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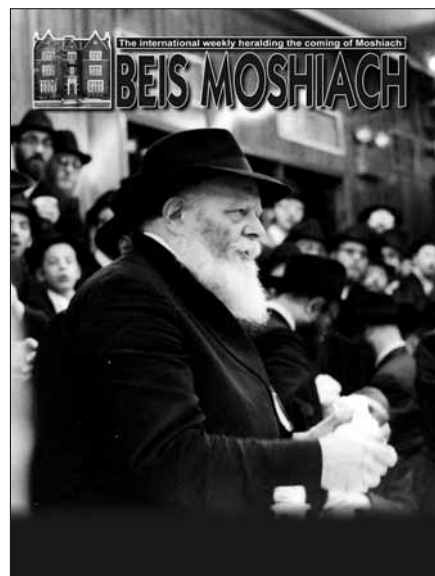
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IN ELUL WE MUST PLOW AND SOW

Likkutei Sichos Vol. 4, Hosafos, Pg. 1342-1348
Translated by Boruch Merkur

Regarding the significance of the month of Elul, the Alter Rebbe writes as follows: “In Elul it is the time of the revelation of the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy. In order to understand this – for [the question is begged]: Why [then] are they regular weekdays and not holidays? ... This, however, can be understood in light of an allegory of a king, who, before he comes to the city, the city folk go out to greet him, holding a reception for him in the field. Anyone who wants to go out and receive him then may do so, and he welcomes all of them with a pleasant countenance and shows a smiling face to them all. As he makes his way to the city, they follow him. Afterwards, as he enters his royal palace, no one may enter

without permission. Indeed, [entrance is granted only to] the elite of the nation and select individuals. So is the matter, in terms of the analogy’s significance, regarding the month of Elul: they go to receive the light of His blessed countenance in the field.”

A (possible) explanation of the answer (to the [puzzling] fact that the days of the month of Elul are regular weekdays) is as follows: The concept of holidays is that an increase of light and revelation is drawn into them, [a revelation] that is not en clothed within them so much [but remains transcendent]. It is on account of this [revelation] that during these days labor is forbidden. Indeed the performance of labor, regular weekday activities, is in contradiction to receiving this light (symbolized in the parable by the king being in his royal palace, where “**no one** may enter **without [permission]**”). Whereas the concept of the month of Elul entails the revelation of the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy to each and every Jew, even to one who has sinned, etc., in the place where he happens to be found: a field [i.e., not the royal place, but a place of mundane weekday activity]. The illumination of the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy is a preparation enabling them to repent. So it is regarding the service of love and fear [of G-d] in Elul (for then the love and fear are loftier): they must be aroused through an initiative that precipitates specifically from below, for the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy are merely a prerequisite for [Divine] service.

Nevertheless, the illumination of the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy is in the field, not in the desert. A desert is at the level of “‘a land that is not cultivated,’ which are those deeds, words spoken, and thoughts which are not for G-d’s sake.” In order to receive the

illumination of the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy requires at least the arousal of the acceptance of the yoke of the kingship of Heaven, [represented by] leaving (the desert), to go at least to the field, to greet the king (but this service is at the level of “field” (of holiness), involving plowing and sowing, unlike [the activities permitted] on holidays).

* * *

All matters discussed in Torah, including the allegories, are precise in all their details. But at first glance, the terminology of the Alter Rebbe is not understood there [in his allegory of the king in the field]: “the city folk go out to greet him...in the field.” This wording indicates that their place is in the city but they only now venture out to the field. But at first glance (in what the allegory represents) it is the opposite: Their place is in the field, and the innovation of [the month of] Elul is that the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy shine even in the place where they are at present, in the field.

The explanation of this quandary is as follows: The means by which each and every Jew perceives this illumination of the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy [which are spiritual in nature] is on account of the root of his soul. The Alter Rebbe alludes to this in saying, “the city folk go out to greet him...in the field.” For the reason the Jewish people perceive the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy is because they are “city folk” [an allusion to the Jewish soul as it exists in the Heavenly realm of Bria, which is referred to as “city.” See Footnote 11 in original text.] It is just that for the time being they happen to be in the field, [a metaphor for being] in the exile of the body and the Animal Soul. Notwithstanding the fact that they are in exile, “one cannot compare the virtue of a minister while in captivity to the virtue of a commoner” [*Likkutei Torah* Parshas R’ei 32c]. Being that they are “city folk,” even when they are in the field, they “receive the light of His blessed countenance,” the illumination of the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy.

* * *

Another matter that is not readily understood from the terminology of the Alter Rebbe in the allegory there: The wording implies that the original place of the king is in the field (for he does not write that “the king **goes out** to the field”), whereas in the meaning of the allegory, the place of the king is in his royal palace, but he makes a special trip to the field to enable everyone to receive him.

The explanation is as follows: In terms of revelations, when the king is in the field, it is a descent in comparison to how he is in his royal palace. For when he is in his royal palace he wears a royal crown and royal vestments, etc. Which is not the case when he is in the field. Nevertheless, in truth, the very fact that the king forgoes the revelation of his royal crown and royal vestments, and he goes out to the field to enable everyone to receive him, proves that the

repentance of those who are found in the field is more precious and pertinent to him than his royal crown and vestments (like the example of the service of penitents, which reaches higher than the service of the righteous). For His royal vestments and crown are merely [elements constituting his] appearance. Whereas His blessed essence is specifically in the field, as it is known that it is specifically the lower worlds that are a dwelling place for His blessed essence.

In the allegory in discussion, the Alter Rebbe writes, “As he makes his way to the city, they follow him. Afterwards, as he enters his royal palace, etc.” At first glance, since His blessed essence is specifically in the field, etc., as has been noted, why is this necessary and what advantage is accomplished in going to the city? The matter is as follows: Regarding a dwelling place there are two factors: 1) In a dwelling place one’s entire **essence** is present (as in a home, for **one’s essence** resides in the dwelling), and this is accomplished through the fulfillment of Mitzvos specifically in the realm of action. 2) The one who lives in the dwelling is **revealed** there. Thus, revelations are also necessary.

Notwithstanding the fact that this service takes place in the month of Tishrei, the Alter Rebbe writes about this matter in the allegory which elaborates on the service of the month of Elul. It could be said that he, thereby, suggests that even the beginning of the service of receiving the yoke [of Heaven], the venturing outwards to receive His blessed countenance in the field, must be on condition and in a manner [intended to] follow Him afterwards to the city and to His royal palace, for then they come from the service of Elul to the service of Rosh HaShana and the Ten Days of Repentance and etc., until the revelation of Shmini Atzeres – “They will be to You alone, with no strangers among You.”

* * *

In the address of the holiday of Pesach 5694 (*Likkutei Dibburim* 116a) my esteemed teacher and father-in-law, the Rebbe [Rayatz], describes the spiritual state in Lubavitch in the month of Elul. In the beginning of the passage there [he writes]: “After Shabbos Nachamu, we would already begin [the practice of] studying following Maariv, in fulfillment of that which is written, ‘Arise and sing at night.’ When the Shabbos that blesses the month of Elul arrived, we would already begin to sense the Elul-atmosphere, etc.” It is not understood, however, why he arranges the two topics – the increase in the learning after Shabbos Nachamu and the conduct of the month of Elul – in one aphorism, for at first glance they appear to be two separate topics.

It is further not understood why in the preceding passage he describes the conduct of [the three-week period of mourning known as] Between the Straits, for

the conduct of Shabbos Nachamu is apparently connected with the conduct of Between the Straits [and not Elul]. Indeed, the consolation (of Shabbos Nachamu) is for matters associated with Between the Straits. Thus, it would seemingly be appropriate to conclude the aphorism regarding Between the Straits with the matter of the conduct following Shabbos Nachamu (and thus conclude with something positive), and the subsequent aphorism should begin with the conduct of the month of Elul.

The explanation hinges on a well known insight concerning repentance. Although repentance is loftier than Torah (for which reason atonement [is accomplished through repentance] even with regard to blemishes in and transgressions of [the commandment of] Torah study), nevertheless the “revelation” of the entire matter of repentance is specifically through Torah. Indeed, this is the central point of the month of Elul [i.e., repentance expressed through rededication to Torah study]. The same principle applies with regard to the service of man: Notwithstanding the fact that the primary service of the month of Elul is the service of repentance, nevertheless this itself is “revealed” through Torah study. That is, in order for one to come to terms with the great necessity of repentance and how to repent and etc., one must add and increase in Torah study, especially the study of the inner dimension of the Torah, which clearly elucidates concepts associated with repentance.

Thus, my esteemed teacher and father-in-law, the Rebbe, arranged in a single aphorism the matter of increasing one’s study along with the conduct in the month of Elul, thereby alluding to the fact that the service of the month of Elul – repentance – is connected with the increase in Torah study. The latter point is reflected in the conclusion of the verse, “I am to my beloved and my beloved is to me” – whose acronym [in the original Hebrew] spells out “Elul” – “who shepherds among the roses (*shoshanim*),” for “*shoshanim*” has two meanings: Thirteen Petals of Mercy (the place of repentance) and those who study (*shonim*) Torah.

* * *

There are two levels of Torah: 1) The level of rain of Torah, [which corresponds to] inspiration from above brought about from initiative from below. 2) The level of dew of Torah, [corresponding to] inspiration from above of its own accord. This [second] level also exists with respect to the manner of Torah study [attained] by man. Namely, that in this manner, “the speech of man is in the ultimate state of nullification in His essence, to the extent that one’s speech does not come from himself at all. It is, rather, ‘the word of G-d, which is Torah law’ that is spoken within him automatically and of its own accord” [Footnote 21: a phrase cited from *Likkutei Torah*, P’kudei 6a], as it is written, “Let my tongue answer your sayings”

as one who responds [or repeats] after the reader.

The Thirteen Attributes of Mercy are beyond the natural order of Divine manifestation (*hishtalshlus*), at a level where initiative from below does not reach. From this it is understood that the connection of the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy to Torah is primarily with regard to learning Torah in a manner of “Let my tongue answer your sayings.”

The connection of learning Torah in the ultimate state of [self] nullification to the month of Elul is also alluded to in its mention in the beginning of the portion R’ei (which is read on Rosh Chodesh Elul or on the Shabbos preceding it): “Except to the place which He shall choose, etc.” (12:5), “to the [place of] rest and to the heritage” (Ibid 9), “And it shall be that the place that He, G-d the L-rd, shall choose, wherein His name shall dwell” (Ibid 11) – “Build for yourselves the Chosen Temple in Yerushalayim” (Rashi’s commentary, Ibid).

That is, the principle object of the Sanctuary (as well as the Temple) is the place of the resting of the Divine presence, which is the ark. The significance of the ark is: 1) Torah, as it is written (Melachim I 8:9), “There is nothing in the ark save two stone tablets.” 2) There was no service associated with the ark (as with other vessels of the Sanctuary [With regard to the service of sprinkling blood between the ark’s staves, see Footnote 25 in the original.]); it simply served as a vessel for the revelation from above: “I will testify to you there and I will speak, etc.” An expression of the latter is the study of Torah in the ultimate state of nullification.

* * *

The practical lesson from the above:

In the days of the month of Elul – and even in the days preceding it, from Shabbos Nachamu – one must increase in Torah study with regard to both the revealed dimension of Torah and particularly the study of the inner dimension of the Torah. (If one did not fulfill this [directive beginning] from Shabbos Nachamu until now, one must fulfill it throughout the days from now on, and in a manner of “wisdom is manifold,” as it is explained in *Igeres HaT’shuva* Chapter 9.) And the study must be with [self] nullification – “Let my tongue answer your sayings.” For by doing so, influence will be drawn down from above in a charitable manner (*b’ofen d’tzdaka*), like the configuration of the name Havaya [Yud-Kei-Vav-Kei] that illuminates in the month of Elul [Footnote 28: Mishnas Chassidim, beginning of Maseches Elul], [as it appears in] the last-letter acronym of, “*U’tzdaka tihyeh lanu ki*” [i.e., Hei-Hei-Vav-Yud] – charity, and not just a limited compensation appropriate to the work done – by being positively inscribed and sealed for a good and sweet year with regard to one’s abundant fortune in children, vitality, and sustenance.

(From the address of Shabbos Parshas R’ei 5723)

Kupas Rabbeinu

Lubavitch

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Boruch Hashem, Elul 5767

Mivtza: HELPING THE NEEDY

To every member of the Lubavitcher community:

During this month of preparation for Rosh Hashonoh, the "head" of the New Year, we fondly recall our Rebbe's words that this is an especially auspicious time for strengthening our deep bond of Hiskashrus with the "Rosh Bnei Yisroel," the "head" of the Jewish people and leader of the generation.

Our Rebbeim explain that **an important way to strengthen Hiskashrus is by participating in the Rebbe's activities and concerns, consequently, by supporting an organization that brings together a number of these activities, the Hiskashrus is greater and stronger.** Such an organization is Kupas Rabbeinu, which seeks to continue many of the Rebbe's activities and concerns without change from the way he would conduct them himself.

Every year at this time, the Rebbe would call upon us to contribute generously to help needy families with their extra expenses for the coming month's many Yomim Tovim. This also coincides with the special emphasis during this month of giving extra Tzedokah, (indicated in the Hebrew letters of the word "Elul," as explained in many Sichos etc.), as a vital way of preparing ourselves for the new year and arousing Divine mercy upon us.

We therefore appeal to every individual man and woman to contribute generously to Kupas Rabbeinu, enabling us to fulfill the Rebbe's desire to help all those who anxiously await our help. The greater your contribution, the more we can accomplish.

Your generous contribution to Kupas Rabbeinu will be the appropriate vessel for receiving the abundant blessings of the Rebbe, who is its Nasi, that you may be blessed with a Ksiva Vachasima Tova for a good and sweet year, materially and spiritually. May it help to bring the full revelation of Moshiach - our Rebbe - immediately now!

Wishing a Ksiva Vachasima Tova for a good and sweet year,

In the name of Vaad Kupas Rabbeinu

Rabbi Sholom Mendel Simpson

Rabbi Yehuda Leib Groner

P.S. Of course, you may send to Kupas Rabbeinu all contributions that you would send to the Rebbe; all will be devoted to the activities to which the Rebbe would devote them.

