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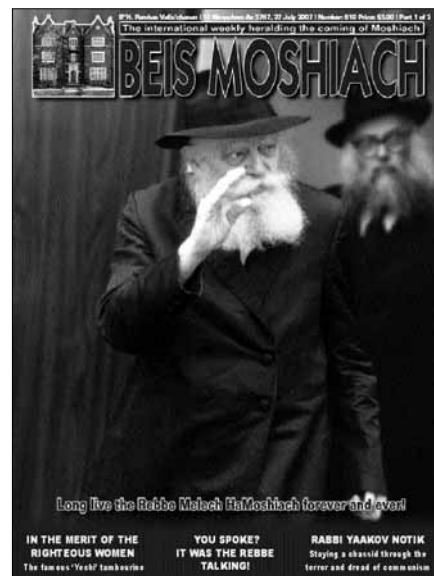
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HOW COULD G-D DESTROY THE HOLY TEMPLE?

Likkutei Sichos Vol. 29, pg. 9-17
Translated by Boruch Merkur

[Continued from last week]

6. From the above explanation, a wondrous concept emerges regarding the destruction of the Holy Temple – the First Temple and to an even greater degree, the Second Temple.

[We learn from the Midrash that] G-d Himself will construct the Third Holy Temple, as it says: “‘Aryei comes’ refers to the Holy One Blessed Be He, etc. ‘In the astrological sign Aryei’ [referred to in the verse], ‘I will turn their mourning into joy.’ ‘And build Ariel.’” But the building is not something that begins in the Future to Come. Rather, construction began immediately after the destruction of the Temple.

Moreover, the entire purpose of the destruction of the Temple is that G-d should “repair”⁵⁷ the Holy Temple,⁵⁸ so that it should not be as it was before, a “man-made structure,”⁵⁹ which has no permanence,⁶⁰ but a “structure...of the Holy One Blessed Be He,”⁵⁹ a permanent structure. To that extent, the Holy Temples – the First and

Second Temple – were demolished “in order to repair” and build a renovated Holy Temple, the Third Holy Temple, which is the construction of G-d Himself. Thus, the destruction of the Holy Temples is properly classified as “construction,” not destruction and demolition.

7. The above explanation sheds light on the story told in Midrash⁶¹ that when an Arab (at the time of the destruction of the Temple) heard a Jew’s “cow bray,”⁶² he told the Jew that the Holy Temple has presently been destroyed. Immediately thereafter, when “the cow brayed again”⁶² he told the Jew that “the savior and redeemer of the Jewish people has been born.”⁶²

According to the inner dimension of this matter, it appears that Moshiach was not merely born then, meaning that from the moment following the destruction of the Holy Temple he was merely ready to redeem the Jewish people,⁶³ that simultaneous with the destruction came the **preparation, the beginning of and the potential for** the Redemption.

(As the necessity for the latter point is readily understood, as follows. Since when the Jewish people repent, “they are **immediately** redeemed”⁶⁴ – and although I am sleeping in exile, my heart is awake for the

Holy One Blessed Be He⁶⁵ – immediately following the destruction of the Holy Temple, Moshiach must be prepared [for his mission], in order that there can be the Redemption “immediately” when they repent.⁶⁶)

Rather, a greater statement is being made here. Namely, that there is no delay between the destruction of the Temple and the redemption and the [re]building of the Holy Temple; there is not a moment’s pause between these two events. The **very moment** following the destruction of the Temple was the beginning of the Redemption – “their savior was born” – in the physical world below, in the Land of Israel itself.

Although ostensibly the Jewish people are highly conscious of the perceived reality of destruction, for

⁵⁸ For, notwithstanding the fact that the verse, “A lion has arisen from its thicket,” refers to the First Temple, which was destroyed by Nevuchadnetzar, it is said of the Second Temple (although it was lacking in five respects [in comparison to the First Temple] —Yoma 21b), “The glory of this later Temple will be **greater** than the former” (Chagi 2:9; Bava Basra 3a, end ff.), etc. – see Footnote 55 in the original.

⁵⁹ Zohar III 221a and see Zohar I 28a.

⁶⁰ To note that also the manner whereby it is “greater” than the Second Temple is with respect to its “structure” as well as its “years” (Bava Basra ibid), meaning that it has greater longevity. See *Likkutei Sichos* Vol. 9 (pg. 27-8 and the notes there; pg. 62; 67-8), where the point is raised that this is a superiority in both quality and spirituality.

⁶¹ Eicha Rabba 1:51.

⁶² Wording of the *Matnas K’huna* ibid.

⁶³ Although it says, “the redeemer of the Jewish people was **born**” (and how can it be possible that he [as an infant] will be ready right away to redeem the Jewish people?), we find precedence for this [kind of miracle] before the Flood – that “on the day he was born he helped his mother” (B’Reishis Rabba 36:1, VaYikra Rabba 5:1), etc. – see Footnote 62 in the original.

The very moment following the destruction of the Temple was the beginning of the Redemption – “their savior was born” – in the physical world below, in the Land of Israel itself.

which reason there are laws [of mourning] regarding Tisha B’Av and etc., the very point of these laws (fasting and the conduct on the day of Tisha B’Av in particular) is to inspire repentance – as it is phrased in Rambam in the beginning of the Laws of Fasting, “**This** matter is among the ways of repentance”⁶⁷ – in order that the Redemption and the building of the Temple should come about in actuality⁶⁸ through the repentance and the Divine service of the Jewish people.

[To be continued be”H]

NOTES:

⁵⁷ See Footnote 54 in the original for a discussion of whether the new structure must be better than the one demolished.

⁶⁴ Rambam Laws of Repentance 7:5.

⁶⁵ Zohar III 95a. See Shir HaShirim on the verse, “I am asleep, etc.” (Shir HaShirim 2:5).

⁶⁶ See the address of Chag HaShavuot 5744, where it explains that, during the destruction, when the Jewish people saw the destruction of the Temple, etc., it was a very appropriate and auspicious time for repentance.

⁶⁷ Ibid Ch. 5, beg., applies this principle to the four fasts, including Tisha B’Av: “The Jewish people fast, etc., in order to arouse their hearts and to initiate the ways of repentance.”

⁶⁸ [To the extent that the perceived reality will no longer be of destruction and exile but of the true and complete Redemption in all respects.]

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A DAILY DOSE OF MOSHIACH & GEULA:

12-18 AV

*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

12 MENACHEM AV: THE SH’CHINA IN THE HOME OF THE LEADER OF THE GENERATION AS IN THE BEIS HA’MIKDASH [B]

“Beis Rabbeinu Sh’B’Bavel,” being the established place (home) of the leader of the generation, “the nasi is everything,” including the entire generation, has the indwelling (and revelation) of the overall Sh’china (and not just a portion that dwells (and reveals itself) upon ten Jews), an example resembling the indwelling and revelation of the Sh’china in the Beis HaMikdash.

Furthermore, the indwelling and revelation of the Sh’china is drawn forth from there into all the shuls and battei midrash “in the lands where they have come,” just as the light of the Beis HaMikdash comes forth from there into the whole world.

(Kuntres Beis Rabbeinu Sh’B’Bavel)

13 MENACHEM AV: BEIS RABBEINU SH’B’BAVEL – THE HOME OF THE LEADER OF THE GENERATION IN AMERICA [C]

In our generation, the majority of the Jewish People are in the exile of America, and there are those who say that this is among the reasons why even the leader of the generation (as “the nasi is everything”) lived for ten years in the exile of America, and from there he was involved in the spreading of Torah and Yiddishkait and the spreading of the wellsprings outward in all the other lands where Jews have come, through his students and shluchim throughout the world.

And since “wherever Jews have been exiled, the Sh’china is with them,” in this final exile, where the majority of the Jewish People are together with the leader of the generation in the exile of America, the Sh’china has also been exiled to the galus of America, and in the exile of America itself “here (in Bavel)” – in “the small sanctuary” of “Beis Rabbeinu,” “where the Mikdash journeyed and dwelt there.”

(Kuntres Beis Rabbeinu Sh’B’Bavel)

14 MENACHEM AV: THE FUTURE BEIS HA’MIKDASH WILL FIRST BE REVEALED IN “BEIS RABBEINU SH’B’BAVEL”

The Future Beis HaMikdash (“which will be revealed and come from Heaven elaborately built”) will be revealed first in the place “where the Mikdash journeyed and dwelt

there” in the time of the exile (“Beis Rabbeinu Sh’B’Bavel”), and from there it will be moved to its place in Yerushalayim...

Perhaps it can be said that the matter is alluded to in the language of the Rambam, “And (Moshiach) will build the Mikdash in its/his place,” i.e., referring to the place of Melech HaMoshiach (“his place”) in the time of the exile (prior to “he is definitely the Moshiach”).

In other words, when he is in exile (where he sits and waits and longs to redeem the Jewish People and the Sh’china with them from the exile), Melech HaMoshiach builds the (small) Mikdash, which resembles the Beis HaMikdash in Yerushalayim, as a preparation for the Future Beis HaMikdash, which will be revealed there first, and from there it shall return (with G-d and the Jewish People) to Yerushalayim.

(Kuntres Beis Rabbeinu Sh’B’Bavel)

We should increase daily in matters that actually bring the Redemption, including strengthening the faith, the longing, and the anticipation for the coming of Moshiach, to the point that a person feels constantly that when Moshiach Tzidkeinu has not actually come and in a revealed state, his days are lacking.

15 MENACHEM AV: THE FULLNESS OF 15 B’AV

Regarding the 15th of Av, our Sages, of blessed memory, have said (end of Tractate Taanis) that Israel had no holidays like the 15th of Av, etc.

(On the one hand) the 15th of Av is the day they ceased to die in the wilderness, when the strength of the sun weakened, the day that they stopped cutting wood for burning the sacrifices as the wood begins to become worm-eaten, the day they allowed the slain of Beitar to be buried – matters pertaining to the destruction [of the Beis HaMikdash], (while on the other hand) it is the day that the tribes were permitted, etc., all the tribes of Israel could come on pilgrimage – matters pertaining to [its] building.

And as the Gemara concludes, “From here onward, those who learn Torah during the nights in addition to the days will increase in life,” and from the 15th of Av – the day of the moon’s fullness, we will soon come to the fulfillment of all matters pertaining to the Jewish People,

which will be renewed in the future as [the moon] is, fulfillment in its most complete sense, with the True and Complete Redemption.

(letter, Menachem Av 5721)

16 MENACHEM AV: PREPARING FOR THE REDEMPTION – STRENGTHENING OF FAITH AND LONGING

We should increase daily in matters that actually bring the Redemption and in a revealed state, including:

Strengthening the faith, the longing, and the anticipation for the coming of Moshiach, to the point that a person feels constantly that when Moshiach Tzidkeinu has not actually come and in a revealed state, his days are lacking...

(Rosh Chodesh Teives 5752)

17 MENACHEM AV: THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD IN THE FUTURE TO COME – WHERE WILL IT BE?

T’chiyas HaMeisim (The Resurrection of the Dead) will take place in Eretz Yisroel, both those who are buried there and those who are buried outside of it.

The reason: Eretz Yisroel will exist forever. Likewise the soul, after the Resurrection, will exist forever within a body.

Therefore, the soul does not enter the body except in a place that exists forever.

(Igros Kodesh, Vol. 2, p. 65)

18 MENACHEM AV: THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD IN THE FUTURE TO COME

– WHO RISES FIRST?

Will all Jews rise at once?

The dead of Eretz Yisroel will be brought to life first, afterwards the dead in Chutz LaAretz, then the dead in the wilderness, and there are those who say – the Forefathers.

According to another opinion, the order will be: the dead of Eretz Yisroel, the dead of Chutz LaAretz, those at rest in Chevron. The reason: They will arise and awaken with joy, as they see among them those who got up from their graves, and the land will be filled with tzaddikim and chassidim.

Another opinion: Tzaddikim will precede all other people, those involved in Torah will precede those involved in mitzvos, and then they will rise and call [the rest] alphabetically, but those with the attribute of humility will stand up first.

(T’shuvos U’Biurim 13)

IN THE MERIT OF THE RIGHTEOUS WOMEN

By Chaya Reinitz

*Along with numerous other women, Mrs. Chavi Cohen stood in line for dollars on Sunday. When it was her turn, she presented a tambourine to the Rebbe, a tambourine which was made because the Rebbe asked Jewish women to prepare tambourines for the coming of Moshiach. On the tambourine it said, “Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu V’Rabbeinu HaMelech HaMoshiach L’olam Va’ed.” The cameras clicked and pictures of the encounter were seen around the world. * Mrs. Cohen tells the story behind the tambourine, as well as her thoughts and feelings about her encounter with the Rebbe MH”M.*

“Women often ask me, ‘Where do I know you from?’ because I remind them of the picture.”

Mrs. Chavi Cohen of New York told us all about the tambourine

that she gave to the Rebbe a few days before 27 Adar I 5752.

* * *

It was a very special time, says

Mrs. Cohen. The Rebbe had been speaking very strongly about Moshiach: his identity, the need to prepare to greet him, and “do all you can.”

Lubavitch women in Crown Heights convened to come up with a plan of what to do to hasten the hisgalus of Moshiach. At a certain point, they began signing people up on “Kabbalas HaMalchus” forms. Thousands of signatures were gathered and on Hoshana Rabba 5752, a delegation of women went to the Rebbe and their representative said: “We are a minyan of women, a stiff-necked nation, who ask the Rebbe to be revealed to all as Melech HaMoshiach and take us out of Galus immediately.”

None of them could anticipate what the Rebbe’s answer would be. After a second, which seemed like forever, the Rebbe said, “Amen, much success, good news.” Then the Rebbe immediately added, “For the letter, for the pidyon nefesh, and for the names, an extra dollar will be given.”

Some time later, there was a gathering of the women of Crown Heights for Kabbalas HaMalchus of the Rebbe as Melech HaMoshiach. This was the first

gathering of its kind (and level of daring) and it took place with the Rebbe's blessing. Regarding the report given to the Rebbe afterwards, the Rebbe said, "I will mention it at the Tziyun again, for continued great and wondrous success *ba'kol mi'kol kol*, etc."

On Sunday 3 Kislev 5752, once again a group of women stood before the Rebbe, this time presenting a box with thousands of signatures. The representative of the group said, "Baruch Hashem there is wondrous work *ba'kol mi'kol kol* in the campaign of 'they sought Hashem and Dovid His servant.' The campaign of N'shei Chabad is spreading around the entire world and with all the shluchos. We N'shei U'Bnos Chabad welcome Moshiach Tzidkeinu, the Rebbe shlita, who will lead us upright to our holy land immediately."

