

**5**

## **THE WAR FOR AHAVAS YISROEL**

D'var Malchus

**8**

## **REACHING OUT AND HELPING OTHERS**

Story | Yosef Yitzchok Kupchik

**12**

## **FOLLOW YOUR HEART OR YOUR MIND IN FINDING A SHIDDUCH?**

The Rebbe's Letter

**13**

## **'I WILL BE YOUR DAUGHTER'**

Profile | D. Levanon

**18**

## **IT'S NOT ENOUGH TO WAIT, YOU HAVE TO LIVE IT!**

Moshiach & Geula | Ofra Badosa

**26**

## **FATHER OF THE JEWISH STUDENTS IN MILAN**

Shlichus | Nosson Avrohom

**34**

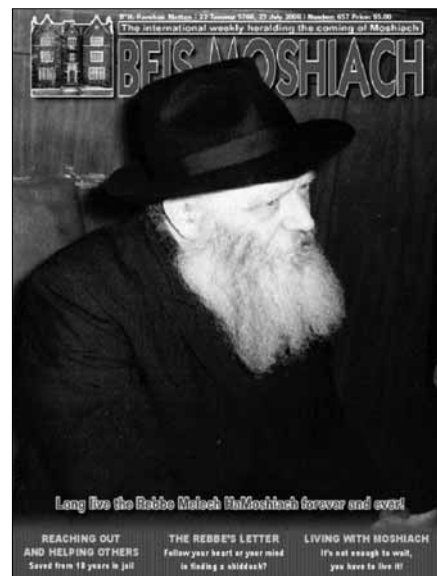
## **BEIS MOSHIACH – NOT ONLY FOR LUBAVITCHERS**

Feature

**40**

## **A CHABAD RAV, NO 'ORDINARY' RAV [CONT.]**

Insight | Interview by Nosson Avrohom



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# THE WAR FOR AHAVAS YISROEL

Translated and adapted by Dovid Yisroel Ber Kaufmann

*The Torah portion speaks of two wars, against Midyan and against the seven nations of Canaan, which had two different motives: vengeance and conquest. Elsewhere, the Torah speaks of a third war, that against Amalek, whom the Jewish people are commanded to annihilate. The three wars, conquest, retribution and destruction, differ in how the enemy is treated and what is done with the property. Each represents a different aspect of our war against the forces opposed to G-dliness and delaying Moshiach. The seven nations of Canaan are the seven emotional traits. Amalek is arrogance and ego. Midyan is baseless hatred. The uniqueness of the war against Midyan is that all Jews must fight, and take vengeance, by acting with Ahavas Yisroel.*

This week's Torah reading speaks about two wars, the war against Midyan and the war against the seven nations of Canaan. Each war had a different purpose. The Jewish people were commanded to fight against the Canaanite nations in order to conquer the land of Israel. The Jews fought against Midyan because G-d told Moses, "Take revenge for the children of Israel against the Midianites." Thus the two wars, against Midyan and against the seven nations of Canaan, had two different motives: vengeance and conquest.

This critical difference obviously affected the conduct of the war. The Canaanites were allowed to flee or make peace, while all male Midianites and all adult females were to be killed. The houses of the Canaanites were left intact, many of them to be occupied by the Jewish people. The houses, cities and dwellings of the Midianites were burned to the ground.

When the Torah records an event, with all its details, it does so because even the details teach us about our Divine service. The word "Torah" means instruction; the Torah instructs us, by direct command or analogy, how to fulfill our Divinely ordained mission to make the physical world a dwelling place for G-dliness. The events of the Torah are a paradigm for the

events of the final Redemption. Ideally, the Jewish people are to observe the mitzvos in the land of Israel. Just as the war against Midyan was a prelude to settling the land of Israel, so too the battle against the present day Midyan – our internal Midyan – serves as a prelude to the coming of Moshiach.

The Torah juxtaposes the two wars, placing the instructions for the war against the seven nations immediately after telling us about the war against Midyan. By doing so, the Torah invites a comparison. The contrast in the goal and conduct of the two wars reflects the purpose and methods of our spiritual battles. We have two types of struggles, against “Midyan” and against the “seven nations of Canaan.” We must struggle against Midyan and Canaan personally, fighting our evil inclinations, negative character traits and the desires that obstruct G-dliness. We must also do so nationally, destroying the nature of

wars, conquest, retribution and destruction, differ in how the enemy is treated and what is done with the property. In a war of conquest, the purpose is to take over the land; the inhabitants are allowed to flee. In a war of destruction, the purpose is annihilation; the inhabitants are allowed no escape. In a war of retribution, vengeance is taken against those involved, the instigators. Some inhabitants are killed, and others saved.

From this we see that the war against Midyan fits in the middle: it has characteristics of the war against Amalek, a war of total destruction. It also has characteristics of the war against the seven nations of Canaan, a war of conquest.

This distinction also applies to the disposition of the property, the spoils of war. The property of the Amalekites was utterly destroyed, not even used for sacrifices. The property of the seven nations of Canaan was divided among those who fought. This excluded the tribe of Levi. From the property of the Midianites, however, a portion was given to the Levites.

The Levites were given part of the Midianite property because in this case, the tribe of Levi went to battle. When it came to conquering the land of Israel, the Levites were exempt from fighting the seven nations. They were separated to serve G-d, teaching Torah to the masses and maintaining the Sanctuary. They were G-d's forces, detached from worldly matters.

But since Midyan opposed G-d, the Levites fought. The purpose of the war was to take revenge for **G-d**. Hence the Levites, dedicated to the service of G-d, participated in the war. And having participated, they were entitled to part of the spoils.

Since the participation of the Levites in the war against Midyan was unique, it teaches us a unique aspect of our battle to bring Moshiach. In a general sense, every Jew can reach the level of the tribe of Levi. As Maimonides puts it, “Not just the tribe of Levi, but **every Jew** whose heart moves him and sets his mind to separate himself, can stand before G-d and serve Him.” In other words, every Jew has the ability to become holy, distanced from worldly matters. This attitude can even extend to involvement in the needs of others. It's possible to reason that, since I have dedicated myself to the service of G-d,

***No one is exempt from the battle against hostility. One cannot be a “Levite” and stand aloof when animosity threatens the unity of the Jewish people. Rather, every Jew must zealously engage in Ahavas Yisroel, fighting against the causeless hatred that led to the destruction of the Temple and exile.***

“Midyan” and conquering the “seven Canaanite nation-like” behavior of the world through our Torah and mitzvos.

On a personal level, both wars are part of the preparation for Redemption. We can readily understand the analogy with the war against the seven nations. As long as other nations lived in the land of Israel, had authority over it, the Jewish people could not truly settle the land. They had to establish a dwelling place for themselves in order to establish a dwelling place for G-d's Presence. Hence, we must battle the “seven nations” within us to bring the Redemption.

What of the war against Midyan? How does taking vengeance bring Moshiach? To answer this, we must note a third type of war. This is the war against Amalek, a war of utter destruction. The three

my primary concern, indeed my only concern, is my own spiritual welfare and that of my family, my fellow "Levites."

The Torah tells us that when it comes to conquering the land of Israel, overcoming the seven nations – the seven emotional character traits – one may indeed be able to separate himself from the struggle. But when it comes to fighting against Midyan, then just the opposite applies. This is a war in which the Levites not only may participate, but they must participate. In fact, the Levites have a particular obligation to fight against and nullify Midyan, since Midyan, by definition, opposes Oneness.

Spiritually speaking, each of the three types of wars represents a different stage in self-purification, and thus the rectification of the world. Each is a stage in the preparation for Moshiach. The seven nations of Canaan represent the seven emotional character traits, our animalistic desires. These need to be conquered and transformed. Amalek represents arrogance, egotism and selfishness. It must be destroyed.

Midyan, however, represents baseless hatred. The very word means strife and contention, division and disunity. The way to battle dissension, is to take vengeance against it. Midyan wants disharmony. It

thrives on antipathy, animosity and malice. Vengeance demands we foster the opposite, promoting harmony, respect and devotion. No one is exempt from the battle against hostility. One cannot be a "Levite" and stand aloof when animosity threatens the unity of the Jewish people. Rather, every Jew must zealously engage in *Ahavas Yisroel*, fighting against the causeless hatred that led to the destruction of the Temple and exile.

The Midianites – the Midyan within each of us – seeks strife, discord and dissension. To achieve this goal, Midyan tries to deceive us with the argument that only Jews like us, only "Levites," deserve *Ahavas Yisroel*. But *Ahavas Yisroel*, an unconditional love for a fellow Jew, applies to every Jew. The war against Midyan must be fought together, with and by all Jews, regardless to which "tribe" they belong. This unites us with the One G-d, and this is the retribution of G-d against Midyan.

By taking revenge on Midyan, we negate the cause of exile, baseless hatred. Our revenge, the vengeance of G-d, is but *Ahavas Yisroel*, unconditional love for a fellow Jew. This battle we must all fight. This battle we must win, for our victory in it hastens the coming of Moshiach.

(Based on Likkutei Sichos 23, pp. 206-213)



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# REACHING OUT AND HELPING OTHERS

By Yosef Yitzchok Kupchik

*My partner and I contacted a top lawyer. He was also skeptical about our chances. “In the best case scenario, you’ll sit in jail for ten years,” he said...*

*\* Two weeks before the sentencing I got a surprise and it wasn’t a good one. It was the worst surprise of my life. I discovered that my two partners had fled the US and I had to pay the entire fine... \* A story of salvation.*

This is how I met Shlomo (pseudonym). I went on mivtzaim, as I do every week, to a real estate office. The Jew working there doesn’t speak a word of Hebrew and I don’t speak English. Our relationship is conducted mainly through the heart – putting on t’fillin, saying l’chaim, and handing out a weekly brochure.

That week, just as I walked in, someone was coming out. I stopped him and stammered in English, “Are you Jewish? Did you put on t’fillin yet today?”

“Yes, I’m Jewish,” he said in fluent Hebrew, “and I’d be happy to put on t’fillin.”

As he removed the t’fillin, I

gave him the weekly brochure and said, “It has a miracle of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.” To my great surprise he said, “You know what? I can tell *you* a miracle of the Rebbe! I was released from jail two weeks ago thanks to the Rebbe!”

Really? I took out a bottle of mashke and a package of cookies that I brought along with me for occasions like this. I put them down on the table and we began to farbreng.

## A NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

My name is Shlomo and I work in real estate and finance. I have three offices in New York and baruch Hashem, I make a

nice living. A little more than two years ago, my partner and I perpetrated tax evasion on a large scale and when we felt they were on to us, we decided to escape to Europe.

We were in Germany when we were arrested. The FBI was able to find us within a short time and we were extradited to the US. The crimes we were accused of were very serious. All the experts and friends we consulted with were pessimistic and predicted we’d be in jail for years and penalized with a large fine.

I wasn’t religiously observant at the time, but during the extradition and jail time in the US I had plenty of time to think about being a Jew. The gentiles around me treated me differently, but I didn’t know what it really meant to be Jewish.

I asked G-d to provide me with an answer. It came soon after. I got an Israeli newspaper published in America called *Yediot America* and when I opened it, I was amazed to see an article about a rabbi, R’ Shmuel Spritzer, who works with Jewish prisoners through an organization called Reaching Out! I saw this as an answer from Heaven, personally directed at me.

I immediately wrote to the rabbi and asked him to help me start being a real Jew. In his response, he was very

encouraging. He explained that where I was, Hashem was with me and watching over me. As a start, he decided to help me keep kosher in jail.

## SIX YEARS IN JAIL OR TWO YEARS PLUS A HEAVY FINE

My partner and I contacted a top lawyer. He was also skeptical about our chances. "In the best case scenario, you'll sit in jail for ten years," he said.

After difficult negotiations, he managed to work out a plea bargain with the judge, who gave us two choices: Six years in jail and another six years on probation or two years in jail and another four on probation plus a fine of half a million dollars!

I didn't hesitate for a minute. Our freedom was more important than money, especially when three of us were able to split the cost of the fine.

The date of the sentencing was set for two months later and by that time we were supposed to have come up with the money. It was a large sum, but since three of us were working on obtaining it,

it was feasible. It seemed that would be the end of the story. We'd pay the fine, sit in jail for two years (we hadn't dreamed we'd serve less) and return to normal life.

Two weeks before the sentencing I got a surprise and it wasn't a good one. It was the worst surprise of my life. I discovered that my two partners had fled the US and I had to pay the entire fine.

What could I do? I had the option of turning state's evidence, to testify against my two partners and go free. I was very uncertain about this. If I turned them in, they wouldn't get out of jail for years. If I didn't, I would have to pay half a million dollars out of my pocket – and I didn't have it!

## THE REBBE SAID: DON'T PAY IT!

I remembered R' Spritzer, whom I had contacted a month and a half earlier, and I wrote him a letter asking him whether I could turn in my partners in exchange for my freedom. R' Spritzer wrote me back that according to the Torah, it was forbidden to send another Jew to jail, even in exchange for my freedom.

What was I to do? I didn't have the money and I couldn't turn my friends in. I asked R' Spritzer what he would do in my place and he answered that he would write to the Rebbe.

Rebbe? What Rebbe? How could he help me? Did he have money? Did he have connections with the judge?

I had a long conversation with him about the Rebbe, the Rosh B'nei Yisroel, Nasi HaDor, and how he is concerned about every Jew. R' Spritzer explained how you write to the Rebbe and how you get his bracha.