You may also send Maimad, **Keren-Hashono** (this coming year 5768 - 383 days), Vov Tishrei, Yud Gimmel Tishrei Magbis etc. to Kupas Rabbeinu.

P.S. Please send all correspondence only to the following address.

KUPAS RABBEINU / P.O.B. 288 / BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11225

Eretz Yisroel address: KEREN KUPAS ADMU"R / P.O.B. 1247 / KIRYAT MALACHI / ISRAEL

A DAILY DOSE OF MOSHIACH & GEULA:

10-16 ELUL

*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

10 ELUL: THE WORLD DEMANDS THAT A JEW SHOULD ALREADY BE IN A STATE OF REDEMPTION

All the preparations for the Redemption have already been completed, and now we have to draw the Redemption down into the physicality and materialism of the world in actual deed, revealed before our very eyes.

Today, they need only to open their eyes, and then they will see the whole world demanding that every Jew should already be in the state and situation of the True and Complete Redemption.

(sicha, Shabbos Parshas VaYigash 5752)

11 ELUL: BEHOLD, I PLACE A BLESSING BEFORE YOU TODAY

We must publicize and awaken people in every location regarding the unique avoda of the month of Elul, alluded to in its five acronyms:

Torah (*Ina L’Yado V’Samti Lecha*), T’filla (*Ani L’Dodi V’Dodi Li*), G’millus Chassadim (*Ish L’Reiehu U’matanos L’Evyonim*), T’shuva (*[Umal Hashem] Es L’vavcha V’es Levav*), Geula (*Ashira Lashem Va’yomru Leimor*),

with a special emphasis in relation to the concept of the Redemption.

In simple terms, we must proclaim and publicize everywhere – in words from the heart – that the Holy One, Blessed Be He, says to every Jew (through His servants, the Prophets): “Behold, I place a blessing before you today,” to the point that we shall literally see today with our own flesh eyes the blessing of the True and Complete Redemption.

(sicha, Shabbos Parshas R’ei 5751)

12 ELUL: THE ORDER OF EVENTS AT THE REDEMPTION

The order at the Redemption will be, as follows. First the building of the Beis HaMikdash, afterwards the ingathering of the exiles, and then the Resurrection of the Dead.

The Resurrection of the Dead will take place forty years after the ingathering of the exiles.

(T’shuvos U’Biurim 13)

13 ELUL: LEARNING FROM MOSHIACH AND SPREADING TORAH WITH HUMILITY AND BITTUL

There is a well-known explanation from my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, in his maamer, “And My servant Dovid will reign over them, etc.,” stating the reason why Melech HaMoshiach is called by the name Dovid is because the concept of Dovid is one of humility and bittul. That is, despite the fact that he was a king, he nevertheless called himself poor and humble. Similarly, regarding Melech HaMoshiach, even though he will represent ultimate greatness...nevertheless, he will be the ultimate in humility and bittul, learning also with simple people.

...Among those matters that speed up and hasten the coming of Moshiach is the study and spreading of Torah, the revealed and the inner teachings of Torah, to everyone, even simple people, in a manner of humility and bittul. That is, the study and spreading [of Torah]

Despite the fact that he was a king, he nevertheless called himself poor and humble. Similarly, regarding Melech HaMoshiach, even though he will represent ultimate greatness...nevertheless, he will be the ultimate in humility and bittul, learning also with simple people.

must not be for the resulting spiritual elevation of the one teaching and spreading Torah (“from my students more than all of them”), but for those on the receiving end.

(Kuntres Hey Teives 5752)

14 ELUL: YESHIVAS TOMCHEI T’MIMIM IN EVERY HOME

We must publicize everywhere about the special shlichus of (Yeshivas) Tomchei T’mimim – drawn into every corner of the world in a manner of “candles to illuminate.”

In addition to the fact (as mentioned on numerous occasions) that every Jewish home must be a house of prayer, Torah, and *g’millus chassadim* (acts of kindness), every home must resemble and emulate Yeshivas Tomchei T’mimim through the study of the teachings of chassidus (in addition to the general study of Torah).

(sicha, Shabbos Parshas Ki Teitzei 5751)

15 ELUL – ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF YESHIVAS TOMCHEI T’MIMIM (5657): THE WAR OF THE HOUSE OF DOVID TO BRING THE REDEMPTION

In connection with the founding of Yeshivas Tomchei T’mimim, there is the well-known sicha of the Rebbe Rashab, *nishmaso Eden*, on the concept in Gemara (Shabbos 56a) of, “he who goes out to the war of the House of Dovid gives a divorce to his wife” (his wife represents all material matters, “matters of this world”) – as the purpose of the founding of this yeshiva is to create “soldiers of the House of Dovid” who will go out to “the war of the House of Dovid.”

Furthermore, on the matter of the war – i.e., the students (“the soldiers”) will be “candles to illuminate” throughout the entire world – revealing and spreading the inner teachings of Torah, the teachings of chassidus, and strengthening the faith in the True and Complete Redemption through Moshiach Tzidkeinu in the time of “the heels of Moshiach,” when there will be those “who Your enemies have disgraced, Hashem, that they have disgraced the footsteps of Your Moshiach.”

We must say that in our times, these matters have relevance to every single Jew, and the shlichus of the war of the House of Dovid applies to them as well.

(sichos, night of Hoshana Rabba 5743, Chaf MarCheshvan 5745)

16 ELUL: THE SIGNS AND TIMES OF THE REDEMPTION – COMPLETING THE ELEVATION OF EISAV

(In our times,) the process of spiritual elevation has been completed, including the elevation of Eisav, who is Edom. This is all the more so as even in the times of Yaakov, he reasonably believed that Eisav had already been purified (and so it was from the aspect of Yaakov’s spiritual level). Surely after the considerable avoda since then, Eisav has already been completely purified.

We see this also from the conduct in these times (the exile of Edom) of those nations of the world stemming from the concept of “Eisav is Edom,” as benevolent kingdoms, and this conduct has also spread to other countries, as we have seen and still see (particularly as of late).

(sicha, Shabbos Parshas VaYeitzei 5752)

A POINT IN TIME AND SPACE

By Dr. Avrohom Orenstein

*Dr. Avrohom Orenstein, a Holocaust survivor, describes his meeting with the Rebbe in the early years of the Rebbe's leadership, in which he asked his burning question. * The Rebbe's unusual answer, which is not found in any of his letters or sichos on the topic, caused him to recall his fellow townsman Fishel the Wagon Driver. * This was originally published in the Algemeiner Journal in Yiddish.*



Dr. Avrohom Orenstein

It happened in October 1951 (Tishrei 5712). The place was 770 Eastern Parkway. The time was after the mystical hour of midnight. The reason was an interview with the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson.

This meeting took place a few months after I had arrived from the land of brutal sadists, Germany, to the freedom of America. My friend from the Jewish Theological Seminary, and a great admirer of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, arranged the

meeting. He knew of my many doubts and the inner conflicts I had in connection with the destruction of European Jewry.

In the long wait to see the Rebbe, in the stillness of the night, my thoughts drifted to the distant past,



“The lesson is, if you understand this geometric concept, that with time you will also understand that what happened with the Jews in Europe is a “point” in time and space, but the line, the direction, continues with no end.”

to the town I was born in, Slomniki, in the Kielce district in Poland.

Like a kaleidoscope in my mind, I saw a panoramic scene of my Jewish town; a town that was poor from a material standpoint but rich in spirit and Jewish content in the form of activities ranging from the social-communal, literary, Chassidic, to Zionist.

Before my eyes I could see my religious home that breathed Torah and Ger Chassidus; the Gerrer shtibel full of d'veikus and the Torah-enthusiasm with which I was raised; the beis midrash and the bachurim who learned in it, as well as the working men with their T'hillim and Mishnayos; the upliftedness of spirit of Shabbos and holidays; the times of joy and moments of sadness; and that tall Jew, broad-shouldered and muscular, Fishel the Wagon Driver, who has a special place in the holy of holies of my heart.

The scenes moved rapidly, like on a screen. One episode from my childhood stood out in the clarity in which it was photographed and engraved in my memory. I see my father z"l, R' Yosef Boruch HaKohen, an outstanding Torah scholar, preparing to travel to the Gerrer Rebbe, the *Imrei Emes*, R' Avrohom Mordechai Alter zt"l. This was quite some time before my bar mitzva and my father already wanted to take me to the Rebbe for his blessing.

His plan that I go to the Rebbe filled my youthful heart with a holy fear. In another little while I would have the great merit to “take shalom” from the tzaddik of the generation. Would I have enough courage to look

at his holy face? Would I be able to engrave his holy visage in my mind? Would I plumb the depths of the great defender, whose prayers and pleading reached the Heavenly throne?

There I was, facing him, aquiver with fear. Gazing upon him but not seeing him. Hearing only a low voice... My father explained to me later the allusions in the Rebbe's words to me, “When you will want to – you will be able to learn.” With these words, he “translated” for me the Rebbe's secrets.

The sudden squeak of the door to the Rebbe's room broke into my sweet dreams and returned me to reality.

Now I will meet once again with a Chassidic Rebbe, a Chabadnik, although no longer with the same naïve, childish enthusiasm. Could it be otherwise? After all, between the two meetings, rivers of Jewish blood and oceans of tears have flowed, casting fear and dread just to think of them.

I intend to confront and challenge this Rebbe, the likes of whom, I had once believed in ad infinitum... I would demand a clear explanation, a serious response to the disturbing questions and doubts regarding the greatest devastation in Jewish history. It is possible that I will decide to call him to a din Torah. If the Berditchever could invite G-d to a din Torah, why should I refrain from doing so with the Rebbe?

I was finally led to the Rebbe's room. After a brief greeting from right to left, I saw how, out of the three students who entered together, the Rebbe focused his gaze on me.

"Where did you come from?" asked the Rebbe in Yiddish.

"From Germany," I answered.

I quickly used the opportunity and directly, though politely, got to the point. "Rebbe, I am very bothered by the question about the recent destruction. How can the slaughter of six million men, women, and children be explained from a Jewish-religious perspective – tzaddikim, holy and pure people? How is it possible that their spilled blood and burning tears did not rent all seven heavens? I seek a clear, unequivocal response from the Rebbe!"

The Rebbe listened to me with great attention and then he answered me calmly, "Are you familiar with basic principles of mathematics?"

"I know something," I answered.

length, width, or volume.

"The lesson is, if you understand this geometric concept, that with time you will also understand that what happened with the Jews in Europe is a "point" in time and space, but the line, the direction, continues with no end."

Although I was dazzled by the Rebbe's deep analysis, to tell you the truth, I was still a bit disappointed by his comparison.

"Rebbe," I continued, "**6 million Jewish souls** are merely a point? A tiny point in time and space? What about Divine Providence, the Father of Mercy, the One Who hears our prayers, and 'no man bangs his finger below etc.?'"

I think the Rebbe agreed that indeed, a philosophical-geometric abstraction did not sit well with such

take this tallis, he beseeched me. May Hashem protect you... That is the only legacy I can bequeath you.

I kept his last will and testament. While in the camp, I wrapped myself in my father's tallis and said Kaddish. My tortured brothers also used my tallis and said Kaddish. This tallis accompanied me to four concentration camps until it was burned along with the millions of Jews in Auschwitz.

However, the spirit of the tallis hovered constantly in the air ("the parchment was burning and the letters flying in the air"). As soon as I evaded the clutches of the Angel of Death, Dr. Mengele, may his name be erased, I said Kaddish again; I prayed Kol Nidrei in Auschwitz and said Kaddish; I fasted on Yom Kippur in Auschwitz and said Kaddish; the images in my mind led me to the victory cry of Fishel the Wagon Driver.

It was during the second Death March from the graveyard which was Mathausen, in April 1945. We were dragging ourselves along together with thousands of other living corpses, when I suddenly realized my name was being called. I turned and saw my fellow townsman, Fishel Perlgericht the Wagon Driver. He was our neighbor and when I was a boy he would take me for a ride in his wagon in exchange for my singing him "Shir HaMaalos." He worked very hard to support himself.

Now the heavens cried along with the rain, cold, and frost, but our tortured eyes had long since dried up. Night fell and exhausted people fell like flies on the damp and rocky ground. Many froze to death, but Fishel Leizer's took me between himself and his friend, warming my body all night. The next day, we continued on our Death March and in the general chaos I lost sight of him.

Then we came to the

This tallis accompanied me to four concentration camps until it was burned along with the millions of Jews in Auschwitz.

The Rebbe took a pen and drew a diagonal line on a clean piece of paper. In the upper left part of the line he made a dot.

"Tell me, what is the mathematical relationship between this line and the point?"

"Zero," I answered.

"That is the answer to all your questions," said the Rebbe. Then he explained, more or less, as follows:

"As you know, a geometric line consists of only one dimension. From a mathematical standpoint, you cannot determine the dimensions of a line because what characterizes it is its infinite length. The point, on the other hand, from the viewpoint of geometry, lacks any definition and dimension because it cannot be seen; it has no diameter,

an emotionally charged confusion and turbulence of the soul. He immediately pointed out that such an unprecedented tragedy could not truly be given a satisfactory explanation. However, "A believing Jew will understand this sooner or later..."

The Rebbe's summary of the subject touched my heart. The Rebbe spoke about the reward for neshamos, the holy ones, the eternity of the Jewish soul, etc., but my thoughts wandered once again, and this time, to the concentration camps, to the seven levels of hell.

Before my eyes stood my father on his last journey, as we parted forever. He went along with his little children, my little sister and nieces. I remember what he said: Avromtshe,

Gunzkirchen Forest full of swamps, utter starvation, rampant typhus, death and – the moment of liberation. Fishel Leizer's, my angel of rescue, appeared once again as though sprouting from the earth.

"Let us get out of this hell quickly, come Avremtche."

"But how," I mumbled. "I have no strength to go."

Fishel took my hand and together, we stumbled like shadows for about fifty meters. Suddenly Fishel called out, "Avrohom, listen. Before I leave this cursed place, I want to say Kaddish."

I found this hard to understand. "Kaddish?" "Why? For whom?" I asked.

"Avromtche, I see that you don't understand. Look around you and see how hundreds of bodies are lying about the swamps. I must say Kaddish. I must complete an important task that I always asked should come my way. I ask you to help me. You once learned Torah, right?"

