard time with class work, but is gifted with a beautiful voice. You have to see her at this time of year ... A student needs successes and these performances boost their self esteem and confidence. In addition, the girls take on responsibility and personal commitments to ensure the success of the performance."

* * *



I had to speak to the originator, Mrs. Tzipora-Vishedsky, high school principal at Bais Rivka in Kfar Chabad, the location of the main event, an inspiration to all the rest.

What is the educational value of this performance?

"This performance, which is exciting, leaves people with a sweet,

Chassidishe taste. It mobilizes the entire school and has an influence outside it as well. I have heard women on a trip to Russia or at a Shabbos for Chabad women at the Keinar Hotel, singing songs from our performances.

"They bring out an array of talents that are not expressed in the classroom. There are girls who paint huge sceneries, dozens of feet long. Who can measure the self-confidence that is bolstered within hundreds of girls, thanks to the performance?

"It also brings the girls together. There are different dance groups competing and we award points to those groups which include girls who don't excel in dance. From a Chassidic vantage point, they work with many concepts and experience many ideas that they just talk about the rest of the year. We are mekasher the girls to the Rebbe through a variety of modalities, opening new pathways into their hearts.

Don't these performances teach the girls to stand out and attract attention?

“Yes, and it’s something we have to fight. We try to appear as one united group. We try to troubleshoot while simultaneously maximizing the educational benefits. We prefer several singers over one.

“The girls love it. This is their “after-school activity,” and they feel happy and fulfilled. The freedom and ability to unwind is exhilarating and contributes to bolstering Chassidishe values. Once they participate, they don’t want to miss another one.”

A lot of money is needed for these performances. Wouldn’t it be more worthwhile to use the money to help girls with learning problems throughout the year, for example, over spending it on a one-time event?

“One is not at the expense of the other. We consider it of educational value for the entire school. Around Purim time, the girls always start to act up and get antsy, and we harness this trend towards positive outlets. The need for a break from routine at this time is used to prepare for the production. That in itself is of enormous educational value. Every year, the Educational Committee concludes that these performances contribute a lot, from an educational perspective.”

Can you give me some examples to illustrate this?

“There are girls who sing a song of yearning for the Rebbe and it is in this that they feel more connected to the values we promote. We had a performance called ‘Eternity in a Moment’ that was about yechidus. Girls interviewed Chassidim for those narrated parts that are interspersed between songs, or they looked up the subject and checked out various video clips. Through all this, they became much more connected.”

* * *

One of the teachers in the high school in Netanya, offers her

perspective:

“In our school, the performance is the twelfth grade graduation. The twelfth grade classes are very involved and they are joined by talented girls from the other grades. They work on it for about two or three weeks, while regular classes go on. It’s only during the days immediately preceding the performance that classes are cancelled. The girls from the other classes, who take part in the preparations, have to make up what they missed, though of course, their participation in the performance is taken into account.

“The theme always revolves around Moshiach and Geula. Last year the topic was, “From the Baal Shem Tov until our generation: Getting ready for Geula.” The performance takes place after Purim and it breathes life into the entire school. The girls are free to let their talents shine, something that doesn’t happen much throughout the rest of the school year.

“The work that goes into it unites teachers and students. There are challenging experiences beyond learning and studying. The script teaches them things in a different way and it’s definitely a wonderful opportunity for those girls who are not so connected the rest of the year. When the girls sing lines of real meaning, they are more open to hearing about the same ideas in formal classroom lessons.”

Do you perceive any drawbacks?

“Well, it definitely affects their formal learning and it puts the teachers under pressure. On the other hand, there are many benefits such as forming a stronger connection with the students, challenges beyond learning and studying, adding to the feeling of simcha, and learning things in different way. It’s a way of opening the way for girls who are not that

involved.

“I wouldn’t give up the performances despite the drawbacks. It’s true that there’s something not p’nimius’dik about a performance, but we try to emphasize the Chassidishe content.

“Two years ago, the topic was ‘Women in Israel.’ Seven women were portrayed during the seven acts of the performance. I can still picture the girl who represented one of the women. On the one hand, she had a lot of chitzoniyus, but on the other hand, we saw how good this was for her. This external role had a great impact on her p’nimius. It doesn’t work this way for all of them, though.