I wrote to the Rebbe and sent the letter to R'

**אני בסך הכל שליח**  
הרב שמואל שפריצר, שמתפל כבר 25 שנה בארצות ישראל, משתמש בקשרים שלו כדי להצטרף אותם לארץ. בראיון לקראת תום חודש שמונתו ישראל צוהר להראות יותר אינפוזיות, מכפר על הדמעות שזרורות לו למקרא מכתבים מהבאלי וידע שלכל אחד מני צ'אנס נוסף, ותודה רבה מלבבית

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The author of the newspaper interview of R' Spritzer, Esther Schwartz, told Beis Moshiah: "After the article was published, we got dozens of phone calls from people who wanted to call R' Spritzer and asked for his phone number. It was exciting to hear that thanks to this article, he was able to help another Jew who experienced a big miracle."

R' Spritzer: "She tried to interview me over the course of a year and I had no time for it. It was only a year later that I agreed to be interviewed. Shlomo went into jail right before the interview. If I had been interviewed earlier, he wouldn't have read the article, and even if he had, it's unlikely that he would have related an article about a rabbi who works with prisoners to him, a free man."

***Rebbe? What  
Rebbe? How could  
he help me? Did  
he have money?  
Did he have  
connections with  
the judge?***

Spritzer. He faxed me a copy of two pages in the *Igros Kodesh*. I read it and didn't understand any of it. In the last lines of the second page appeared two words, "don't pay!" This was followed by a bracha from the Rebbe for the imminent Geula. That was the only part I understood and the answer was clear. I wasn't going to pay a cent and I wasn't going to sit in jail for very long.

My cell phone rang and it was my lawyer. "Nu Shlomo, did you manage to get the money together?"

"Don't worry," I told him. "Everything's fine. I have most of the money." He called again, a week before the trial and I told him again that I had the money and everything would be fine.

The day of the trial I was sitting in my lawyer's car on the way to the courthouse. On the way he asked me, "Where's the money? How are you going to pay – in cash?"

"The money? I'm not going to pay!"

"What?!" He hit the brakes and nearly caused an accident. "You're not going to pay?"

In all sincerity I began telling him what I had heard about the Rebbe, but he wasn't willing to listen.

"Are you crazy? Get out of my

car! I am not going to represent you in court. My reputation is at stake here and when the newspapers find out that my client received the maximum sentence, I'm finished!"

I suggested that we leave the debate for a less pressured time since the trial was about to begin. We arrived at the courthouse and were besieged by reporters. They were all certain that it would end with the maximum sentence for the one partner who remained in America: me.

I was the calmest person there. I smiled at everyone. I was confident in the Rebbe's bracha.

The judge banged his gavel. "I will ask the prosecutor to deliver his closing arguments." The prosecutor got up and explained the seriousness of our crimes, the fleeing to Europe, and worst of all if the judge did not punish us severely – everybody would learn from us.

My lawyer grew more and more nervous. He realized that the plea bargain that he had worked so hard to obtain was in danger. As for me, I read some chapters of T'hillim. Everybody was sure I had lost my mind.

When the prosecutor was finished with his concluding remarks, the judge asked the defense to speak. My lawyer was nervous as he read his speech. He was sure all was lost. There was a deal and his crazy client hadn't kept to it.

Finally, there came the surprising ruling of the judge.

"The two sides have presented arguments against the existing sentence. The (state) prosecutor argued against mitigating it and the defense has argued against its severity. In this dispute, the court finds with the defense. The court has decided that the defendant will be sentenced to only two

years jail time. The terms of the probation will remain as is, and will continue for four years."

The lawyer was flabbergasted. The judge had simply forgotten the previous summation. He didn't say a word about a huge fine. It was as though our entire deal had been deleted from the computer and this laughable sentence had replaced it.

An additional amazing thing is that the judge agreed to include the time I had spent when extradited as well as the jail time I had done in the US thus far, so all I had left to serve was a little more than a year in jail.

I saw the fulfillment of the Rebbe's bracha in that I hadn't even paid the court reporter fees to the court (\$750), an amount always charged to the defense with no connection to the outcome of the trial. The Rebbe wrote, "In my opinion, don't pay." I didn't pay a cent!

After a few months in jail, I stood before a parole board, which decides whether an inmate deserves to be released on parole. I sent R' Spritzer another letter and enclosed a letter to the Rebbe. The result? The committee decided that I should be released.

\* \* \*

Still stunned by the miracle, I told Shlomo that the Rebbe doesn't like it when Chassidim only tell him their tzaros. He wants to hear the good news too. I suggested he come to 770 and write to the Rebbe about his release. He readily agreed and told me, "Believe me, I write to the Rebbe every month."

Here was a Jew who had never seen the Rebbe and had barely heard of him and he has such wholehearted faith. He writes to the Rebbe every month.

## A STORY IN INSTALLMENTS

R' Shmuel Spritzer tells us what happened next: Shlomo was so overcome by the miracle that he wanted to commit to a full observance of mitzvot immediately. He came to 770 and after davening he asked, "How should I start?"

I told him to start with t'fillin and Shlomo began putting on t'fillin every day.

One year ago, on 4 Nissan, I went to 770 to buy brochures for mitzvaim. I usually don't buy them myself; a bachur buys them for me, but that day I bought them. I went down to the basement where the Mitzvaim center is located.

I was walking around, taking some brochures from here and some from there, in another language when someone said to me, "On Sunday, there will be a big Kinus for Israelis. Would you like to bring someone?"

I thought of Shlomo and called him and he was happy to attend. I did not stay in 770 for the entire Kinus but I assigned Itzik to him, who already knew him, and he took good care of him. By the end of the Kinus, Shlomo decided to keep kosher.

Before the big parade on Lag B'Omer, I called Shlomo and invited him. He was happy to come and said he would bring some friends. The parade was fantastic and they loved it.

Afterwards, one of the group wanted to write to the Rebbe about a problem he had. He did not want to say what it was. I asked one of the T'mimim to help him. The answer he opened to was in Yiddish and the bachur's Yiddish wasn't good enough to translate it. They came back to me and asked me to translate it.

I read the letter and translated it as Shlomo and his friends stood around. I read and the friend cried. "The Rebbe hit the nail on the head," he said. When I had finished reading the letter, Shlomo said that the Rebbe had written to him too and he had gotten an answer in that letter.

One of the bachurim had to go into 770 for a minute and the rest of the group waited for him outside. As they waited, an older man came over

## Reaching Out

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Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu V'Rabim Melech Hamoshiach L'Olam V'ed

### The Coming of Moshiach

The Torah teaches that in every generation, there is always someone in existence who has the potential to be the Moshiach.

The only reason why this potential Moshiach, throughout history, has not gone on to become the actual Moshiach is because the generation did not merit it. However, for the generation that merits it, when the time comes, G-d will reveal Himself to this person and bestow upon him the "Spirit of Moshiach". As such, the "Spirit of Moshiach" is really the essence and vitality of Moshiach - for it is that which makes him the Moshiach. For once the "Spirit of Moshiach" is revealed in this person, it means that Moshiach is here, in the world, and ready to do his profound mission.

Since there are clearly defined prerequisites for who can or cannot be Moshiach, the identity of the potential candidate is generally evident. For the person destined to be the Moshiach must be a man of flesh and blood who can trace his lineage to the original House of King David. And he must be an expert in Jewish Law and practice. Furthermore, prior to his being revealed as Moshiach, he will have already established himself as a leader amongst the Jewish people. Therefore, in short, he will be a known, practicing, righteous Rabbi.

When the time comes for G-d to send the Moshiach, the "Spirit of Moshiach" is revealed in this Jewish leader, which marks the onset of the "Days of Moshiach". Then, the full revelation of Moshiach ensues, through his actions of building the Temple in Jerusalem and the gathering of the exiles to the Land of Israel.

The Lubavitch Rebbe, the true leader of our generation, messianically precisely 95 generations back to King David. He has prophesied that the time of the final Redemption has arrived after almost 2000 years of exile, and Jewish law states that a good prophecy must be fulfilled. The opinion of some, that our generation is not fitting for the Redemption is in itself a

proof that now is the right time, since Moshiach will come, as is stated, when we find ourselves in such a lowly situation that one doesn't see any possibility of his arrival.

Since we have seen the fulfillment of all the previous prophecies of the Lubavitch Rebbe (including the first Gulf War in 1991, when all experts were pessimistic and warned Israel of gas warfare, the Rebbe was the only one that prophesied that Jews will see great miracles. Indeed, the entire world witnessed these miracles, as the 39 acid missiles fired upon Israel did not claim a single life). There is no doubt that the Rebbe's prophecy regarding the immediate revelation of Moshiach and the subsequent complete and everlasting Redemption is already being materialized.

When Moshiach is revealed, we will be filled with genuine joy, as all G-d's promises will be fulfilled. No more prison, no more weeping, no more working hard to make a living - as nothing will be lacking. There will be something of the past, there will be no troubles or war, and even war equipment will be turned into good and positive things. Also non-Jews, especially those that were helpful to the Jewish people while in exile, will lead and pursue meaningful lives with the adherence of the Universal Jewish Laws, believing in the One Supreme Being that created the heaven and earth.

Before the final revelation of Moshiach, there will be a period when Moshiach will become concealed and not be able to be seen. The Talmud tells us something very similar about our Patriarch Yaakov (Jacob). Even after he had been buried, the Talmud insists that he did not die. The famous Torah commentator Rashi says, that "Yaakov lives forever - it appeared to them that he died, but he was alive."

The Rebbe explains: If the Torah promises that something exists, even if it is not perceived by the human eye, this does not change the fact of the actual existence of that thing. On the contrary, since the Torah says it exists, its existence is a cer-

tainty - more so than a thing seen by the eye, since a thing seen by the eye can be a mere illusion. However, when the Torah gives evidence to the existence of something, it is there without question.

In the writings of the famous Torah mystic Rabbi Yitzchak Luria (known as the Ari HaKadosh) it is stated that before Moshiach is finally revealed, he will be hidden away in a similar fashion to that of Moshe (Moses) when he went up on Mount Sinai to receive the Torah. The people were deluded into thinking that he died, but he really was alive and later came back down with the Ten Commandments. Furthermore, according to the Ari, there is a tremendous advantage in the apparent passing of Moshiach, as compared to the aforementioned passing of Yaakov. Regarding Moshiach it is added, that not only he does not really die, but that "afterwards Moshiach will be completely revealed and all the Jews will recognize him and will gather around him."

The Talmud states also that Moshiach can be someone who was already in the world and it seems that he died. The late Onen and Torah scholar Rabbi Aaron Solovitchik, a widely-known authority in the ruling of Torah law, published just a few years ago, and it appeared in Jewish-American newspapers, that even in light of what happened to the Lubavitcher Rebbe after the 3rd of Tammuz, "accord-

This issue is  
Dedicated to  
Shmuel and Yaakov  
\*\*\*  
In memory of  
their beloved mother  
Rivka bas Tzvi  
29 Tammuz 5762

### Front page of the current issue of Reaching Out

and asked Shlomo, "What does it say on your kippa?"

Shlomo said, "It's the proclamation of Yechi Adoneinu in honor of the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach."

"Do you really believe that?" asked the man.

Shlomo said, "Of course. After the miracle the Rebbe did for me, I have no doubt that he is Moshiach."

Shmuel Spritzer of Reaching Out can be contacted at 718-771-3866

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# FOLLOW YOUR HEART OR YOUR MIND IN FINDING A SHIDDUCH?

By the Grace of G-d  
11th of Adar, 5718  
Brooklyn, N. Y.

Greeting and Blessing:

I received your letter of February 11th, in which you write that you had been given to understand that in connection with a Shidduch, the true approach of the Torah and the Jewish way, is not to let the heart play a decisive part in it, but that the important thing is to ensure the good qualities, etc., of the party concerned. Therefore, you write, that my reply, as it was reported to you, seemed inconsistent with the above.

Now, I do not know how my reply was reported to you. At any rate, my reply always relates to a particular question, asked by a particular person, on the basis of a particular set of data, and, needless to say, my reply is given to the person concerned, who alone can reveal the answer to others. With regard to your particular problem that you write in your letter, however, let me state that it is true that according to the ideal of the Torah, "The mind should rule the heart," and when the mind desires something in accordance with the Torah, the heart should follow without question. This is theoretically true also of a Shidduch, where the ideal woman is described as "Grace is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth G-d, she shall be praised." Proverbs 31:30. The same is true, of course, of a man.

Undoubtedly, however, in our present-day world, it is not always a case where the heart follows the mind, but the heart often has an opinion of its own, not consistent with the above quotation. Therefore, when it comes to a particular case, and it is necessary to decide whether it is a suitable Shidduch among two particular persons, it is then necessary to take into consideration the two concerned parties as they are, and not as they should be, in all perfection. Hence, there is no contradiction between the ideal of the Torah in connection with a Shidduch, and the practical necessity to advise one, in a particular situation where the party has not attained the ideal stage, to listen also to the voice of the heart.

I trust that you know of the three daily Shiurim and observe them, and may G-d grant that you find your suitable Shidduch in all details, since G-d's blessing is necessary in every case, and particularly in the case of a Shidduch.

Wishing you a happy Purim,

With blessing,

# 'I WILL BE YOUR DAUGHTER'

By D. Levanon

*The righteous woman, Mrs. Doba Gita Tewel of Crown Heights, recently passed away. Mrs. Tewel was a model of a Chassidishe mother. The following are some stories that were related during the Shiva in her house by her family and close friends.*

## A CHILD WITH MESIRUS NEFESH

Mrs. Tewel was raised in a Chassidishe home. Her father, R' Shmuel Yitzchok Reitzes, was mekushar to three N'siim: the Rebbe Rashab, the Rebbe Rayatz, and the Rebbe MH"M. They say that one Simchas Torah, when he was tipsy, he left shul for home with a happy bunch of children surrounding him.