"In a most unusual manner, I lost my wife and children... I want to say Kaddish for them, and for myself. I ask you to say amen after

me."

Fishel sighed and slowly bent down to the ground, rubbing the earth of the forest floor with his hands.

"What are you doing Fishel?"

"I am washing my hands."

He rubbed his hands on moist grass, stood up again, and in a weak and broken voice he began to say the Kaddish. After each line, I responded with amen.

When he finished the Kaddish, I suddenly felt ashamed. How was it that it didn't occur to me? Who would have thought that Fishel Leizer's the Wagon Driver, who people barely looked at or thought about, would have risen to such a lofty level – if not even higher than that...

I felt hot tears coursing from my dry eyes. They rolled down my dried up skeleton, fell on the grass and mixed with the morning dew on the cursed earth. I felt a certain sense of being uplifted and in my mind's eye I saw how the heavens opened and the angels, instead of chanting "Holy, holy," joined Fishel the Wagon Driver and his Kaddish.

Fishel completed his assignment

to hand me over, nearly dead, to the hospital in Weiles in upper Austria, and then he vanished. I never saw him again, but his Kaddish always dances before my eyes.

* * *

The Lubavitcher Rebbe continued his explanation, but in his voice I heard the Kaddish of Fishel Leizer's. Without any question, simply, he placed the tiny point among the other points and extended the geometric line of the Jewish spark. * He proved once again the eternal secret of the Jewish people, the existence of the long, infinite line, which cannot be limited or explained with simple logic.

Is that what the Rebbe intended? Did I understand the Rebbe's explanations at the time? Apparently not. Did the Rebbe indirectly rouse me on until he restored my memories about the elevated spirit of Fishel Leizer's the Wagon Driver? I believe so.

Either way, I do say Kaddish!

**Apparently the idea is that the Rebbe extended the line until it reached and touched the point, thus expressing that the point is an inseparable part of the eternity of Israel.*

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THE T'MIMIM COULD IMMERSE IN THE TEARS OF THE REBBEIM

*“If they knew how many tears I shed for the yeshivos that remained overseas and the few yeshivos that there are here, it would be possible to immerse the students in these tears!” * A compilation of stories and comments of our Rebbeim about Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim Lubavitch and its students, the T'mimim. * In honor of 15 Elul 1897, the day the yeshiva was founded.*

TOMCHEI T'MIMIM – GRANT US SUCCESS!

During a farbrengen, the Rebbe Rayatz announced:

“The yeshiva is called **Tomchei T'mimim**, and I ask everyone, those who are here and those who are not here: *hoshia na* (help us) – and they are guaranteed for this – *hatzlicha na* (grant us success).

(Likkutei Dibburim)

THE FOUNDING OF THE YESHIVA

The founder of Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim and its eternal leader, the Rebbe Rashab, relates:

Over the years, I was worried and sorrowful over the lackluster spiritual state and standing of the Chassidim. My heart would drip blood. Each time I visited the holy Ohel of my ancestors, the holy

Rebbeim, I poured out my bitter heart about the state and standing of the Chassidim and of Chassidus.

In the summer of 5656/1896, I visited the holy gravesites of our teacher, the Baal Shem Tov, our teacher, HaRav HaMaggid of Mezritch, the Alter Rebbe, and the Mittlerer Rebbe, and upon my return to Lubavitch I was at the holy gravesite of my grandfather, the Tzemach Tzedek, and my father, the Rebbe Maharash.

With their holy blessing, I began to organize a yeshiva, to raise Chassidishe bachurim with good character, devoted to the ways of Chassidus with mesirus nefesh. I was confident in the blessing of these holy Rebbeim that the yeshiva would be successful and the light of Torah and avoda will illuminate in Israel in general, and among Chassidim in particular.

On Chai Elul 5657/1897 the sun of Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim shone in the city of our fathers, the holy Rebbeim, Lubavitch.

(Seifer HaSichos 5701)

COVENANT WITH THE REBBE RASHAB

At the Simchas Torah farbrengen of 5661, three years after the founding of Tomchei T'mimim in Lubavitch, the Rebbe Rashab farbrenged with the T'mimim about their mission and purpose, a farbrengen that left a powerful impression on the listeners:

"It is *muvtach* (guaranteed) to me – and you know the difference between *muvtach* and *batuach* (certain) – that the talmidim of Tomchei T'mimim, in whatever condition they are, and in the four corners of the world, will actually realize, with self-sacrifice, the lofty intent of 'G-d desired for Himself a dwelling in the lower realms.'"

The Rebbe Rashab turned to his son, later the Rebbe Rayatz, and said:

"Acting dean, stand the army of Tomchei T'mimim at attention, I want to drink a l'chaim with them to mark the making of the covenant of avoda."

When the Rebbe Rayatz stood the T'mimim at attention, with the mashpiim and mashgichim at their head, the Rebbe Rashab arose and said:

"Talmidim of Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim, who learn

today in all of the departments and those who will learn in the future, those who are here and those who are not here, I make a covenant with you, a covenant of joint participation for avoda with self-sacrifice for Torah, fear of Heaven, and service of the heart, without concessions and compromises. 'May the law bore through the mountain,' i.e., may the 'law' of the 'Tzimtzum HaRishon' bore through the mountain of the Committee for the Dissemination of Enlightenment.

"'G-d creates the cure for the illness,' G-d preceded the cure of the founding of Tomchei T'mimim to the illness of the teachers of *haskala* and heresy. The talmidim, the T'mimim, will remedy this with the Torah and mitzvos that they disseminate."

(Otzar Sippurei Chabad)

LONG LIFE FOR TOMCHEI T'MIMIM

All the holy souls of the Rebbeim and the holy tzaddikim who are in Gan Eden, recommend for good, and arouse Heavenly mercy on all those who support and are involved in supporting the yeshiva Tomchei T'mimim, for them and their grandchildren, success and long life.

(Likkutei Dibburim)

THE TIME HAS COME TO EXPAND THE YESHIVA

When news came of the downfall of the czar and the democratization of the country, the Rebbe said:

Now is the time to establish yeshivos Tomchei T'mimim in all cities and towns. Now that the forces of enlightenment are expanding, we must establish many chadarim and yeshivos. Always, and in all things, the power of self-sacrifice will emerge victorious.

(Likkutei Dibburim)

NOW I KNOW

In the first period of the founding of Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim, the Rebbe Rashab, the founder of the yeshiva, had still not established how many hours a day the T'mimim should learn Chassidus.

Shortly after the yeshiva was founded, representatives of the Russian government arrived. Among the demands they made of the yeshiva's administration was that the Russian language be studied for four hours a day.

After the government representatives left, the Rebbe Rashab said: "Now I know how many hours a day they need to learn Chassidus."



THE ROLE OF THE MENAHEL OF TOMCHEI T'MIMIM

In 5672 the Rebbe Rashab was in Menton because of his health. When his son, later to be the Rebbe Rayatz who was the menahel of Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim, went to him, his father asked him, "Did you bring me the list of talmidim?"

When the Rebbe Rayatz said he did not have the list, his father said, "Then you are only half a guest."

The Rebbe Rayatz immediately sent a telegram home and asked that they send him the list. When the Rebbe Rashab received the list, he said, "What do people think, that being a menahel is a simple matter? You need to spill tears and recite T'hilim that every student will be a 'tree planted on streams of water.'"

their opinion, were not fit for their jobs. They wanted to add some senior students to the yeshiva's administration as representatives of the students.

In my presentations from time to time to my father about goings-on in Tomchei T'mimim, I fulfilled my obligation as menahel and told him that the talmidim were complaining about the mashgichim and mashpiim and they wanted senior talmidim to represent them in the hanhala.

My father answered all the questions in a set order and as always was my custom, I wrote it all down. Regarding the students' request, my father told me to tell them to see him on the next Monday or Wednesday at a certain time.

I told the talmidim what my father had said. The older talmidim, who were unhappy with my strict

complaints against the hanhala. Regarding your complaints, we should borrow the whip from Pesach the Wagon Driver. He has a way of driving certain lazy creatures.

"Indeed, the members of the administration of Tomchei T'mimim have a lofty spiritual task – not only to learn Chassidus and to speak regarding matters of avoda, but sometimes it is necessary to clean and retrain the student's ears of understanding and avoda so they can receive and absorb the p'nimius of the things being discussed.

"So the senior talmidim went through a lot, but the young talmidim need to be involved in avoda and to refine their bad middos!"

(Chanoch L'Naar)

"When a bachur comes in for yechidus regarding spiritual matters – that is my menucha (rest)."

IMMERSION IN THE REBBE'S TEARS

On another occasion, the Rebbe Rayatz said: If they knew how many tears I shed for the yeshivos that remained overseas and the few yeshivos that there are here, it would be possible to immerse the students in these tears!

(Seifer HaSichos 5703)

WHEN THE TALMIDIM COMPLAINED ABOUT THE HANHALA

The Rebbe Rayatz related:

When my father appointed me as "acting dean" of Tomchei T'mimim, some bachurim once came to me and complained about the mashgichim and mashpiim who, in

administration through the mashgichim and mashpiim, were very satisfied with the fulfillment of their request by my father. They took it as a sign that my father was not pleased by how I ran the yeshiva and they were confident in their success regarding their suggestion about a different makeup of the hanhala.

On the appointed day, when the talmidim were supposed to see my father, my father said to also call the mashpia R' Michoel, and he and R' Zev the mashgiach and I should be present as well. When we all entered – the hanhala and the older students – my father said:

"The acting menahel of Tomchei T'mimim told me the complaints of the talmidim and that you wanted me to set a time to listen to your

HOW DOES THE REBBE REST?

The way it was with the Rebbe Rashab was that sometimes the bachurim had yechidus with him regarding spiritual matters. When many guests came to Lubavitch, the assistant would push off the bachurim from time to time.

One time, after the Rebbe received many people for yechidus, the assistant let one of the bachurim into the Rebbe's room. One of the wealthy men was annoyed with the assistant and complained that he did not have mercy on the Rebbe, the proof being that after hours of yechidus he let in a yeshiva bachur.

The wealthy man did not stop with his censure and when he went into the Rebbe's room, he repeated what he had said, saying that the assistant should have pushed off the bachur for another time.

The Rebbe said, "When a bachur comes in for yechidus regarding spiritual matters – that is my *menucha* (rest)."

THE “ALEF” OF REDEMPTION

By Rabbi Chaim Ashkenazi, Rav, Chabad Community, Tel Aviv, Eretz Yisroel
Translated By Michoel Leib Dobry

It's not always easy to distinguish who's standing behind the “Alef” – the G-dly soul or the animal soul – as this will only be revealed in a clear and absolute manner in the future, at the arrival and hisgalus of the Rebbe MH”M. Excerpts from a chassidic farbrengen.



THE WHOLE WORLD IS ONE BIG “ALEF”

A participant at a chassidic farbrengen once asked: How do we carry out in practical terms the instructions and intention of the Rebbe shlita (“D’var Malchus,” Acharei-K’doshim, Emor 5751) that the avoda is to place the “Alef” into the gola (exile) and turn it into geula (Redemption)? In response, another chassid quipped: Don’t you understand? It’s similar to a guest who is asked by his host what he would like to eat, and he replies, “A shtikel broit, a shtikel fish, a shtikel fleish, a beigel, a bisele cholent, a marantz, etc.” (using an Alef – “A” this or “A” that – to introduce all these things).

Thus, if so many things can be included in “Alef,” what exactly is the

meaning?

In essence, we can preface this question with another one: Why was the chassid at that farbrengen so troubled? If you’re supposed to bring in the “Alef,” then you bring in the “Alef.” Why all the doubts?

The reason for the doubts is the constant war between the two souls – the G-dly and the animal – as each of them wants to rule over “the small city,” i.e., the body (as explained in Tanya, Chapter 9). It would seem that anyone with a brain in his head would want to be ruled only by the G-dly soul and not the other. Who would even consider being ruled by the animal soul? Who would agree to be an animal?

Yet, this would be a simple and correct assessment if one of the souls wanted to place an Alef within the

person’s life, whereas the other wanted to place a different letter. In such a case, the choice would be neither difficult nor complicated. However, since each soul wants to place specifically the Alef (and nothing but the Alef) within the person’s life at every moment, then maybe there’s no need to wage war?

But the Alef of the G-dly soul and the Alef of the animal soul only appear similar in an external sense. This is similar to the story of the young couple that came to their rav with a bizarre request. Their first son had just been born and they wanted no less than a divorce. Why? The wife insisted that the child be named after her father, who was a great rabbi and outstanding Torah scholar, and the husband demanded that his son be named after his father, who though just a wagon-driver, was a

simple, honest Jew who always conducted himself with the utmost modesty. A terrible argument broke out between them on the night before the child's bris, and it turned out that neither side was prepared to compromise. As a result, they concluded that the only viable course of action was to get divorced.

The rav quietly heard out the claimants, thought for a moment, and then came up with a brilliant idea. He turned to the husband and asked him, "Tell me, what was your late father's name?"

"Meir," the husband responded. "And what was your father's name?" he asked the wife. "Meir," she answered decisively.

The rav smiled and said, "If so, there is no problem. I have a solution that will bring you both a happy life together. Call the child Meir. If he will grow up to be a Torah scholar, he will be named after his mother's father, and if he will grow up to be a simple and honest Jew, he will be named after his father's father..."

Perhaps this also characterizes the essence of the war in our discussion. Everyone wants to bring the "Alef" into the framework of his life at every moment, in every situation, and at every event. The G-dly soul wants and desires to bring in the "Alef" of "Anochi," while the animal soul wants the "Alef" of "Ani." But it's not always easy to distinguish "Which Meir is he?" – i.e., who's standing behind the "Alef," the G-dly soul or the animal soul. This will only be revealed in a clear and absolute manner in the future, at the arrival and hisgalus of the Rebbe MH"M.

WHO'S THE BOSS OVER THE "ALEF"?

We have to know how to perceive every situation, and how to check and determine if it stems from the Alef of "Anochi Havaya Elokecha" (I am Hashem, your G-d), i.e., the world was created for Him, as is

stated, "If the Jewish People accept My Torah – good, and if not – I will return the world to a state of nothingness," or the Alef of "Ani V'Afsi Od" (me and nothing else).