The Rebbe listened and said, "Amen." The Rebbe then looked at

the box and asked, "Is this for me? May there be good news." The Rebbe looked at the box and the signatures and added: "For all the inyanim one must pay with tz'daka. It should be with great success, and go from strength to strength until you go to Elokim in Tziyon with the true and complete Redemption, blessing and success, much success."

On Motzaei Shabbos 28 Teives 5752, N'shei Chabad held a "Seudas Kabbalas Panim L'Moshiach Tzidkeinu" and they received "a special blessing in a special time," as the Rebbe put it.

These favorable reactions from the Rebbe motivated the women to carry on their work in getting people to accept the malchus/kingship of the Rebbe.

How did you do the Kabbalas HaMalchus work?

Every Friday we went to different areas or we made house calls. We introduced ourselves by

saying, "We are from Chabad, can we speak to you for a few minutes?"

When we sat down, we told them about the Rebbe's announcement that "the time of your redemption has arrived," and that he had indicated that he is Moshiach. We usually showed them some quotes from the Rebbe. We told them how important it is to sign and accept the Rebbe's malchus just as the nation accepted the kingship of Dovid seven years after he was anointed, and this helped bring about his rule as king.

Not everybody agreed but most signed and thanked us for the z'chus we gave them to be part of it.

After the Rebbe's sicha on Shabbasos Parshas Bo and B'Shalach 5752, "about the special quality of Jewish women and girls in this generation," our work got a major boost. In these sichos the Rebbe emphasized the special ability women have to bring the Geula and how the women of our generation are the reincarnation of the souls of the women who left Egypt, in whose merit they were redeemed.

The Rebbe said, "A special and essential directive regarding song, as is emphasized in the song of Miriam and the song of Devora: Just as in the exodus from Egypt 'the righteous women of the generation were confident that Hashem would do miracles for them and they took tambourines out of Egypt.' So too with the geula from this final galus, the righteous women need to be confident – and they are surely confident – that the true and complete Redemption is coming immediately. This should be to the extent that they begin immediately (in the final moments of galus) with song and tambourines and



dancing, because of the true and complete Redemption!”

We didn’t need more than that.

So you began to dance?

Yes! We organized an evening of dancing to greet Moshiach, which took place in Oholei Torah on Motzaei Shabbos, the night of 12 Adar I 5752. We first asked for the Rebbe’s blessing and consent and the Rebbe gave his bracha and added that it should be done in a modest fashion. The band was comprised of female musicians.

The evening was for all women and **everybody** came, grandmothers and great-grandmothers, babies and girls, teenagers and mothers. The evening began with a D’var Malchus on the topic of Geula. Then the dancing began. Everybody danced, even the oldest women danced a little and then sat down and clapped. The simcha was palpable. We danced for hours with the strong feeling that it’s going to happen now. The Rebbe would come and we would go forth to Geula.

The organizers, Mrs. Shterna Spritzer, Mrs. Cherna Light, Mrs. Mindy Halberstam, and Mrs. Shifra Chana Hendrie, smiled at one another. They saw the Rebbe’s brachos before their eyes in the form of this hugely successful evening.

My tambourine was in use during the dancing. I had gotten it as a present and I had asked my son to write the words, “Shiru L’Hashem Ki Gao Gaa” and “Shiru L’Hashem Shir Chadash.” In the center of the tambourine it said, “Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu V’Rabbeinu HaMelech HaMoshiach L’olam Va’ed.”

Was that the only tambourine that night?

There were other ladies who had tambourines, but I was the only one who had that written on

it. Whoever saw it that night was enthused and it was passed from woman to woman and from circle to circle and added a lot to the atmosphere, to the anticipation, and to the simcha. The dancing ended at two in the morning!

Where did the idea of presenting this tambourine to the Rebbe come from?

In the middle of the dancing, Ms. Ariella Benayoun said to me, “Chavi, maybe you’d want to give this tambourine to the Rebbe?” I immediately agreed.

The next day, Sunday 12 Adar, Ariella called me and asked, “Do you want to go by the Rebbe and give him the tambourine?”

“Why me?” I asked.

“The tambourine belongs to you!” she replied.

I agreed and I stood on the

long line that stretched outside 770. In the meantime, a group of women gathered around me. I knew that I wasn’t just giving the tambourine but that I had to say something and describe the evening of dancing of the night before. I was afraid to go alone ...

Throughout the time that I waited in line, I repeated what I would say to the Rebbe out loud since I was afraid that when the moment came, I wouldn’t be able to say it properly.

I was finally near the Rebbe and the photographer began taking pictures (it’s not every day that tambourines like this are given to the Rebbe). I said to the Rebbe in Yiddish, “This is for the Rebbe shlita. We women danced with this last night with simcha that burst all bounds, with confidence in the

THE REBBE SHOULD BE HEALTHY AND STRONG FOR ETERNAL LIFE

Mrs. Shterna Spritzer relates:

After 28 Nissan 5751, there was a great *hisorerus* in the topic of Moshiach. In response to the Rebbe’s call for action we established the Moshiach Committee that initiated and organized various events.

On Rosh Chodesh Kislev 5752, in response to the Rebbe’s saying that it is everybody’s obligation to participate in the building of 770, “Beis Moshiach,” physically and financially, we presented a pushka to the Rebbe with money for the building and expansion of 770.

Until that time we were not in agreement regarding the wording, whether to write “Melech HaMoshiach” or not. We made the decision to say it just a few minutes before we went to the Rebbe.

I had the privilege of being one of the representatives who presented the pushka to the Rebbe. It was a very moving and special event. None of us knew how the Rebbe would react to the title “Melech HaMoshiach.” I said, “This pushka with the first of the money that the women have donated for the miniature Mikdash, 770-Beis Moshiach, is a gift from all Chabad women and girls to the Rebbe shlita, in honor of Rosh Chodesh Kislev, and all the events of the month of Geula, the month of Kislev. We ask of Hashem that the Rebbe shlita be healthy and strong, for eternal life, and that the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach lead us to Eretz Yisroel, and that we have eyes to see and ears to hear and a heart to know and to see this immediately.”

All the women present answered amen and the Rebbe gave a dollar and then another dollar, and another dollar for tz’daka to hasten the Geula. The Rebbe was satisfied and had nachas ruach.

hisgalus of the Rebbe shlita Melech HaMoshiach immediately for the complete Geula.”

The Rebbe smiled broadly and you could see he was pleased. My fear melted away and the Rebbe’s smile made me feel relaxed. The Rebbe asked, “You are probably leaving this with me.” I responded with a smile and the Rebbe gave me one dollar and then gave me another one and said, “This is for the ‘sounds of joy,’ which is what it is called in T’hillim. It should be in a good time. And this is for the entire group.”

Did you always refer to the Rebbe as Moshiach?

That was the first time that I verbally addressed the Rebbe in that way. Previously, I would write “Melech HaMoshiach” in letters to him.

**EVERY WORD
PRECISE**

Mrs. Chavi Cohen relates:

As I said, we worked on preparing a video depicting when the Rebbe accepted the tambourine, along with other excerpts on inyanei Moshiach and Geula. We added a voiceover with a translation.

My friend and I worked on the translation for hours. Afterwards, my friend went to rest and she dreamed that she was passing by the Rebbe at dollars and the Rebbe said to her, “Be careful with every word,” She woke up in a turmoil and we continued working on the translation, knowing that this was a great responsibility. We weighed every word. If there was a word we were unsure of, we asked Rabbi Kaminker and Rabbi Shapiro who helped us.

Everybody danced, even the oldest women danced a little and then sat down and clapped. The simcha was palpable. We danced for hours with the strong feeling that it’s going to happen now. The Rebbe would come and we would go forth to Geula.

What did you do with the dollars and pictures of that encounter?

I enlarged one picture and framed it along with the two dollars. I also have a picture that I always keep in my pocketbook. When I go on mitzvaim I show the picture as proof that the Rebbe approves and acknowledges his malchus.

When I attend special private gatherings (Jewish Women United for the Redemption), I convey the message clearly, that the Rebbe is the Nasi HaDor, Melech HaMoshiach chai v’kayam, neshama in a guf, and he prophesied the prophecy of Geula and asked us to publicize it and prepare for it.

At these gatherings I show my picture and the video of the encounter along with quotes from the Rebbe on the topic of Moshiach and Geula. Whenever I show this video, I save myself half the work. 99% of people accept the message.

What kind of women do you speak to?

All types: Satmar Chassidos, Litvishe women, and women who aren’t yet religious. They accept what I have to say. It’s not surprising, for after all, the Rebbe said the world is ready.

I produced the video as a gift for my son’s wedding that took

place in England and I gave it out along with a booklet about Geula that was published by Ruti Cohen and Sara Kanevsky. The video and booklet made waves in England. When I returned to the US about a week after Sheva Brachos, I got a call and was told that Manchester was still in an uproar over it...

Among the wedding pictures we saw that one of the guests from B’nei Brak, an extreme Litvak, was reading the booklet.

After the wedding, I gave out the leftover videos on mitzvaim and then I made a large number of copies and called it “The time for your redemption has arrived.” We added a voiceover translation of the sichos on the video and gave out thousands of them.

What is the secret of the success of the picture and the video?

When people see the picture or the video, they can’t dismiss the whole thing. My brother, Rabbi Gliss of B’nei Brak, told me that when he showed the picture to various people, it encouraged them.

When R’ Itche Gansburg a”h found out about the picture, he called me and said he wanted to distribute it by the thousands, around the world. He did so, and later on he added the Rebbe’s words in Yiddish and a translation into English.

I heard from many people that this picture opened many doors to people who until then, hadn't quite believed. There's no question that the picture did away with many doubts. You just can't dismiss such a clear approval by the Rebbe, with such a smile...

Were there people who were annoyed by the publicity the picture got?

Definitely. The Friday that *Beis Moshiach* had it on the cover, I was walking down the street when someone stopped me and asked, "Are you the lady who gave the tambourine to the Rebbe?" I said that I was, and he told me that someone was going around saying that the picture was forged. "Maybe you should confront him with the facts."

I called the man and told him that I was the one who gave the tambourine to the Rebbe. He asked me, "Then why, when I visited the Rebbe's library, and I saw several tambourines, didn't I see that one there?" I answered, "Maybe someone wants to be sure you don't see it..."

The man continued to ask questions. A few days later his daughter-in-law called me and asked to see the video. She watched it three times, four times, to check it out.

Another incident happened after the picture was printed in *Beis Moshiach*. Someone wrote a sharp letter to the editor and tried to prove that the picture was a fraud. I wrote him a response and

I show my picture and the video of the encounter along with quotes from the Rebbe on the topic of Moshiach and Geula. Whenever I show this video, I save myself half the work. 99% of people accept the message.

told him that I planned on being in Eretz Yisroel in a few weeks and if he wanted to, he could reach me at a certain phone number.

When I arrived at my host's home, I had barely put down my things and taken off my coat when the man called. I sent him the picture and he apologized and asked forgiveness for his letter. He said he was happy to see that it was genuine.

How do you convey the message about the Rebbe MH" M without difficulty?

Who said it's without difficulty? I always have to contend with mockery. When I hung a tambourine in my living room, a family member made fun of it, but I said that I thought it was important for anybody who entered my home to see the tambourine, to buy one too, and be ready for the hisgalus.

Although I am strong in my belief, I've seen people make faces at me and they've made it hard for me to speak. There are people who, when I see them, I lose

interest in speaking... No doubt this is what the Rebbe meant when he said that the main test of our generation is "don't be embarrassed by the mockers." That's in the first paragraph of *Shulchan Aruch* and it is also our biggest test.

What is your message for Chassidische women and girls?

Action. On my birthday I gave out a present – a tape with songs of Geula. I gave it out on mitzvaim too. I prepared a page with various excerpts from the Rebbe's sichos in Hebrew and English about Moshiach and Geula.

Everybody needs to know that every little thing that is done in inyanei Moshiach has an enormous effect and we can't know how powerful it is. When I had those words written on the tambourine, did I dream that it would be given to the Rebbe and we would have such chizuk from it? I just wrote the message to be ready for the hisgalus.

May Hashem help us see the Rebbe MH" M immediately, now!



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SUMMERTIME ON SHLICHUS

By Rabbi Yaakov Shmuelewitz, Shliach - Beit Shaan

Vacation time means working overtime for shluchim, who prepare weeks in advance with endless meetings and arrangements to provide day camps, services for tourists, shiurim, and programs that are suitable for summer.

While everybody else has vacation, the shluchim are extremely busy. Take Shabbos for example, which is called the “day of rest and joy.” For shluchim it is a day of “activity and joy.” Just before Shabbos the shliach has to hurry and visit all the shuls in his area and distribute weekly brochures, spreading the Rebbe’s teachings and the B’suras HaGeula. Right after that is the weekly speech that the shliach has to give in shul (at least one) before Kabbalas Shabbos.

When he arrives home, guests will be waiting for him, possibly in addition to the ones he brings home with him. At the Shabbos table the shliach will tell stories and speak about the parsha for hours. (If the devoted shlucha goes to sleep, the shliach will have the shlichus to clear off the table.) Then he will learn Rambam and sleep a little before the

next day’s activities.

The shliach wakes up early (sometimes he has to wake up at 6 a.m. since the mikva is open only until 7). He will hurry to the Chabad house and give a shiur in Chassidus before davening. Often, this same shliach will be the chazan for Shacharis, will review a sicha of the Rebbe (who knows when he had a chance to prepare it), read the Torah portion, be the chazan for Musaf, and appear, full of enthusiasm, for the farbrengen after davening. At that point he will enthrall his mekuravim with stories, sichos, and maamarim, l’chaim, l’chaim u’li’vracha.

At home, the guests are waiting to eat, for stories, for singing, and divrei Torah. After the meal the shliach and/or some of his children will go to other neighborhoods and public parks, and gather children for

Mesibos Shabbos.

If he’s lucky, the shliach will have a half-hour break until Mincha, niggunim at the third meal, a maamer Chassidus, Maariv, a video of the Rebbe, Havdala, and on to an Erev Chabad or a Melaveh Malka at the home of one of the mekuravim.

Similar to the weekly “day of rest” is Chanuka “vacation.” During this vacation, the shliach will hardly be home (don’t have pity, it’s true joy!). Then there’s “Sukkos vacation,” “Purim vacation,” etc.