A gentile policeman shouted at him, "Drunk, eh?" and R' Shmuel Yitzchok retorted, "A drunk can become sober, but a fool like you will remain a fool..."

Mrs. Tewel's childhood years were spent during the most difficult years for Russian Jewry. The secret police persecuted anyone who dared to spread Judaism or live openly as a Jew. Fear reigned, especially for Chabad Chassidim, who apprehensively waited for the knock at their door.

The KGB did not only arrest

people; they would harass the Chassidim even without arrests. One day, they came to her house and announced that they had disconnected their electricity. Why? Just because.

As soon as their uninvited guests left the house, Doba Tewel, a little girl at the time, climbed an electric pole and connected the wires, unconcerned with the danger.

## RESCUING CHASSIDIM

Dovid Itche is an infamous name among Chassidim who left Russia. In Samarkand they called him Dalet Alef, which in Hebrew are the first letters of *davar acher* (a euphemism for a pig). In books he is referred to as "the known informer."

He became the terror of hundreds of Chassidim, who wondered who was turning in their best friends to the KGB. He would go from town to town, become chummy with his "fellow Chassidim"

who were his classmates back in Lubavitch, and then he would snitch on them to those who sought their blood.

The regularity with which he did this made it obvious that there was an informer in their midst. Chassidim, who had found comfort in their miserable lives in their fellow Chassidim, stopped talking to their best friends.

One day, Doba Tewel was traveling with her younger sister Sarah (later, Mrs. Kievman) a"n on a train. At one of the stops, they saw Dovid Itche, whom they knew as a Chassid who had come to their house, entering the police station! Sarah asked her sister to wait in the street for her and said that if Doba saw her at the window, she should immediately run and warn the Chassidim.

Sarah went inside and saw Dovid Itche unfolding his lapel where the KGB symbol was hidden. The guard let him in. By Divine providence, Dovid Itche entered one of the rooms and left his briefcase outside. Sarah quickly opened his briefcase and saw documents with the names and addresses of all the distinguished Chassidim in the town. She closed the briefcase and went to the window.

Doba saw her there and ran to town to warn the Chassidim about the impending danger. A few minutes later, Sarah joined her, after miraculously managing to leave the building.



**Mrs. Tewel's husband receiving lekach from the Rebbe**

They went from house to house and told the Chassidim to leave. R' Nissan Nemenov took them seriously and packed his bags and left. Another great Chassid, however, did not buy their story.

"Little girl, you think Dovid Itche would inform on me? I learned with him in Lubavitch!"

Unfortunately, he was not the only one. That night, as the angels of destruction came to visit the homes of Anash, they found plenty of incriminating "evidence." It wasn't all they expected but dozens of Chassidim were arrested that night and many of them did not return.

Until his final day, R' Nissan was grateful to Mrs. Tewel for rescuing him. He arranged his trip a few days early when he went to see the Rebbe, so he could participate in the bar mitzva of her oldest son.

### **"I WILL BE YOUR DAUGHTER"**

When the family managed to leave Russia, they were in a refugee camp in Peking, Germany, when Rebbetzin Chana, who was known as the widow of Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Schneersohn, arrived. Mrs. Tewel approached her and simply said, "I will be your daughter."

Their relationship, which began in Peking, continued until the passing of the Rebbetzin in 1965. Mrs. Tewel helped the Rebbetzin with various things in the camp and then in the United States. Every year, she sent mishloach manos to the Rebbetzin and received mishloach manos in return.

The Rebbe was grateful to her and was involved in her shidduch to R' Avrohom Tewel. When she was hesitant, the Rebbe told her, "Kislev is a happy month and I want to hear a positive answer." Naturally, she had no questions after that.

When she had a yechidus and she asked the Rebbe to

officiate at her wedding, the Rebbe answered her with a line that became a motto for her in life ever after. The Rebbe told her that she deserved it but another wedding was taking place the same week which the Rebbe could not attend. "You can't build your own simcha on someone else's jealousy." This was a line with which she lived and educated her children.

In 1963, Mrs. Tewel underwent a complicated operation. At first, the doctor said there was no hope but in the end he was convinced to try. The operation took sixteen hours and Mrs. Tewel's life was miraculously saved. The Rebbe was involved in every detail.

### **HER HISKASHRUS TO THE REBBE**

Mrs. Tewel's hiskashrus and devotion to the Rebbe were boundless. In the first years of the Rebbe's nesius, when the Tewels still lived in Brownsville, Mrs. Tewel would walk to Crown Heights to attend the Rebbe's farbrengens. The few women who participated did not see or hear anything, but they attended anyway.

Her son, Yosef, remembers how his mother would wake him in the wee hours of Simchas Torah morning and schlep him to 770 to hear the new niggun the Rebbe would teach.

When the Rebbe announced the mitzva campaigns, they became Mrs. Tewel's projects. On the corner of Eastern Parkway and Utica there is a bank that once used to be a Jewish bank that had many Jewish employees. Mrs. Tewel made sure that every door in the bank had a mezuzah and she developed personal relationships that started with Mivtza Neshek and turned into house visits with the employees.

### **YASHAR KO'ACH FROM THE REBBE**

When Mrs. Tewel suffered from problems with her feet, the Rebbe told her to speak to Dr. Seligson who referred her to a top doctor, a Jew by the name of Dr. Radler. Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka a"h was treated by this doctor. Dr. Radler had an office in Manhattan.

When Mrs. Tewel arrived for her appointment, after taking the subway and climbing steps on her aching feet, she paused at the door to his office. There was no mezuzah.

"You have a very nice office," she complimented the doctor. The doctor smiled and enjoyed the compliment. He was surprised by the next thing she said. "But where are the mezuzos? You forgot the mezuzos!"

The doctor mumbled something and Mrs. Tewel, as though she didn't hear what he said, asked, "If I bring you mezuzos, will you put them up in your office?"

"I'm a Jew," he answered in Yiddish as his way of saying he would. Without another word, Mrs. Tewel turned around and went back to Crown Heights. She

***When Mrs. Tewel heard this, she told her father and said the Rebbe should be told about this. Rabbi Reitzes went to the secretaries and returned with this answer, “The Rebbe wants to know the name of this evil man’s mother...”***



Mrs. Tewel’s father, Rabbi Shmuel Yosef Reitzes

went to a Judaica store, bought mezuzos, went back to the subway and took the train to Manhattan, to the doctor’s office.

“Where did you disappear?” wondered the doctor when his patient showed up again two hours later.

“I went to get you mezuzos,” she said, and she asked him to put them up. The doctor couldn’t ignore such sincere devotion and he put up the mezuzos.

Some time later, the Rebbetzin went to this doctor and he told her about the woman from Crown Heights who brought him mezuzos. A few months after that, Mrs. Tewel had yechidus. When she went in, the Rebbe said, “I received good regards from you.”

She didn’t know what the Rebbe meant and the Rebbe repeated what he had said. When he saw that she still did not understand, he smiled and said, “Good doctors – they let themselves be healed.”

Rabbi Shneur Zalman Gurary addressed a N’shei Chabad convention that took place at that time. R’ Gurary, who had heard from the Rebbetzin about the mezuzos that Mrs. Tewel was responsible for, and about the nachas this gave the Rebbe, told the women the story. He asked the audience to applaud for Mrs. Tewel. Mrs. Tewel, who always did things modestly and was unused to the American style, didn’t know where to hide herself.

## THE DOWNFALL OF THE WICKED

Underneath their home on S. John’s corner of Albany in Crown Heights, lived an anti-Semitic Ukrainian by the name of Ivan Patronya. Whenever he saw the Tewel children, he would curse Judaism and Jews.

One time, when he was drunk, he blurted out, “All of you should be slaughtered like we did to you at Babi Yar” (in north-eastern Kiev, where 100,000 Jews were butchered by the Nazis and their helpers). When Mrs. Tewel heard this, she told her father and said the Rebbe should be told about this. Rabbi Reitzes went to the secretaries and returned with this answer, “The Rebbe wants to know the name of this evil man’s mother.”

Mrs. Tewel handled this cleverly. The next day, when she knew Ivan wasn’t home, she knocked at his door. His wife opened the door and was surprised to see her Jewish neighbor with a tray of fruit. “This is a birthday present,” she said.

The surprised neighbor said it wasn’t her birthday, but Mrs. Tewel was already inside her house. She found an excuse for the neighbor to accept the fruit and they sat and chatted like good friends from Russia. Eventually, they got to talking about Ivan and his parents’ names.

Mrs. Tewel said goodbye and told her father that

Ivan's mother's name was Yevducha. The next day, when Yossi Tewel got off the Oholei Torah bus he saw Ivan there as usual, drunk and cursing. The child was afraid of Ivan and he hid behind a parked car. Then he saw a sight he will never forget.

Ivan the evil drunk went into the street, and a sanitation truck, which had come from the direction of Albany Avenue, plowed into him, throwing him a few feet in the air. The paramedics could do nothing, since he was dead.

## FINAL DAYS

In Mrs. Tewel's final years she was sick and hospitalized. One day before Purim, the family heard about a Jew who had been in a coma and had woken up because of a dollar

from the Rebbe that was put under his head. The family decided to put a dollar under their mother's head. They put it there in the morning and a few hours later they saw signs of life, but at night, the dollar was gone.

A family member, who was there, realized that the dollar had probably ended up in the laundry. He ran to the hospital's laundry room, where he found out that the dollar had gone with all the hospital's laundry to the main laundry center that serviced all the hospitals in the area. Finding a needle in a haystack would have been an easier task.

When they called the laundry center, a Russian Jewish woman answered the phone. She said she had also received a dollar from the

Rebbe. She promised that she would try and find the missing dollar. Seven hours later she called to say that she had found it! She identified it by the date written on it.

Since it was close to Purim, when Mrs. Tewel's daughter went to get the dollar, she took mishloach manos, Neshek, and a large picture of the Rebbe giving out dollars. The Russian woman cried and said she did not know why she had merited to find the Rebbe's dollar. Being so inspired, she promised to light Shabbos candles every week. Thus, Mrs. Tewel "did mitvtzaim" even in her critical state.

Mrs. Tewel passed away a few days later, but can anyone say that the Rebbe's dollar did not accomplish anything?



Mrs. Tewel's husband receiving a *Tanya* from the Rebbe. Behind him stands his son, Pinchas.

# IT'S NOT ENOUGH TO WAIT, YOU HAVE TO LIVE IT!

By Ofra Badosa

***What did I do today to bring Moshiach into my life? This question needs to be our primary focus until it happens. It's what the Rebbe demands of us! \* How do we do it? How do we bring Moshiach into all aspects of our lives, into our homes, into our hearts? \* Daniella Shefi, a Chassida and naturopath, and Henya Elishevitz, Tzivos Hashem coordinator at the Chabad School in Kiryat Gat, respond to these questions.***

*Something essential must change in order for us to succeed in bringing Moshiach. It has to be deep but immediate. We cannot wait any longer. All endpoints for Galus have passed.*

*I think that anybody reading these lines can relate to them, to the yearning that the Rebbe has tried to instill in us. It seems, though, that as much as we really try, it's still not working. We have a big role to play in this, greater than we are aware of. We know that we are the*

*reincarnation of the Generation of the Desert. The women in Egypt carried the day by strengthening their husbands. Are we doing this?*

*What are we doing to live with Moshiach? It's so hard to be inspired again and again in the routine of Galus, but if the Rebbe told us to live with Moshiach, that means we have the ability to do so. We need to abandon the chitzonius and bring Moshiach into every aspect of our lives, into our homes, into our hearts.*

*We sometimes think that to live with Moshiach means to wait for him. The truth is, Moshiach is already here! He is waiting for us to invite him in.*

**Not surprisingly, the conversation with Mrs. Henya Elishevitz about Moshiach began with a birth story.**

Henny: I recently accompanied a laboring woman to the hospital. The birth process took days and the mother tried to do anything she could to hurry it along, but it seemed never-ending. At some point, after suffering for a long time, she gave me a despairing look and asked me: Tell me, will the baby ever get out?

The question struck home. The woman was truly waiting for the baby to be born and she had done all she could to make it happen. Nobody could say that she didn't really want the birth, but towards the end, she reached a point where it was so painful that she was no longer sure that it would ever end.

I told her: Remember everything the Rebbe told us about Geula.

To me, this woman was a very powerful parable. I saw, through her, how much we need to fight, to strengthen our faith so it is as it ought to be, so we don't start

doubting and fall into despair or apathy. After everything the Rebbe screamed, asked, and demanded, how can we say, “Yes, he will come, but I don’t know when.”

**What do you think we need to do?**

Henny: I think that to be a Jew, a Chassid in the seventh generation, you need to walk a fine line, because on the one hand it says, “the work is not for you to finish,” and on the other hand, “you are not free to desist from it.” On the one hand, we need to arouse our inner cry to Hashem and to the Rebbe, with a demand and a plea that they help us. On the other hand, we cannot wait for the Rebbe to be revealed to us but have to shake off our passivity and be mekabel the Rebbe’s malchus.

## CONNECTING EVERYTHING TO MOSHIACH

**What do you do to live with the Geula in your daily life?**

Henny: One of the things that really helps me and those around me to live with Moshiach is to see how there are constantly signs of his coming. When you look out the window you see a crazy world out

there, but the minute you start connecting everything to Moshiach, it gives you a feeling of calm and hope. For example, when the price of rice went up, we connected it to one of the signs of Geula mentioned in the Gemara, that prices will rise.