The Rebbe Rashab gave us a hint when he said, "Anyone who expresses himself by saying, 'I must have this,' is detached from G-dliness, because he is led by the "Ani." In a similar vein, the Rebbe once referred to a letter he received from a young man who used phrases such as "I want," "I think," etc. The Rebbe shlita underlined the word I, and emphasized that this represented the yetzer ha'ra.

This matter exists on all levels – from the lowest person to the very highest and loftiest in Avodas Hashem. If the person wants to take for himself all the material things that begin with "Alef" (as brought in the above story at the farbrengen...), this represents a situation that ch"v obligates returning the world to a state of nothingness. However, if his only desire to give all the material things that begin with "Alef" to another, this is the ultimate purpose for which he was created.

There are numerous examples: If a person looks for a suitable match for his daughter only according to what is befitting the honor of his family, this derives from the aspect of "Ani V'Afsi Od." However, if he looks for a match suitable for his daughter's unique character and attributes, he is then acting from the strength of the Alef of "Anochi."

Similarly, if a person scolds his daughter that she is not acting like the daughter of a Torah scholar, this derives from the aspect of "Ani V'Afsi Od." However, if he berates himself over why he doesn't fulfill his obligations in order that his daughter will be the daughter of a Torah scholar, this comes from the Alef of "Anochi."

In short, someone motivated by the Alef of "Anochi" asks: What is

required of me? As in the chassidic saying on the pasuk, "Please, Hashem, as I am Your servant": They read the beginning of the verse as a question – "Ana Hashem?" When the word "Ana" is interpreted as "Where" (similar to the pasuk, "Where can I flee from Your presence?"), then the meaning is: Where does G-d want me to go? What do You want me to do? "For I am Your servant"!

ANXIOUS WHEN THE PHOTOGRAPHER COMES ALONG

Recently, certain members of Anash have been customarily striving to publicize and glorify their names at every possible opportunity, claiming that their intention is entirely for the purpose of publicizing the Rebbe, and not themselves in any way. This sounds exactly like the misnagdim of generations past who claimed that they were simply demanding the honor of the holy Torah and nothing for themselves ch"v. Yet, when this apparent honor was not given to them or was taken away from them, they saw no possibility of continuing to live. This is similar to the story of the "porush" who learned Torah for many years with great self-mortification. Each Friday, he would customarily sit on a large stone near the bathhouse, and the city dwellers would come up to him with great awe and respect to wish him a "Good Shabbos."

The Baal Shem Tov instructed that the stone should be removed from its place, and a short time afterwards, the "porush" passed away. The Baal Shem Tov explained that the porush's life force derived entirely from the honor he received, and when it disappeared, so did his vitality... This proves that he demanded the honor for his own sake, and not for G-d.

Even in our times, we see similar modes of conduct. There are people who are involved entirely on how to publicize themselves in the print and electronic media. They try to appear and speak only on weekdays, when their presence at a given event can be photographed and they can choose exactly which picture to put in the papers – the one where they appear in the middle. For this purpose, they are prepared to expend much time, money, and energy, and they also check if anyone else is trying to get some recognition and whether it will be at their expense or not...

We can see these people in action whenever there is a photographer in the vicinity: They make all types of clever maneuvers to get in the picture

their breath about their lack of publicity is because they are thinking about the Rebbe, and their lives are nothing except for the Rebbe... The truth is, however, that this represents yet another of the many examples of conduct that stems from building one's personage upon the foundations of the Alef of "Ani V'Afsi Od."

What exactly is the yardstick through which a chassid can properly distinguish which Alef is motivating his actions? He can ask himself: Am I devoting my efforts to determining whether my intentions are really for the sole purpose of fulfilling the Rebbe's wishes? When? How much time? If he is unable to investigate properly the truth of the matter,

similarly a harsh person, "a man of evil," must reach a state of "giving up his thoughts," forsake his harshness. A proud and stern person has a problem with his "Alef," through which he expresses his rigid opinions. Thus, he spreads himself out over the entire shul and everyone steps all over him.

This concept is also inferred from the well-known story of the chassid who complained to the Alter Rebbe in yechidus about his difficulties, saying that "I need this, I need that (sustenance, health, nachas from my children, etc.)..." The Alter Rebbe's reply: You're telling me only what you need – meaning that you're only troubled by the Alef of "Ani V'Afsi Od." But you don't ask about why you are needed – i.e., the need to bring in the Alef of "Anochi" doesn't concern you at all!

The Rebbe once referred to a letter he received from a young man who used phrases such as "I want," "I think," etc. The Rebbe shlita underlined the word I, and emphasized that this represented the yetzer ha'ra.

– sitting at the "table of honor" or moving in the direction of the photographer at the correct and defining moment, etc. – all with the innocent assertion that "Ich main nahr der Rebbe" (my only intention to glorify the Rebbe's name)!

If these efforts do not prove successful, they reason that they are allowed to engage in slander and unruly behavior against those who have insulted the Rebbe! Since they did not cater to their demands, they are not worthy of any expressions of Ahavas Yisroel. They try to show how they emulate Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, who said, "I have no existence unto myself whatsoever," and the fact that they mutter under

there's another proposed gauge: Check and see how much time and effort he invests in publicizing his fellow chassid, who is also actively involved in the service of the Rebbe MH"M...

The battle with the Alef of "Ani" appears in numerous chassidic stories. For example, a chassid once complained to the Tzemach Tzedek that people trampled on him wherever he was in shul, gave him no consideration and degraded him. The Tzemach Tzedek replied with an explanation of the pasuk: "The wicked shall give up his way, and the man of evil his thoughts."

Just as it is necessary for "the wicked [to] give up his way,"

WHY SPECIFICALLY AN "ALEF"?

It's not for naught that the letter Alef was chosen, as opposed to a "Shlos Mem," which is square in shape and thus much easier to place into a person's whole existence. Furthermore, if the letter were a Samech, which is round, it would slip right in without any exertion.

In this light, it might be possible to understand why the sleep of the Jewish People on the night before Mattan Torah caused G-d such displeasure. The Rebbe MH"M explains that they wanted to receive the Torah without any effort or exertion, similar to placing a Samech, a "Shlos Mem," or even a little "Yud" of G-dliness into our daily lives. As has been said in the name of our Torah giants, every Jew wants to be a gaon – but on two conditions: a) it should be done all in one night; b) he'll be sleeping at the time...

Thus, it's not a Samech, a "Shlos Mem," or a Yud that bring the G-dly plan into fruition, but specifically an

“Alef,” which resembles someone with hands and feet capable of pushing and kicking. This means that the Alef doesn’t enter the guise of life so easily, without any effort. It wants to transform the person, not just him, but his family – his wife and children. If they’re not going in the same direction as him, then he has to figure out how to get the “Alef” into them as well.

There’s a story about a prominent Chabad supporter who came to the Rebbe MH”M, and complained that his wife was unwilling to accept a life in the path of Torah. The Rebbe replied that she apparently thinks that G-d is with her and not with you. “How can she even think such a thing?” the man asked. “I’m the one who’s observing Torah and mitzvos, not her.” The Rebbe said that she apparently thinks that your Torah observance is merely in order to annoy her, and therefore, such a G-d (such an Alef!) she is unwilling to accept.

When the man asked how he could prove that he really wants to fulfill Torah and mitzvos because he is a Jew, the Rebbe suggested that he choose a particular mitzva to fulfill stringently for the next year, one that will clearly show his wife that he’s doing it solely to fulfill G-d’s Will, and this will bring her to follow him and do mitzvos as well.

The man requested that the Rebbe suggest which mitzva would be most appropriate in this case, and the Rebbe replied: There is such a mitzva – the mitzva to honor one’s wife more than himself... It stands to reason after conducting himself in this fashion, the man succeeded in bringing the Alef of “Anochi” into his entire family.

ALEF IN ATTIRE, ALEF IN KASHRUS, ALEF IN OUR MANNER OF SPEAKING

It is, therefore, understood that the Alef must be the driving force in

matters between us and our fellow Jews, and not just those between mitzvos between us and G-d, and a person must check himself thoroughly to determine which Alef is guiding his conduct. This can be based upon the way a person decides what clothes to wear – the color of his tie, the size of his kippa, if his beard looks properly combed and groomed (maybe even trimmed ch”v...). For the truth is that he really wants (r”l) to look like a model – and he gives the excuse that he’s worried that he might make a chillul Hashem, and therefore, since he has to meet with all types of people who are not necessarily chassidim or the like, he dresses the way he does. This is called placing the Alef of “Ani”...and the best proof is that not only he is not worried about stating these worthless excuses, he’s even proud of them...

Anyone who places the Alef of “Anochi Hashem Elokecha” into everything he does must above all make certain that his external appearance is appropriate, in accordance with chassidic custom over the years, and similarly regarding the external appearance of the members of his household. Only the Shulchan Aruch can give us the necessary sanction – and not just regarding food, but regarding all matters of attire and appearance! Everyone knows that such subjects are discussed explicitly in Shulchan Aruch, however, prior to fulfilling them, a person must accept absolutely that only the Shulchan Aruch determines the proper mode of conduct in his home. This is the Alef of “Anochi.”

Anyone whose community and environment feeds on the print and electronic media, signs and billboards, etc., all of which determine how they look, how they speak (in what slang...), how their public functions appear or where they appear – it’s interesting to consider when was the last time they

checked what Shulchan Aruch says about these things? Does Hashem your G-d walk in their midst or does ch”v the evil dwell among them? They take the Alef of “Anochi” and whittle down the corners until it turns into a Samech or a “Shlos Mem,” and then it goes smoothly into their little world.

To put it mildly, this possibly relates to the saying of our Sages, of blessed memory, regarding the Samech and “Shlos Mem” in the luchos at Mattan Torah, which “miraculously stood in place.” This means that it’s a miracle that they still have a little Yiddishkait, since they claim that they’re still chassidim in spite of this totally reckless approach.

Why do they think that there’s room in “Anochi” for such an incorrect mode of conduct, or as in the words of the Rebbe shlita – conduct of “goyishkait”? Are they the ones to be telling us how to instill the Sh’china within our Daled amos, or how the Shulchan Aruch will guide our lives as chassidim?

Such a phenomenon does not exist in the concepts of this world: Would a businessman ever entertain the thought that he should get ideas on how to bring in clients for his business from cannibals who don’t have the slightest notion whatsoever of a business or a store? Would someone learning how to drive a bus check how a wagon-driver and donkey pull a cart?

A TORAH “ALEF” AGAINST AN AGGRESSIVE “ALEF”

In reference to what are these examples? Is there someone appropriate who can tell us how we place G-d into our world, apart from G-d Himself in all His glory, or those who emit the Word of G-d from their mouths? Those who do not recognize G-d’s existence, particularly those who insult and

scoff at the idea of a G-d in the world, have absolutely no right whatsoever to express an opinion on this matter.

How do we find this Divine guidance? In the entire Torah, which provides the instructions on how to place the Alef of “Anochi” in our lives – twenty-four hours a day! Every comma, every saying of our Sages, of blessed memory, particularly in Shulchan Aruch, and even more particularly in the teachings of chassidus – all are the Torah of life!

So said a chassid, who heard an interpretation from the Alter Rebbe on the pasuk “‘Observe’ and ‘Remember’ in one utterance” – observe and remember the One G-d in every utterance. And if you have neither found nor revealed this in every single pasuk, etc., then ask – but don’t say that the Torah does not have the necessary guidance for every situation that I encounter.

It would also be appropriate to test the assumption that it’s difficult to place the “Alef” because it doesn’t have an easy shape, as does the Samech and the “Shlos Mem.” The truth is that this is totally incorrect!

It is possible to understand this point in accordance with the statement of the Alter Rebbe: What is an “Alef”? A ‘Yud’ above, a ‘Yud’ below – bittul at the beginning, bittul at the end. Then there remains a line that passes into the p’nimius more easily than the Samech. However, if there is a ‘Yud’ of yeshus at the beginning, and a ‘Yud’ of yeshus at the end, it is simply impossible to place such an “Alef” inside a person. It is bound to bring forth idol worship with hands and feet, and it will get stuck in a variety of ways – grabbing, kicking, smacking, spitting, attacking... There’s no way possible to manage with such a type!

Thus, we learn Torah, particularly chassidus, and we daven

with special devotion and contemplation, both before and during davening, in order to distinguish the proper and desired Alef to instill within our lives in these final days of exile.

Thus, we sit at farbrengens – to hear how chassidim, both past and present, inserted and insert the Alef of “Anochi Hashem Elokecha,” giving it its honored and proper place. In addition, we can discover how the animal soul tries in all its cunning ways of deception to push in the Alef of “Ani V’Afsi Od” through seemingly kosher methods and other obviously unkosher ones, making excuses that reality makes this inevitable, everyone does it (!), times have changed, “you can’t have it all,” etc.

This is the reason why we travel to the Rebbe, preparing ourselves accordingly well in advance, in order to be a proper vessel to receive the correct direction and strengths for our main avoda of placing the Alef of “Alufo Shel Olam” (Master of the World) into the gola (exile) and transform it into geula (Redemption).

PREPARING FOR ELUL AS WE PREPARE FOR THE REDEMPTION

By the same token, a Jew begins his preparations for the month of cheshbon nefesh – Elul. He sums up the Alef of the past year and prepares for the upcoming year, according to the guidance provided by the acronym “Ani L’Dodi V’Dodi Li” – giving the “Ani” to “Dodi”!

At every opportunity throughout the year, and not just during the month of Elul, this is the cheshbon nefesh we must make: Which Alef am I using? Maybe I’m actually looking for easier letters, and bringing all the aforementioned excuses...

As the chassidic saying goes, “A

tirutz iz a ganav” (an excuse is a thief), as is written, “If you see a thief and run (taratz, similar to tirutz – make an excuse) with him.” A thief has plenty of excuses to justify his acts of thievery, and therefore, he stays a thief. So too with me – after all the excuses, where am I? Where is the Alef of “Anochi”?

When we are in the period of “Here comes Moshiach,” and then “The world will be filled with the knowledge of G-d as the sea fills the ocean bed” – just as the sea is all water and appears as nothing other than water, similarly, in the days of Moshiach, when there will be a true state of bittul, the Yud above and the Yud below will diminish themselves and assist the line in the middle of the Alef – the line representing fear of G-d – in inserting its entire being, and then the Alef of “Anochi” fulfills its entire existence.