“The preparations are made under the supervision of the mechaneches and talent coach. We try to use ‘our own’ professionals, like the brother of one of the girls who had a studio. It takes a lot of energy on the part of the teachers who are involved.”

What about the financial cost?

“It’s a problem for us, because it’s not done on a grand scale and it’s a big burden on the school, especially when we charge only a token amount for tickets. We get businessmen involved who make donations in exchange for advertising.”

* * *

It seems that most teachers are in favor of the performances. Even without their saying so explicitly, they seem to enjoy the break in a pressured year.

I was interested in hearing what the girls had to say. I wasn’t surprised that nearly all of them, aside from a small percentage, are very much in favor of the performances. Nevertheless, about 7-10% of the girls participate only partially or not at all, for various reasons.

Dina, a student in 12th grade has this to say:

"I've never participated in a performance. I'm embarrassed to appear on stage. Because of my weight, every move is more pronounced. This year I took care of typing the scripts. In previous years I would remain in the classroom or wander among the groups. Every class has some girls who are not involved. Over the years, the teachers have said to me, 'What will you remember from high school if you don't participate in the production?' – as though two weeks out of the year are the only thing I'll remember."

The best and most direct result of the performance is seeing girls from different classes or social circles sitting together in the lunchroom or on the lawn. Sometimes they get close and they keep up the connection after the performance is over.

Although the teachers, coordinators and principles are enthusiastic, with some of the girls there is much rumbling taking place below the surface. Shterna, an eleventh grader, says, "I don't like participating because of the atmosphere of competition and jealousy. About twenty girls vie for every top position, leaving nineteen of them disappointed."

The performance takes place after Purim and it breathes life into the entire school. The girls are free to let their talents shine, something that doesn't happen much throughout the rest of the school year.

Chana, a ninth grader, says, "Most of the girls don't end up happy because only one group wins and the rest cry over all the time and effort they put in."

Ronit, also a ninth grader, disagrees and says, "Most of the girls enjoy it and who wins is not that important."

Rocheli, an eleventh grader, says there are always girls who cry because someone in charge yelled at them under the pressure. "You need to be lucky to get a patient counselor."

Sarah, a tenth grader, explains, "I don't like it. I don't have energy for endless practice. I don't see any benefits to these performances. More Chassidische content could be put into them. Now, when there are classes, I participate in rehearsals. Today I was a cow in Pharaoh's dream. We'll see what I'll be tomorrow... In days packed with rehearsals, I might just get out of it and stay home. The school announced that girls who don't participate have class in a certain room, but it doesn't actually happen."

Ronit elaborates, "We don't feel like putting up with the seniors who are responsible for everything. Why not

allow representatives from each school to organize it? Why isn't there room for self-expression beyond what the girls from the graduating class decide? Why not make suggestions and decide according to what the girls want? Not all twelfth graders are able to teach others and sometimes, they don't know what they want themselves."

Gitty is bothered by the content: "The content of the festival is not especially Chassidish, though in the end they connect it somehow to Moshiach. The dancing is sometimes not Chassidish, ditto for the music. There is supervision and if something is extreme, they get rid of it, but they can't tell the head of dance that the entire dance is no good.

"The results directly reflect the level of Chassidishkeit of the twelfth graders. If they really wanted to, they could include far more Chassidishe content."

Tali agrees: "Maybe I simply have had enough of the whole thing. In elementary school we had a performance with the same type of movements. It's disgusting. In elementary school, I had a special role every single year, and in general, when you're younger, you get more

excited by things like this. Maybe that's the reason I hold to the minority view opposing it."

I insisted on hearing some positive comments from these girls with a negative take.

Chaya said: "We consider it free time and that's definitely a plus, as far as we're concerned!"

Ronit: "It makes life more interesting and you make new

friends and acquaintances."

Sarah: "It's supposed to be fun, develop your talents and advertise and make money for the school. Most of the songs are niggunim and you get to learn niggunim that are not so well known."

If I thought that only teachers and students had an opinion about this, I was surprised to hear various views from the mothers who are also the audience and chaperones.