I also use parables that are connected to Geula. Parables are excellent for strengthening one’s emuna and it helps makes ideas relevant to us. We need to use these two tools again and again, to make them a part of us.

**Do you have an example for us?**

Henny: In a class that I give to women, mekuravos, we speak a lot about Moshiach. Whatever comes up in the shiur is connected to Moshiach.

One of the ladies told about a horrible experience she had. Her father was in the hospital in critical but stable condition. One day, she and her sister were sitting at his bedside and after many hours she felt the need for a drink. She went downstairs and stood for a while in front of the vending machine, deciding which drink to buy.

Upon her return upstairs, she heard her sister crying and she realized what had happened in her absence. After the initial shock, she

asked: How was it that he suddenly died? They didn’t say these were his final moments!

Her sister looked at her in surprise and said: You didn’t see what state he was in?!

The woman found it hard to believe that in her father’s final moments, she had stood debating which drink to buy.

**How does this story connect to Geula?**

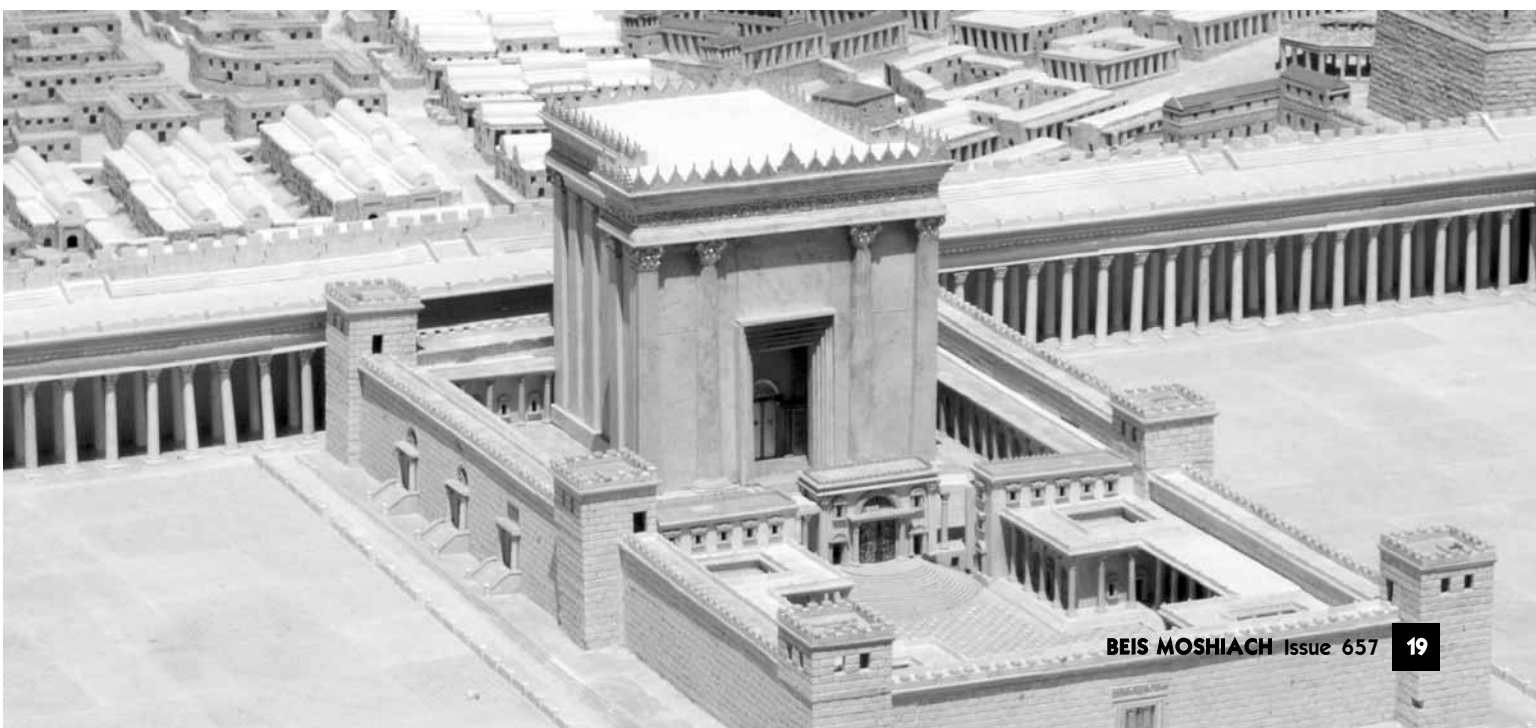
Henny: It showed me clearly how we don’t see reality for what it is. Whether due to the daily grind or routine, we are inclined to forget and not live with the fact that the Rebbe will appear at any moment. If he comes this second, don’t you and I want to greet him with a smile and be able to say: I just did something so you would come!

**So how do we get out of our Galus mindset?**

Henny: It says that a prisoner cannot free himself. We have to constantly inspire one another so we can proudly say, “Do you know where I was when the Rebbe came?”

## SPEAKING ABOUT THE GEULA

**How do you instill all this at**





***A prisoner cannot free himself. We have to constantly inspire one another so we can proudly say, “Do you know where I was when the Rebbe came?”***

**school?**

Henny: First of all, I speak to the girls about the Geula as a happening thing. On every homework paper or sheet handed out, we write, “If Moshiach doesn’t come, G-d forbid, we will meet...” The assignments always have these questions on them, “How can you bring yourself to want Moshiach more?” and “Why do you want Moshiach?” I constantly talk about this topic, making it part of their awareness and their lexicon.

In addition, we learn inyanei Moshiach and Geula, which gets them involved and able to live with it. At every activity or gathering, this is the main topic I speak about. At recess, girls are appointed who circulate with candies. If girls are quarrelling, they go over to them and tell them that only with Ahavas Yisroel will we bring the Geula. They remind them that if they stop fighting, the Geula will come sooner, and they give out candies.

**And at home?**

Henny: One of the things we are particular about at home is learning inyanei Moshiach and Geula. Among other things, every evening, before bedtime, I sit between the children’s rooms while they are in bed and I read the *Yom Yom*

*Moshiach and Geula* to them with a flashlight.

It’s amazing how they absorb it. Yesterday, one of my daughters came over to me and happily said: Ima, you know, I had a strange and nice dream last night. I dreamt that Moshiach came already and the clouds came to take us to the Beis HaMikdash. I was in my room and you were in your room and each of us waited for her cloud. You didn’t know how to get on the cloud and so I showed you. At first, I also thought it would sink under me but that didn’t happen. It was soft and I showed you again and again until you were able to do it and we were able to go.

I listened to her with a smile and asked: How did we get through the bars of the windows?

She said: I don’t think that in the Geula the bars will be in the way.

**Have you prepared something for vacation?**

Henny: We decided that if Hashem leaves us in Galus, we will have a Geula vacation. The first week, each child will get a notebook in which to write or draw those things which hasten the Geula and what special thing they did.

Each one collects as many things as possible that are a segula to bring Moshiach. I assign my little ones to my older children so they can help them. In the evening, we will sit together to illustrate the concepts and of course, we will hang them up on the wall. Each child will have to decide which segula he/she chooses to do the next day from all the choices.

We are also planning to go out and distribute Neshek. On another day, we will do Mivtza Ahavas Yisroel in the neighborhood with one helping an elderly neighbor, while another one will go and play with a child who is not popular in class, etc. On another day, we will look for stories and parables about

anticipating the Geula.

**Tell us which things had a particular impact on your children.**

Henny: The thing to remember is that everything at home has to be connected to Moshiach. One thing that I see is especially effective is when the walls “talk.” I hang up decorations that I constantly change, that instill the fact that the Rebbe is Moshiach and about a Geula life.

I also try to have them feel Geula in their daily activities. When I ask them to pick up the toys, I say: Come, let us imagine that we are in Yerushalayim in the time of Geula and the floor is full of diamonds and precious stones. Who will pick up the most and be a big baal chesed?

You don’t need more than that in order for the children to run and pick up the toys. You have to put in some thought in making connections to Geula.

We sometimes “go bowling” and each one writes a note on a bottle (pin) with traits or things he doesn’t do properly that he wants to “knock down.” There is much enthusiasm when they manage to knock the Evil Inclination out in this way.

Another very important thing is to speak to the children. One of the best times is at the supper table. Each child tells how they saw Divine Providence during the day and how they lived with Moshiach and Geula. We each listen and it enables us to be strengthened and grow closer.

I listen and don’t criticize what the children say. Accepting what they say, I try to stimulate them and add my own insights. I use what the child says and take it another step further to personalize it. Through these family discussions I try, as much as possible, to make what the Rebbe said relevant to them.

## **ENORMOUS INFLUENCE IN CHINUCH**

**Tell me about a special activity**



**that you did to hasten the Geula.**

Henny: Last summer, throughout vacation, we built the walls of the Beis HaMikdash. I put boxes in the living room and each one had colorful bricks. On one box it said “respect for parents.” On another it said, “Ahavas Yisroel,” etc.

I gathered the children and announced: Whoever did any of these mitzvos is invited to add to the building of the Beis HaMikdash. Every day of vacation the bricks piled up and when we completed the first wall, we were all excited. When the second wall was finished, we celebrated. We connected the two walls and took our pictures with them. We felt as though we had brought a korban to Hashem. The results were amazing. I saw how it spurred them on to be particular in these mitzvos.

**Do you see a change in your children’s behavior as a result of these activities?**

Henny: I have a terrific story to tell you in answer to your question. Before Pesach I gathered the children and asked them to help out. An hour later, I saw that each of them was busy doing their own thing. I told them that I was very

sad and this was definitely not the way to bring Moshiach.

They went to the room at the end of the house and came out a while later. They proudly walked over to the wall and hung up two papers which said – The Moshiach Game - the game which guarantees to hasten the coming of Moshiach, on top. The rules of the game were written out: you have to help one another and heaven forbid, not fight or speak not nicely.

What amazed me was that they did it all by themselves. It showed me that they were listening to me and so everything they do is connected to Moshiach.

**Daniella Shefi, a naturopath by profession, feels that she has undergone a transformation in everything connected to kabbalas p’nei Moshiach Tzidkeinu. I spoke to her in order to find out what caused this change and was surprised to hear her also begin with a birth story.**

Daniella: It all began because several young women asked me to accompany them when they gave birth. I had no experience but there I was, attending birth after birth. I stood by them, encouraged them when they were frightened, and

strengthened them when they lost faith. I did all I could to help them maintain their optimism. I saw how my support helped them move forward, despite their pain.

It was clear to me that Hashem was trying to show me something. It wasn’t possible that He was sending me to birth after birth without any lesson in avodas Hashem for me.

At one birth, I had a brainstorm. I had learned many times that the transition from Galus to Geula is compared to a birth. Attending births brought the point home to me in a deep way. The baby, who is engaged in a huge struggle is coming from a reality which is very different than the world he is about to enter. Between these two worlds is the birth passage.

I saw how we are in the same situation. We are familiar with the reality of Galus but are clueless when it comes to Geula. This transitional period is very painful.

**What’s so special about that – the analogy of birth to Galus and Geula is well known?**

Daniella: It’s familiar but only intellectually. There is a big difference between having heard something and actually knowing it. I reached a place within me that really wants to go out to Geula, to cross the border of this birth. What made it real for me were the births I attended. I saw how I helped the birthing mother move forward despite the pain, fear and uncertainty. Not to stop.

It occurred to me that we also need help; we need “birth support” to help us get through this period until Moshiach is revealed.

## **THE REBBE IS WAITING FOR US**

**Isn’t it the Rebbe who helps us?**

Daniella: The Rebbe gave us the direction, the ability and tools, but when you experience the fear, you



need someone nearby to tell you that you're doing fine. We need someone to tell us that despite all the catastrophes we see around us, everything is proceeding according to plan. We need to internalize the reality that the Rebbe revealed, that the Geula is really here and we just need to move forward. The Rebbe is waiting for us to take the next step.

**Maybe these “douglas” are our mashprios?**

Daniella: That's correct in principle but in order to have a Geula-type influence, you have to be in that mindset. Listen, I'm in the same situation, but after being present at those births I began asking myself where I stood. I had a strong desire to find the way out to Geula.

When I asked myself some pointed questions, it wasn't at all clear to me that I was living Geula. I can talk about what the Rebbe said in his sichos about Moshiach and Geula but does that impact on my mopping the floor and the dishes I wash every day, on my behavior? In what way do I really live Geula?

I began discussing this with my husband as it had become a burning issue for me. I wanted to know what Geula is! What is the avoda that we need to do in order to really live it! My husband joined me in my research. He started asking people how they live with Moshiach. Most of them repeated what the Rebbe said in sichos, but my husband would say, “No! What does living with Moshiach mean **for you**? How do **you** live with Moshiach?” At that point, many of the people he asked seemed stuck.

## LEARNING IS NOT ENOUGH

**Being involved with Moshiach must have brought the “point” alive to you in a more tangible way.**

Daniella: Yes, and it just keeps getting stronger. Originally, I was struggling with many questions. I didn't understand how it was possible that the Rebbe told us that the Geula is here, yet we don't see it. This is not merely a small detail that we can overlook. The Geula is the revelation of the “Alef” (G-dliness) of the entire world. I put in great efforts to understand this, to find a solution that would help me. I had to understand how to bring the Geula into my life.