THE “BIG VACATION”

The “Big Vacation” [summer vacation in Israel is called Chofesh HaGadol] begins two months before the vacation. That’s when the shliach begins to look for staff for his day camp. It is important to note that a good shliach who is looking for a girl to run his camp, asks questions like for a shidduch: Is she diligent and responsible? Is she properly Chassidish so that she can have the right influence on the staff of counselors, all the campers plus the young daughters of the shliach who will be able to see a role model of how a Chassidishe girl behaves and looks?

Afterwards, by way of preparation for the “big vacation,” the shliach will have to find a school

building or some empty place for the camp. (In my experience, this takes no less than 30 phone calls, letters, and meetings.) The counselors need an apartment, arrangements have to be made with the pools, chocolate milk and rolls have to be bought, information about an amusement park, a safari park, and some money to pay to get into these places.

I will skip many more of the preparations because during the “big vacation” the shliach will spend hours, days and nights, on the camp itself. Usually, the shliach will have afternoon programs and youth clubs in various neighborhoods and/or in the Chabad house and kindergartens, because the Rebbe wants all Jewish children to use the summer vacation to learn about the Judaism that they don’t learn about all year.

While many Jews are traveling on vacation to countries near and far, they won’t forget to stop at the Chabad house before they go in order to find out where they can find a kosher restaurant in Prague or a place to stay in the Caribbean, a

minyan in Laos or a shiur in *Tanya* in Rio de Janeiro.

Since the shliach is the one to ask about anything Jewish, sometimes the phone rings at odd hours, Thailand-time or Los Angeles, China or Japan-time, when it’s 2 or 4 in the morning here. Then the shliach calls to gather the necessary information and to provide an answer to the faithful tourists.

So you can imagine how nice the “Big Vacation” is for the shliach.

A FANTASTIC BROCHURE FROM KARMIEL

Some shluchim are a bit more diligent, and their day camps are just the tip of the iceberg of their summer activities. They have no vacation at all during the Big Vacation.

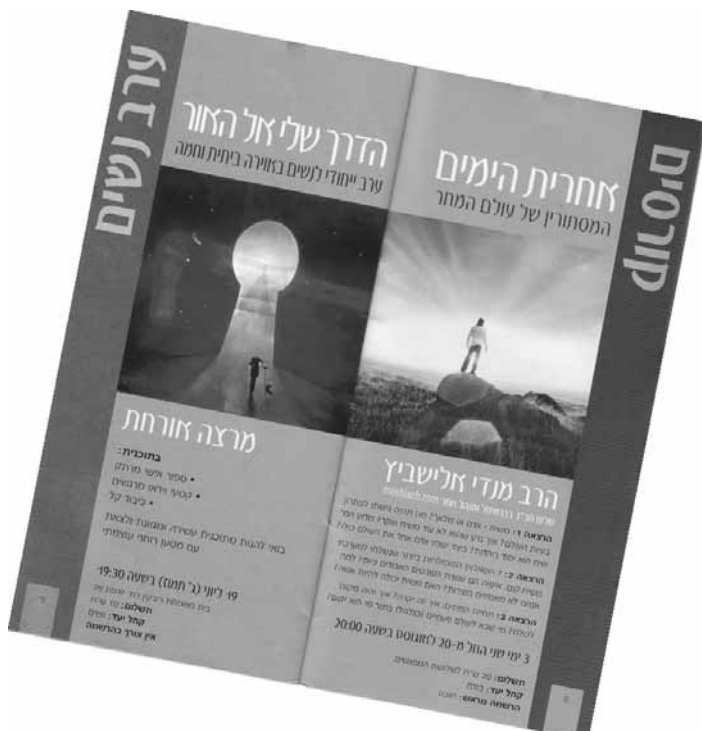
For example, I came across a fantastic brochure of a curriculum of classes for summer 2007 at the Chabad house of Karmiel. It is professionally done, the graphics, layout and all, 24 pages of all sorts

of shiurim, for all ages and levels of interest. Science and halacha, relationships and kabbala, family purity, archeology and the Beis HaMikdash, the mystery of the End of Days, the year of Shmita, spiritual music and more and more. Each of these subjects is either a one-time class or a series of classes that will enrich the participants with a wealth of knowledge in all areas of Torah and Chassidus.

You will also find shiurim on *Tanya*, Talmud, “join a live discussion between Moshe Rabbeinu, the Tanaim, Amoraim, Rambam, and Kabbalists.” Other topics include Pirkei Avos, Parsha, Lag B’Omer events, Shavuot, and 15 B’Av. And then there are the Farbrengens and Evenings for Women.

CHAVRUSA AT THE CHABAD HOUSE

The brochure includes an invitation to whoever wants to learn one-on-one. “Call and don’t learn alone.” Also an invitation to the



Shabbos meals, "Come and bring your friends to an unforgettable experience." From my experience, these last two will bring the best results.

A few years ago I gave a shiur in Chassidus to a small group of teachers in Beit Shaan. For some reason, the shiur did not last long and slowly dwindled. One of them was very eager to continue learning and asked me to learn one-on-one with him.

Genius me, I told him that I had no time for private classes. He was so taken aback that he almost did not want to hear anything more from me. In the end, his desire to learn Chassidus overcame his astonishment and he continued, and even intensified his connection to the Rebbe and to Chabad. Today we learn together b' chavrusa sometimes.

Shabbos meals have great potential. The shliach of the Rebbe in the West Karmel neighborhood in Chaifa, Rabbi Shlomo Chaim Lisson, started his shlichus by investing a lot in his Shabbos meals. On his way home from shul he

would collect young people who were hanging around, and bring them home with him.

Sometimes, in the middle of the meal, the roar of a motorcycle could be heard in the yard and another two guys joined the meal. Today, many of the people who attend the shul and are Rabbi Lisson's mekuravim, are those young men who ate Shabbos meals with him. The atmosphere of a Chassidishe Shabbos was not forgotten and when they got older, they learned how to make a proper Shabbos in their own homes.

THE POWER OF ONE BROCHURE

Back to the amazing brochure I was telling you about. A young couple, Rabbi Mendy Elishevitz and his wife, joined the shlichus in Karmiel and brought great talent to it. R' Elishevitz knows about computers and graphics and his wife contributed the captivating writing style describing the classes and courses. Whoever sees this brochure feels he just has to call and take at least one class, if not more.

R' Elishevitz relates: A woman who saw the brochure called and said that for a long time now she wanted to be religious and didn't know who to turn to. Now she wanted to learn as much as possible. In the meantime, she kashered her kitchen and her life has changed for the better.

Every week, new people join the classes. The booklet has been distributed in yishuvim and hilltop communities around Karmiel and people come from all over. Some come out of curiosity to a course in kabbala and stay for an ongoing class in *Tanya*.

The shliach Rabbi Yosef Rivkin, director of the Chabad house in Karmiel relates: Since my son-in-law and daughter joined me in shlichus, we have had to rent another building for the Chabad house where we hold all the new classes. Today, the Chabad house is spread out over two stores in the center of the city, with one serving as an office and store and the other as a place for all the shiurim. The brochure has made a great kiddush Hashem. It's all the power of the meshaleiach.

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STAYING A CHASSID THROUGH TERROR AND DREAD

By Shneur Zalman Berger

Rabbi Yaakov Notik a”h passed away on Rosh Chodesh Sivan. He was an activist who did not fear the communists, he contended with the government prosecutor of Samarkand, escaped by the skin of his teeth and used a bogus identity for ten years, yet he did not stop teaching Torah to the T’mimim. Later, in Eretz Yisroel he did the Rebbe’s mivtzaim devotedly and persistently, despite his advanced age. He was a tremendous Torah scholar, an Ish Halacha, permeated with classic Jewish-Chassidic strength.

The mashpia, Rabbi Yaakov Notik passed away on Rosh Chodesh Sivan at the age of 86. We lost a Chassid who served as a role model by his very being and conduct.

R’ Notik hardly ever spoke about his past. When he was asked by one of his sons what cities he

lived in before he married, he answered curtly, “I wandered from here to there, from city to city.” Occasionally he related a bit, but that was all.

However, nine years ago I wanted to talk to him about his father, the well-known Chassid, Rabbi Shmuel Notik a”h, the rav

of Kopust [see his profile in issue #558]. Out of respect for his father, R’ Yaakov was willing to talk, and for many hours he shared his fascinating reminiscences. Sometimes he told something about himself, but he always made sure to get the conversation back on track. When I suggested that we also speak about his life, he rejected the idea out of hand.

Over the years I spoke to him many times and he always spoke about other Chassidim. One time I managed to convince him to talk about his memories. I arrived at his home at the appointed time and we sat down. He leaned his head forward a bit and with a bewildered expression on his face he asked me, “What should I tell you? I have nothing to say.” And that’s how another golden opportunity ended.

Upon his passing, I collected the crumbs he had shared with me, from which I could piece together some of the important events in his life. Together with his sons and those who knew him, we put together a history of this Chassidic figure and Torah scholar, whose head was in Gemara, *Shulchan Aruch*, and Chassidus, who devoted himself to the chinuch of

his children and to strengthening Judaism.

BORN WITH A BRACHA FROM THE REBBE RASHAB

After being married a few years, his parents, Rabbi Shmuel

and Miriam Notik, asked the Rebbe Rashab for a bracha for children. The Rebbe told R' Shmuel to take a position as rav in Kopust and said that in this merit he would have children. Two years later, on 21 Iyar 1921, Yaakov, the oldest was born.

R' Shmuel protected his son

and did not send him to public school, despite the pressure from the communist authorities, as R' Yaakov told me:

"I did not spend a single day in school. I learned with my father at home. My father refused to send us to public school. This was not an easy decision. Every year, at the beginning of the school year, representatives from the school came to our home and demanded that my father send us to school. My father gave various excuses and we stayed home."

R' Shmuel, who was a mighty *gaon* (Torah genius), devoted most of his day to learning with his sons, Yaakov and his younger brother Sholom Ber:

"My occupation is to give public shiurim like in Ein Yaakov and Mishnayos and Tanya every day," he wrote in a letter dated the winter of 1929 to Rabbi Dovber Rivkin, rosh yeshivas Torah Vodaas. *"And since in our town there is no proper melamed, therefore I must teach my sons. (Many rabbanim do so in our country.)"*

"With my eldest, who is eight years old, I learn Chumash and Rashi, Neviim, and Gemara at a beginner's level. With my younger son, who is six years old, I teach reading and beginner's Chumash. From the time they reach the age to learn, I learn with them myself and practically the entire day involves learning with my sons and learning the shiurim and preparing shiurim. I have no free time for myself to learn regularly and in depth, as would be proper."

The communists persecuted R' Shmuel for this and he tried to leave the country, but all attempts failed. In another letter, one that is heart-rending, he describes the suffering he endured when the communists did all they could to humiliate him and make his life



difficult:

“Aside from the great poverty and the difficulty in making a livelihood, because all sources of parnasa are closed to me, I am also greatly persecuted by the government. They oppress me horribly. They impose large taxes on me, which I cannot possibly pay. The amount is a sum that I don’t even earn in the course of an entire year.

“They also impose labor upon me, to go to the forest and cut trees in the winter, in the snow and terrible cold. They also impose other difficult and humiliating jobs and the gentiles gather round me to see my suffering, to laugh and mock and rejoice at my sorrow and the sorrow of all Jewry, seeing the

terrified about the danger to their souls, ch”v.

“Whoever does not send their children to school, as the government desires – so that they should not be religious but learn to mock religion and religious people – is considered a traitor. All the persecutions with which they persecute me are all because of this, and I am in great danger, heaven forbid.

“I constantly anticipate the danger of being put in jail, ch”v, because of the great taxes imposed on me constantly, which cannot possibly be paid, and because of this they arrest people and their ways are known. And I anticipate an even greater danger ch”v, because of my children – that I

was arrested and sent to exile in Kazakhstan.

His wife and children remained behind. In addition to her concern about her husband’s welfare, she was also anxious about her children’s future. She wanted them to learn Torah. She sent a letter to her brother-in-law, Rabbi Shimon Chanin, who quickly arranged places for her sons in underground yeshivos.

Many years later, when he lived in Tashkent, during a Chassidische farbrengen, R’ Yaakov said l’chaim many times and said that when he left Kopust he finally felt free. “In Kopust I was known as the son of the rav, and I was beaten and degraded by the goyim. In other places they did not know who I was and I did not suffer.”

At first, R’ Yaakov learned in Tomchei T’mimim in Klimovitz by Rabbi Zalman Buber (Pevsner). Then he wandered among underground Tomchei T’mimim yeshivos in Kursk, Kuibyshev and Karalevitz.

At the end of five years, in 1940, R’ Shmuel was released. He went by train until he reached Mozaiesk, a suburb of Moscow, where his wife and sons lived.

When the happy news reached his son Yaakov, he immediately returned home in order to see his father. “It was thrilling to see my father, whole in body and soul, after five years of exile. Throughout that period, we feared for his lot. We knew that many did not return home, and that many who did were broken. My father, who worked beyond his capabilities and did not eat forbidden foods, was very thin and weak. He said that the prisoners in the camp lived in sub-human conditions. In any case, there was tremendous simcha, especially when a short time later he recovered and regained his

Yaakov was frightened and was sure he would be arrested. Maschi just looked at him and said, ‘Hey Notik, were you in Sechaltuva?’ R’ Notik knew there was no point in lying, so he admitted it...

fall of Judaism and the Torah’s humiliation, that the rav of the town works at hard labor, against his will. Additionally, there are many other terrible persecutions that cannot be explained in writing.

“They also try to force me to send my children to school, to make them abandon their Judaism, G-d forbid. I have two sons. One is 13 and the other is 11, and I always learn with them and I educate them in Judaism, and I never sent them to school because there they teach the children heresy and to hate the Jewish people. Everybody sends their children to school because the law is that everybody must do so, but I have never sent them. And we are always

don’t send them to school and I teach them Torah and Judaism. This is considered by them as one who organizes a rebellion against the government.

“They have warned me a number of times to send my sons to school, but I put my life in my hands and do not send them. Only G-d knows what will be. I need much mercy and therefore we must flee from here.”

THE SEPARATION AND REUNION WITH HIS FATHER

R’ Shmuel Notik’s “prophecy” that he was in danger of being imprisoned, quickly came true. He

strength.”

At this point, R’ Yaakov went to distant Georgia, where he ran an underground yeshiva, Tomchei T’mimim, in the city of Sukhumi. He served as the menahel and maggid shiur in the yeshiva.

During the Holocaust, R’ Yaakov was in Kutaisi in Georgia. “From 1942 until 1946 I learned in the yeshiva in Kutaisi, and actually reverted to the days of my youth, for I learned at home with my father, who had come there because of the war. In Kutaisi my father learned a lot with the talmidim and encouraged them to learn. He also gave shiurim in Chassidic maamarim of the Rebbe Rashab, and in Nigleh he taught Gemara and commentaries.