Batsheva is critical: "I see many improvements and hear some teachers point out things that need to be fixed, but there are many dangers, and the main one is that they give young girls the responsibility to decide about the dance movements and background music. Sometimes I watch and don't know whether it's a production by B'nos Chabad or a disco. It's being a "naval b'r'shus ha'Torah" (degenerate with the sanction of Torah).

"The girls are covered up modestly, the niggun is Chabad, but the beat and the means of expression are so not from the side of holiness that it's shocking. It would

“WE WERE AS DREAMERS” – AWAKENING TO GEULA

The first school to have annual performances, which has amassed much experience in the process, is Beis Rivka in Kfar Chabad. The principal, Mrs. Tzippora Vishedsky:

Some history: It began spontaneously 28-30 years ago. We had a large dormitory and we kept the girls here for Purim night and in the morning, to make sure they had done the mitzvos of the day. After the reading of the Megilla at night, we had a performance. At first, there were choirs accompanied by live instruments. As the years went by, we progressed gradually in terms of content, professionalism, and mainly ruchnius.

At a certain point, the twelfth grade classes began to take charge of involving the entire school. They chose representatives from the classes, an ideas team and an organizational team. Each group from 12th grade, was responsible for a certain dance.

What's unique about our school is that we also design and produce the costumes that the whole country benefits from by borrowing.

The girls who participated worked day and night and we suddenly discovered wonderful talents in girls who composed songs and wrote lyrics. It has always been one cohesive program. Sometimes, there is a competition and sometimes not, but we are always improving. Today, for example, we are particular about using Chabad niggunim. We managed to dispel the myth that you can't dance to Chabad niggunim. The tznius has also improved from year to year. We place a great emphasis on the process and not only on the finished product.

What was the topic this year?

“We were as dreamers” – exile is like a dream and awakening to Geula. Each song exemplifies a dream related in Tanach. It was amazing to see the twelfth graders, in the introduction, announce that the competition is not only on the quality of performance, but also on the process, and a bonus would be given to the group whose girls performed modestly. It was at their initiative!

Does a performance like this engender jealousy and competitiveness?

You can ask that about anything we do, about Shura Rishona too. We transform the difficulties into a challenge and try to emphasize the group rather than

the individuals. It's not one girl who is praised but “Beis Rivka.” I emphasize and say to the girls, “Thank you Rebbe for giving us Beis Rivka and thank you Beis Rivka for giving us the Rebbe.”

To what extent does the performance disrupt the learning and contribute to an atmosphere of vacation?

There were years that we really wondered about this but nowadays, we are very organized. We devote two weeks to it. Every week we give a precise timetable for rehearsals. During the first two hours there are classes as usual, and afterwards they practice for two hours. The rest of the rehearsals take place in the afternoon. There is a teacher in charge of the rehearsal plans and everybody knows exactly what is happening, when, and where.

Baruch Hashem, there's no chaos. In general, every school has winter vacation after midterms. Our girls also deserve a break.

Where does the performance take place?

In the early years, they took place here, at the school. However, since the school has grown (we have 600 students now), which makes it hard to include everyone, we had no choice but to go to halls outside of Kfar Chabad. Now, we have spacious Beis Zlata and so we've returned home and don't

have to shlep all the scenery.

What were the themes of recent performances?

“The 10th Besura,” “Our Queens” – the Rebbetzins, in Yemos HaMoshiach, “Tzlilei HaHeichal” – Beis HaMikdash, “B'Maavak Eitan” – the tests of our generation up until the present, great test, Megillas Esther, Torah study for women, traveling to the Rebbe. With each topic we include Moshiach and Geula. The girls first learn the topic and then write the songs.

How would you guide schools that are first starting out?

You have to give it a lot of thought before you get underway, analyzing all the difficulties and providing lots of preventive medicine; include as many girls as possible, and of course, ask the Rebbe for a bracha for Heavenly assistance and so that the goals are easily attained. The main thing – that we no longer be “as dreamers” in a performance, but actually have the Geula!

The main thing is that we no longer be “as dreamers” in a performance, but actually have the Geula!

be better if they had ballet dances with classical music than disguised Chabad niggunim... True, I'm talking about rare instances, a particular song or only a segment, but that, in itself, is awful.

"There were times that the teachers pointed things out and the girls promised to change it, but they didn't, and they took them off the stage or vetoed the song entirely. The girls were so offended and did not accept the criticism, and the parents were also upset and asked why they hadn't prevented it in the first place!"