Thus, we will eventually have the complete infusion of the Alef into the gola and its transformation into geula very soon indeed – so why do we have to work so hard to achieve this? Because in the days of Moshiach, there will be a clear reflection of the level of our efforts to instill the G-dly Alef: For someone who worked towards this objective during the exile, the G-dliness penetrates in a most impressive and proper manner, arousing much honor, whereas, in someone who delayed in this avoda, the Alef appears stuck and strained, like a ring in a pig’s nose ch”v. So while even a pig will be a clean animal in the days of Moshiach, nevertheless, it remains a pig...

The Redemption is really coming, and we must hasten our avoda in order that we shall merit to be united with the G-dly Alef in a complete state of unity – “as the sea fills the ocean bed.” Amen. May it be His Will.

‘THEY BELIEVED IN HASHEM AND IN MOSHE, HIS SERVANT’

By Y. Ben Menachem

*As we start to think about the new school year, let's hear what five mechanchim, who have experience with grades 3-6 and preschool, have to say about the simple faith that children have that the Rebbe is Moshiach, about his Kashrus for children who never saw the Rebbe, and about traveling to 770. * Although this discussion took place 11 years ago, it is as relevant as ever. Part 2 of 3*

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[Continued from last week]

There are parents who take their child to visit 770. How should the child's rebbi prepare him for the trip and what should the farbrengen, upon the child's return, be about?

R' Rosenfeld: When there is a child in the class who is going to the

Rebbe, the rebbi has to make sure the child does not feel let down by his not seeing the Rebbe. In order to ensure that he won't be disappointed, the melamed needs to explain two things: 1) The Rebbe is there, 2) something the Rebbe himself told us – the place itself is holy, “holiness does not move from its place.” This is the place where

the Rebbe Rayatz lived for ten years and the Rebbe has been there for over 50 years. This is “Beis Rabeinu Sh'B'Bavel” and “Beis Moshiach,” as the Rebbe himself said.

When the child returns, he will find it a bit hard to describe his experiences since he can't say what the Rebbe did and what the Rebbe said. However, he can describe the

atmosphere there. So the melamed needs to guide him to tell everything he saw there.

If the mechanech prepares the child properly, there is a chance that the boy will absorb the sense that people today are behaving in 770 just as they did when the Rebbe was visible to all. This feeling is expressed in physical ways, just as awe of the Mikdash was expressed in physical ways. When the mechanech draws the child's attention to these things, upon his return, the child will talk about the feeling he sensed in 770 – that the Rebbe is here, and even if I don't see him, I feel that he is here.

R' Kaplan: As R' Rosenfeld said, if a child always needed guidance before a trip to the Rebbe, then today, a child needs this guidance more than ever. The question is how we can prepare him so that he has something to say upon his return.

In earlier years, this question did not arise because there were new things happening every day, things the child could relate. If we take 5752 for example, special things with the Rebbe occurred every day – the t'fillos, farbrengens, sichos, dollars, which took place many times that year, the bracha on the Rebbe's lulav and esrog in his presence, etc. A child that experienced a Tishrei like that could talk for hours about what he saw.

Today though, it's hard to find things for the child to talk about when he returns to school. That is why the child needs to be guided to focus on the atmosphere in 770, namely an atmosphere of anticipation for the Rebbe to be revealed.

Even a young child can see how people stand in awe near the Rebbe's place, how people are living with the feeling that any minute now the Rebbe will walk in. It is this atmosphere that the child's attention needs to be drawn to, and during the farbrengen with his classmates he should convey this to his friends.

R' Gold: You know the saying: it is worth looking at the eyes that looked into the eyes of the Rebbe. So too, we can say that when a child goes to 770 and sees the place where the Rebbe farbrenged for decades, the place where the Rebbe davened for decades, and from where he distributed kuntreisim and dollars, it will have a positive effect on him. That is why it is very worthwhile for children to go to 770. This approach needs to be

instilled in the children – that just being in the place is enough to increase their Chassidishkeit and hiskashrus to the Rebbe.

R' Reinitz: Being in 770 helps us feel how the Rebbe is with us. On a personal note, I went on a family trip to Baltimore. I met someone who asked me, "How can you live in Crown Heights? Doesn't it hurt to see it empty? I went there after 3 Tammuz only one time and can't go there again. It's too painful to be in 770 and not see the Rebbe. It's depressing."

I said, "It's just the opposite! When I go **away** from 770, I feel I missed a farbrengen, I feel that I am missing the Rebbe, that I left the Rebbe (as it were). When I'm in Crown Heights, it's much easier, because when you see how they sing before every t'filla and at the end of each t'filla, just as though they see the Rebbe, it gives you the feeling that the Rebbe is actually here."

What can we have children do to deepen their connection to the Rebbe?

R' Rosenfeld: In yeshiva there are various campaigns and we always emphasize that the purpose is to give the Rebbe nachas, and that by participating he is connecting to the Rebbe by doing what the Rebbe wants.

Aside from that, I try to accustom the children to make good resolutions and to carry them out, in order to connect to the Rebbe.

One of the best ways to get children to make good resolutions is by writing a pidyon nefesh to the Rebbe. Before the children write the pidyon nefesh, their teacher explains that in order to be worthy of receiving the Rebbe's brachos, they need to make a "vessel" for the bracha.

This vessel is made through positive resolutions. I always try to emphasize to the children that a good resolution does not mean that from now on I will be a big *masmid*. That's not practical and it won't work. A good resolution means to take on something small, something I can stick to.

When a child sticks to the resolution he made, each time he does the thing he resolved to do he is reminded that he is doing it because he wrote a pidyon nefesh to the Rebbe. This gives him the feeling that he is giving nachas to the Rebbe and is connecting to the Rebbe. In this way, the child "lives" each day with the Rebbe and





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--Rabbi Nachum Kaplan

with hiskashrus to the Rebbe.

R' Gold: As I mentioned before, children are influenced not by lectures, but by personal example. So I always try to carry out the Rebbe's hora'os. When I enter my classroom after davening, I want it to be after I have already done the daily *Chitas* and *HaYom Yom* and everything the Rebbe wants of me. When the children see a melamed who fulfills the Rebbe's hora'os, it makes a deep impression on them.

R' Kenig: Every day, after davening, we say the Rebbe's kapitel. We said the Rebbe's kapitel every day before 3 Tammuz too, but back then we did not emphasize that by saying it, we were connecting more to the Rebbe. Today I emphasize this and speak about it from time to time.

Just as with a picture of the Rebbe, the Rebbe writes that by looking at it you can attain a sort of yechidus, so too, by properly concentrating on the Rebbe's kapitel, your hiskashrus is improved.

R' Reinitz: As far as the giving of tz'daka being a substitute for fasting, it is explained in Chassidus that since the money a person gives to tz'daka did not fall from heaven, but he worked hard for it, therefore, when he gives this money to tz'daka, he is giving his very life

away.

For a child, his "life" is playing during recess. Every teacher knows how important recess is to a child. So the greatest present a child can give the Rebbe is learning something special for the Rebbe **during recess.**

It is difficult to describe what a sacrifice this is from a child, but there's no question that when a child dedicates his recess time to learning Mishnayos by heart to give nachas to the Rebbe, it creates a strong soul bond which is etched deep in his soul.

Every day I see how the children sit in class during recess and review Mishnayos and I think there is no greater sacrifice than this, on the part of children. This connection is not one-sided, of course, for I see the Rebbe's bracha in this mitvta.

R' Kaplan: The law from the Ministry of Education states that every school has to have a teacher on duty during recess to supervise the children as they play. There are usually arguments that break out over all sorts of nonsense. Sometimes it's enough for a child to touch the ball out of turn for a fight to occur. Who do they complain to? To the teacher on duty, of course.

This is a good opportunity to get the child to sacrifice something for the Rebbe. When the teacher

explains that if he gives in to his friend, he will be fulfilling mitvta Ahavas Yisrael, and the child gives in, in order to give the Rebbe nachas – this is a big sacrifice for his hiskashrus to the Rebbe.

Since the Rebbe told us to "live with Moshiach," how do you get the children to do this when years are going by without the complete Redemption?

R' Rosenfeld: This question is an old one. It says regarding Torah, "every day they should be regarded as new in your eyes." How can this be? The only answer is, when you operate with the infinite power of Atzmus, you can live with the feeling that every day it is new.

The practical solutions for living with these subjects and not allowing them to fade are: 1) intensive learning of inyanei Moshiach and Geula at set times so the child is deeply affected by the consistency of the learning, 2) not to stop talking to the children about Moshiach's imminent coming and our having to prepare for this, 3) to explain that the Rebbe is Moshiach.

These topics should be discussed in the classroom. Just as with anything that's repeated that ultimately sinks in, so too with inyanei Moshiach and Geula, ultimately they will penetrate deeply

within the child's consciousness.

Another thing, since Moshiach and Geula are integral parts of Torah and mitzvos, we need to live with it as we do other mitzvos. What do we do when we want to teach the children the importance of t'filla? Aside from talking about it, we have various mivtzaim that revolve around t'filla. So too with Moshiach and Geula – we need to have many mivtzaim on this topic. The children can memorize ten aphorisms about Geula and this definitely contributes a lot towards the children "living" with Moshiach, and as the Rebbe said, you can see Moshiach in the children.

R' Kaplan: I think that if we continue with the Rebbe's inyanim with the faith that nothing happened on 3 Tammuz, you won't see any weakening among the children. If, however, the children feel that there's a change in the teacher, there's reason to fear a diminishment in the children's excitement in Geula.

If the teacher continues to mention the Rebbe with the same enthusiasm as before 3 Tammuz, there is no reason to think that the children will not also live with inyanei Moshiach and Geula.

Aside from that, the rallies that take place every so often in school,

watching videos, etc., enable the children to live in an atmosphere of Moshiach. When a child sees how the Rebbe encourages the singing of "Yechi" or the singing of "Sh'Yibaneh Beis HaMikdash," it greatly inspires the children to live more with Moshiach and Geula.

In the Talmud Torah in Lud, we have a contest every year to learn *Tanya* and Mishnayos by heart. Since we teach the children that this is being done as part of an array of activities to prepare ourselves and the world to greet Moshiach, with every Mishna and chapter of *Tanya* that they learn, they feel that this is hastening the Geula. This feeling spurs them on to learn even more and I can tell you that in my classroom several children learned the first twelve chapters of *Tanya* by heart.

R' Kenig: When the teacher connects everything to Moshiach, then the child learns that every good deed opens the door to Moshiach, and every negative deed closes the door to Moshiach. For example, every so often, before davening, I talk to the children for a few minutes about the significance of every good deed toward hastening the Geula. This way, the concepts about Moshiach and Geula become everyday talk for the children.

This is actually what the Rebbe stressed at the Kinus HaShluchim 5752 – that today, everything you do, every good deed, every new contest, is all to greet Moshiach. Today, says the Rebbe, Moshiach is the gateway through which everything else goes, and this point is a very important one to instill in children.

Just as with Mivtza T'fillin we know that today we do it with the intention that it hastens the Geula, so too when we put on t'fillin ourselves. We need to think how by doing this we are hastening the Geula. Likewise with everything the children do, all their mitzvos – they need to feel that every one of their mitzvos is another step in the direction of the goal, kabbalas p'nei Moshiach.

It is we, the teachers, who have the obligation to instill this in the children. This feeling is not instilled via one-time projects but in daily behavior that expresses this message.

R' Gold: Here too, I will take the same approach. If there is emuna, emuna does not weaken. If there is no emuna, there is nothing to talk about. When you have the foundation of emuna, you don't need to strengthen it.

I have never heard this question



For a child, his "life" is playing during recess. Every teacher knows how important recess is to a child. So the greatest present a child can give the Rebbe is learning something special for the Rebbe during recess.

--Rabbi Moshe Reinitz

asked about belief in Hashem. How do we strengthen emuna in Hashem after thousands of years of emuna. The reason is because emuna is not man-made. Emuna is super-rational and therefore, it does not fall sway to the rule of nature which imposes a “law of aging” on everything that endures X number of years.

Obviously, we need projects that instill a chayus in Moshiach not only in the G-dly soul but also in the animal soul of the children, so that their animal souls will want Moshiach. As the Rebbe once said: For the G-dly soul to want Moshiach – that’s nothing new. The “chochma” is that the animal soul should also want Moshiach.

When I want to make the topic come alive for the children, I am very limited because what can you tell a three-year-old already. You can’t learn inyanei Moshiach with them and what else is there?

This problem was solved with the production of the tape called, *Ohr B’ketzei HaMinhara* (*Light at the End of the Tunnel*). The truth is, I was thrilled to see this because it’s just right for little children and it makes the prophecies about Yemos HaMoshiach come alive for them.

I play this tape nearly every day and many of the children in the school come over at recess to listen to *Life in Yemos HaMoshiach*. They don’t find it boring, even if I play it every day.

R’ Reinitz: Until 3 Tammuz, the children did not feel that they lacked Moshiach that much. They could



As the Rebbe once said: For the G-dly soul to want Moshiach – that’s nothing new. The “chochma” is that the animal soul should also want Moshiach.

--Rabbi Aharon Gold

see the Rebbe nearly every day and that was enough for them. Today, because we don’t see the Rebbe, the children feel the need to do various things to bring the Geula.

Naturally, when you are involved with something, you “live” with that thing. When you work on things to bring the Geula, you are living with the Geula.

If you are still looking for ways to live with Moshiach, the Rebbe told us how to do it – by learning inyanei Moshiach and Geula. If we want to implement this, we need to be consistent with daily study so that the children get used to living with Moshiach.

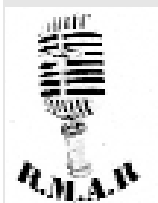
Another thing the Rebbe says in one of the sichos of 5752 is that when you live with Moshiach, it leads you to the point that with every thing you do, you emphasize

before you do it that this is in order to hasten the hisgalus. So in order to get the children to live with Moshiach all day, we connect everything to the hisgalus of Moshiach.

For example, when we learn Mishnayos by heart, the children know that this mitvza hastens the Geula. It spurs them on to learn more and more, learning to give the Rebbe nachas and to hasten the Geula. They live with Geula and Moshiach all day.