“The learning atmosphere during the war was something special. The communists



A special farbrengen was held for Yud-Tes Kislev 5745 for the newspaper *Erev Shabbat*, which was attended by five Chassidim from the Soviet Union. Sitting from right to left: R’ Mendel Garelik, R’ Yaakov Notik, R’ Sholom Vilenkin, R’ Zalman Leib Estulin, and R’ Michoel Mishulovin

oppressed those who studied Torah, the Nazis did as they pleased in large parts of the Soviet Union, and everybody was apprehensive about their relatives in other places. Nevertheless, the T’mimim devoted themselves to their learning with mesirus nefesh.” R’ Yaakov said that it was at this time that the nickname, “Yankel der Geller” (Yankel the Yellow) stuck because of the color of his beard.

AN INEXPLICABLE MIRACLE

During the World War II, the Russian government drafted every healthy male. The talmidim in the yeshiva in Kutaisi were in danger of being drafted. Rabbi Yechezkel Brod a”h, who taught at that time in Kutaisi, related the great miracle that happened to R’ Yaakov Notik:

“R’ Notik was registered in Kutaisi, but when the draft notices began to arrive at his house, he ignored them. As a result, he did not have legal documents and this was very dangerous. From time to time the police did inspections and asked people to show their identification papers and their exemption from the army.

“Not far from Kutaisi is a health resort town Sechaltuva. Someone managed to steal exemption papers from the authorities there (“white papers”) stamped with half the seal (the other half had to be stamped on the picture), and sold them to whoever was interested. This person knew how to attach the person’s picture and forge the second half of the stamp. This is how many people got counterfeit exemption papers.

“R’ Notik traveled there and bought one of these exemptions. It could only fool a policeman but not someone from the local draft



Rabbi Notik with his children in Samarkand. On top from right to left: Dovid Aharon, Shmuel, Avrohom Zerach. Below from right to left: Yosef Yitzchok, Bas-Sheva, Rabbi Yaakov Notik. (the picture was taken before the youngest, the mashpia R’ Zalman Notik, was born)

office.

“The commander of the draft office in Kutaisi – Maschi was his name – knew us personally, and he knew who had presented himself to the draft board and who hadn’t. One day, he saw Yaakov Notik on the street. He was well aware that Yaakov had avoided the draft order. Yaakov was frightened and was sure he would be arrested. Maschi just looked at him and said, ‘Hey Notik, were you in Sechaltuva?’ R’ Notik knew there was no point in lying, so he admitted it. ‘Go take a walk,’ said Maschi with a smile.

“R’ Notik returned to us, trembling from the miracle that he had personally experienced. The truth is that none of us could understand it. Instead of arresting him, the commander let him know that he knew about the forgery, but he let him go.”

TEN YEARS WITH A BOGUS IDENTITY

R’ Notik’s parents and sister tried to leave the country via Poland on a train with R’ Mendel Futerfas, but they were caught, arrested, and exiled.

“I never saw such diligence, a Jew sitting in terrible fear, and learning all day...”

R’ Yaakov knew that the authorities would start looking for him since some of his relatives had managed to leave the Soviet Union, three had been caught, and he remained free in the Soviet Union. He obtained various documents, changed his name, and was known by the name Eli Moshe Milstein. He used this identity for a decade!

He lived in Tashkent, where he worked as a shochet for the butcher R’ Meir Stambler a”h. He lived with Rabbi Shmuel Menachem Klein a”h, a distinguished Chabad Chassid in Tashkent. During these years, he learned with R’ Shmuel Menachem’s son, R’ Zalman Klein a”h.

R’ Lipa Klein, R’ Shmuel Menachem’s younger son, remembers that even at this time, R’ Notik was known as an exceptional Torah scholar who grew his beard in spite of the

danger. At farbrengens, R’ Notik would say l’chaim for his family in exile.

In Nissan 1949, the festive holiday atmosphere was sullied by the sad news of the passing of his father, in exile in Kazakhstan. He later learned that his father had contracted hepatitis and had recovered but then had had a relapse which was even more severe than the first round. He quickly deteriorated until he passed away after much suffering.

R’ Yaakov had to hide in the months to come, after he found out that searches for him had intensified. Having no choice, he changed his appearance. Nevertheless, he did not go out in the street. He hid in the homes of Chassidim in Tashkent. Sometimes he even had to hide in cramped attics.

Every so often he changed his hiding place and when he had to do so, he wore a large scarf over his face so he would not be identified. R’ Zalman Klein related that he remembered R’ Yaakov sitting in a narrow hiding place with the Alter Rebbe’s *Shulchan Aruch* and learning all day. “I never saw such diligence, a Jew sitting in terrible fear, and learning all day...”

Rabbi Michael Mishulovin related, “During the time he hid in our home, he learned Gemara with me for a few hours a day. We learned the tractate Kiddushin. Even after he moved to another hiding place, we would go to him secretly so he could shecht a chicken for us.”



Reciting the HaGomel blessing by the Rebbe

[To be continued be”H]

EXPULSION IS DEATH

By Shai Gefen

CHILLING FACTS

It's two years since the expulsion from Gush Katif and it's hard to believe it. The agriculturists of the Gush, most of whom are unemployed, have been demonstrating under the slogan, "Give us back what you took from us." And they took a lot. They took their souls, their bodies, and their property.

Groups of people from the Left demonstrated this week on behalf of the refugees from Darfur. That's who they're worried about. Among their signs was one that said, "Expulsion is death." That can be said about the expellees from Gush Katif and northern Shomron, yet those who are ready to endanger millions of Jews for personal gain have no problem uprooting and destroying thousands of families who will never go back to what they had.

A new and chilling movie will be marketed by the Organization to Save the Nation and the Land, about the terrible situation the expellees are in. It's a sequel to the movie *There is Justice and there is a Judge*. In this movie viewers will learn disturbing facts about the refugees within our own country, about homes and families that have been destroyed, about increased illness;

young people adrift, and no solution in sight. Remember the propaganda campaign on the eve of the expulsion by the Sharon family, at the cost of tens of millions of shekels that promised, "There is a solution for every settler?" That's how public opinion was won over for the expulsion which was nothing but a crime against humanity.

In other countries, they were able to delude the public by saying that "work makes you free," and in Israel they promised a solution for every settler. Perhaps this is their idea of

the "final solution." It's incredible how apathetic the public is. A few weeks ago, on a trip, a couple of Israelis sat near me who were reading for the first time about the condition of the expellees.

They admitted, "We couldn't finish reading the article, we burst into tears." That is precisely the reason why the media is keeping silent, for the purpose of wiping out those communities.

Two years later and there is nobody who hasn't seen what happened. We are still discovering



Israeli soldiers during a training exercise in the Golan Heights

new layers of evil on the part of our leaders. Not one has gotten up and said, “We made a mistake.” The solution to the situation created by our leaders is to go deeper into the mud by releasing terrorists, by pardoning terrorists, by strengthening Abu Mazen, by establishing a Palestinian state throughout Yehuda-Shomron, by looking away from those wanted for blood on their hands, by allowing terrorist leaders to enter Israel, by expelling hundreds of thousands more Jews, giving away the Golan, etc. We are inclined to think we are talking about “political spin,” but the truth is that they mean what they say.

It’s hard to believe how removed this sector is from reality. From where they are sitting, they see only themselves and the desire to prevail over the waves that threaten their kingdom. “What you see from there is not what is seen over here,” they remind us. And they’re right.

THE FATE OF DE HARTUCH – THE FATE OF THE EXPELLEES

Earlier this month an attorney hit a chareidi Knesset member, a deed which shocked many. Unfortunately, the anti-Semitic media justified the attack. We all instinctively recoil from physical violence, especially in a case when the context is clear and we all know De Hartuch’s attitude towards mosdos Torah over the years.

What’s surprising is that those who castigated De Hartuch and turned him into a despicable criminal because he raised his hand, were the same ones who, just months ago, protested those who protested and named those who perpetrated the Expulsion, in the *Black Book*.

Those who carried out the Expulsion not only attacked the

people living in Gush Katif, but destroyed their lives and robbed them of their property and livelihoods. Yet, with fraudulent Ahavas Yisroel, they eagerly defended those who did the expelling and attacked those who dared to name them and publicize their pictures.

Isn’t the hand that was raised against ten thousand Jews and robbed them of their dignity and lives a more serious crime than that committed by De Hartuch? Is the hand that aided Hamas and Al Qaeda to establish a terror state that threatens the peace of the Jewish nation a more gentle hand?

A pity that our own people display a double standard, while they haul De Hartuch over the coals, they

urgent, some less urgent. The discussions were secret, but here and there word got out about the topics that were discussed.

It’s definitely all fine and good, but the more we heard, the more it became clear that the danger crouching at our doorstep wasn’t discussed at all. This should have been the main subject, especially two years after the expulsion.

This is a recurring phenomenon. When we need to hear the opinion of rabbanim on the burning issues of the day, suddenly, there is silence. On every other topic, even marginal subjects, we hear all sorts of protests and views, yet when it comes to our security and that of the entire nation in Eretz Yisroel, the rabbanim are quiet.

On every other topic, even marginal subjects, we hear all sorts of protests and views, yet when it comes to our security and that of the entire nation in Eretz Yisroel, the rabbanim are quiet.

are the same ones who go all out to protect the hand that cut off a portion of the land and the lives of so many families.

Two years after the expulsion we have to be the voice of conscience and keep saying, “We won’t forget and we won’t forgive.” One who raises his hand against Eretz Yisroel, will have to give an accounting for what he did.

GATHERING OF RABBANIM AND NOT A WORD ABOUT PIKUACH NEFESH

Last week there was a meeting of Chabad rabbanim where they discussed various topics, some more

The Rebbe said a shocking sicha about the convening of rabbanim, and how they talk about everything but shleimus ha’Aretz. The Rebbe said this sicha regarding the Sixth Knessia G’dola in Yerushalayim (VaYitzei 5740):

When many dozens of Jews gather, all of whom are shomrei Torah and mitzvos, who review the parsha every Shabbos, including those Shabbosos when it talks about the true borders of Eretz Yisroel. In addition, some of them read the newspapers and know what is going on in the world. And being that this convention is for the purpose of strengthening Torah and Yiddishkait, how is it possible that they spent three days together

and spoke about the most important matters, and made good resolutions, but regarding actual pikuach nefesh of more than a few dozen Jews, they didn't say a word? And nobody protested either!

And then they printed up a report in which they enumerated the good resolutions, without mentioning even one word about the danger the Jewish people are in! You don't want to mention it openly? What does it mean that it is not out in the open? It is public knowledge throughout the world and cannot be made secret!

The only excuse I was given was that since they are past their bar mitzva (i.e., adults), go and ask them directly! I asked one individual and was told: he already did his part... I asked: What was done about the situation of pikuach nefesh? He answered me: This is not the place to get into that and on another occasion he would speak with so-and-so about pikuach nefesh, but in the

meantime there were many other good resolutions made and these will be implemented.

I said to him – you can ask him – there is a din in *Shulchan Aruch* that one who is quiet or one who waits until they come to him and ask him about pikuach nefesh is called, “disgraceful!” And he knows this din too!

Since he was a Jew who knew how to learn, he answered me: It says in the Gemara, “Just as it is a mitzva to say that which will be heard, so too, it is a mitzva not to say that which won't be heard.” And since he knows that they will not deal with this issue, it is something that “will not be heard.” Therefore he doesn't want to rule on the matter.

So I maintained: That is not according to *Shulchan Aruch*! The meaning of “do not stand by your brother's blood” means, according to *Shulchan Aruch*, that even when there is a doubt, and a shadow of a doubt, and even the thousandth of a doubt that perhaps

the protest will help, he must protest!

The *Shulchan Aruch* was printed in Tzfas by the Master of the Land of Israel, the Beis Yosef, and there's a clear p'sak din there. He doesn't pasken without giving a reason, for then people could debate the reason, but he says the reason, “the land will be open before them”!

Therefore, this is quoted by the poskim who speak about the laws pertaining to outside Eretz Yisroel. Although the discussion in the tractate Eruvin can be debated if it pertains to Jewish towns in Eretz Yisroel or also outside Eretz Yisroel, but the commentators on the Shas and *Shulchan Aruch* bring this regarding the laws of outside Eretz Yisroel even nowadays, without any distinction, and they placed this within the Laws of Shabbos with the reason, “the land will be open before them”!

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YOU SPOKE? IT WAS THE REBBE TALKING!

By Avrohom Ber

Translated By Michoel Leib Dobry

Tense silence reigned in the courtroom as I finished speaking. After the judges consulted one another for a few minutes, they decided to grant the long-awaited visa. I returned jubilant to my office in New York, and I called Raskin, "Bring a bottle of whiskey and come to my office."

The process of getting a Green Card, the necessary papers to enable someone to live in the United States, has never been an easy task. It is a complicated process, usually requiring the assistance of an attorney with expertise in such matters. The attorney deals with all the documents, makes an appointment for a hearing, and accompanies his client every step of the way until he receives the papers. Without a lawyer, the process can be a real challenge.

This is the reason that Rabbi **Boruch Lepkivker**, today one of the Rebbe MH" M's shluchim in New Jersey, decided to retain an attorney to help him obtain his emigration

papers. However, besides obtaining these documents, he was also privileged to hear a miraculous story from the Rebbe MH" M, which he retells here.

THIS IS NO SUPERSTITION

"About twenty-five years ago, close to the time of my wedding, I began the process of applying for a Green Card. I turned to a Jewish lawyer, named Ring, and requested that he handle my case. This attorney was known as an expert in emigration matters. Even Merkaz L'Inyanei Chinuch would use his services in a variety of instances.

"Attorney Ring began to deal with the file. I pressured him to rush with his handling of my case in order to have everything completed before my wedding. I asked him to let me know before the start of each stage in the process, so I could ask the Rebbe for a bracha.

"Over this period of time, we became quite friendly. We would sit sometimes and talk about a variety of things.

"A few months later, the attorney informed me that the time had come to submit the documents for a very important stage in my request. 'This is a very critical moment,' the attorney said. 'Write down the date...'

"As he told me the secular date, I was feverishly checking the calendar, trying to find the Hebrew date when the hearing would take place. When I found it, my joy began to vanish. The date was during the Nine Days, and I didn't want to take such an important step during this time, when it is highly inadvisable halachically to engage in a court case before a gentile, etc.

"When I asked the attorney to postpone the hearing, he responded with astonishment. 'You're the one who was pressuring me to rush with

the handling of the case, and now you suddenly ask me for a postponement? Do you understand the implications upon the case if you postpone for almost two weeks?"