Nechama looks at this from another perspective: "The performance is a reflection of the entire year, and you have to have your hand on the pulse all year. Yes, to use creative and modern means, but not to make the content second to it."

Miriam: "The performance opens the girls' eyes and desires to all sorts of places they are not accustomed to. I sit in the hall and watch the girls working with the men in charge of sound and lighting, because that's what has to be done, not to mention them being around when the girls practice."

Chava talks about the day after: "These days, you can get tapes and videos of the festival after it happens. Of course, every girl wants a copy. The problem is, there's no control over them. It brings problems into the house. At what age do you send your boys out of the room because the girls want to watch the performance? You have to constantly pay attention to what's going on."

Leah talks about her daughter's experience: "My daughter was included in the group that is in charge of dance, and they weren't the most Chassidishe, to say the least. The movements were not refined and the music was in a non-Jewish style. They tell the girls: When the teacher passes by, tone it down, but when we perform, do it right!"

"It was hard for my daughter to oppose the girls in charge. If there's peer pressure within a class, how much harder is it to stand up to older girls and protest? Baruch Hashem, my daughter chose to drop out and so did one of the twelfth grade girls who was in charge. You have to be mechanech without forcing and you need to convey the feeling that something is not right, and she

understood that."

The principal, Mrs. Tzipora Vishedsky: "There are two teachers in charge at rehearsals for the dances. There is also a tznius committee, which is run by a teacher, Shterna Alperowitz, who checks the niggunim to see that they don't take on questionable nuances as well as the movements. It's an opportunity to teach the girls lessons about sensitivity to tznius."

Leah raises some additional points: "Why are tickets so expensive? It's an event that a mother has to (and wants to) attend and there are sisters who want to see it too, and it adds up to hundreds of shekels! In addition, the girls are so pressured and busy that they barely have time to help out at home. When they finally get to a quiet time after exams, they occupy them once again, outside the house, till late at night!"

Bracha sums it up nicely: "Throughout the year, there has to be a combination of interesting educational

media, classes that develop talents and abilities, artistic expression or creative writing; these activities will encourage cooperation and contributions throughout the year and not just Purim time. The festival shouldn't turn into something pressured since we are limited by the formal curriculum and there are enough pressures

related to matriculation exams. This will lead to giving up and saying, 'there's no time or budget' and trying to force all the girls into the old fashioned dry learning atmosphere. We are losing part of our chinuch! A child needs to realize her potential and her talents, and to absorb important educational messages in varied ways. The production shouldn't replace investing in their development throughout the year!"

* * *

Like most things, there are pros and cons. There's no question that these performances can add, uplift, improve, unite, and strengthen, but attention has to be paid to the details, and each girl needs an outlet for her abilities. If it's done properly and all the concerns are somehow resolved, these performances can give nachas to the Rebbe MH" M and we will merit the "raising of the curtain" with the great hisgalus, and all will burst into song and dance.



IN THE MERIT OF T'FILLIN

By Rabbi Yaakov Shmuelewitz, Beis Chabad – Beit Shaan

“If that’s the case, that my putting on t’fillin can hasten the Geula, then I’ll put them on.”

Rabbi Shmuel Reinitz is the Mitzvaim Coordinator in Beit Shaan. Every day, he goes to one of the business and industrial sections of Beit Shaan, and systematically visits each of the stores, offices, and businesses, offering to put t’fillin on with people.

Putting on t’fillin is often only the beginning. After t’fillin, a brief conversation ensues, sometimes there is also a shiur, and sometimes a real connection develops. Occasionally, putting on t’fillin happens at the end. There have been people who refused to put on t’fillin, but R’ Reinitz did not give up on them. He goes every week, on a set day to the same person, and to the same office or business, says a nice “Hello, how are you, maybe you’d

like to put on t’fillin today” until the person agrees.

People say you cannot refuse R’ Reinitz endlessly. He combines persistence with lots of emuna and ahavas Yisroel, and ultimately there are only two possibilities: either R’ Reinitz will put t’fillin on with you or you will start putting them on yourself every day.