Every classroom has a tape recorder and during recess, as the children sit and learn Mishnayos, the tape plays niggunim of Nicho’ach and niggunim from the Rebbe’s farbrengens. It makes for a very Chassidishe environment in the classroom. I think this should be implemented in every school.

[To be continued be”H]



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HASHEM SENT HIM SIGNS

By Sholom Dovber Crombie

He left a religious home, knowing good and well what he was leaving behind. Like waves crashing on the shore, his soul repeatedly crashed on the rocks of Judaism until he found his way.

I met Shimi Ben-Mocha for the first time during the year of K'vutza in Beis Chayeinu. His appearance resembled those of the other T'mimim and nothing betrayed his unusual past and the long road he took until he returned to his roots. A year later I had the opportunity to hear his fascinating story, which consisted of a long and winding route until he became a baal t'shuva.

Today, Shimi is a mashgiach in the Chabad yeshiva in Ramat Aviv. He guides beginners and helps them out as someone who knows where they've been and truly understands them.

* * *

Shimi grew up in a religious community in Petach Tikva. He attended the local religious school and his father worked as a sofer and prepared boys for their bar mitzva. While in school, he began to feel estranged from Judaism.

He felt a disdain for mitzvos, and the Jewish way of life seemed pointless to him.

When he completed his schooling, he was drafted. While in the army, Shimi finished the sad process, removing his kippa and abandoning Torah and mitzvos. At that stage of his life, searching for meaning in life was not of interest to him.

During the years that followed, he finished his army service and moved to Tel Aviv, where he worked in the fashion industry. Within a short time he entered Tel Avivian life with his religious past completely obliterated. He found himself becoming more and more a part of the night life and he divided his life between exhausting work that took up most of his time and empty entertainment.

He took a six-month trip to the Far East, but this was not a

spiritual search, just a way to let go of stress and a release from the pressured life he led in Tel Aviv, nothing more than that. Upon his return to Israel, he was appointed to a senior position in the Telephone company. He intended on throwing himself into business without a thought to his spiritual life.

Life could have gone on this way for a long time, but one day, someone suggested he attend a "spirituality festival" in the south of the country. Shimi enjoyed the festival and he decided to quit his job and move to live in a commune that was set up at that time in the Shittim desert.

In hindsight he realizes that everything that took place at that commune was idol worship and devotion to the forces of impurity. Shimi became interested in meditation and spiritual development that results from asceticism. He also liked the fact that these same people spoke a lot about accepting people as they are, as well as living within the bosom of nature. He was drawn to this way of life.

After Shimi felt that he had gotten whatever he could from the commune, he left and moved to a nature spot in the north. He

didn't miss a single festival that took place in Eretz Yisroel, and after a while he became one of the people who organized a series of mysticism festivals.

The more Shimi got involved in the world of festivals and the various techniques of divestiture from physicality, the more confused and purposeless he felt. After feeling this way for a long time, he came to the conclusion that this too was not the path to happiness in life. He did not know where to turn.

One night he had a dream in

which he saw himself touring in India when he suddenly passed through a mall to a place where he saw dozens of bearded men wearing hats and suits, who turned to him and smiled. When he woke up, he tried to think whether he had ever been in a place like that before, but he concluded that he had never been anywhere where he saw so many chareidim.

He tried to go back to sleep with disturbing thoughts about what his dream signified, but as he slept he dreamt he was in the

same place and then saw himself in a small room with a large desk and empty chair.

He woke up feeling upset with the people who smiled at him. When he fell asleep once again, he dreamt he was in that same empty room. Then he suddenly fled the room and found himself back in the mall. The moment he returned to the mall, his angry feeling about the men ceased.

It was only years later that Shimi discovered that the large place where he had seen all those men was 770 and that the little room was the Rebbe's room, with the desk and chair that he saw in the dream the very same desk and chair that belong to the Rebbe!

The next day, Shimi sat and wondered about the meaning of his strange dream as he heard someone on the television playing in the background reciting a verse of T'hillim. Suddenly, he burst into tears. He felt these weren't ordinary tears but tears that came from a deep part of his soul, which despised a life lacking all purpose and was seeking genuine, inner peace.

Since at this time in his life, Shimi was involved with Eastern religions, he understood his tears as coming from the inner point of a man removed from the physical world. These days, he knows to explain that it was his neshama crying out.

At that moment, he felt that G-d was signaling to him and that he needed to make a courageous move and return to a life of Torah and mitzvos. On the one hand, he yearned for a real change that would bring him happiness in life. On the other hand, the fact that he had spent so many years running away from Judaism, made him not want to deal with any thoughts of t'shuva.

At this point, Shimi decided to



travel the world. He bought a one-way ticket and had no idea when he planned on returning. One thought kept on running through his mind and that was, if after all the spiritual experiences he had had in life he still felt empty, where could he find the truth? An inner voice told him to leave Israel in the hopes that in traveling the world he would find truth.

A few days later, Shimi was on a plane on his way to an international nature festival in Europe. He put the dream out of his mind as well as the experience

worship and spiritual paths.

During the day, Shimi spent his time studying various spiritual approaches, trying to slake the mighty thirst he felt upon leaving Israel. Every evening, after returning to his room with a feeling of purposelessness, he would find comfort in a small book of Chassidus that he had taken along with him. He read it after his daily meditation and felt at peace with it.

At the end of the first month, Shimi decided to leave the festival and along with a group of about thirty people, he went to the

had eaten.

When he got up the next day, he went to the beach and sat and watched the waves breaking on the shore. For the second time in such a short span of time he burst into tears. He sat near the water and sobbed for quite a while, without being able to stop the tears. He realized that his neshama was crying out, "Save me!"

When he calmed down, he began to think things through. He knew he was at the furthest point he could reach and now he could only head in one direction. The path was clear to him: truly approaching G-d and fulfilling Torah and mitzvos. As soon as this thought passed through his mind, he was gripped by fear, for he did not see himself returning to the life he had as a child, but he knew there was nowhere else to go. Whatever he would do would not help him run away from that strong desire to connect to Hashem.

He remained on the French shore for a few more days in order to further analyze where he was heading. Then he left for Italy, where he found work picking grapes on a farm. The physical labor enabled him to think, and he was provided with a place to sleep.

When he first started working, his employer told him he could choose one day a week as his day off. Shimi decided to take the opportunity and chose Shabbos. At least this way, he figured, he would not have to work on Shabbos. This was Shimi's first step in the direction of a religious life.

A few days after he started working, as he was busy in the vineyard, it suddenly struck Shimi that it was Erev Rosh HaShana. He continued thinking about Rosh

When he got up the next day, he went to the beach and sat and watched the waves breaking on the shore. For the second time in such a short span of time he burst into tears. He sat near the water and sobbed for quite a while, without being able to stop the tears. He realized that his neshama was crying out, "Save me!"

he had the following day in which he heard the verse of T'hilim, and tried getting back to his usual routine. At the same time though, he knew that he would soon have to change his way of life, in which direction, he still did not know.

The first month of the nature festival was uneventful. This is a festival that takes place in the Pyrenees Mountains between France and Spain. It is attended by about 3000 people from all over the world. The festival consists of programs and workshops about all forms of idol

Mediterranean Sea on the coast of France.

The first evening, Shimi sat with his friends and saw that two types of meals had been prepared for them, one vegetarian and one of seafood. For some reason, he chose the non-kosher seafood meal, but this was followed by deep pangs of conscience, even though he was not at all observant. Why had he chosen the treif food when he could have taken the vegetarian one? He went to sleep with these thoughts and felt terrible about the food he



A conversation with a tourist during Shimi's process of kiruv

HaShana with memories of holidays at home coming to mind and pressing on his heart.

He felt that he did not want to work on Rosh HaShana, yet he did not want to stop working when he had made a commitment to his employer. When Shimi recounts this part of his story he describes it like this: "I kept going back and forth. I felt an inner voice calling me to leave the harvest and not desecrate the holy day, but I pushed this thought away and tried to focus on my work.

"Then I heard the boss stop the work and announce that we would not be working for the next three days because the storage bins were full to capacity! I knew this was not a regular occurrence on a professional farm and that it was nothing but the hand of G-d that enabled me not to desecrate the holiday.

"The next morning I happily boarded the train for the city of Firenze in the hopes of finding a shul. I found a little shul and after years of not attending a shul, I took a machzor and joined the

t'filla. I sought a special feeling. I wanted the spiritual experience to sweep me away, but it didn't happen.

"After the davening I began looking for a Chabad house, knowing that I would find some spiritual sustenance there. I was disappointed when I saw a notice on the Chabad house door which said it was closed for the High Holidays since the shliach had gone to organize t'fillos in the Jewish community of Bologna. I went back to the farm."

Another week went by and the following Shabbos, Shimi decided to visit the famous museums in Firenze. When he found out that the cost was more than he could afford, he decided to try the shul he visited on Rosh HaShana again. At the shul he met the shliach of the Chabad house. The shliach invited him to his home for a delightful Shabbos meal. There he also met Rabbi Yaakov Har-Tzvi, who invited him to join him on Yom Kippur in the Jewish community of Bologna. Shimi happily agreed.

That Yom Kippur was an

extraordinary day for Shimi. It was the first spiritual experience that uplifted him after having spent so much time on fruitless searching and repeated disappointments. He says that when the fast was over, he was looking forward to the next Yom Kippur!

He was swept up in the singing and in the recitation of, "Avinu Malkeinu," and in his heart he resolved to continue getting more involved in Judaism. "I was magnetically drawn to the deeper purpose of repentance," he relates with a smile.

However, a few days later, all those feelings were put aside and Shimi wanted to go back to India and attend an institute for mysticism. He hoped to do well and that in a short time he would be able to become a guru for that form of worship. He found a school that met his needs located in Carla, in southern India. In his confused mind he pushed aside the need and desire to learn more about Judaism as he tried a different path.

In the meantime, he went to Milan, the capitol of Italy, where he looked for a place to celebrate Sukkos. The thought he had as he entered the city was, "Where is the Chabad house?" Just at that moment he heard someone talking on a cell phone in Ivrit. He waited until the person finished his conversation and then asked him about a Chabad house.

It turned out that the man was familiar with all the Chabad houses in the city and he gave Shimi the addresses. When he looked at a map, he saw that one of the addresses he had been given was right near the place where he was staying. However, when he went there, he saw no sign of a Chabad house or shul.

He walked around for a few

minutes, checking out every corner and sign, but he noticed nothing Jewish. He finally left, disappointed that he wouldn't be celebrating the holiday with Chabad.

When he finished arranging his lodgings in the city, he returned to the street where he had been looking for the Chabad house and noticed a door that opened, out of which emerged someone who looked like a Chassid.

He found out that this location was where the talmidim-shluchim studied for their ordination and that it wasn't a place that had t'fillos and holiday meals. The shliach invited him to his home for Sukkos.

The shliach's son suggested that they learn a sicha about the meaning of Sukkos. For the first time, Shimi encountered a deeper aspect of Judaism that combined

After years of learning that in order to achieve spirituality you need to be completely removed from the material world and bond with nature, Shimi was suddenly hearing that the central idea of Chassidus is the joining together of the material and the spiritual.

materiality and spirituality. The Rebbe explained at length how we can take the physicality of the world and elevate it to holiness, so that it becomes refined and incorporated into the spiritual.

After years of learning that in order to achieve spirituality you need to be completely removed from the material world and bond with nature, Shimi was suddenly

hearing that the central idea of Chassidus is the joining together of the material and the spiritual.

The Rebbe's teachings were a bombshell for Shimi. This explanation made a deep impression on him. "I closed the book and said to the shliach's son, 'I want to be a Chabadnik.'"

[To be continued be"H]

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AFTER 3 TAMMUZ: THE REBBE IS STILL MOSHIACH

By Rabbi Sholom Dovber HaLevi Wolpo
Translated By Michoel Leib Dobry

In response to requests by our readers, we now present the third in a series of excerpts from “V’Torah Yevakshu MiPihu,” Rabbi Sholom Dovber HaLevi Wolpo’s seifer on the Rebbe’s teachings regarding Chabad chassidus, its approach to emuna, and its various customs.

4. THE REBBE TAUGHT US THAT THERE IS NO CONTRADICTION BETWEEN GIMMEL TAMMUZ AND HIS HISGALUS AS MELECH HA’MOSHIACH

As mentioned above, the Rebbe himself, in a manner of “*maaseh rav*,” also taught us the basis for the belief that the Rebbe is Melech HaMoshiach – even after Gimmel Tammuz 5754. After he assumed the mantle of leadership, the Rebbe spoke often and with much fervor about how the Rebbe Rayatz is Melech HaMoshiach and that the events of Yud Shvat 5710 are no contradiction to this fact. In the customary golden language of the Rebbe: “My revered father-in-law,

the Rebbe, will come clothed in a body and he will take us out of exile” (Shavuos 5710 – *Toras Menachem*, Vol. 1, pg. 100). “And we will merit to see and be together with the Rebbe, down here in a physical body and within our reach, and he will redeem us” (conclusion of maamer “Basi L’Gani,” Yud Shvat 5711). The Rebbe discussed this faith in dozens of sichos and letters over a period of more than forty years.

Therefore, since the Rebbe made such statements, it is clear **that it is precisely in accordance with the revealed and esoteric teachings of the Torah of truth.** For no one like

the Rebbe has delved so deeply and taught all matters of Jewish faith in a manner so compatible with halacha, philosophy, kabbala, and chassidus, as we have seen in the hundreds of volumes of maamarim and sichos he delivered before thousands of people, and the personal letters he sent in reply to people from all over the world.

While the Rebbe said all this in reference to his father-in-law, the Rebbe Rayatz, *nishmas Eden*, nevertheless, he had already explained on numerous occasions that Melech HaMoshiach is the actual nasi of the last generation, and according to the Rambam,



Moshiach is the one who works to bring the Jewish People of that generation closer to Torah and Mitzvos and fight the wars of G-d. Thus, he explained in *Likkutei Sichos* (Vol. 35, pg. 206, note 6) **that Dovid HaMelech cannot rise and become the actual Moshiach**, because he was not part of the final generation before the Redemption, though his soul is clothed in Melech HaMoshiach, who is the leader of the generation prior to the Redemption.