"I started to explain to him that nothing would make me happier than if we could finish matters quickly, but our holy Torah teaches us that it is a problem to have a court case during the days of mourning for the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash.

"He didn't seem to buy my explanation. 'Boruch,' he said, 'I've known you to be a rational person, normal in every respect. It's not appropriate for you to hold by these superstitious old wives' tales.'

"I explained to him that there's a difference between superstition and faith according to the *Code of Jewish Law*. The attorney was genuinely impressed by this faith, and he openly expressed feelings of praise.

"Suddenly, he became very quiet, and there was a look of distance in his eyes. 'You know something?' he said. 'You remind me of someone who came to me thirty years ago. He was also a Lubavitcher.' He was quiet again for a moment, and then

he added, 'He came because of your Rebbe.'

"The attorney had managed to arouse my curiosity. If this was connected to the Rebbe, I wanted to hear the whole story, and so he began to tell it."

"I CAME TO YOU ON THE REBBE'S SHLICHUS"

"Thirty years ago, during the fifties, a large flood of refugees arrived in America. This was after the Second World War, and many people had come to try and build a new life on a new continent. As all other attorneys in the city, I also tried to make some money from arranging resident visas in the United States for the new émigrés.

"One day, the telephone rang in my office. The secretary who gave me the phone told me that some Lubavitcher wanted to speak with me. I furrowed my eyebrow and shrugged my shoulders in puzzlement. 'I have no idea why he's calling,' she said.

"Why the great wonder? The fact is that it was most unusual for a Lubavitcher to contact my office.

Surely, you will ask: Why? There was another lawyer in town named H., who dealt with the arrangement of U.S. residency documents. He was a relative of one of the local Lubavitcher families, and his relatives made certain to send him all the Lubavitcher clients. I almost never saw any business from these chassidim.

"In any event, the Lubavitcher on the phone introduced himself as Leibel Raskin, and asked for my help. His story was not all that simple. In response to my first question, he replied that he has already been to see H., and had even submitted a visa request. However, his application had been denied, and they had even issued deportation orders against him.

"I wrote to the Rebbe,' the young man told me, 'and the Rebbe said that since it's possible to file for an appeal, I should do so, but I should do it through you.'

"The truth is that I was flattered that the Lubavitcher Rebbe himself was sending me clients. I invited him to come to my office and make an appointment. 'Bring all relevant documents with you,' I reminded him before concluding the conversation.

"When the young man arrived at my office, I asked him why his initial request had been rejected. He replied quite plainly: 'The people at the immigration service decided that it simply wasn't possible that I served in my listed profession.'

"I looked at the document to see what position the young man before me supposedly filled, and I didn't know whether to laugh or cry. According to the papers that were in my hand, this eighteen-year old youth sitting in my office was the director of Chabad activities in Europe.

"Listen,' I told him, 'I know the system. After such a blatant lie, there is no chance that they will give you



the permit this time around. I can't convince them that an eighteen-year old boy is the director of all of Chabad activities in Europe. Forget it. From my point of view, the story's over. You may go.' I quietly pointed in the direction of the door leaving my office, and went back to work.

"When I lifted my head again after a few minutes, he was still sitting there. 'What are you doing here?' I queried. 'I told you to leave. Don't you understand that there's no chance?'"

"He replied with a stern expression on his face: 'Do you think the Rebbe sent me to you to get your opinion on my chances of winning an appeal? The Rebbe sent me because the process will go through you. Do your job.'"

"What can I do with someone so insolent?"

"With no alternative, I agreed to take on the case. However, I made this conditional upon his paying me for every stage of the process that we complete, as opposed to all other cases when payment is made only at the end. He accepted."

"I found his confidence that he would receive his residency permit slightly amusing."

REVOLUTION IN THE COURTROOM

"I began work on the file, and things actually went smoothly. The first stages passed easily and quickly. We then came to the critical stage, when the outcome of the case will be finally decided. I called him to let him know the date of the hearing, which was due to take place in a few weeks. And what was his reply when he discovered when the hearing would be?"

"I'm sorry, Mr. Ring, but I can't come on that day. That's a very big day for Lubavitcher chassidim. On that day, the Rebbe will make a major public address. I simply can't be away from the Rebbe on such a day."

"Nu, what could you say? I couldn't call for a postponement after all the many efforts involved, and my client would not agree to come on that day. Now you understand why I remembered him after you wouldn't agree to come on the date I set for you? The same craziness, only thirty years later..."

"It was eventually decided that since the client had no obligation to appear personally before the court, I would travel there alone and represent him. The appeals court was located in a remote town in Vermont (where, incidentally, R. Leibel Raskin's son, Rabbi Yitzchak Raskin, serves today as the state's head shliach). We're talking about a good few hours journey each way."

"I traveled to the court alone, and I thought about how the trip was totally unnecessary. There was no chance the request would be granted, my honor would be besmirched, and I didn't even why I took on the case in the first place. Yet, I comforted myself by the fact that at least I was getting paid for the trip, as I would for any other hour of work."

"I arrived at the courthouse, entered the hall, and waited my turn to be called in for a hearing, as I still saw no chance of success on the horizon."

"Then, just as I began to speak before the judge, I got an inspiration that I had never had before. Pay close attention to what I said:"

"I was asked regarding my client, Leib Raskin, who had submitted a residency permit request that had been denied, and who was now making a second request. I was asked why I thought the first court decision was wrong to rule that such a young man could not possibly be the director of such a large operation as Chabad activities in Europe. I proceeded to explain with a brief introduction:"

"We are used to American young men. They grow up near

their mother until the age of eighteen, and only then do they actually leave their nest and go out into the big wide world. An American lad of eighteen really couldn't run such a vast project."

"In contrast, this case deals with a totally different situation. My client is a native of the Soviet Union, and we all know about Communism and what it has done to Russian Jewry. An Orthodox Jewish boy who grew up in Russia acquired – against his will – emotional maturity far greater than any other child his age."

"Therefore, when we're talking about someone who was already sitting and learning in an underground



Rabbi Leibel Raskin a"h

Talmud Torah at age three, had escaped from pursuers at age five, smuggled Judaica items at age eight, was making a living at age eleven, and by the age of thirteen was running a network of...

"In short, I put together all the stories that I knew about Russian Jewry, and I attributed them all to one hero. I described him as someone who went through the worst possible things in the world, and yet he knew how to survive.

"As a result," I concluded, "I believe that there has been a clear misunderstanding in relation to my client. Whoever signed on the previous decision to deny the permit doesn't know about the young men who grew up in Russia, and therefore, he cannot possibly believe that such a youngster could be in charge of Chabad activities overseas. However, anyone who is familiar

with this young man knows that he may be only eighteen years old, but he is as mature as a man of forty. He has no problem with running such a project, and even projects on a far greater scale."

"Tense silence reigned in the courtroom as I finished speaking. After the judges consulted one another for a few minutes, they decided to grant the long-awaited visa.

"I returned jubilant to my office in New York, and I called Raskin, 'Bring a bottle of whiskey and come to my office.'

"When he arrived, I gave him the promised signed permit, and now with the successful conclusion of the case, which as you recall did not start off on the right foot, I decided to compliment him a little. 'You know,' I said, 'you really have a wise Rebbe. He knew how to pick the

only attorney in America who knew how to win such a case in appeals court.'"

* * *

"The attorney turned red as he concluded his thrilling story," described Rabbi Lepkivker, "as his face displayed great anger."

"After saving this young man from deportation, his response was shocking: 'Don't you understand yet? You were the smart one? You spoke? It was the Rebbe talking!'"

Another marvelous story of Divine Providence, another miracle of the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach. What is perhaps most unique about this story is the way this young Lubavitcher chassid expressed his simple faith that the whole world is merely the Rebbe's means to achieve his desired ends. Thus, when we go with the strength of the Rebbe, the world is no obstacle.

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THE AFTERMATH

By Rabbi Simon Jacobson

No matter who you are or what you do, you will have moments of inspiration – a time when your heart will be open and your soul stirred.

No matter how stuck you may be, a window of opportunity will open in your life. And what you do at that moment will make all the difference.

But what happens when a moment of inspiration is not realized?

This week's essay – a sequel to last week – discusses the power of inspiration and the profound consequences of not acting on a call from above, and what we can do to mend it – both in our personal and collective lives.

Last week's article addressed the great spiritual awakening that took place 40 years ago, in the summer of 1967.

At the time the Rebbe referred to the awakening as the onset of the "great shofar" call which resulted from the miraculous Six-Day war victory. The call of the "great shofar" touched a deep chord inside people, even those "lost in the land of *Ashur*"

– in the pleasures of life, and those "banished in the land of *Mitzrayim*" – in the oppressive forces of life.

Forty years have passed since the '67 summer of awakening. Have things changed? And how! Everything gained back then seems to be lost now. Indeed, it often appears as things are worse today than they were prior to 1967.

During the past four decades

several more wars have been fought – with far less pride and success – the Yom Kippur war in 1973, the Lebanese War in 1981, the ongoing Intifadas. The only thing predictable in Israel today is unpredictability. Today, 1967 seems like another lifetime.

Terrorism is now the norm in the Middle East. It began in Israel, but now it has spread to the entire world – in all its hemispheres.

People in Israel and all over the world are weary, resigned, confused by an unknown future. The political systems are in shambles and the confidence in leaders is all but gone. The mere fact that the country is running is in itself quite a miracle. What is even more confusing – and miraculous – is that in this toxic climate Israel's economy is booming, with unprecedented prosperity.

Just last summer yet another senseless war was fought in Lebanon – draining and humiliating Israel, leaving everyone more resigned than ever.

Even more bizarre and ironic is the fact that today's Islamic terror campaign is driven by misplaced faith. Faith – the power that was stirred in 1967 – now is regularly abused by others to wreak destruction on innocent people...

How could things have changed so drastically?

The argument can be made, that with the fundamental changes that have taken place over the past 40 years, who really cares what happened in 1967? Whatever happened then was then, but today, forty years later, we live in a new world order, far more complex.

Instead of an awakening we have a major mess. Peace seems farther than ever.

So what difference does it make what transpired 40 years ago? How does that knowledge help us today?

But, the truth is that the only real way to solve a problem is by looking at its roots; to deal with the causes and not just the symptoms.

Thus, the only way to address today's challenges is to look back at the events of 40 years ago, and trace today's events to their earliest roots.

So let's revisit 1967 and take a closer look at the events that followed the Six-Day War. There was an undeniable awakening at the time that electrified the world. But the big question, of course, is what happened next?

What happened next is perhaps the most important story of our modern times.

Initially, in the immediate aftermath of the Six-Day War, everyone recognized and marveled at the hand of G-d, eliciting a profound faith-inspiring euphoria. But just after a few days, the wonder began to wane and people began to dismiss the miracle by explaining the events away. They began to take credit for the smashing victory – arguing that it was due to the great training and discipline of the Israeli Army.

This is the nature of all success: After the initial appreciation, we usually gravitate to taking it for granted and feeling that we are self-made successes. The same with every inspiration: It dissipates unless it is kept alive.

Therein – the denial of G-d's miracles and hand in victory – lays the undoing of all great successes, throughout history. Arrogance, the delusional sense of all-powerful invulnerability, brought down many an empire and many a leader in centuries past.

The Torah warns us of this human tendency (Deuteronomy 8:17-18): *[When you achieve success*



and prosperity be careful that you not] say to yourself, "It was my own strength and personal power that brought me all this prosperity." You must remember that it is G-d who gives you the power to become prosperous. He does this so as to keep the covenant that He made with an oath to your fathers, even as [He is keeping it] today.

Why is it a problem to feel self made? If a child wants to be foolish and convince himself that he is self made – let him be; why should it matter what he thinks? Does it have any negative impact?

The answer is absolutely yes. Besides for the fact that we shouldn't be living in delusions, and we shouldn't be ungracious in acknowledging those that helped us achieve success, there is a deeper issue at stake. By denying your blessings and cutting G-d out of the picture, you end up creating a self-defeating prophesy. Attributing success solely to yourself basically renders you into a vulnerable creature, with no strength but your own. Once you refuse to recognize the "hand inside the glove," even the "Hand" itself cannot do anything to show its strength.

In psychological terms: A mortal creature needs nurturing and love. In this cruel world, every one of us must have an unwavering foundation that holds us up. Without it – our conscious and unconscious never develop the strength and confidence necessary to navigate life. Witness the profound effects that an un-nurtured (or abused) childhood has on a person's self esteem and inner security. Without the fortitude provided by a higher power, we are left to our own vulnerable schemes, with the existential fears, insecurities loneliness of our psyches – left alone, relying on our own, weak selves.

The humility of recognizing the Divine blessing of your success opens up the channels to manifest and contain these blessings. Which in

turn give you the strength to face any challenge.

This is the both the great gift – and power – of free will: We have the ability to open or close the channels of blessings.

This is true anywhere, anytime in every life experience, in every part of the world. How much more so in the Promised Land, which is so much more dependent on the Divine covenant, without which Jews would have no right or chance of survival, surrounded by hundreds of millions of enemies.

Tragically, this is what happened back in 1967. People began to feel that huge victory was due to their own great power. *Kochi v'otzem yodi* – "It was my own strength and personal power that brought me all this prosperity."

Ironically, both left wing and right wing extremists assumed the same position and cut G-d out of the picture: The secular left, denying the Divine hand, by arrogantly taking credit for their own successes. Some religious extremists argued that the victory did not come from G-d but from the "other side." They felt that G-d would not work miracles through the secular "Zionists" who defy G-d.

And this is the root of all the problems: By denying the Divine hand and not actualizing the call of the "great shofar," we actually make it more difficult to manifest the channels of blessing.

A strange Midrash illuminates this point even further: The Talmud states that "the world is like a balcony without the fourth, northern, wall" (Bava Basra 25b). Why? Explains the Midrash: Should someone claim to be the Creator, he will be told to finish the northern wall (Pirkei D'Rebbe Elozor Ch. 3).

What is the meaning of this cryptic statement? Who in their right mind would suggest that he is the Creator?!

The Midrash is telling us, that

every person at times may be tempted to feel that he is a self-made entity. In order to remind us all that as great as we may be, we must always appreciate our blessings from above, the universe was created in a way that there always remains one vulnerable corner – the northern border – which can allow in problems, "out of the north the evil will break forth on all the inhabitants of the land" (Jeremiah 1:14).