There is someone from the industrial area who at first, was hardly willing to put on t’fillin. Then he began putting them on once a week. Then he sent his t’fillin (from his bar mitzva) to be checked and began putting them on every day. Ultimately, he brought his t’fillin to work and convinced his partner to put on t’fillin every day!

At this point, R’ Reinitz visits

their business to give a shiur and to inform them of any upcoming farbrengen at the Chabad house.

One day, R’ Reinitz met someone from a nearby kibbutz who works in a factory in Beit Shaan. The man explained to R’ Reinitz that because of his education in the HaShomer HaTzair (anti-religious) kibbutz, he had no intentions of putting on t’fillin that day or in the near or distant future.

R’ Reinitz didn’t give up. Every week he asked the same question and got the same response, until the Aseres Yemei T’shuva, when R’ Reinitz gently hinted that maybe, in honor of Yom Kippur that was coming up, he would put on t’fillin. The man agreed “only because of Yom Kippur,” but amazingly, once the ice cracked, one mitzva led to another, and since then he puts on t’fillin every week.

T’FILLIN FOR THE GEULA

Another person, who happened to be in the area where R’ Reinitz does his work, heard him say that everybody has to do something to hasten the Geula. He asked, “What can a simple person like me do to hasten the Geula?”

R’ Reinitz quoted the Rambam (Hilchos T’shuva chapter 3, halacha 4), about the world being “half meritorious and half guilty” and one mitzva shifts him and the world to the side of merit. He gave the mitzva of t’fillin as an example. The man said, “If that’s the case, that my putting on t’fillin can hasten the Geula, then I’ll put them on.”

His rolled up his sleeve and put on t’fillin... The man even said that he would continue putting on t’fillin every day.

Dozens of people who attend farbrengens and davening at the Chabad house are recruits of R’ Reinitz. Also, many of our regular donors began their connection with



Rabbi Shmuel Reinitz



Putting t'fillin on with soldiers during the recent war in Lebanon

the Chabad house by putting on t'fillin.

A while ago, one of the owners of a business in the

industrial area passed away. When he visited the

mourners, R' Reinitz heard from the man's children that

recently, since R' Reinitz began putting t'fillin on with him, he changed his way of life. He began keeping Shabbos and he davened, and now they believed that he had returned to Hashem as a baal t'shuva, thanks to putting on t'fillin.

A THANKSGIVING FARBRENGEN



Rabbi Benny Karniel, shliach in Gadera, relates:

At our Chabad house in Gadera, we have a farbrengen nearly every Shabbos. It could be a Shabbos Mevarchim, a birthday of one of the people, a Chassidishe date in the calendar that falls out that week, or a farbrengen to celebrate a miracle experienced by one of the people.

One Friday, I was thinking that the next day, Shabbos, there would be no reason to farbreng.

Then I got a phone call from the gabbai, who told me about a farbrengen. In honor of what, I asked, and he told me that S.A. had called him and told him he wanted to contribute refreshments for a farbrengen since that week he had had the privilege to save a Jew from the category of "*karkafta d'lo monach t'fillin*" (someone who never put on t'fillin in his life).

S.A., who davens at the Chabad house, wears a knitted yarmulke and is a lieutenant colonel by profession. He children still attend a secular high school, and that week, a friend of his son visited them at their home. They began to talk and he found out that the friend had never put on t'fillin, so they immediately put t'fillin on with him. Thrilled over this opportunity, S.A. decided that it was reason to celebrate, which is why he donated towards the farbrengen.

It teaches you about the atmosphere of shlichus and the manner of talking at the Chabad house in Gadera, where every mekurav and beginner Chassid makes a thanksgiving seuda because of the great joy of doing a mitzva.

NONSTOP MIVTZA T'FILLIN

Rabbi Yehoshua Bar Mocha, a Lubavitcher from Tzfas, was a military chaplain for over thirty years. He filled dozens, even hundreds of different roles, including staff and command positions in every area of military service.

I met him many times when he was a platoon leader. We worked together on mivtzaim, both in "our" military sector on the border with Jordan and during the time I spent in the army in the Reserves, kashering kitchens for Pesach and other military jobs, including my "Moshiach broadcast," mentioned in an earlier article. I found Rav Bar Mocha to be a devoted military

chaplain with a fiery Chabad spirit.