By Divine Providence, I remembered that the Baal Shem Tov said that other people are your mirror. In other words, if something bothers you about someone, that means that the same thing is lacking, albeit in a subtle form, within you. This principle works in the positive too, that if we get excited about something positive in someone else, that's an indication that we have that trait too; otherwise, we wouldn't identify with it.

I realized that I don't see Geula because I don't have

***When there are hardships or worries in life, we need to put them aside and focus on the fact that there is Moshiach, there is someone to turn to, someone to consult with. There is a judge, a prophet, an advisor for our generation – we are not alone!***

it within me. I have Geula in the computer, in my head, and in s'farim. I know how to speak nicely about things connected to Geula, but I don't really relate to it.

**From what you're saying it sounds like learning inyanei Moshiach and Geula is secondary in importance to “living with Geula.”**

Daniella: Not at all. We have to learn. The Rebbe speaks many times about the importance of learning inyanei Moshiach and Geula. The learning enables us to relate to it but we need to learn and know about Geula in order to live with it. The learning cannot remain academic, theoretical; we must internalize it.

The Rebbe put it like this, in a sicha of Parshas Balak 5751, saying that additional learning of inyanei Moshiach and Geula is “**not (only) as a segula to hasten and bring closer the coming of Moshiach and the Geula, but (also and) primarily in order to begin “living” in inyanei Moshiach and Geula, “to live with the times,” of Yemos HaMoshiach, through the intellect becoming full and saturated with understanding and a grasp of inyanei Moshiach and Geula in Torah, and from the intellect it spreads and penetrates even the emotions of the heart, until actual behavior in thought, speech, and action, in a way that is fitting for this special time as we stand on the threshold of Geula, and point with a finger that “behold this (Melech HaMoshiach) came.**”

The Rebbe says that the Geula is already here and we just have to draw it in, within us. This is our avoda, our birth. And I, like everybody else, am trying to find my way. The Rebbe gave us all the tools but we have to make our way by ourselves.

Each one of us needs to take the responsibility because nobody is going to do it for us. When I work at my clinic I don't make people well; I show the patient the way. He has to take the path in order to get better!



## LIKE BEFORE PESACH

**What do you think we're lacking?**

Daniella: I think we need to live with the Rebbe's message with the intensity it deserves. A month before Pesach, people are very busy preparing for Yom Tov. We talk about Pesach. We read about Pesach. We go to shiurim about Pesach. We advertise about Pesach.

That's what we're lacking: living with Moshiach as we all do for Pesach, when we are all in the same "headspace." I am waiting for the rabbanim to teach us how to live with Moshiach.

**What about the shiurim in D'var Malchus that exist all over?**

Daniella: At these shiurim, the topic of Geula is taught, but in order to internalize it, it needs to be broken down more. An ordinary woman who attends one of these shiurim doesn't know how to apply what she learns to her daily life, and that is the job of the one giving the shiur, to make it practical.

**So what should we do?**

Daniella: I see this era as a grace period that Hashem is giving us to prepare for the revelation of Moshiach. It's easy to think that Moshiach is coming and everything will be fine, but it's not a good idea for it to happen this way, without

any preparation on our part, because it's hard to jump from one reality to another.

In earlier generations, the avoda was to draw the Geula down into the world. The Rebbe announced that the avoda of *this* generation is kabbalas p'nei Moshiach Tzidkeinu. You can't live with Moshiach until you accept him. So our avoda today is to be keilim to receive the great revelation of Geula.

That is why it is so important to learn, because when this will be accepted within ourselves, then Moshiach himself can enter there as well. The verse says, "Behold, he stands behind our wall, watching from the windows, peering through the cracks." People think that Moshiach is concealed of his own volition, but I think the verse is saying that he is standing right behind our walls, right behind our very own barriers and limitations.

We are Galus Jews and our mindset is one of exile. We have to confront the truth, that we are no longer in Galus but just think we are.

It says that Moshiach will come *b'hesech ha'daas* (when our minds are diverted). We need to divert our minds from our Galus thoughts. The problem is that we are waiting for something to happen to take us

out of Galus and we don't see it happening. We're having a hard time understanding this fact that we aren't just supposed to anticipate Geula. The Rebbe gave us work to do. We need to bring Geula into our personal lives. Geula begins at home.

## HOW DO WE LIVE MOSHIACH?

**What does living with Moshiach mean to you?**

Daniella: First, I have to accept the fact that there is a Moshiach, that there's a Rebbe; that he is a man of flesh and blood who is here. You can't live with something that doesn't exist. It's not enough for this knowledge to be something you heard or read or were told; it has to be internalized. There really is a Moshiach.

If we truly feel this, our entire inner world will change completely. When there are hardships or worries in life, we need to put them aside and focus on the fact that there is Moshiach, there is someone to turn to, someone to consult with. There is a judge, a prophet, an advisor for our generation – we are not alone!

In good things and in those things which aren't quite good, we need to involve the Rebbe, to bring him into every detail of our lives. This itself is already living with Moshiach. This is the inner work we all need to do and the test as to how much we really want Moshiach.

We need to do the work. Every day, we need to do something in order to live more with Geula, to progress in something, like a baby emerging, millimeter by millimeter from its mother's womb. The worst thing in a birth is when a baby gets stuck. Today, I am sorry to say, I feel that we are stuck.

The Rebbe said, "May there be one, two, three people who come up with a plan what to do and how to do it." One of the things that I've

realized lately is that we won't get anywhere on our own. We need to unite and not stop talking about Moshiach until he comes.

***I thought about what Daniella said and realized that she is right. It's rare that I feel that a farbrengen actually changed me, that I left a different person than when I came in. In order to do the avoda that she's talking about, we really need to transform ourselves.***

**How can we do it? Where do we begin?**

Daniella: There are many possible places to start; the important thing is to start! I begin with trying to ask myself and those around me this question. Wherever I go, I make a comment about Moshiach. I toss out questions like, "How do you live with Moshiach?" It gets people thinking.

I know that the purpose of Creation is to make a dwelling place for Hashem down below and that the Geula is here. So my avoda is to bring the Sh'china down into the lowest possible place, into my mopping and changing diapers.

Thursday night as I'm trying to finish up my preparations for Shabbos I suddenly think: One minute! How are you living with Moshiach now?

**How do you do a Geula-mopping?**

Daniella: When you start changing internally and bringing Moshiach into every detail and corner of your life, you're no longer the same person. Then all the things you do are coming from that place of Geula. I also try to remind myself of the fact that I'm living in Geula and that Moshiach is already here. It's a word that I repeat in my head: Geula, Geula, Geula. And it works.

I also look at where I am now and see how I really am living with Geula, compared to the way I was twenty years ago. There are so many

different places that I might have ended up, and I feel like I'm living in Geula by virtue of this fact alone.

**Do you have other ideas about how to bring Moshiach into our homes?**

Daniella: The members of the family have to come up with a plan about how to bring Moshiach into the home. Learning about Geula and Moshiach and translating the learning into our daily lives. When situations arise that aren't as they should be, to try and redeem them, bring them into a state of Geula.

**Do you think we are ready for this, for a big change?**

Daniella: The goal of Geula is to reveal G-dliness in the world, to reveal the good. We have an animal soul and need to be aware of that, but only in order to attain G-dliness. It's important not to make the animal soul primary but to reveal the G-dliness within us and in those around us.

You can't always be stuck on the animal soul. One of the difficulties is our Galus mindset. We've grown accustomed to darkness, to difficulties, to persecution and suffering. We are used to dealing with the good that is so high that it is revealed to us as evil. We know how to bear difficulties but we don't always know how to accept the good. There is a certain fear and suspicion of good and we sometimes think, "It's going to be followed by bad; it couldn't just be good."

We need to be brave and believe that Geula is here. In order to be redeemed, we need courage. We need to open up and let it in. It is human nature to find it hard to leave that which is familiar to us, but we have to free ourselves of Galus.

## IDENTIFYING THE RIGHT DIRECTION

**How do you know you are on**

## ALL THE DAYS OF YOUR LIFE

"The chiddush of the Nasi Yisroel (Nasi from the root meaning uplifted) is to connect and unite 'all the days of your life' of every single Jew and all Klal Yisroel, with the Geula (going out of limitations and boundaries) in general, and especially with Yemos HaMoshiach, the true and complete Redemption after which there is no exile.

"It is specifically the Nasi who has the ability to connect and unite the Galus with the Geula and more specifically, to connect the going out of Egypt and Yemos HaMoshiach (as they are in our reality that Galus separates them), 'remember the day you left Egypt all the days of your life ...to bring to Yemos HaMoshiach' – that in a Jew's life 'all the days of your life' as a neshama in a body in this physical, material world and in the time of Galus, he can go out of the limitations and boundaries, and furthermore, he can be in a state of Yemos HaMoshiach.

*(Sicha-Shmos 21 Teives 5752)*

**the right track, that you have really been transformed into a Geula mindset and way of life?**

Daniella: I once asked the mashpia, R' Reuven Dunin how I can know whether I am on the path of truth. He answered me in his characteristic direct and wise way. He said: **When you are happy, you will know that you are on the right path.**

I see this when my husband and I attend a shiur in the evening. There are women there who look exhausted but when we begin



discussing the topic of inyanei Moshiach, they begin to wake up and talk animatedly about it.

**Why is it so hard for us? We ought to dance with joy after waiting for nearly 2000 years!**

Daniella: I think that the reason is because nobody has been there. We have a lot of wise men, tzaddikim, and Chassidim in our history, but we don't have a role model of someone who lived with Geula. It's new for all of us. The ones for whom it's relatively easy are the children.

The only dugma chaya we have for this is the Rebbe himself. He is the only one who is already there and therefore, he is the only one who can guide us to do it. Without the Rebbe, nobody would believe that the Geula is real. We would think the Geula is far-off. The Rebbe opened the gate of Geula! There is a way to get there now, and so if we want it, we can do the impossible.

We are no longer the powerless, Galus nation. We have enormous strength. People who use just a

little of these kochos, live wondrous lives and tell of miracles. For this reason, the most important thing we need to do in order to really live with Moshiach is to accept the malchus of Moshiach.

After we left Egypt and arrived at the sea, there was much confusion and fear that the Egyptians were about to catch up to us. The Rebbe describes the four groups, each of which reasoned well, but none of them did the right thing. The one for whom the sea split was Nachshon ben Aminadav and this was because he listened to Moshe, who told them to journey onwards.

We are in precisely the same situation. We have enemies around us, but the only thing to do is to listen to the Rebbe. And he says to live with Moshiach. This is not just a personal prescription, to reveal my p'nimius, but a prescription for us all. Our connection to the Rebbe enables us to spearhead the going out of Galus, to be just like the Jews who were close to Moshe when they left Egypt. They left in a huge convoy of millions of people. By the time Moshe had left Egypt, the last part of the convoy was still deep in Egypt. They were still in the process while the first ones were already in Geula.

The Rebbe wants us to be in the front row of the convoy, and it's a responsibility. People don't know everything the Rebbe said and innovated in the topic of Moshiach and Geula. It's our job to bring it to people's awareness.

*My conversations with Daniella and Henny motivated me to set up a chavrusa to learn inyanei Moshiach and Geula and take on some concrete resolutions. I must admit that I feel newly energized. Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Melech HaMoshiach L'olam Va'ed!*

# FATHER OF THE JEWISH STUDENTS IN MILAN

By Nosson Avrohom

***Nosson Avrohom spent a few days in the Beis HaTalmud K'hilla in Milan, Italy and saw the wonderful work that Rabbi Tzemach and Mrs. Efrat Mizrachi are doing. They work with hundreds of Israeli students as well as with those who attend the Beis HaTalmud Beis Midrash to learn and daven.***

“The father of the Jewish students of Milan,” is what he is called by the Jewish students as well as many Israelis who go to work or study in Milan, or in northern and central Italy. The Rebbe’s shliach, Rabbi Tzemach Mizrachi is available to them at all hours of the day and night.

Along with his activities with students, which include Shabbos meals, t’fillos, shiurim, and seasonal programs, he also helps them find apartments to rent, employment, and material assistance. At the students’ website in Italy, every student knows him. Every few weeks, the site administrators call him and

ask him to write about his work.

“When you help a Jew materially, he is open to hearing about spirituality,” explains R’ Mizrachi.

In addition to his work with students, Rabbi Mizrachi is the rav of the Beis HaTalmud k’hilla, one of the most interesting k’hillos I ever encountered. It seems that every group within Judaism is represented in this one k’hilla: Lubavitchers, Sephardim, Ashkenazim, Litvishe, Religious-Zionists, young and old alike. All see the k’hilla as their home and are devoted to making the k’hilla grow and flourish. R’ Mizrachi is devoted to his congregants. There

is something about the soulfulness that he demonstrates towards every Jew, showing respect and warmth towards all, that attracts a wide-ranging group of people.

It’s much more than a shul. It’s a beis midrash that pulses with the life of Torah. It was fascinating to participate in the shiurim and lectures that R’ Mizrachi gave.

The nicest and most impressive thing we experienced on our visit to his k’hilla was the Shabbos and Yom Tov meals in R’ Mizrachi’s home. Students who he is in touch with all year were there along with members of the k’hilla. In the middle sat some emissaries of B’nei Akiva who came on a tour to Italy. It was only natural for the representative of this organization in Italy, who is a member of R’ Mizrachi’s k’hilla, to recommend that they spend Shabbos at R’ Mizrachi’s home.

They sang niggunim, heard divrei Torah, and enjoyed the great food prepared by Mrs. Efrat Mizrachi, but the best part was the serene atmosphere that was almost palpable.