No matter how successful a person may be, even if all "three sides" of your life are covered, we always remain vulnerable creatures. Everyone should always be blessed, but we never can know when or where a "curveball" may come. Never, ever forget that we need every blessing we can get. If you ever feel self made, be careful, because you may be them challenged: Ok, you think you're an all powerful, self created individual, let's see what you can do with the vulnerable ("north") areas of life... Go ahead, show us how you can close up and protect that open border.

But if you recognize the true Creator, then He will do what is necessary to protect us from the "north," he will finish and seal the vulnerable points.

In a most uncanny fashion, this Midrash is literally being played out in Israel: Despite the great success of the Six-Day war, which basically eliminated the enemy in the South (Egypt), East (Jordan), Northeast (Syria) and West (the Mediterranean) – Israel's northern border (Lebanon) has always remained a vulnerable sore point.

Forty years have passed since the '67 war, people have argued that our strength is "self made," and till this day the "northern front" remains a source of festering misery – as witnessed in the Lebanese War in 1982, and again last summer, with thousands of missiles raining down on Israel in the years in between.

Indeed, the lack of healthy faith

in the Divine hand at work, has created a vacuum which has allowed for a distorted faith to emerge – yet another ironic twist – the misplaced faith of Muslim extremists, who in the name of faith, are wreaking havoc and murdering innocent people.

Conversely, this also teaches us what we need to do to achieve and maintain success: We need to recognize the Divine hand affecting our lives, and ensure that we actualize our Divine calling in our daily lives.

In the words of Isaiah: Following the call of the “great shofar” comes the second half of the verse and the challenge: Will the call lead us to “come and bow down to G-d on the holy mountain in Jerusalem”? The victory 40 years ago sounded a “call”

for each other is a given. In G-d we trust creates a firm foundation that allows for coexistence, despite our differences.

Many ideas have been presented suggested to bring peace to the Middle East. One way that has not been explored is the path of faith – healthy faith.

While it is true that we are witness to profound intolerance in the name of faith – both today and over the centuries, yet a similar level of intolerance is practiced by those without faith. Without respect for the sanctity of each and every life, ultimately “self-made” men will follow the “survival of the fittest” dictum. When success is seen as self-made, with no need to humbly acknowledge a higher presence, how can people ever treat each others as

will solve all the deep distrust and animosities. However, the question should be posed the other way: Can peace be achieved without healthy faith? So, in addition to all the other political and diplomatic means being employed, it would be a good idea to introduce the element of humble faith.

Looking back at the events of 1967 and seeing what transpired over the last four decades, perhaps we now have the wisdom and experience to launch a new offensive – one built on humility and appreciation of the miracles in our lives.

Now forty years later, blessed with the insight 40 years bring, the lessons are relevant more than ever as we have witnessed, in retrospect, the consequences of ignoring or denying the Divine hand.

We now can appreciate that we must do everything possible to reintroduce the Higher power behind the script of world events, and especially those in the Middle East

It is never too late. With forty years of accumulative experience, we now can reignite *V'haya iota b'shofar gadol* – the call of the “great shofar,” which reaches those “lost in the land of *Ashur*” and those “banished in the land of *Mitzrayim*.” And above all – to ensure that this call will cause them all to “come and bow down” not to themselves and their self-made illusions, but “to G-d on the holy mountain in Jerusalem,” and do so not once, but on a permanent basis.

This is the lesson for the summer of 2007: Recognize the great hand of G-d in our lives, and allow His blessings to take hold.

This in turn will open up the channels of blessings, drawing them down into every aspect of our lives.

Leading, finally, to the ultimate blessing: Peace in our lives, in our communities, in the Middle East and in the world at large.

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By denying the Divine hand and not actualizing the call of the “great shofar,” we actually make it more difficult to manifest the channels of blessing.

that touched millions. But, as it is with every inspiration, the challenge is maintaining the inspiration. As the inspiration dissipates we tend to take our miracles and gifts for granted. Will we utilize this awakening to its fullest? Will we act upon it and allow it to change our lives?

Recognizing the Divine hand is also the secret to peace:

True peace between peoples is only possible when there is a fundamental respect for the sanctity of every life and every human being. Self-made people will compete for dominance and superiority. When people feel that they are self made, it is not a far step to abuse the rights of others. But when we accept that “all people were created equal” and by virtue of our Divine souls each of us has unalienable rights, than respect

equals? Hence, there will never be permanent peace.

This suggests a third path – neither the path of faithlessness nor the path of fanatical faith. Rather the path of a faith in G-d who created all life, thus a faith that dictates the sanctity of every life, Jew, Christian or Muslim, black or white.

In essence, the lack of humble recognition in the Divine miracles ultimately is the greatest cause for the escalation of hostilities. Left on our own, without acknowledging G-d's gift of life, we will be at each other's throats, either in the name of (misplaced) faith or in the name of faithlessness.

Obviously, there are other factors necessary to consider in order to achieve peace in Israel. I am not naively suggesting that faith alone

MIVTZAIM TANKS ON THE FRONTLINES

By Shneur Zalman Berger

SHOCKING SIGHT

It was surreal. Steel tanks, armored half-tracks, jeeps and infantry tramping across Lebanon. Blistering weapons fire on all sides and tension at an all-time

high. At any moment, from any direction, bullets whiz by. And within the fire and inferno there goes a Chabad mitzva tank with Chassidic music playing!

At the first opportunity, as the

forces take up positions, bearded men jump out. They wear army uniforms, bulletproof vests, and are armed, and they invite the soldiers to put on t'fillin.

This was no one-time



“The Mobile Mitzva Tanks of Chabad in the north of the country joined the columns of IDF tanks and armored vehicles moving towards southern Lebanon. The Chabadnikim are the army’s mascot.” This is how one of the newspapers described the Chabad mitzva tanks during the Peace in Galilee War, 25 years ago. * A retrospective on the work of Chabad on the frontlines during the war 25 years ago, as we mark the anniversary of the second war in Lebanon, which took place one year ago.



Mivtzaim in Lebanon

occurrence but a scene that accompanied the soldiers throughout the war, day in and day out, for three years.

There was no precedent for this as the IDF allowed the Chabad Tankistim to enter the field of fire and to move around the battlefield. The army’s high command realized that Chabad’s work is extremely important. Rabbi Dovid Nachshon, director of the Chabad Mobile Mitzva Tanks relates:

“In hindsight, I find it hard to understand why the IDF allowed us to enter the war zone. Upon request of the Chief of Staff, Refoel (Rafal) Eitan a”h, towards the end of the war a process was set into motion to establish a special unit of the army specifically for Chabad Tankists. It didn’t end up happening, though, because the war ended and there was no longer any need

for it.

“We entered the fray with our tanks from the beginning of the war, in Sivan 5742 (summer 1982), with the permission of the army. I won’t tell you it was simple, because this war wasn’t child’s play; it entailed real danger. Army officers were afraid for our welfare, and also apprehensive about our wearing civilian clothes. “After extended discussions, it was decided that the Tankists would only include those who had previously served in the army and each of the Tankists received a uniform, bulletproof vest, and a weapon. You can see us in the pictures dressed as Israeli soldiers, working for the Rebbe.”

Over the years, the administration of the Mobile Tanks received encouraging answers from the Rebbe. During the Peace in Galilee War, nearly every activity written to the Rebbe merited a response, along with instructions for this special work that demanded great mesirus nefesh.

R’ Shmarya Harel the mythological campaign leader of the Mobile Tanks, who oversaw the mitzva tanks in Lebanon, relates two instructions that they received from the Rebbe at the beginning of the war:

“The first instruction was that everything we did had to be approved by the army. The Rebbe also said we should not enter dangerous areas.”

Indeed, the Tankistim worked in cooperation with the army, and were highly successful. Their work was done around the clock: Mivtza T’fillin throughout the day, registering people for a letter in a special seifer Torah that was being written for IDF soldiers, and bringing simcha and encouragement to the soldiers.

Aside from this, there were

NORTHERN COMMAND THANKS THE TANKISTIN

The following is a free translation from a letter written on the stationery of the Commander of the IDF Northern Command, Brigadier General Amos Katz, and signed by him:

"In the name of the Northern Command, I would like to express my appreciation for your work during the 'Shalom LaGalil' campaign. I have no doubt that the work of the 'Mivtzaim Tank' amongst the soldiers of the IDF, contributed to the moral of the soldiers and commanders, and as a result contributed greatly to the success of the campaign.

"May you enjoy ever greater continued success in your blessed mission."

(Signed): Amos Katz



army ordered a truck that carried tanks from the army transport unit and it took the Mitzva Tank and its crew from Beirut to Chaifa! This shows how greatly the army and its commanders esteemed Chabad and its work.

FROM THREE TO SEVEN

When the war broke out, there were three tanks, which operated under Shmarya Harel. In the meantime, Dovid Nachshon went to the U.S. in order to fundraise. A few weeks later, he returned with money for their work and with Tank Number Four.

Throughout the war, Nachshon divided his time between working in Lebanon and fundraising in the U.S. and Europe. The sight of the Lubavitch tanks alongside tanks of steel opened people's hearts and wallets and the number of tanks increased to seven!

"CONQUERING" THE AIRPORT

The day the Beirut international airport was

seasonal activities that included Sukkos, Chanuka, Purim, etc. There were no set work hours. They began in the morning, continued during the day, and sometimes worked into the wee hours of the night. At night is when people consulted with the Chabadniks, when they gave shiurim, farbrenged, and had heart-to-heart talks with people.

"It's difficult to convey the enthusiasm people had when they came to enlist in this mitvza," says R' Nachshon. "We had regular drivers and activists and they were joined by others who became regulars throughout the war. In addition, we had people who did short stints, for a week or two or more.

"Above all else, I'm amazed by those Chassidim who came from outside the country especially to help out the Tankists. These included R' Leibel Mochkin, R' Itche Springer, and R' Chaim Boruch Halberstam."

THE ARMY PROVIDED THE GAS

In addition to the physical

costs of the war in Lebanon, morale was terrible. The soldiers were mired in war and they began to hear that some people were opposed to the war. Demonstrations against the war began and this weakened many soldiers.

The army commanders who knew that Chabad brings along a positive spirit, supported their work as R' Nachshon relates:

"Every evening we had a special briefing at the platoon command post. During the briefing, the senior commanders would put together a special travel plan to guide our work for the next day.

"We got a lot of help from the army. The Mivtzaim Tank is a big vehicle and it uses a lot of gas. During the war, the army supplied us with all our enormous fuel needs as well as food."

The Lubavitchers also received mechanical help. When a tank experienced mechanical problems, the repairs were made in Lebanon by army personnel. In one instance, a technical problem was discovered in Tank #2 and it had to be repaired back in Israel. The

THE JORDANIANS KNOW ABOUT THE TANKS

A few years after the war was over in Lebanon, two bachurim wanted to print the *Tanya* in Jordan. In order to get the required papers they went to the government office, where they met an important minister in the Jordanian government.

"You are against the Arabs," barked the minister, but the bachurim said they were not at all involved in politics. In response, the minister took out a picture of a Mitzva Tank working alongside IDF forces in Lebanon!

conquered found the mitvtzaim tank rolling down the runways along with the invading forces. The IDF's tanks operated on the northern runway. The guns of the steel monsters fired upon the nearby hills and the machine guns chattered nonstop.

Parallel to their movement, a mitzva tank traveled along the southern runway. Those on the tank did not hide their fear. This time it was for real. Even the soldiers and officers asked them to take shelter. Their recommendation had a sound basis. A bloody battle was taking place there at the airport. Shells landed nearby with a terrible screech, bullets and mortar shells whistled right by your ears, and planes were taking off towards their targets.

R' Shmarya Harel:

We traveled towards the terminal and there, among the planes, tanks and armored troop carriers, we found a good position and began our "attack" on the soldiers. I must say that all the soldiers and commanders went



A l'chaim with soldiers

wild over our being there. Yes, there were some who said we were crazy. They asked why we were in such a dangerous place, but they said this out of genuine concern. The soldiers surrounded us with love and great joy. Dozens of arms were extended to put on t'fillin. We remained at the airport until morning and throughout that time, we didn't stop serving as a

focal point for the soldiers.

MINES AROUND THE TANK

Despite the preplanning and care, in war you need miracles and these were not lacking. The Tankistin who worked for three years in the shadow of war, saw terrible scenes of dead and wounded, and they experienced numerous miracles.

The following are three stories of miracles that the Tankists experienced during the war in Lebanon:

Manchuria is a Lebanese town somewhere along the way that leads from the coastal mountains to the coastal valleys. The mitzva tanks made a stop in Manchuria. One evening, Rabbi Yisroel Halperin, shliach in Hertzeliya, held a farbrengen there with the regular staff from the tank. The farbrengen, which was held for the members of the heavy artillery unit, lasted late into the night. At the end of the farbrengen, the tank was parked for the night.

The night was quiet and after everybody woke up four hours



Putting t'fillin on with soldiers in Lebanon

later, a discussion ensued as to whether to travel to the next camp and organize a minyan there or to wait until a minyan was organized where they were. The Tankists deliberated and finally decided to stay put.

Rabbi Halperin, who had walked around the tank to stretch his legs, noticed a suspicious object under the wheel of the tank. He took another look and was shaken by what he saw. It was a powerful mine!

The military sappers worked long and hard to dismantle the Russian mine. They noticed other mines scattered around. Nobody could understand how the tank had managed to enter the minefield and pass all the mines. All acknowledged that it was only because of the Rebbe that they had decided to stay there and daven rather than leave. Had they not done so, who knows what would have happened.

R' Harel describes a horrifying incident in which a soldier mistakenly shot at their Mitzva Tank:

"We often encountered shooting by all types of weapons, but being hit by our own side is another story entirely. It was Chanuka when we traveled in the Lebanon Valley towards a distant outpost. As we approached it, the watchman noticed us from a distance. He saw the lights of the menorah on the roof and heard the music, but due to the distance he couldn't make it out.

"The watchman, who was armed with an automatic Mag rifle, didn't think twice but shot a long stream of bullets at us. Two bullets penetrated the tank. One bullet hit the ceiling and the other hit near the motor. The shooting stopped and we drove quickly towards the outpost until the soldiers identified us.

"When the soldier saw the vehicle with the strange lights rapidly approaching, he got cold feet and fled within the outpost and that's how we were saved from being fired on by one of our own."

RPG AIMED AT THE TANK

Another amazing miracle took place later on. This was when army forces invaded the port of Beirut to the west of the city. A roadway leads from the port and it was considered extremely dangerous. There were nests of terrorists nearby who shot missiles and mortars at vehicles that passed along the road. Regardless, the Tankists who waited in the port had to drive via that road. Television reporter Motty Eden (today director of Israeli TV) accompanied them and he later reported extensively on Chabad's work in the area. Shmuel Ezagui was the driver of the tank. He had an uneasy feeling, which he couldn't quite explain.