More than anything else, I enjoyed seeing Rav Bar Mocha's enthusiasm for any opportunity for Mivtza T'fillin. It was a daily, an hourly sight, to see him traveling in a military jeep and suddenly yelling, "Stop!" to the driver. The driver had no idea what was going on as the rav jumped out of the jeep.

What had happened was that Rav Bar Mocha saw a soldier at a post or waiting to hitch a ride, and he went over to him to put on t'fillin with him. Of course nobody refused someone of his rank, and thus, with our combined efforts, every day, dozens of soldiers performed this mitzva, about which it says, "And all the nations of the earth will see that the name of G-d is called upon you" – these are the t'fillin of the head – "and they will fear you."

MIVTZA T'FILLIN FOR THE MILITARY JUDGE

Rav Bar Mocha maintained that there was no situation in the world that wasn't a potential opportunity for Mivtza T'fillin. He recalled a particular incident when he served in the army as a judge in military tribunals at Central Command. There was the professional judge, who was the chief judge, and two officers who joined him to make up the quorum. The professional judge wasn't religious, and that's an understatement, but the moment Rav Bar Mocha felt that there was a good feeling established between them, he didn't wait, but asked him to put on t'fillin. The senior judge was so surprised that he didn't even refuse.

When he was finished, the judge said he was stunned. He himself did not understand why he had agreed to put on t'fillin, "but I felt that you were so interested in my doing so, that I could not refuse."

Rav Bar Mocha recalls two other incidents that happened at that time,

when he served in a Chabad tank and traveled the country with Rabbi Dovid Nachshon's Mobile Mitzva Tanks:

One day, said Rav Bar Mocha, I drove up in the mitzva tank to the junction at the entrance to the Ein Charod kibbutz in the Beit Shaan valley. I had lived at this kibbutz a few years before, and even went to the high school there. I looked out the window of the tank and saw someone who had been my teacher

fifteen years earlier.

I stopped near him and offered him a ride in the direction of the kibbutz. He got in and, taken aback by the tank, he asked many questions about it. I called him by his name and he couldn't understand who this bearded Chassid was that knew him by name!

I told him who I was and then I said that I wanted to make him an offer he could not refuse... He

THE POWER OF A RESOLUTION MADE AT A FARBRENGEN

Rabbi Benny Karniel, shliach in Gadera, relates:

At our Chabad house, the custom is that on Simchas Torah, at the Kiddush before hakafos, each person takes a turn and tells us of the good resolution he is committing to, and all say l'chaim.

About two years ago, when it came time for Ben, a 17-year-old, a new mekurav to say his hachlata, he said he had decided to set up a t'fillin stand every Friday in the market of Gadera. I figured this was a commitment that would not pan out. Ben, who attends a secular high school, had just begun putting on t'fillin himself. Would he be able to man a t'fillin stand? I politely said l'chaim and wished him success.

When it was the turn of Shachar, a friend and classmate of Ben, he announced that he was joining Ben at the t'fillin stand. Once again I thought that this was a doomed resolution, but I said l'chaim and wished him well.

The Friday after Simchas Torah, Erev Shabbos B'Reishis, I passed near the market on my way to the mikva and what did I see? A t'fillin stand with Ben and Shachar on one side, Ben in jeans and a T-shirt, and Shachar in shorts and a matching shirt, and on the other side stood Jews in t'fillin reciting Shma from a siddur!

I couldn't hold back the tears of emotion and joy. I saw the power of a hachlata made at a farbrengen when I saw the unbelievable, two boys, on their way to t'shuva themselves, already working and enabling others to do mitzvos.

A few weeks later, Shachar went off to a Chabad yeshiva. This created a bit of a problem, for who would man the t'fillin stand? Shachar said to his younger brother Ayal, "Although you aren't religious, and you are only 15, you have to help Ben at the t'fillin stand on Friday."

Ayal agreed. He doesn't put on t'fillin all week, but Friday is another story. Ayal put on t'fillin on Fridays and only then went to the market and together with Ben he helped others put on t'fillin.

Ayal ended up going to a Chabad yeshiva too, so Ben (who also learned for a time in a yeshiva) asked my son who recently turned 12 to join him. Together they man the t'fillin stand.