R’ Mizrachi tirelessly runs

activities on these two fronts, as rav of the shul and as director of a Chabad house for students. Often the lines blur whether at a Shabbos meal or in joint activities that are done on holidays. Don't even bother trying to figure out how many hours of sleep he manages to get.

Then there are times that he focuses on all the Israeli students throughout Italy. Before this past Pesach, R' Mizrachi sent letters to all the Israeli students in Italy, and those who requested it – and there were many – were sent matzos, wine, and a holiday brochure. Every once in a while

he holds Shabbatons for many students in the mountains of Italy.

R' Mizrachi has been on shlichus in Milan for eight years and over the years, many students have become more involved in Judaism. Some of them even changed their inner and outer garments and became fully observant.

"It all began eleven years ago when I arrived with a group of T'mimim to learn in the smicha program of the central Chabad house in Milan, which is run by Rabbi Moshe Shaikevitz. On our first day there, Rabbi Shaikevitz

told us that part of our day we would spend learning with local people.

"Anash had just resolved to strengthen Mivtza Torah. One of the people active in this was the president of our shul today, R' Refael Nimni. They had a number of ideas and were having a hard time deciding what the best approach was. When they wrote to the Rebbe, they opened to a clear answer in the *Igros Kodesh* which was about opening a beis midrash where even people in the other half of the city could learn. It was amazing because back then, many Jews had begun to live in the other half of Milan and therefore, new mosdos were opened for them.

"In response to the letter of the Rebbe, they decided to take action. They rented a small apartment and called it Beis HaTalmud. The goal was to turn it into a beis midrash where anybody could come, at any time, and learn. They planned on having shiurim in Gemara, Mishna, Halacha and Chassidus, of course. The beis midrash is not designated as a Chabad shul, hence its name, 'Beis HaTalmud.' The idea is that it should have a Talmudic orientation, not a Chabad orientation per se, so that those who have preconceived notion regarding Sephardim and Ashkenazim, Litvishe and Chassidim, will look at it as a place without labels. Whoever wants to learn Torah, can learn there.

"We students of the Machon HaSmicha would go there, in rotation, in order to give shiurim or to learn with people one-on-one. It was opened in Teives 5757 and within a very short time, it became a success. I had some balabatim with whom I learned three evenings a week. On



***“We mustn’t get flustered when sometimes we feel that we give it all we’ve got and don’t see a response. Not only that, but we sometimes even get painful slaps in the face.”***

Shabbos I would walk there; it took an hour and a half. In the afternoons we learned a maamer of the Rebbe. It was fantastic. We delved into the maamarim and I learned so much from my students. The balabatim would often give me a new perspective on things. I got really involved and the people responded.

“At the end of the year, when my friends at the Machon HaSmicha went home or went elsewhere on shlichus, I was asked to remain in Milan. I agreed and I lived with the founder, R’ Refael Nimni. In the summer, the families would go to the mountains on vacation while the husbands remained in Milan to work. They joined their families on the weekends. This gave us more time to learn together. Occasionally we would also farbreng after we learned.

“When the summer was over and I planned on visiting my parents in Eretz Yisroel, I was given a touching letter by some members of the community, in which they asked me to return to

Milan. They promised to support me.

“I loved the place no less than them, and so the following summer, after I got married and studied safrus, I returned to Milan. In the beginning, I would go to Beis HaTalmud every evening to give shiurim and to learn with chavrusos. On weekends, my wife and I would go to Venice.

“We decided that in addition to shiurim in the evening, we had to do something else. We saw that nobody was working with the Israeli students who came to study in Milan and the surrounding areas, especially for design and medicine, and we decided to get involved. At first it was hard. When I think of it now, I don’t know how we didn’t give up.

“The first thing we did was before Chamisha-Asar B’Svat. We prepared a program and lots of good food and waited for many guests to show up, but only two people came. We can smile about

it now but then...

“We contacted many students and discovered that the largest group of them lived near us. We decided to work with them on a regular basis and with effort, the circle widened steadily.

“At first, many came to the Shabbos meals we organized as well as to special holiday programs, but at a certain point they themselves decided that it wasn’t enough for them and they wanted to study Judaism on a deeper level. That is how our Tuesday shiur began. We saw how this shiur was really making a difference in many people’s lives.

“When a student comes to your Shabbos table, he is moved; he has had a nice Jewish experience. When he hears a nice d’var Torah, he is impressed. But when he regularly attends a *Tanya* shiur, he internalizes things and it makes a real change.

“For years we have been the students’ confidantes. We help many of them find jobs so they can cover their expenses. We have

### **THREE ANSWERS THAT COMPLETED THE PUZZLE**

In our k’hilla there is a wealthy man who is a rug dealer. He has donated a lot towards the Chabad house. This man had a daughter and then five years went by in which he and his wife waited expectantly for more children, but they were not blessed. This bothered him greatly.

Rabbi Boaz Kali, someone suffused with a chayus and Chassidic warmth, was staying with me. He told miracles that he had personally witnessed with the *Igros Kodesh*. The man heard what he had to say and he asked to write to the Rebbe.

There were three letters on the page. In one letter, the Rebbe said to strengthen taharas ha’mishpacha. In the second letter the Rebbe blessed someone who had moved with “change your location, change your fortune.” In the third letter, the Rebbe asked someone to register his children in the Rebbe Rayatz’s mosdos.

The man was amazed by the answer because he had been looking for a new apartment for a while, and the Rebbe was writing about that. His wife reviewed the laws of taharas ha’mishpacha with my wife. A few months later they found an apartment and when they finished renovating it, they had a child. Today they have several children and all are registered in the Chabad school.





**Rabbi Tzemach Mizrachi (left) with students**

helped them find apartments. People know that we are in touch with students and within the k'hilla they turn to us for various things and we can be the middlemen. We learned that gashmius and ruchnius go hand in hand and you see that when you help a Jew materially, he gives it back to you spiritually.

"My wife is a partner in my work. This work was not done at the expense of the work in Beis HaTalmud. On the contrary, it brought new congregants and in Beis HaTalmud's seventh year we decided to expand the place since the benches were already full. We found the place we are presently in and renovated it and more people keep joining.

"Expanding had a direct impact on the quality of our work. Beis HaTalmud turned into a shul with minyanim every day, Shabbos and Yom Tov. New shiurim started and more people attend them."

\* \* \*

R' Mizrachi is a man of action. He is fully devoted to the students, so I wasn't surprised to hear one of the students tell me, "Rabbi and Mrs. Mizrachi are like parents to me."

Since I observed R' Mizrachi for several days, I was able to see his devotion and energy. "I feel that I am dealing with people at a fateful crossroads in their lives. With each one who has gotten closer to his traditions, and there are many of them, you feel that you have gotten another Jewish family on track. It's a great feeling."

When I asked R' Mizrachi to give me some examples he thought a bit and said, "One day, a student we worked with called me. He was someone who had committed to several mitzvos already. He wanted to tell me what was on his mind and I wondered what he wanted to say. Then he stunned me when he said he had a non-Jewish girlfriend for a long time.

"My initial reaction was utter shock. There are students whom you have no trouble believing that they would assimilate, but him? The one with such strong feelings for Judaism? He told me that the girl was very interested in Judaism, Torah and mitzvos, and Eretz Yisroel, and he asked me what he should do.

"After I had calmed down a little, I decided to be tough with him. I told him openly that even if she converted for him, that was no simple matter and she would have to keep Torah and mitzvos after marriage. What do you need all these problems for, I asked him. I told him to come over and together, we called a rav in Eretz Yisroel, who explained the matter to him at length.

"Despite this, I did not get a promise from him that he would leave her. In fact, he started coming with her on Shabbos. I was impressed that she really was serious about learning about Judaism. I felt that it was coming from a deep place and from a real, inner connection. When I asked Rabbi Yurkowitz, he advised me to ignore her and to continue my connection with him.

"Although we followed his advice and our attitude was rather obvious to her, she continued coming with him, for a year, to the Shabbos meals. She decided to fast on Tisha B'Av. I kept repeating to him that even if she was serious and she had feelings for Judaism from here to Eretz Yisroel, she was still not Jewish!

"One day, he told me that he found a rabbi who would convert her after the rabbi saw that she studied many Jewish books and was proficient in Jewish ways. He wanted my approval since she had come to me for Shabbasos. After consulting with a rav, I told him

## THE FOUNDER OF THE COMMUNITY

The community Beis HaTalmud is comprised of a range of diverse people, many of whom merit an article of their own. Suffice it to mention the unique and dedicated gabbai R' Abba Yaakov, who beyond his duties and activities as a gabbai, invests most of his time and effort in supporting and helping Jewish prisoners incarcerated in Italian prisons.

Due to space constraints though, we elected to speak with the founder of Beis HaTalmud, R' Refoel Nimni, a pleasant man who was *niskarev* to Chabad many years ago:

"I was born into a traditional family", he told us. "When I was 17, I went to study trends in Business Management at the Bukini university, the best and most prestigious in Italy.

"My connection to Chabad began with the *shliach*, Rabbi Shmuel Rodal. I attended some *shiurim* he gave and was hooked. Then I got to know other Chabad rabbanim like Rabbi Yitzchok Belinov and Rabbi Moshe Lazar. I got a push when I started attending the ongoing *shiur* with Rabbi Moshe Shaikowitz at the Chabad house.

"Over a span of five or six years, seven of the students participated in a daily *Gemara* class he delivered, and the experience was one of the sweetest I've ever had. My first trip to the Rebbe was in the month of Adar during the 80's. I was accompanying R' Shaikowitz, and he instructed me before entering 770 that I should recite the *SheHechyanu* blessing upon seeing the Rebbe.

When I saw the Rebbe I couldn't open my mouth. The Rebbe's majestic appearance left me dumbfounded. I'm not the mystical or spiritual type; on the contrary, I want to understand everything, but in those moments I felt a soul connection that I had no control over."

Rafael Nimni remained in the United States for several months and he learned in the Chabad yeshiva in Morristown.

"When I returned from Morristown to 770 and I planned on returning to Italy, I was very confused. I felt like someone who had been in the dark who had an enormous projector turned on. I wanted to know all sorts of things and it was all confusing. I wrote a long letter to the Rebbe in Italian with all my questions, and I received a long and detailed letter in response in which the Rebbe gave me a path in *avodas Hashem*. The Rebbe answered every question I raised."

Today, R' Rafael invests prodigious efforts into expanding Beis HaTalmud.

"Whenever I write to the Rebbe through the *Igros Kodesh*, even on other topics, I open to answers about developing the yeshiva and about being involved in the yeshiva. I quickly realized that this is my *shlichus*."

When he spoke about R' Mizrachi, the thought that crossed my mind was, if only every person who founds a *mosad* or is a gabbai, relates to rabbanim that way.

"We love him. R' Mizrachi is genuinely humble. People sense it. He is a loving person and people feel that it's real. I wish every *k'hilla* a *rav* like him, who is open to helping and answering anyone at any time and does what needs to be done without fanfare. The *kehilla's* success is thanks to him."

that I was sorry but I would not help him.

"The two of them did not give up. They went to rabbanim in Yerushalayim who saw that she truly wanted to convert. One day, he called me with the *rav*, who was about to handle the conversion, on the line. He said that he did not want any letter from me; he just wanted to know if they came to me every Shabbos for the past year.

"I couldn't say no and that was enough for them. After two years of studying and challenges, she was converted according to *halacha* in the course of which he became stronger in his observance. They had a proper Jewish wedding. He followed his wife and became more committed in his observance. They are married for several years now and live in Yerushalayim. They have become a *chareidi* family. They have two daughters and the wife dresses modestly.

"He works a few hours a day as an architect and the rest of the day he learns Torah. When we were in Eretz Yisroel recently, we met with them. After I left their house, I said to myself that this was no simple soul story. You can't always tell at the beginning, or in the middle, what's going on. This woman had to undergo a conversion in order to draw this man along to a life of Torah and mitzvos and in order to raise a family with him."

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For many students, their thoughts about Judaism changed from one extreme to another after taking part in the Shabbos and Yom Tov meals and seeing the beauty in the *niggunim*, the positive and spiritual atmosphere in the Mizrachi home in Milan.

However, the change doesn't always happen smoothly.

“There was a student who came to Milan and looked for work in fashion design. Since people in the Jewish community of Milan know that we are involved with students, they referred her to us. She began coming to us for Shabbasos and really enjoyed the experience and the people. After her first Shabbos, when we found out that she lived on the other side of town, and sometimes, when the meal ended late, she had to walk very far (and in the area in which she lived, live many hostile Moslems) we suggested that she sleep over. She agreed.

“On the one hand, she was serious, but on the other hand, there were things that bothered her. She even mocked them, which bothered us very much. It sometimes irked me and I thought of speaking to her and asking her to stop making light of that which was dear to us. I knew that which every beginner shliach knows, that people react this way to things that affect them deeply.

“One day, she developed a medical problem that bothered her a great deal and got her down. When she consulted with us, we suggested that she write to the Rebbe and she did. In the answer that she opened to in the *Igros Kodesh*, the Rebbe wrote that she should strengthen her observance of Shabbos. She took it very seriously. My wife taught her how to light Shabbos candles and she committed to lighting them every Erev Shabbos. At a certain point, she began influencing the girls she lived with to light candles too.

“She improved from day to day and took a serious interest in Torah and mitzvos. Even after she returned to Eretz Yisroel she kept in touch with us. She would call my wife every Erev Shabbos in

order to hear about Torah and mitzvos and to ask the questions that she had thought of during the week.