Shmarya Harel did not try to hide his apprehension over the possible outcome of the trip. Motty Eden's car went first and the tank followed. After a few

minutes of driving on the road, Eden motioned that he was turning at the next junction and driving north. Shmarya told the bachur an alternate route and Shmuel, the driver, agreed.

The vehicles slowed down and Motty waved goodbye to them. Shmuel stopped the mitzva tank and began to drive in reverse. A second later a red and deadly streak zipped by with a terrible whistling sound. The explosion on the edge of the road said it all. The R.P.G. missile had missed the tank driving in reverse and Eden's car by just a second.

Eden stepped on the gas and to travel north as fast as he could. Shmarya, who had relieved Shmuel at the wheel, also floored it and sped out of the area before the terrorists could load another missile. Shmarya, recalling that day, said he doesn't remember another trip that was as fast as that one, in his life.

IN THE MEDIA

The work of the mitzva tanks in Lebanon was covered extensively by the media. One journalist declared that the Chabadnikim are the IDF's mascot.

R' Nachshon remembers those

THE REBBE WATCHED A MOVIE ABOUT THE MITZVA TANKS

At the end of the war, a film was made, with the Rebbe's encouragement, about the work of the Mitzva Tanks in Lebanon.

Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka asked to see the footage several times and even showed it to some women when they visited. One of the times, as she watched it, the Rebbe came home.

R' Chesed Halberstam who was there at the time, relates that the Rebbetzin asked the Rebbe whether he wanted to watch it and the Rebbe said he did. As the Rebbe watched, he smiled a few times, especially when the movie explained that the Rebbe is the Chief of Staff.

When the movie was over, the Rebbe asked whether it would be difficult to show the movie again and the Rebbe watched a second time!



R' Dovid Nachshon and R' Shmarya Harel with the Chief of Staff during Peace in Galilee, Rafael Eitan a"h

Rabbi Halperin, who had walked around the tank to stretch his legs, noticed a suspicious object under the wheel of the tank. He took another look and was shaken by what he saw. It was a powerful mine!

days with nostalgia. “Berke Wolf would send us the articles about our work. Many of them expressed amazement over the courage and determination of the Tankists. Famous journalists would join us for a few days and afterwards they reported about our work in amazement. Motty Eden, a television reporter in those days, would report from Lebanon about our work once every few days. I also remember Chaim Zisovitz (of *Kol Yisroel*) and Tom Segev (*HaAretz*).

“At a certain point I had a regular spot from where I broadcasted from Beirut on the Chatzi HaYom program of Kol Yisroel, and this is how the entire

country heard about our work.

“The media knew that the safest place to be was a Mitzva Tank. Whenever shelling began, they all ran straight to one of our tanks.”

THEY ALL REJOICED

Mr. Shabtai Bibi, who runs Radio Moreshet, has presented countless radio programs, but the first radio interview that he did in his life was with the Tankistim during Peace in Galilee. He did so even though he was a radio technician up until then:

“During the war I got to see the work Chabad does from up close. They came in their tanks

and I felt great admiration for them in that they come to the frontlines, voluntarily, endangering their lives. The soldiers were all happy to see them.

“I remember an incident when one of the managers at the radio came to us at the front. A Chabadnik asked him to put on t’fillin but he responded disparagingly, ‘Leave me alone, don’t bother me with these stupidities.’

“A few minutes later there was a major Katyusha attack. It was really frightening. I myself went through all of Israel’s wars. I lived in Yerushalayim and we heard the shelling during the War of Independence and the Six Day War, but what went on in Lebanon was terrible. Many missiles landed from all directions and we lay on the ground and prayed for a miracle.

“The radio manager lay on the ground with his hands on his head, waiting for a break, looking terrified. When the attack ended, he got up and went right over the Chabadnikim and said, ‘Where are the t’fillin?’

“During the war, Avrohom Doron, an editor for the religion department of Reshet Beit, spoke with me. He asked me to send him a segment about Chabad’s work there. I told him, ‘How can I send tape with my voice, when you need to pass a licensing committee in order to be a broadcaster.’ He insisted and said, ‘Send it and it will be all right.’ That’s how my first broadcast came to be.”

The following is the text of the special broadcast:

“Chabad 2 here. Chabad 2 here. We are on the Damascus-Beirut road. We are approaching a blockade and are preparing to go back.

(Shabtai Bibi): "We are on the Beirut-Damascus road. I found myself in the midst of heavy artillery shelling as the terrorists from western Beirut shelled our forces and showered heavy fire and Katyushas. Among the military vehicles and the dusty tanks of our forces, I found a colorful tank. This was a tank of Chabad which, in the midst of the shelling, instilled bitachon in our forces."

(Tankist): "My name is Yedidya. I am from Kfar Chabad. I volunteered to come on this tank. You will surely want to know what a tank is and since when have we been on these tanks. The truth is that I am not a member of the armored corps. I am an engineer. Yet I am on a tank. This tank is a sort of mobile home equipped with all sorts of good things, like sifrei kodesh, tashmishei k'dusha, t'fillin, and mezuzos. In the rear there is a special area for shiurim in the event that people want a spontaneous class on Judaism."

"We are well equipped on the tank and can live a long time on it."

"It was the Rebbe who came up with the idea of calling it a tank. The Rebbe said that in order to conquer the desert, you need a vehicle that can traverse a desert. There are four tanks like this in Eretz Yisroel. Our base is in Natzeret Ilit and our director is

LIGHT AND JOY FOR THE SOLDIERS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Aside from mitzvaim, the Tankists also brought light and joy to the soldiers and their families by establishing phone connections between soldiers and their parents or their wives and children. In those days (before cell phones) connecting with the home front was complicated.

The Chabad tanks came up with a creative solution. Through the tank's radio they were able to make contact with the tank's base in Natzeret Ilit, where Tankists sat and dialed the numbers they were given, thus connecting the telephone and the radio transmitter. It was thrilling when the soldiers were able to call home after months in a war zone.

One day, the office called a family in Yerushalayim. The grandmother answered the phone and she didn't understand who was calling. She explained that she was home alone with the children and that the parents were not home.

Out in Lebanon, the worried Reservist captain said, "Ask her why she's there and where my wife is." The answer was, "She is at the hospital and two hours ago she delivered a boy!" A bottle of mashke was opened on the spot and everybody present said l'chaim with the soldier.

Rabbi Dovid Nachshon, who brought these tanks to Israel and he is the one who initiates and funds all these wonderful projects.

"We are volunteers, which keeps costs lower."

(Shabtai Bibi): "I see an office in your tank and you write reports. Can you explain this?"

(Yedidya): "Yes, the Rebbe is the mastermind of this project and he is the one who urges us to do these activities. Like the Chief of Staff needs to know what is going on in the army, the Rebbe needs to know what is going on in his

army. We send the Rebbe a detailed weekly report about all our activities, as much as we can write."

"The main thing we say is that the reaction of the soldiers that we meet is – why doesn't the Rebbe come here? But the Rebbe has his reasons and he knows where he has to be, but we ask him – come here, bring Moshiach and we won't have to suffer from wars and tzaros anymore."

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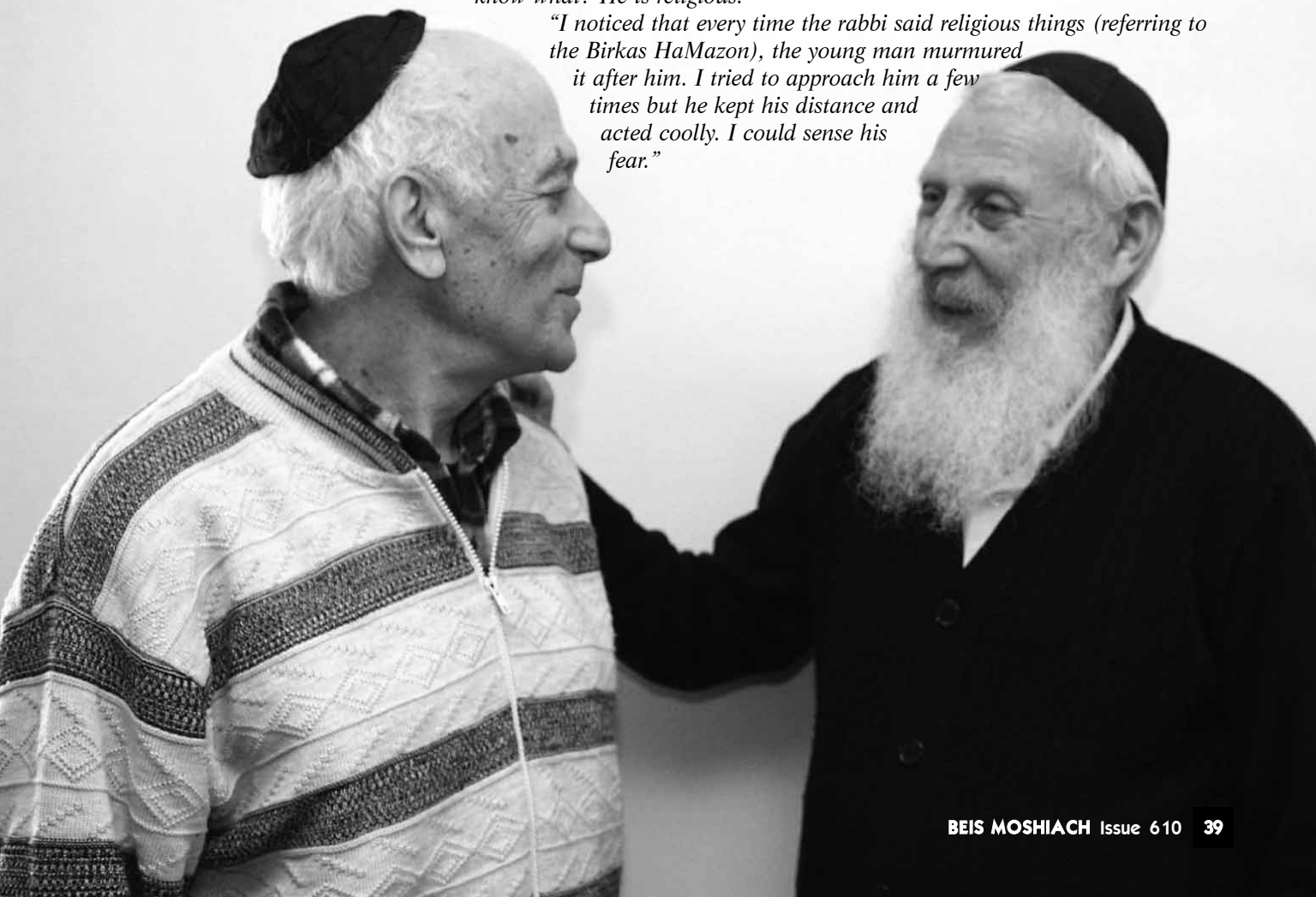
WE MEET AGAIN

By Shneur Zalman Levin

Rabbi Reuven Galperin, a Chassid from Kiryat Malachi, and a Jew named Aharon Grossman met for the first time 40 years ago. They parted six years later and didn't hear about one another for 20 years. In 5751 they met again and since then, they have kept in touch. * The story of two men and how their lives intertwined.

"It was the first religious wedding I had seen and had ever attended. They told me ahead of time that it was a big secret that I had to carefully keep. Someone pointed to a young man and whispered to me, "See that student over there? He studies mathematics and is outstanding in his studies. And you know what? He is religious."

"I noticed that every time the rabbi said religious things (referring to the Birkas HaMazon), the young man murmured it after him. I tried to approach him a few times but he kept his distance and acted coolly. I could sense his fear."



Aharon Grossman, who related the above, lives in Petach Tikva though he used to live in Tashkent. He and Reuven Galperin met for the first time at that wedding. Reuven was completely unaware of the man who sat and observed him, amazed at his seriousness and wondering why he sat there and mumbled silently.

A few years went by and they met again, this time as employer and employee. Aharon Grossman was Galperin's boss and although Galperin did not remember Grossman, Grossman remembered Galperin. Grossman knew that talking about Judaism and religion could culminate in a jail sentence or hard labor, so he did not mention the wedding they had both attended. As for Galperin, he did all he could to keep his Judaism a secret.

They worked together for six years and for six years they shared a secret but never spoke about it until the day they parted. For six years, Galperin was moser nefesh to keep mitzvos under a veil of secrecy and the fear of those days, while Grossman, without Galperin's knowledge, helped him to the best of his ability.

Reuven Galperin and Aharon Grossman met for the first time forty years ago. They parted six years later and were not in touch for twenty years. In 5751, when Eretz Yisroel was attacked by Scud missiles, they met again. Since then, they keep in touch. It's a bond of friendship, this time without secrets and subterfuge. They recently met again and shared their memories.

* * *

Aharon Grossman was born in 1933 in Odessa. During World War II he fled Odessa with his mother and in 1943, after meeting up with an uncle, his mother's brother, they settled in Tashkent in Kazakhstan.

Aharon completed his schooling in Tashkent and then attended an



Aharon Grossman checking buildings after a controlled explosion to simulate an earthquake

institute specializing in construction research. In 1961 he went to a university in Moscow to work on his doctorate in engineering, completing it after three years.

"In the former Soviet Union," said Grossman in Russian, which Reuven Galperin translated into Hebrew, "there are five large centers for construction research. Each one of them examines environmental effects on buildings. Each area has environmental problems unique to it. The centers are in Moscow, Kiev, Leningrad, Novosibirsk, and Tashkent.

"The Asian continent suffers from frequent earthquakes. The institute in Tashkent, located in the center of the continent, was chosen to focus on the effect earthquakes have on building."

When Aharon Grossman successfully completed his studies, he returned to Tashkent and got a job directing the research center there. Since the area had been hit with earthquakes, he was quite busy. He conducted research following the severe earthquake in Tashkent in 1966, and was sent to Algeria, when

it was hit by an earthquake in 1972, as a member of a delegation that was sent to the scene of the tragedy.

He was also in Tajikistan, which was struck by an earthquake, and in 1988 he was sent to Armenia to examine the damages sustained by the area following an earthquake.

"My job was to find the faults in the construction – after the fact, of



Reuven Galperin

course – in order to learn what to do in future construction projects. As part of our work we would build a wall, install measuring devices and set up a controlled explosion, each time at a different level of intensity.

“Afterwards, we would examine the damage and the solidity of the wall. We then applied the results of our research in massive construction projects of hundreds of thousands of apartments in Middle Asia.”