The power of a hachlata at a Chassidishe farbrengen.

agreed. It was a very moving hanachas t'fillin, with the student putting t'fillin on his teacher from the HaShomer HaTzair kibbutz.

Another incident from that time (5741) was when I took the mitzva tank into kibbutz Manara near Kiryat Shmoneh. At a certain point, I had to make a turn. I entered the parking lot of a factory and one of my old friends from the kibbutz came over to the tank. He was surprised by the big and peculiar-looking vehicle I was driving, with all the pictures and p'sukim.

I invited him in for a tour of the tank, a tour that generated questions and other surprises. It ended – you must have guessed – with his putting on t'fillin and with lots of tears, of a Jew who had suddenly found himself, in the heart of the kibbutz, wearing t'fillin and reciting the Shma.

When I was rav of the Golani Brigade there were soldiers who put on t'fillin in the middle of alleyways in Gaza when I visited them during security rounds, and were unfazed by the danger or the exhaustion and the multitude of tasks they had to do. It goes to show, concluded Rav Bar Mocha, at any time and any place, there is an opportunity for Mivtza T'fillin.

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RABBI AVROHOM LEVITANSKY A"H

The world of Lubavitch was saddened to hear of the passing of the shliach in S. Monica, California, Rabbi Avrohom (Avremel) Levitansky, at the age of 63, following a serious illness.

R' Avrohom was born in Chicago and he attended Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim on Bedford and Dean in Brooklyn, then in Newark, and finally, in 770. He was outstanding in his abilities, his avoda, and his middos, and was an example to his peers, who admired him.

Two weeks after he married Devorah Hendel, daughter of Rabbi Yitzchok Hendel a"h, rav of Montreal on 15 Elul 5727/1967, the couple went on shlichus to California, where they worked together with Rabbi Shlomo Cunin. Together, they founded Shelah, a release-time program enabling children in public schools to receive a Jewish education.

In Tishrei 5730/1970, the first Chabad house in the world was opened in the Westwood neighborhood of Los Angeles. As opposed to other Chabad centers that had already opened around the world, this was the first Chabad center that was designated "a home for every Jew," for eating, sleeping, etc.

Mr. Marvin Goldschmidt, representing the Chabad house, brought the key to the Chabad house to the Rebbe. The following dialogue ensued:

Rebbe: What's this?

Goldschmidt: The key to the Chabad house in Westwood.

Rebbe: For which door?

Goldschmidt: The front door
Rebbe: And the key is mine?

Goldschmidt: Yes!

Rebbe: That means I'm the balabus?

Goldschmidt: Yes!

Rebbe: If so, I say that the door has to be open 24-hours-a-day to men, women, and children, and this should burst forth to the north, south, east, and west!

On 11 Nissan 5732/1972 the



Rebbe announced the campaign to open 71 mosdos as a birthday gift for his 71st birthday. By Yud Shvat 5733, Rabbi Cunin had founded five Chabad houses, with the fifth one opening in S. Diego that Yud Shvat. The opening ceremony was scheduled for Yud Shvat and there was a live broadcast of the farbrengen in 770. The Chabad house did not have a telephone yet, and the

broadcast was heard via a public phone.

During the farbrengen, the shluchim heard the Rebbe say that since that year was a leap year, there was an extra month to finish creating 71 mosdos. Then and there, the decision was made to double the number of mosdos in California, and by 11 Nissan another five Chabad houses had opened!

One of these Chabad houses was located in S. Monica, which Rabbi Levitansky transformed into "Simcha Monica." It opened two weeks after that farbrengen. In addition to directing Chabad of S. Monica, Rabbi Levitansky was instrumental in opening Chabad's first Gan Israel Day Camp. Rabbi Levitansky also helped launch Chabad's Talmud Torah and educational institutions in California, and was active in opening Chabad in Long Beach.

"He was a cherished friend and partner who worked tirelessly for the community and was greatly loved in return," said Rabbi Cunin. "Rabbi Levitansky was a man who, along with his beloved Rebbetzin, dedicated his entire life to the mission of the Rebbe. His contributions were beyond measure, and his legacy will endure."

Rabbi Levitansky also served as a posek to his fellow shluchim, who asked him questions in halacha and for his advice.

Rabbi Levitansky is survived by his wife and children who serve as shluchim around the world.