“She even got her mother involved as well as some of her neighbors. We connected her with Chabad in her area and she began attending farbrengens and classes in Chassidus. She runs a bridal shop and she designed a beautifully accessorized shawl which she gives to kallos for free so at least they will be dressed

likewise. He worries about them and does all he can to help them. A student’s failure is viewed as his own failure and apparently, this is why he is successful.

“We have a student named Dovid who comes to us for all the meals and programs. He began taking baby steps towards religious observance and started coming to daven with us every day at Beis HaTalmud.

“This fellow conducts business in China and he would travel



**Rabbi Tzema Chaim Mizrachi (third from left) with students**

modestly at the chuppa.

“It’s amazing to look back and see how she changed. I realize now that if I had reprimanded her, she may have been insulted and would not necessarily have gone through this t’shuva process.”

When R’ Mizrachi tells the stories of his students, he gets all excited. You can see that the feeling that he is their father is not one-sided and that he feels

there a lot. When he returned from there a few months ago, he was unsure about some of his business ventures. I suggested that he write to the Rebbe. He was glad to do so but didn’t see a specific answer to his question. The Rebbe wrote, “Surely you know about the three shiurim.” He asked me what this meant and I explained him about Chitas.

“He said that he felt that his mazal and success were tied to

this and the very next morning he brought his Palm Pilot and downloaded the Chitas from the Internet. Since then he doesn't miss a day without Chitas! I was excited when a few days ago he called me from China in order to ask me what klipas noga is."

R' Mizrachi has many more stories and moving anecdotes about students who began to strike roots and discover Chassidus which led them to making drastic changes in their lives.

When I asked R' Mizrachi what his "ani maamin" is, he was silent. Then after some thought he said, "I learned this in my early days on shlichus. The secret to success is to give without thinking about what you'll get out of it. We invest in every Jew; it makes no difference where he's from and where he belongs. We invest in him because, first of all, he's a Jew and we were sent here by the Rebbe to serve them.

There were many times when I thought, 'This student is more likely to get involved than his friend,' and reality was different.

"Often, the ones we thought wouldn't get involved, surprised us by the changes they made, while the ones we thought were on board, remained in that same place and didn't move.

"We mustn't get flustered when sometimes we feel that we give it all we've got and don't see a response. Not only that, but we sometimes even get painful slaps in the face.

"I'll tell you something. In the early years, an Israeli came to work in Milan. We got to know one another and he came to our Shabbos meals. He seemed like an intelligent guy with values. One Shabbos I went down to the street with all my students in order to open the main door for

them so they wouldn't be mechalel Shabbos and I heard this guy make fun of us for serving the Shabbos meals on disposable plates. 'These Chabadnikim will never outgrow plastic,' he said.

"He didn't realize I had heard him and I decided that if there was one Jew who was bothered by this, it was worth buying regular utensils and plates. Better we should work for another hour or two washing dishes and people should enjoy the Shabbos meals.

"I hoped for the best but was disillusioned. The following Shabbos, only his wife came and aside from him there were other students missing, people who were on good terms with me and had even slept at our house several times. At first, they gave various excuses and explained that he didn't feel well, but we soon discovered that he had decided to host Shabbos meals of his own.

"At first I was very offended. I thought – I managed to put together a solid group of mekuravim and now they prefer his house to mine. A few days went by and he was exposed as a decadent person. He left Milan in shame and the students returned to us and some got even closer to us.

"The point I wanted to bring out with this story is that we have to do the work the Rebbe gave us to do without waiting for recompense. When we do, we will be rewarded in far greater ways and unexpected ways. That's besides the simple fact that just helping a Jew is a great thing.

"When a young student educated in Israel that religious people are into milking money and are only interested in themselves, and here he meets a religious Jew who has no

obligation to help him but this religious Jew goes out of his way to find him an apartment and make sure he has good meals and a job to cover his expenses, his outlook changes."

Whoever goes to Beis HaTalmud notices that the place "lives" with Moshiach. In all his speeches, R' Mizrachi mentions the Geula and when he speaks about Moshiach who lives with us in the physical sense, everybody there knows who he means.

The Moshiach Seuda with R' Mizrachi was very uplifting. It was impressive to see the variety of people who sat around the tables: Litvishe, Mizrachi types, Chassidim, working people, businessmen, young students, all sat and drank four cups of wine, sang the niggunim of the Rebbeim, listened to R' Mizrachi's heartfelt words and danced together to Yechi.

"There is one area that I think needs the most work, and that is explaining things. I meet people who don't understand that our belief in the Rebbe is based in halacha and is not just a fantasy of Chassidim who find it hard to part from their Rebbe. We have a long way to go in this.

"Last year, a student came to me and asked me about this. He really didn't understand and he wanted to know. We began to learn the D'var Malchus and other sichos of the Rebbe and it became clear to him. We must learn and teach. This student met his wife through us, married and moved to Afula. They had a daughter and became an integral part of the Chabad community there.

"The topic of Moshiach shouldn't be hidden with various excuses. It's our shlichus! We have to do it but we need to use our brains, as with everything



Lighting the menorah at a Chanuka party

else. I remember a student who was close to us and one day he suddenly disappeared. He didn't even say goodbye. I was very taken aback.

"I found out that he was in Milan but had stopped coming to Beis HaTalmud and to our Shabbos meals. People felt that he was behaving this way as a sign of protest. Then one of his friends approached me and told me that the reason was that a few days before he left, some students had asked me whether I didn't think that our belief was like that of the Christians, G-d forbid. I had answered that anyone who

thinks so, is speaking out of ignorance. This answer upset him.

"When I heard that this was the reason for his disappearance, I suggested to this student that we sit and learn the subject together and he would see for himself that our belief in the Rebbe is firmly anchored in Judaism.

"Some time went by and the student got back in touch with me. Before he returned to Eretz Yisroel he came to say goodbye. A few months later he even invited me to his wedding and on the invitation it said Yechi!

Apparently the issue really bothered him and Hashem helped and I gave a clear answer. He realized that this was no fairy tale, he checked into it, understood, and finally accepted.

"We have to find a balance between being intelligent and not holding back for appearances sake. We need to present things as they are, as we were asked to do."

\* \* \*

Our conversation took place in Beis HaTalmud during a break. A young man came in who stood in a corner with two Gemaras and that was our signal to end the interview. This young man together with other men his age, learn with R' Mizrachi every day.

"There are some talmidim who come from homes where their Jewish identity is not strong enough and thanks to learning with me, and with the bachurim who come from the Machon HaSmicha, led by R' Sender Wilschansky, they went to learn in yeshivos in Eretz Yisroel."

R' Mizrachi's plans include the hisgalus of the Rebbe and the building of the Beis HaMikdash and until then, he's not just sitting around. The concept of relaxing doesn't exist in his dictionary. He is constantly coming up with new activities to attract more students, teach more Torah and publicize the Besuras HaGeula.

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# BEIS MOSHIACH – NOT ONLY FOR LUBAVITCHERS

Translated By Michael Leib Dobry

*Beis Moshiah Magazine was created in order to encourage and strengthen Chabad communities worldwide during this time of hiding and concealment. However, with the passage of time, it turns out that the magazine also has great influence over friends and supporters of Chabad, even those who are presently not Torah observant. Many Chabad shluchim and activists have discovered the tremendous power of the magazine. They understand that we're talking about a tool made to influence their friends and supporters, specifically at private times and in places where the shliach cannot reach them.*

Pushkar is a dusty little town in the heart of the Indian desert. The closest Chabad center is located a flight of several hours away (plus

another few hours by vehicle). For the local shluchim of the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach, *Beis Moshiah Magazine* is much more than just a

chassidic journal. *Beis Moshiah* is the pipeline that connects them to 770, the center and headquarters for the worldwide Lubavitch community. The magazine makes the long and winding route each week to the remote village, where the Chabad shluchim and their friends and supporters eagerly await its arrival. **Rabbi Shimshon** (Shimi) **Goldstein**, local shliach in Pushkar, recalls a marvelous story about the power of influence that the magazine wields:

"This took place one night during the Sukkos holiday in 5764. Each night during Chol HaMoed, the Chabad House does the traditional Simchas Beis HaShoeiva dancing in full force. Dozens of young Israelis leap with great vigor, as they taste the pure joy of a mitzva. Suddenly, the door opens, and the striking image of a refined Jew with a long white beard appears at the entrance.

"I thought for a moment that Eliyahu HaNavi had come to participate in the celebrations," confessed Rabbi Goldstein. "I approached him and noticed that he wasn't wearing a kippa. His name was Eric and he only spoke English. This was the first time in his life



that he had ever entered a synagogue.

“From that day forward, he visited the Chabad House on a regular basis. Despite the fact that we couldn’t communicate with one another due to the language barrier, something attracted him, and he sat on the side as he contemplated all that was going on. Once when I suggested that he put on t’fillin, he refused. He was still deeply immersed in the broad ‘spiritual’ philosophy of the Far East, and he claimed that he was simply unwilling to take an animal skin and wrap it around his arm. I really wanted to reach out to him, yet I didn’t know how. One of the bachurim who spoke a little English would chat with him occasionally, but I felt that we weren’t properly taking advantage of the opportunity to kindle the spark within his soul.

“Then, I came up with an idea: I would show him the English side of *Beis Moshiach*. I honestly didn’t know how someone who had never experienced Judaism in his life would respond to such a thing. Would he be able to understand and appreciate the lingo?

“Every day for a period of three months(!), Eric would come to the Chabad House at exactly five o’clock in the afternoon. He would take the *Beis Moshiach*, plop down on one of the couches, and read magazine after magazine for hours until the Chabad House closed shortly before midnight. I asked him about the magazine, and I was thrilled to hear his enthusiastic reaction. He was positively enraptured by the chassidic way of looking at the world. ‘I feel that I have revealed a new world,’ he said. ‘Which section do you enjoy the most?’ I asked him. His reply: The ‘Chassidic Farbrengen’ with Rabbi **Chaim Levi Yitzchok Ginsberg**.

“Quite often, I would watch him read page after page, article after

article. It was clear to me that things were percolating and starting to reach him, and one fine day, they would burst forth in an open state of revelation. I continued asking him each day if he would like to put on t'fillin, but he remained adamant in his refusal.

"It reached a point that when the magazine arrived, I would simply divide into two, separating the English section from the Hebrew section, so that we also could read it... While waiting between issues, Eric would read the back issues in the Chabad House library.

"After three months of reading 'chassidic farbrengens,' miracle stories, and the weekly diary from 'Beis Chayeinu,' Eric finally decided to put on t'fillin! The shiny black straps wound around his aging wrinkled skin and the white hair on his head, no longer 'a head that had never worn t'fillin'... Warm tears drenched Eric's cheeks as he read in a trembling voice the eternal words of 'Shma Yisroel.' When Eric got his first aliya to the Torah, a group of young Israelis, deeply moved by the event, threw candies at him and we all joined in a spirited circle, dancing to the words 'Am Yisroel Chai.'

When we made the holy proclamation to accept the Rebbe's sovereignty, word by word, Eric no longer required any lengthy explanations, having participated already in numerous 'Chassidic Farbrengens.' He knew what to do, and so he proudly declared: 'Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu V'Rabbeinu Melech HaMoshiach L'olam Va'ed!'"

**Rabbi Goldstein, with which sectors of the population do you use *Beis Moshiach* as an outreach tool?**

*Beis Moshiach* is a wide-ranging periodical, where you can find an article for every Jew. Outreach activities in India have their own unique characteristics and *Beis*

*Moshiach* is one of the more blessed tools that assist us in our work.

Many Jews come into the Chabad House with the purpose of taking a break from the estranged Indian reality, the idol worship, and the local hoi polloi. There are those who want a light portion of Judaism, while others prefer reading material over listening to a Torah class, and I offer them the magazine in the Chabad House reading corner. You have to understand that every seifer, even something designated for "the outside," wrapped in an attractive binding, and written in easy language, is still perceived as something "heavy." A magazine is perceived as being relatively light and with the times.

*Beis Moshiach* contains amazing modern day miracle stories, alongside historical sketches that have a powerful influence upon its readers. Another sector that the magazine influences in large measure is the "knitted-kippa" community, which constitutes a fair percentage of the tourists who come here. These people often come with questions and complaints, and after learning a sicha in the Chabad House, I give each participant an issue of the magazine containing an article that deals with the subject that they can take with them and read at their leisure.

When a woman comes to the Chabad House with complaints about the traditional Jewish view on women, etc., a casual glance at the monthly women's supplement does wonders. She is exposed to the vibrant and joyous world of the chassidic woman, and it achieves far more than constant explanations and arguments. Women who are presently not Torah observant sometimes draw the mistaken conclusion that the status of the woman in religious circles is inferior. The *Beis Moshiach* women's supplement clarifies the

Chabad message that women stand in the front line on all undertakings within Judaism, leading to positive Jewish action and filling their lives with satisfaction.

Above all, I am greatly affected by the influence that the magazine has upon our more ardent devotees – those who stay at the Chabad House over a lengthy period of time, and most of whom later go to Eretz Yisroel to learn in yeshiva. These people get a great deal out of the magazine, including chassidic ideas and concepts that constitute an important part of the t'shuvah process. A primary source of their information comes from the weekly "Chassidic Farbrengen" section with its articles from Rabbi Ginsberg, Rabbi Chaim Ashkenazi, and others. It is important to note the high and professional level of content that brings the magazine to such readers, along with the stringency in always keeping it positive and chassidic, while refraining from mentioning any negative internal matters that can have the opposite effect.