What did you know of religion back then?

“I knew very little,” says Grossman. “I learned one important thing at home and that was to respect religious people. My mother always told us: Religious Jews are men of truth and you have to respect them. So although we made jokes about rabbis and religious leaders, in moments of truth, especially during sorrowful times, we knew to respect religion.

“I also remember that when a funeral took place, my mother would wake my brother and me up early – before the time we had to get up to go to school – and send us to complete the minyan.

“At home, we remembered the



Aharon Grossman

holidays and we fasted on Yom Kippur. On Yom Kippur, my mother would go to shul and I, the oldest, would accompany her there and back. I remember religious Jews who came to our house and collected money for tz’daka and for religious causes. My mother always gave them what she could give.”

Did being Jewish impede you in life?

“Since we weren’t particularly religious, we had no cause to display our religious affiliation and our being Jewish wasn’t obvious. We had a few incidents related to our being Jewish, but nothing beyond that.

“Some of the countries within the Soviet Union were Moslem, including Uzbekistan. It was easier to be religious there. The Moslem majority also opposed the communist-atheist regime and they, together with the Jews, worked against the decrees that affected the observance of religious practices.

Galperin: My uncle, R’ Meir Tzinman a”h, sat in a Soviet jail for many years for the crime of keeping mitzvos. When he died, a minyan of people gathered in his home for a year, three times a day, and said Kaddish. One of the gentile neighbors saw this and ran to the head of the committee to tattle.

He was a Moslem and when he heard her report he made a motion across his neck and told her that if she repeated this story again, he would kill her.

* * *

R’ Reuven Galperin was born in 1939 in Leningrad.

“My family is seventh generation Chabad Chassidim. Many members of the family were put in jail and tortured in KGB cellars for the crime of keeping mitzvos and for religious activity.

“When I was two and a half, they took me from besieged Leningrad to Kashkiria and in 1944 I was taken to Tashkent, where I

lived all my life. Until age 11 I stayed home and learned. Until this age they somehow managed to keep me out of public school, which was extremely problematic because of Shabbos observance. At age 11 though, there were no more excuses and I began attending school. I graduated at 18 and attended school in the mathematics department at the university in Tashkent.”

Why did you pick mathematics?

“In those days, our choices were constrained by our desire to keep mitzvos in secret. The main problem we had to contend with was Shabbos observance. We could manage with kashrus, and could also manage to cover our heads. In Tashkent, as opposed to other places in Russia, people went around with Bucharian hats. It had nothing to do with mitzva observance. So nobody suspected anything if they saw someone wearing one of these Bucharian hats.

“I had three choices: physics, mathematics, and chemistry. With physics and chemistry, the work is done in a laboratory. You can’t work independently; you always have to be involved with assistants and other employees, which meant working on Shabbos without the possibility of exchanging time slots.

“The only profession where I could work on my own was mathematics. Especially if you picked research, the work is solitary, you, the pencil, and the books. This enabled a person to avoid desecrating the Shabbos. So I chose this route, specifically the field of computer programming.

“After five years of study, I worked for three years at the computer center of the university in Tashkent until I received an invitation to work in a lab for theoretical computing. I was sent to the department that did research on the effect earthquakes have on buildings, which was run by Mr.

Aharon Grossman.”

For Galperin, this was a first encounter, but Grossman had already met the Jewish religious student eight years earlier. Grossman had noticed him, had been impressed, and he remembered him.

“In Tashkent there was a Chassidic Jew by the name of R’ Shmuel Baschinsky, who was nicknamed Shmuel Engineer. He was one of the heads of the network of underground shiurim for youth called Tiferes Bachurim,” said R’ Reuven, explaining their one-sided encounter.

“This network was founded in order to save young Chassidic men from the communist party. In 1950, R’ Shmuel was arrested and sentenced to four years in jail. In Cheshvan 1958, R’ Shmuel’s daughter got married. The wedding took place at home under a thick veil of secrecy. Some friends, myself included, were invited.”

What R’ Reuven did not know was that among the guests was the kalla’s teacher from the engineering school, Aharon Grossman. “They relied on him as someone trustworthy, who could keep a secret, and told him about the Jewish wedding. Their trust was well-placed; nobody was put into jail following this wedding.”

Grossman: “It was the first religious wedding I had seen. They told me that it was top secret. It was peculiar for me to see a wedding in which the men and women sat separately. They gave me a yarmulke and sat me among the men. One of the guests pointed out Reuven Galperin and whispered to me, ‘See that student over there? He studies mathematics and is outstanding in his studies. And you know what? He is religious.’”

“I noticed that every time the rabbi said religious things (referring to the Birkas HaMazon), the young

man murmured it after him. I tried to approach him a few times, but he kept his distance and acted coolly. I could sense his fear.”

Galperin does not remember Grossman from that wedding, but the story fits. Fear of disclosing the truth that he was religiously observant was so strong that his coldness was part and parcel of his manner.

* * *

Reuven Galperin began working in the laboratory under Aharon Grossman. Eight men worked in the lab, including five Jews. Galperin was the only religious Jew and due to his fear of being found out, he carefully guarded his secret.

“It was the first time I met a religious Jew of this type,” says Grossman. “Until then, I knew that religious Jews were elderly rabbis who dressed in black, people who definitely did not work in mathematics. Suddenly I had this young man, a talented mathematician, working for me, and I found this very interesting. But my attempts at befriending him were rebuffed.

“I even asked him once whether he was religious and he said no. He refused to admit that he knew Yiddish or that he had even a minimal understanding of religion. I realized that he didn’t want to talk about it and I kept my distance.”

Despite the distance he had to keep, Grossman continued to keep an eye on the young, religious man and tried to help him.

“We had a custom to eat together. We would put our food in the middle of the table and share it,” tells Grossman. “On most occasions we collected money and bought food together jointly. I knew that religious people were particular about eating certain food and I noticed that Reuven brought his food from home.

“The problem was that people liked Reuven’s food. They all loved

to put their hands in his plate and taste from it. Reuven didn’t feel comfortable refusing and the others had no problem taking from his plate since they were willing to share their food with him. They just didn’t notice that he never touched other people’s food. But I, who knew his background, knew that if they ate from his food, he would go hungry. So I would yell at them not to touch his food.”

Galperin: “My mother was a great cook and when I got married, so was my wife. I would bring delicious food to work and everybody wanted to have some. I noticed how Aharon always made sure to protect my food, but of course I never spoke to him about that. I acted as though nothing was going on.”

Another problem arose having to do with the food. This was when the colleagues decided to go out to eat together.

“I couldn’t be the only one who didn’t go,” explains Reuven. “Any deviance from the norm stood out and was an invitation for people to look at you askance.

Grossman smiled and interjected, “You always ordered the same thing: vodka and honey cake. Always vodka and honey cake.”

When Reuven got married, he did not invite his colleagues to his wedding, of course. A Jewish wedding was considered a crime. Grossman realized that this was another religious issue that couldn’t be spoken about and he kept his questions to himself. But when Reuven came back to work and his colleagues wanted to make him a party, he defended him.

“I knew that he didn’t have much money,” says Grossman, “so I quietly approached people and told them that each should contribute a ruble or two and we would provide the refreshments. The point was not to make Galperin responsible for it.



We ended up collecting a nice amount and we arranged a party.”

The most complicated problem was keeping Shabbos. Galperin, with no small amount of ingenuity, exploited the work system of that time to get out of working on Shabbos, week after week.

“The lab under Grossman was the first to switch from its primitive means of calculating to using a computer. Although at that time computers were in their infancy, and a simple Tetris game today is faster than the computers of back then, still, 10,000 calculations a second is a lot more than one per minute on a calculator.

“As the programmer of the lab I was responsible for work on the computer. Since there was only one computer in all of Tashkent, you had to reserve time in advance to work on it. This was very responsible work. An hour on the computer back then cost 100 rubles, which was a doctor’s monthly salary! The results had to justify the investment.

“In order to arrange Shabbos off from work, I would arrange computer time three times a week on Sunday, Tuesday, and Thursday. It was my good fortune that other than a bill for the time spent on the computer, the lab did not receive a detailed list of dates and time that I worked. It was good enough for the people at the lab that I did satisfactory work.

“So I did not show up to work in the lab on Shabbos and afterwards I would say that I had been working on the computer.”

At this point, Galperin looked at Grossman, nodded, and said with a smile, “I apologize for thinking that I was fooling you regarding working on Shabbos.”

Grossman smiled back. He wasn’t at all surprised by the story. He knew that Galperin was Shomer Shabbos and he had helped him by keeping quiet about it.

“I had a problem on those weeks that there was no need for computer work. I had no choice and had to show up at work, seven kilometers away. Naturally, I walked the distance. I would go over to Grossman and say that I had to go to the library. Grossman would surprisingly give me the okay, time after time, and enable me to sit with a book in the library, preventing me from desecrating the Shabbos.”

The two men nodded at one another again and burst into laughter.

Galperin said that one time, he nearly “fell into the trap.”

“One Shabbos, he asked me a question in mathematics. I used my head and gave him an answer without figuring it out on paper. The problem was that he needed to know how I solved it and I went through it with him without doing any writing.”

Galperin also remembers one of the times men from

the lab, led by Grossman, were sent to pick cotton.

"Uzbekistan had a big cotton crop and since they need a lot of manpower, everybody, no matter who he was, had to go and pick cotton. My luck, my group was sent on Shabbos. I went over to Aharon and said I didn't feel well. With a half-smile on his lips, he sent me home to rest."

On the subject of close calls, Grossman remembers one of the few times that Galperin slipped and forgot that supposedly he knew nothing about Judaism or religion.

"My aunt died. She had been a religious woman and so we wanted the funeral and burial to be in accordance with Jewish custom. When I returned to work, Reuven came over to me and began questioning me about it. When I told him, he said to me in surprise, 'Why didn't you tell me about it? I could have come and helped you?' I smiled to myself and thought how this was the first time that he forgot to keep up the pretense. I did not point out his error, he didn't notice, and life went on as usual."

* * *

The Galperin family, like many other Jewish families, made prodigious efforts to leave Russia. Here too, Aharon Grossman was helpful in enabling them to leave the country.

"In order to get an exit visa, I needed a character reference which had to be signed by three people: the manager of the factory or concern, the chairman of the communist branch of the factory, and the union leader. The union leader was a woman who agreed to sign only if the other two signed. The communist told me he wouldn't sign for any money in the world. The Uzbeki manager wasn't there and his replacement was a Jew. This Jew quietly told me that since he was a Jew he couldn't sign my character report.

"The only one who agreed to give me a character reference despite the refusals of the others, was Aharon Grossman. He wanted to write how devoted a worker I was and to add that I had written two articles in my area of expertise and that I was working on a doctorate.

"I explained that the report had to be pareve. If it said how wonderful I was at my job and how much I knew, there was no way in the world that they would let me leave the country. "Don't say anything good or bad," I directed him.

"I submitted the documents to the KGB office and noted that I was unable to provide a report with all three signatures. The KGB called me in and gave me a letter requiring me to provide a character report.

"For four years in a row I presented a request to leave and was refused, each time because I didn't have the necessary document. But every year, Grossman persisted and was unfazed by his colleagues' refusals. He produced the certificate of the year before, signed it and gave it to me. Maybe it would help that year. Finally, on the fifth try I was given my exit visa."

Reuven Galperin went to work for the last time to say goodbye to his fellow workers and especially to his boss of the previous six years.

"When we parted he asked me openly, and for the first time whether I was a religious Jew. This time, I answered in the affirmative. I asked him how he knew and for the first time he told me that he had seen me at the wedding."

The Galperin family arrived in Eretz Yisroel Erev Tisha B'Av 1971 and settled in Nachalat Har Chabad. "From the moment I boarded the plane, I no longer hid my religious identity."

Upon his arrival in Eretz Yisroel, Reuven studied at the Weitzman Institute and then was employed as a mathematician by the government.

Did you keep in touch with Grossman?

As soon as I arrived in Eretz Yisroel, I traveled to New York to the Rebbe. I sent a postcard from there to Grossman, wanting to show them the big world. The postcard from New York caused Grossman to assume I was living there which stopped him from looking for me when he arrived in Eretz Yisroel."

Grossman and his family moved to Eretz Yisroel with the big wave of immigration in 5750. Nearly a year passed until they met again.

"On Chanuka 5751, I was invited to speak to Russian immigrants," recounts Galperin. "After I finished my talk, someone came over to me and said, 'I know you.' I looked at him and couldn't recognize him. It turned out the man had worked with me in the same institute but he had worked in the planning department while I had worked in the research department. For some reason he recognized me despite the intervening years and despite the beard that I had grown in the interim.

"I asked him whether anybody else from the institute was in Eretz Yisroel and he told me that Aharon Grossman was here too. I took Grossman's number and called him."

Before long, Aharon Grossman spent a beautiful Shabbos with Reuven Galperin. Reuven's daughter describes their meeting:

"I was a little girl and it was an unforgettable Shabbos. It was in the middle of the Gulf War. I remember sitting together around the table, listening to amazing stories about a period of time we were unfamiliar with, as the sirens interrupted and we went to the sealed room. We were all very excited."

Galperin continued, "That year, I was invited by the shliach in Sderot, Rabbi Pizem, to run a public seider for new immigrants. I invited Grossman and his family because



Reminiscing together

the son lived there. Thanks to him, it all went very well.”

Grossman adjusted to life in Eretz Yisroel and went to work on construction sites as a supervisor. Within a short time, he found himself back in the same job he had done back in the Soviet Union. He was called down to measure the ability of new buildings to withstand

earthquakes.

This occurred after an earthquake that took place in Elul 5759 in Turkey. News of the enormous damage that could take place to buildings after an earthquake began to penetrate in Eretz Yisroel too.

“I got together a group of Russian scientists and we began to

lobby for this among Knesset members. They supported us, led by the Infrastructure Minister of that time, Ariel Sharon.

“We got a budget of a million shekels and began to examine buildings in Eretz Yisroel and to come up with solutions. I put out three books on the subject, but when the budget was used up, the project ended.”

Today, Grossman continues, without a budget, to survey buildings in the city he lives in, Petach Tikva. He has done extensive research on the old buildings and has submitted exceedingly worrisome reports to the municipality. “They told me that the situation is grave but at this point, they don’t have the money to do anything about it.”

Reuven Galperin is a well-known Chassidic figure in Nachalat Har Chabad. He fills his days with shiurim and doing things for others. He also does mitzvaim to bring merit to others.

A half a year ago, the Grossman family moved to a new home and they invited Galperin to put up new mezuzos. No secrets anymore.

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