Therefore, just as the Rebbe spoke about his father-in-law being Melech HaMoshiach after 5710 and was not affected by what happened on Yud Shvat, similarly he taught us to believe today that the faith that **he** is Melech HaMoshiach remains in force, despite the hiding and concealment of Gimmel Tammuz.

The truth is that these two tenets of faith emerge as one, since it is known that regarding his father-in-law, the Rebbe Rayatz, the Rebbe did not say “*nishmaso Eden*” (his soul in Eden), but “*nishmaso bi*” (his soul is within me). Everyone saw their wondrous state of unity and the tremendous bond of, “They

Just as the Rebbe spoke about his father-in-law being Melech HaMoshiach after 5710 and was not affected by what happened on Yud Shvat, similarly he taught us to believe today that the faith that he is Melech HaMoshiach remains in force, despite the hiding and concealment of Gimmel Tammuz.

are so close to each other that no air comes between them,” as also expressed in the many hours the Rebbe spent in prayer at the gravesite of his father-in-law, of blessed memory, as is known. (See the marvelous sicha of Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sara 5752 (Seifer Sichos 5752, pg. 111), where the Rebbe states how the revelation of Moshiach is through the renewal that occurs within the soul of the Rebbe Rayatz.)

See also in the same sicha

(Sichos Kodesh 5752, pg. 318) how these concepts are unified: “The True and Complete Redemption must come immediately through **Moshiach Tzidkeinu**, the shliach of ‘Send, I pray, through the one whom You will send,’ my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, leader of the generation, and **thereby the continuation of his successor who will follow.**” – Thus, the Rebbe shlita says **explicitly** that he is Melech HaMoshiach, being the successor to the Rebbe Rayatz.

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WHEN IS LUXURY A GOOD THING?

By Rabbi Yaakov Shmuelewitz, Shliach, Beit Shaan

This is a question that every shliach deals with, but it relates to all Chassidim as well.

There's a story about a shliach who lives for decades at a northern yishuv and faithfully works on being mekarev Jews to Torah and Chassidus. Dozens, maybe hundreds, of baalei t'shuva are grateful to him and his wife for everything they have, as well as their Jewish and Chassidic way of life, and that of their children and even their grandchildren.

This shliach lives simply, like the Jews in the legends of the Baal Shem Tov. He has a small house on the edge of the yishuv. The entire house is full of boxes with material about the Rebbe, sichos, pamphlets, Chassidishe magazines, food for the needy, menoros, mishlochei manos, machzorim for Rosh HaShana, mashke, and what not...

If you enter the house and you manage to find a way between all this stuff, the shliach and his wife will immediately offer you a cup of tea. They'll even clear a little space for you at the table by moving some booklets and magazines.

One day, someone showed up to buy mezuzos. The shliach began to chat with him about this and that. It turned out that the man had a high position in the Israeli legal system. He wasn't that religious, but his wife

asked for mezuzos. As a result of the meeting the man and the shliach arranged to learn together. Once a week the man went to the shliach's house, they cleared a place at the table, and they learned.

Then the man called up and said that his wife wanted to come along: "She also wants to learn and get to know the shliach and shlucha."

For obvious reasons, the shliach and his wife decided to host their guests outdoors. The guests sat down, cups were poured, and the guest asked, "Why don't we go inside and sit down there?"

The shliach answered, "See how nice it is outside..."

Ten minutes later, the guest asked that they go inside, and once again the shliach said it was nice outside. The third time, the shliach admitted that it was crowded inside and not very tidy.

"That's just what I wanted my wife to see!" said the guest.

What happened here? The guest was impressed by the simplicity, by the humble home, and told his wife about it. She wanted to see it for herself.

Some say that it was specifically because these guests were impressed by the modest home that they

decided there was something to learn from the shliach and his wife. They continued coming, learning, and doing and raised a Chassidishe family of children and grandchildren of Chassidim and rabbanim who spread Judaism all over the country.

R' Reuven Dunin's home in Chaifa was similar. It was simple and had many guests, admirers and baalei t'shuva.

Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Segal of Migdal HaEmek relates: One Lag B'Omer there was a wedding in R' Reuven's home. Yes, you read that correctly: a wedding in R' Reuven's home. Many bachurim came from Migdal HaEmek to rejoice with the groom.

After the wedding, R' Dunin said there was room for the bachurim to sleep. They spread blankets all over the house and there was room for all. R' Segal happened to go outside in the middle of the night to take a breath of fresh air and that's when he saw R' Reuven sleeping outside on a bench. R' Dunin was sure nobody would know because he went to sleep last and got up first, but the secret was out.

When there is room in the heart, there is room in the home, and R' Dunin had plenty of room in his heart.

MAYBE A FANCY HOME IS BETTER?

Then there are those who maintain that a shliach's house

needs to be spacious, tidy, and attractive so that every guest feels comfortable and it's not crowded even if many guests come.

Rabbi Yigal Tzipori, a shliach in Kiryat Shmoneh, built his house in the new neighborhood. He did his best so that the house suits his family's needs, as well as that of the many guests and esteemed personages who visit him to coordinate activities with the Chabad House in the northern city that often finds itself on the front lines.

"Ministers, senior army personnel, representatives from the Joint, and donors from all over the world come here. There is no reason for them to see us reading books by candlelight. Baruch Hashem, we have a large, nice home and it makes people want to come again and see a

a house, a car and clothes?

We see both approaches with the Rebbe. On the one hand, the Rebbe always gave a bracha of *harchava* (expansiveness) and blessed, "raise the children amidst *harchava*." On the other hand, there are letters from the Rebbe about not wasting money on material things.

Whoever visited the Rebbe's house on President Street (I was there a few times in 5748, during the year of mourning for Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka a"h), couldn't believe how simply the Rebbe and Rebbetzin lived. There was a very old refrigerator and oven, and an old wooden floor.

Yet, along with the simplicity, there was a feeling of being in a perfect home, order and cleanliness, fresh air, everything just right.

gashmius, as soon as "the head is in galoshes," it is a sign that he needs to stop and move back to the "middle of the road."

Obviously, there isn't one answer for all shluchim. It depends on what city and country we're talking about, the size of the city, the financial state, etc., but the main thing is that the shliach needs to be sure that everything he puts into his home is truly to give honor to the Rebbe and to shlichus.

This applies to the shliach's home and not to the Chabad house, where it is permissible (and a mitzva) to make it as beautiful as possible. But there too, there needs to be a red line. You don't want donors to shake their heads and say, "Look what he does with our donations..."

I will conclude with a Chassidishe story that I once heard. One day, the Tzemach Tzedek came out of his room to the Chassidim and asked, "Tell me, what is a Jewish standard of living that is not called superfluous luxury?"

(Apparently, the Rebbe saw there was a Heavenly accusation about Jews who didn't suffice with a little broken-down, one-room hut on the edge of town, and built themselves homes.)

There was a wise Chassid there who said, "A *moyer* (lit., a wall, i.e., a solidly constructed house) and 50,000 rubles in the bank. (A *moyer* was considered luxurious at that time and the Chassid said that even such a house plus money in the bank were still basic needs, not luxuries.)

The Tzemach Tzedek was happy with this answer and returned to his room.

I wish all the Jewish people tremendous spiritual and material wealth and that we use it properly and in good health, and that we prepare the house to greet Moshiach Tzidkeinu who will visit every Jewish home, may it be now!

As long as you feel that things of this world don't attract you, and you use material things for the sake of Heaven, then it's a good thing.

shliach of the Rebbe who lives comfortably with a huge picture of the Rebbe gracing the living room when you enter the house."

Another shliach, Rabbi Shlomo Cunin, asked the Rebbe thirty years ago about a house, shortly after arriving in California. He had the opportunity to buy a large, luxurious house. The Rebbe answered: What will donors say when a young man arrives in town and is already able to buy a million dollar home?

SO WHO IS RIGHT?

You hear the two sides and don't know who is right. Sometimes this topic is discussed among shluchim or shluchos, sometimes between a shliach and his wife, and sometimes a person asks himself, what's the limit? How much should be put into

Nothing was lacking and nothing was extraneous.

The answer can perhaps be found in the Rebbe's sichos about vows at the beginning of Parshas Mattos (*Likkutei Sichos* vol. 4), about whether it is desirable to make vows and refrain from the pleasures of this world, "vows are a fence for abstinence." Or, perhaps it is better to use all that is permissible, "it is enough what the Torah forbade you."

The Rebbe answers, as long as you feel that things of this world don't attract you, and you use material things for the sake of Heaven, then it's a good thing.

Back to our topic, if the shliach beautifies his home for the comfort and needs of his guests, terrific. But the moment he feels drawn into

OHR CHANA: A FRUM VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

While vocational schools are not a new concept, a frum vocational school in Crown Heights is! For the first time, girls will be able to choose a school that combines high academic standards with the ability to learn a profession.

Doing well in school, being socially comfortable, feeling good about the image they portray to others and having a warm and stable home environment, are just some of the ingredients that go into creating a positive self-image in teenage girls. When one of these factors is missing or compromised, the girl's self image will be eroded.

Ohr Chana plays a major factor in molding their students' personality and self-confidence, for a teenager spends her most formative years in school.

Although education is of primary importance, the student must be receptive to receive the information being taught. A happy, confident person is a more receptive person. Therefore, a program which goes beyond academics, and which fosters self-confidence in the student, will ultimately benefit the

students' academic success.

Vocational schools have gained popularity for exactly this reason. The students receive a solid, well-rounded education with the addition of being taught a profession. The students get to excel in something they enjoy and are good at. Success generates success, and the students have renewed energy to apply themselves to their academic studies. The end result is a student who graduates with the knowledge that she has life skills she can use to become financially independent after graduation. Even more, she will have the life skills necessary to be a successful Jewish woman in the frum world. These include the abilities to run an efficient home, and to multi-task the many responsibilities of taking care of children, and working. The student graduates confident in her abilities to face the world.

While vocational schools are not a new concept, a frum vocational school in Crown Heights is! For the first time, girls will be able to choose a school that combines high academic standards with the ability to learn a profession.

If your daughter is:

**An average student who tries her hardest, but no amount of studying helps her "make the grade." The school she attends stresses high on academic achievement and as a result her self esteem is low.*

**Feeling overshadowed by her younger sister. She is constantly comparing her to her smart and talented sister. She's delighted at the opportunity to go to a different school.*

**A student who finds the learning uninspiring. Though she remains committed to Yiddishkait, she lacks enthusiasm. She desperately needs to fill the void of emptiness inside her.*

**A bright and motivated student, but now spends her days in school dreaming instead of learning, because of domestic or inner strife.*

**Desperate to win the approval of her peers, but can't afford to buy her the clothes and accessories she feels she needs in order to fit in, she begins to slowly slide in her observance of Yiddishkait and tznius.*

**Her relationship with her parents begins to deteriorate, as the y find it*

"The objective of Chinuch al Taharas HaKodesh, especially now, is not merely to accumulate knowledge, but rather and especially as a preparation for life on the foundation of Torah and mitzvos. And as we see b'muchash, it affects and has a bearing not only on the students themselves but on their present homes and even how much more so the homes the y will build when the y get married. And any weakness in any in any area is a weakness in the general structure of traditional Judaism.

....There must be a second school that will be a haven for those students that belong to Chabad mosdos, but are not up to par with the seminary for teachers, for surely there will be suck..

We can assume that a certain percent of this" vocational" school will eventually "become part" in a way that they become up to par with the demands of the regular seminar.....

....And it's understandable that all above can be publicized in my name

(Igros Kodesh Vol. 20, pg. 260)

and inculcate the students with a strong love for Yiddishkeit. The emphasis will not merely be in acquiring information. The goal is for the students to learn in order to practice.

The staff will work with each girl and help her evaluate how she learns most effectively. In addition, strong emphasis will be placed on developing strong organizational and study skills.

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difficult to give her the warmth she craves, when she's disappointing them is such a deep way...

She needs a alternate school, where the administrations strives to understands what each girl needs and do their utmost to provide those needs. A school which adopts a

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FW: Faith & Science Newsletter - Vol 2, Issue 37 - Proof Positive

06/28/2007 04:28 PM

From: Arnie Gotfryd [mailto:arnie@...] Sent: June 28, 2007 2:55 PM To: boruch@... Subject: Faith & Science Newsletter - Vol 2, Issue 37 - Proof

Re: Krinsky Case overturned - Decision

06/27/2007 09:15 PM

B"H 1st of all it wasn't overturned just delayed till the next stage is completed 2nd if you look at the dates on those documents this was long time ago why

FW: Tehilim for 13 year old

06/27/2007 05:40 AM

From: Yisroel Ber Kaplan [mailto:ybk@...] Sent: Tuesday, June 26, 2007 6:56 PM To: ybk@... Subject: Tehilim for 13 year old

Moshiach boat? - FW: Shliach at work

06/26/2007 05:45 PM

... From: Kent [mailto:kent5744@...] Sent: June 26, 2007 1:43 PM To: webmaster@... Subject: Shliach at work Rabbi Adam Stein is a Shliach in

FW: Our high Jewish intelligence

06/25/2007 01:48 PM

... From: Thetermite@... [mailto:Thetermite@...] Sent: June 25, 2007 11:27 AM To: webmaster@... Subject: Our high Jewish intelligence WHY

Thank you Aliza!! Re: More About Knowing How To Answer A Religious-Z

06/25/2007 07:17 AM

- Dear Aliza: Thank you for this clear statement: "If we can desecrate the Shabbos to save lives, we can oppose those Jews who threaten our lives. We should

More About Knowing How To Answer A Religious-Zionist

06/24/2007 04:30 PM

MORE ABOUT KNOWING HOW TO ANSWER A RELIGIOUS-ZIONIST By Aliza Karp One thing to keep in mind while discussing Eretz Yisroel is that passionate people with a

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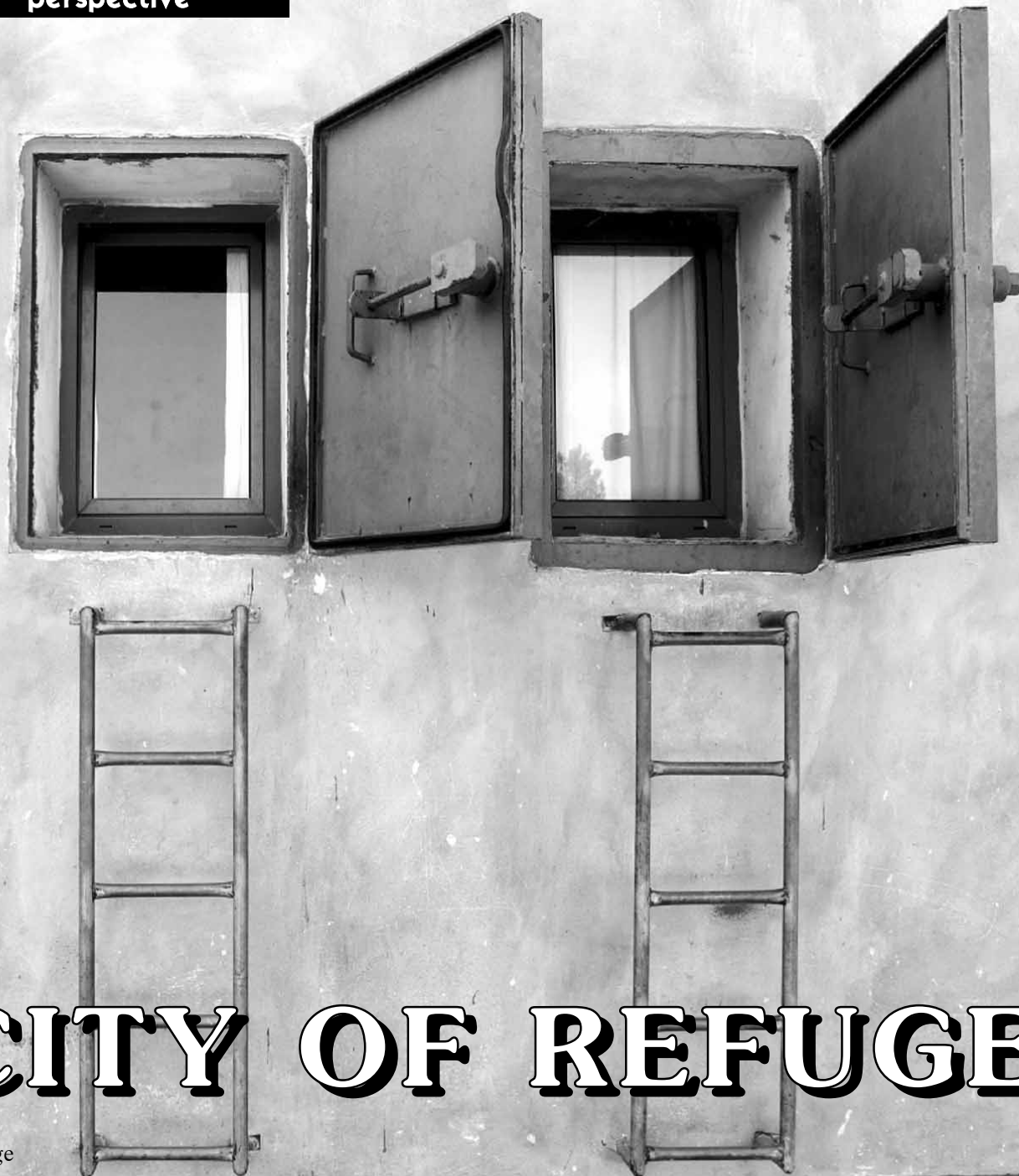
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YECHI ADONEINU MOREINU V'RABBEINU MELECH HA'MOSHIACH L'OLAM VA'ED!

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CITY OF REFUGE

By Faige

A woman from Tzfas shares her diary of one summer ago, describing the beginning of the second Lebanon war.

Thursday, 17 Tamuz 5766

Late morning. The little ones finally left for Talmud Torah and day camps. The diligent older ones rushed to work as counselors and babysitters. Two of my children pamper themselves by sleeping in late and I can quietly organize the

house and try to daven a little. There is no hint as to what will happen a few hours from now.

I managed to shop briefly at the grocery store, buying mezonos and drinks for after the fast, and also for the weekly shiur that my husband will give tonight at a nearby kibbutz. Everything seemed as usual, yet another “routine” fast day.

Can it be? We’ve gotten used to calling exile routine?! Just one year ago we tried with all our might to stop the so-called Disengagement. We believed with all our hearts that it wouldn’t happen and very soon we would see the victory of the forces of holiness in the world. Unfortunately, it didn’t happen.

Although there are glimpses of light, signs of people awakening, wising up, my heart goes out to my brothers, the expellees of Gush Katif, who are living in “temporary” quarters after being moser nefesh to live under a barrage of missiles in order to protect us. I didn’t dream that soon we, and all of the north, would get a sampling of what they lived like for years.

An announcement over a loudspeaker from across the nearby wadi broke into my thoughts, “Enter the pit! Everyone go down into the pits.” I didn’t understand and didn’t make any connections. “Looks like there’s some army exercise taking place over there,” I figured.

I thought I heard a booming sound, but far away and muted. Maybe work was being done on the main highway? But then the phone calls started: Did you hear? A katyusha landed near Ivikur (on the edge of the city) in an open area, nobody was injured.

No, I didn’t hear, and there’s nothing to worry about, I said. Tzfas is safe. It doesn’t look like anything else is going on. Maybe it was a mistake and just rumors.

But my twelve-year-old, who had gotten up in the meantime, reported

to me, “Ima, yesterday, when we were at the bat-mitzva in Miron, some katyushas fell on the nearby mountain. It was very scary! The ground shook!”

Wow! That sounded more serious and close to home. Maybe something was going on? “It’s probably connected with the two soldiers who were kidnapped yesterday,” said the older one who had also just gotten up. For some reason, we didn’t panic. Tzfas is not Kiryat Shmoneh after all.

Afternoon.

The neighbor, who is a preschool teacher, came home earlier than usual. She was officially told by the municipality to prepare for a spell in the bomb shelters. It is a time to be close to home and look after the children. “We need to prepare for the worst and stock up on food and water,” she said excitedly to all. “We have to clear out the shelter. We’ll make a meeting of the tenants... I spoke with A who said that for a nominal fee her sons will do the work.”

“Excuse me?! I have (almost) nothing in the shelter!” I exclaimed.

“And anyway, what’s all the hysteria about? We don’t need to panic. You sound like you’re exaggerating. It’s not that urgent. In any case, I’m in favor of everyone taking care of clearing out their own stuff. Right now, we are all fasting and tired and nobody has extra strength for this.”

To tell you the truth, I thought, it’s time to organize our stuff down there. The shelter is full with a floor-to-ceiling mess. Whenever anybody needed something, he had to clear a path between the towers of stuff and then extricate what he wanted from where it was buried.

It looked something like this: on top of sukka boards lay the suitcases from those who returned in Tishrei. Then there were baby carriages of those who didn’t give birth in the past two years. (They were stored away in anticipation of the next baby, but in the meantime, they collected dust and were beat-up or broken.)

Scattered about were dismantled playpens, glass bottles for recycling, and boxes of material for Chanuka mitvzaim (the candles come in handy in an emergency), as well as



The children of Kiryat Chabad in Tzfas in bomb shelters

Megillos Esther to color, and do-it-yourself projects, and cartons (that were once kosher for Pesach) to pack three shmura matzos.

In the corners are signs from Lag B'Omer parades that are not in great shape and in the back, is one "civilized" area, a locked room which is "u'faratzta headquarters." It has electricity since it is connected through the neighbor, a shliach's apartment. Thanks to him, later on we had light when we were forced to stay in the shelter. On top of everything, broken chairs are strewn about as well as bicycles waiting for repairs and other UFO's whose identity is known only to a select few.

In short, my young neighbor is right, but the job is unrealistic. "Don't be naïve," I said. "Fine, keep my little ones occupied in your apartment and I'll try to organize something," she half asked and half stated.

Parenthetically, one of the neighbors who was abroad, called his wife that night. "Don't worry, we're all together in the bomb shelter with all the neighbors," she told him.

"Can't be! The shelter is packed with stuff. I don't believe you!" he exclaimed. "I know just what was piled up in there before I left!"

His wife replied, "That's also one of the miracles of this war!"

While I tried to calm everybody, my 14-year-old daughter began preparing for war and for a protracted stay in the shelter. I noticed her out of the corner of my eye, packing the contents of the pantry into bags: canned goods, bottles of water, all the bread in the house, all the cookies and borakas I had bought for after the fast, and whatever else she could find. (When she wasn't looking, I removed some things.)

I tried explaining to her that we were not going to open a public

kitchen downstairs and we were not planning on holing up there for two weeks. It was enough to take some cookies and drinks. But I didn't manage to set her mind at ease and I preferred not to argue.

I remembered a public service short film from my youth that showed a model shelter with the vital equipment you needed for a stay in one. Our shelter looked as it did thirty years ago, but in the meantime, junk had collected as well as dust and dirt.

In the other room, the children sat in front of the computer and were watching a new video CD (that a neighbor brought), when the house suddenly shook from a nearby explosion.

"A bomb!" Some more bombs (which we later learned to call a "*metach*" (a salvo)) and then the power went out, along with the voice of a singer who was in the middle of singing, "If not now – when." We all ran to the window to see what happened (we didn't know that doing this was dangerous) and saw smoke. We smelled an acrid smell rising from the nearby wadi and from the direction of Givat Shoshana.

There was a panicked dash down the stairs. Within five minutes all the men in the building had gathered and managed to clear away a space so that we could stand crowded together. Then they worked for several hours until nearly the entire rough, cement floor was visible, which they even washed with something fragrant.

When the next salvo came, we already had mattresses, blankets, chairs and ten families (some of them with many babies) crowded together, crying, laughing, praying, and silent – all together. We were frightened by what was going on and by the unknown, but confident in impending salvation in the merit of the children who were saying

T'hillim and p'sukim together with all their heart.

The meal we ate after the fast was comprised of food the neighbors brought down in their rush. The main feeding was the pre-end-of-fast meal for the children and those who were frightened and it consisted mostly of water and the ice cream I managed to smuggle out of the freezer between my daughter's screams, "We must go down to the shelter now!" and the niggling thought that we had to have treats for the kids when they finished the "Kinus Hakhel" and discovered they were not going back home.

Indeed, the ice cream turned out to be a good treatment for fluttering hearts, and not just those of the children; neighbors also distributed treats and there was an atmosphere of "brothers sitting all together."

Towards evening.

We figured the danger had passed and hoped no more salvos were in store for us. Little did we know...

We were getting ready for the end of the fast (those who were still fasting in that heat). Most of the men left for Mincha-Maariv in shul. Then, a mighty boom shook the building down to its foundation. The electricity went out and a group of old people, women, and children were in the dark as people cried and screamed. You even heard cries of Shma Yisroel. It seemed the building was going to fall down, G-d forbid.

Someone lit a candle, someone else turned on a flashlight, and people calmed down. Someone hummed a quiet niggun and others joined in. "A little bit of light pushes away lots of darkness!"

It was Yemos HaMoshiach with old and young, religious and not-yet-religious, new immigrants and old-timers, from different backgrounds and viewpoints, all together and concerned about one another, happy to help; supporting

one another with faith in the Creator of the world, “only He can help,” and anticipating the Geula.

This was actually the point of light that we felt throughout the war – the arousal of the *pintele Yid*, the strengthening of pure faith and genuine Ahavas Yisroel that was expressed in an abundance of giving.

At a certain point, the electricity was restored and the men returned from shul and reported excitedly about the miracles and about the missiles that flew overhead and didn’t hurt anyone.

The “men” (13 and up) spent most of their time outside but near the shelter. This was for several reasons: 1) they could smoke (unfortunately) and listen to the radio, 2) they had a view of what was going on outside and could see the smoke from an explosion and could run and get a live report or pieces of shrapnel, 3) their parents were unable to control them inside and so they expended energy outdoors, climbing on bars and mainly slamming the old door of the shelter to the sound of “boom,” which made those in the shelters jump, time after time (if they managed to calm down in between).

In the shelter, the children discovered interesting mitzvaim material which kept them occupied. It was calming in that chaos to be surrounded by brochures, Moshiach flags and various sized pictures of the Rebbe. There were also gift boxes for an apple, honey, and a card wishing a good new year, on a layer of packing straw which scattered and stuck to us.

To sum it up, we are all the Rebbe’s children, active on the king’s shlichus in kibbutzim and moshavim, near and far, surrounded by proof that we try to do all we can to hasten the Geula. Certainly, we are in a very secure shelter and Hashem is watching over us and taking care of the entire building

(with the yellow flag on top) and all of Tzfas.

We were reminded of what the Rebbe said during the Gulf War, that Eretz Yisroel is the safest place in the world and we were sure that we would see miracles now too. “In every generation they rise up against us to destroy us, and Hashem saves us from their hands.” It’s the same script with slight differences. Back then, I was a mother of four with two gas masks for the children and two plastic, collapsible tents for the six-month-old twin girls, as well as a sealed room that was supposed to protect us from chemical attack.

Baruch Hashem the Rebbe calmed us down and said we would not need all this equipment and the sheets of plastic.

Now, I am a mother of nine and I know that it isn’t the primitive shelter or the Lack of Defense Ministry that will protect us, but the good deeds and prayers of the Jewish people, uniting within the cement walls of their shelters. (By the way, Tzfas is the one of the Biblical cities of refuge.)

During the breaks and dashes

upstairs to the house, we were happy to answer the (nonstop) phone calls from relatives and friends who wanted to know how we were doing.

“Yes, we are alive and well, thank G-d. Tzfas is still on the map,” is what I said to my sister from the center of the country, who was fearful for us.

“Everything is fine?” asked my brother from abroad. “We saw on the Internet ... news that didn’t look good ... Rabbi Kaplan ... What? Your husband spoke with him at mincha? In the picture of his car, it looks awful...”

Afterwards, we heard of the double miracle that happened to Rabbi Kaplan. In the afternoon, his family was saved from a missile that exploded in the yard of his house while they were in it. In the evening, as he drove to the municipality to report the damage, a missile landed near his car. The glass broke and shards flew about but he came out of it miraculously and well!

That is just one miracle out of a slew of miracles that we experienced.



A home damaged by missile attack in Tzfas