This is particularly applicable in relation to the subject of hiskashrus to the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach, shlita, where the magazine affects these people in a most wondrous fashion. There is a special emphasis on "living with the Rebbe" and the importance of traveling to the Rebbe via the weekly "Beis Chayeinu" diary, plus interviews and articles on the subject. I have no doubt that many of those affiliated with the Chabad House of Pushkar who traveled to 770 did so primarily in the merit of the *Beis Moshiach Magazine*. In my opinion, this is a powerful quality tool that every shliach can and must utilize in the avoda of shlichus.

**How does the magazine assist you in the avoda of "greeting Moshiach"?**

In this area, I see that the



magazine has great influence, as people relate with the utmost seriousness to the message conveyed in written form. It's only natural that when a Chabad supporter sees a reputable publication that presents the Chabad position of the Rebbe as *chai v'kayam* in an official and established manner, he relates to the whole subject in a totally different fashion. The magazine is instilled with vitality, a yearning, and faith in the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach, and it has a tremendous effect.

\* \* \*

Rabbi **Yitzchok Kenig** is the shliach of the Yesha settlement of Elkana. One of the Elkana Chabad House's most successful projects is a diverse Torah library filled with films on the Rebbe MH"M and Chabad, audiocassettes of Chabad niggunim, and lectures from prominent mashpiim. Surprisingly, however, one of the more sought after sections in the library is the *Beis Moshiah* archives.

**Rabbi Kenig, why does specifically *Beis Moshiah* serve you as a tool in the spreading of the wellsprings of chassidus?**

When I arrived at the settlement four years ago, I quickly learned about its unique characteristics. The settlement's residents, about three thousand in number, belong to the traditional Jewish community, and their socioeconomic living standards are among the highest in Eretz Yisroel (ranked with an 8, on a national economic scale of 1 to 10). A sizable portion of Elkana's population works in professions in the private sector, and this naturally means that they are people with high intellect, Torah knowledge, and a clear and reasoned world outlook with an orderly way of life.

As a result of these unique qualities, the Chabad House is faced on the one hand with a great challenge. On the other hand,

however, because we're talking about such intellectual and learned people, we can have a more inward effect upon them. *Beis Moshiah* gives us interesting and good quality material that makes our job much easier, and therefore, we opened a section of our Jewish studies library in the Chabad House for back issues of the *Beis Moshiah Magazine*.

**How did this innovative project begin?**



**Donning t'fillin at the Pushkar Chabad House**

I always look for ways to arouse the interest of Chabad House visitors in the Chabad world, its concepts, and its unique customs – in short, “getting them involved.” One Shabbos by Divine Providence, I happened to bring the magazine to the shul in the Chabad House, and I saw people sitting and reading whole articles. I understood that I

had a great opportunity here, and I quickly began the process of realizing its potential. I made another subscription for the Chabad House, and opened a *Beis Moshiah* section in our Torah library.

**How does *Beis Moshiah* influence your friends and supporters?**

From my experience, *Beis Moshiah* is a top-notch tool in the avoda of shlichus, unparalleled in its usefulness towards influencing the homes of Chabad supporters. It also has success in its persuasive power over their family members (spouse and children), even in those instances where for various reasons, they can't come to the Chabad House and participate in activities.

As a shliach, I am frequently confronted with the problem of bestowing an authentic chassidic way of life to my supporters. This is a reference to emotions and mode of conducts written explicitly neither in *Shulchan Aruch*, nor in *Seifer Maamarim* or *Likkutei Sichos*. These are things that every chassid gets at home or in yeshiva. *Beis Moshiah* succeeds in giving over the authentic chassidic vitality, down to the last detail. Even the amazing miracle stories brought in the magazine have tremendous influence on the hiskashrus of Chabad supporters to the Rebbe. On more than one occasion, they have approached me about writing to the Rebbe in response to a story they had read in the magazine.

***Beis Moshiah* proudly spreads the announcement of the Redemption and the Redeemer. How does this influence your supporters?**

The magazine's written content possesses unique strength and credibility. In many instances, I have seen how friends and supporters who had difficulty digesting the faith in the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach, changed their opinion

upon reading the magazine. *Beis Moshiach* is filled with the simple faith in the Rebbe MH"M and his modern-day presence. My friends who read *Beis Moshiach* internalize the fact that the Rebbe is *chai v'kayam* because of the clear and simple discussion of the subject. No less important is the method of explanation, which I clearly see to be "in an acceptable manner" for each and every person, causing the faith to be internalized more deeply.

\* \* \*

Chaya H. is a resident of Kfar Chabad, involved in the field of education. At the institution where she teaches, there come many students from non-Chabad households who are coming closer to the chassidic world. To her great regret, Chaya discovered that students who don't continue their studies at the Beit Rivkah Seminary often face difficulties in following along the path of chassidus. Chaya decided to maintain the influence upon her students through a subscription to *Beis Moshiach*.

**Why did you specifically choose the *Beis Moshiach Magazine* as a means of influencing your students?**

*Beis Moshiach* also has an effect when I have difficulty maintaining contact with a student, whether due to time constraints, physical distance, and the like.

What is no less important is how *Beis Moshiach* has an effect in ways that many Torah classes and chassidic farbrengens simply can't. The magazine arrives directly at the student's home each week, and is available at all hours of the day. It comes brimming with engaging material, full of content that can be calmly perused in one's free time and moments of tranquility. Another point is the influence upon the family members that we aren't always able to reach.

Even before opening the

magazine, the Rebbe's picture shining from its cover already has an effect and brings a change to the entire home. Students tell me that after the magazine started coming to their home, family members felt that it was not appropriate to keep secular newspapers along side of it, and as a natural reaction, they removed the other periodicals from the house. The magazine is filled and overflowing with "chassidishkait," firm faith, and clear explanations. I only wish that I could give a subscription to all of my students.

\* \* \*

We went to speak with **Lana**, one of the students who received this unique gift. Today, Lana is married and lives in northern Eretz Yisroel.

**When was the first time you encountered the *Beis Moshiach Magazine*?**

I first saw the magazine after I got married, when I received a subscription from my former teacher as a wedding gift.

**How does *Beis Moshiach* affect your household?**

The magazine is extremely interesting. I have learned many new things, and I also strive to implement them in my personal life. I feel that the magazine adds a true Jewish atmosphere to the home, and strengthens my faith in tzaddikim and the longing for the Redemption.

**Which subjects in *Beis Moshiach* interest you the most?**

I really enjoy the stories that appear in the magazine, especially those that have taken place in our times, teaching us that miracles happen and G-d constantly watches over us, even today. I particularly like the monthly supplement for women, which contains many interesting articles that I read throughout the month.

**Do you also give over the messages contained in the**

**magazine to those around you?**

Definitely. When we sit at the Shabbos table with my family or my husband's family, I relate ideas and stories from the magazine. I also do this with my friends each Shabbos when we meet together at the "Seudat Amenim." (NOTE: *It is a well-known custom among many Jewish communities to gather at a table set with various items of food, and all the participants make each of the five blessings out loud, and those assembled say "Amen."*) Besides this, I have a friend who really loves the magazine, and I bring it to her each week.

**How do those around you accept it?**

The responses are most positive. I remember telling a certain miracle story at the "Seudat Amenim" regarding the Rebbe and *Igros Kodesh* that was publicized in the magazine's Sukkos issue. One friend became very excited from this story, and she wanted to write to the Rebbe. She received a marvelous answer and a very encouraging bracha. In general, I feel that people love to hear these messages because they are most joyous and heartening.

**What do you feel that the *Beis Moshiach Magazine* has changed within you?**

There is no doubt that the most meaningful aspect of the magazine is the strong faith in the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach, and the anticipation that he will redeem us. In the merit of this magazine, I believe more and await his coming at any moment.

*In the framework of the big Beis Moshiach subscription drive now getting underway, the magazine offers a special deal for Chabad shluchim and other mitzva campaign activists who wish to order larger quantities of the magazine for their outreach activities. For further information, please call (in Eretz Yisroel) 054-977-0504.*

# A CHABAD RAV, NO 'ORDINARY' RAV

Interview by Nosson Avrohom

*The concept of “Chabad rabbanim” has expanded over the years. If in the not so distant past, Chabad rabbanim were rabbanim of Chassidishe k’hillos, in recent years there has been a quiet revolution. More and more Chassidishe young men are being appointed to important positions as rabbanim of cities, yishuvim, neighborhoods, and even of k’hillos that are not necessarily Chassidic. \* Beis Moshiach spoke with three Lubavitcher rabbanim who serve as rabbis of yishuvim and moshavim in the north and south of Eretz Yisroel, and discussed their work, the difficulties they have to contend with, and the challenges they face. \* Part 2*

[Continued from last issue]

**Rabbi Avrohom:** Rabbanus on a moshav is very different from rabbanus in a city. On a moshav there are fewer people and you must relate to all of them on a daily basis. Having a personal relationship with everyone is a big

challenge. If you offend just one person, it sullies the atmosphere and affects the entire yishuv.

A few years ago, someone was insulted when he decided I hadn’t given him enough honor in shul at his son’s aufruf and he stopped coming to shul. I tried to appease

him, but failed to do so. So what did I do? I invited him to the hakafo shniyos that we do at the moshav. He came, but he stood there pouting on the sidelines. I went over to him, lay on the grass and said, “Step on me. You come to shul for G-d, not for me.” This shook everybody up. He realized that honor is not something that plays any role with me. From that point on he was appeased and life went back to the way it was before.

**Rabbi Rosenblatt:** The main difficulties were with the nusach ha’t’filla and my understanding that I wasn’t there to change the k’hilla and to transform them into Chassidim when it comes to their customs. Of course, in every shiur or lecture of mine, they hear about the Rebbe, the messages are taken from the Rebbe’s sichos, and people know what the Rebbe’s mitvzaim are. Just a few weeks ago, we had a Lag B’Omer parade in our area that was very successful, with more than 700 children. It was a very powerful and very touching event.

I don’t try to interfere with their Sephardic ways. In fact, there are clear instructions from the Rebbe to shluchim who worked in Morocco to enable Jews to follow their family customs. We have to be mekarev them to Judaism, not cut them off from it.

As a Yerushalmi boy who was

## PANELISTS

### **RABBI YOSEF CHAIM ROSENBLATT**

*Rav of the District Council of the Lower Galil and Yishuv Givat Avnei*

### **RABBI TZEMACH AVROHOM**

*Rav of Yishuv Yinov in the Sharon*

### **RABBI SHLOMO LIFSH**

*Rav of Yishuv Kfar Achim near Kiryat Malachi*

raised with Ashkenazi customs and pronunciation, it was very hard for me at first. At the same time we have enormous satisfaction being on shlichus. I've heard people say several times that only Chabad can succeed in a communal yishuv like this. Why? Because even though the people come from many North African countries, and there in North Africa every community had its unique customs, Chabad is able to maneuver between all the customs and nuances.

Working with a crowd like this from such a range of Sephardic backgrounds requires much effort, from the halachic end of things too. There are questions in

halacha where I look to see what Sephardic poskim say on the matter.

**Rabbi Lifsh:** I'll never forget in the early days when one of the residents grumbled to the gabbai, "Why do we need a Chabad rabbi? He won't say a bracha on Independence Day and he's just not 'one of us.'" He wasn't the only one who thought so, but Hashem helped and it didn't change a thing.

We had some difficulties acclimating. Kfar Achim is a yishuv of Jews from Hungary. They say that when they came to the transit camps in Kastina, they decided to establish their yishuv and they sent notice around the camp in Hungarian about their yishuv so that someone who was not Hungarian, even if he came from other Ashkenazic countries, would not be able to settle with them.

The yishuv back then was very far from religious observance. Only the older men used the shul and there were three religious families that insisted on a rav. We daven with a Sephardic pronunciation so that the young people who come to daven, and

baruch Hashem, their numbers are growing, can follow along.

If you want the k'hilla to understand you and join the davening, especially when you want to attract young people, you have to do it their way.

**The Rebbe says that all of shlichus must be permeated with how it leads to kabbolas p'nei Moshiach. How do you do so in your shlichus?**

**Rabbi Avrohom:** The Jewish revolution taking place at the moshav is a form of Geula in that we see that the world is ready for the coming of Moshiach. Progress like this comes along with many difficulties. It comes slowly, but surely. We recently started a beis midrash here where we have shiurim, in addition to the shul. Many people from the moshav take part. That in itself is a kind of "End of Days."

People are becoming ever stronger in their observance. The committees that run the moshav understand and identify more with the goal.

I remember that at T'fillas N'ila in one of the early years, when I addressed the crowd, I initiated a fund that all should contribute towards with the money going to the local needy. Everybody comes to shul for N'ila and what you say must be thought out and measured. I didn't dream what a mess I would get into.

A man got up and began shouting, "That's not your job! That's the job of the appointed committees!"

You work on preparing a drasha and along comes someone who ruins it all. If you're a Chassid, you don't get rattled because you're on shlichus.

The entire moshav underwent a real change regarding everything having to do with how to relate



**Rabbi Shlomo Lifsh**

***One of the residents grumbled to the gabbai, "Why do we need a Chabad rabbi? He won't say a bracha on Independence Day and he's just not 'one of us'" ...***

properly – whether to the rav, or to what we represent – to Judaism. This is all on the communal level. We see how the world is ready for Geula.

On the individual level, people understand what Moshiach is; they understand that the world (*olam*) is from the Hebrew root meaning hidden (*helem*) and Moshiach will bring about a revelation of G-dliness in the world. I speak about it in all the lectures at shul and at every opportunity. Those people, who come to shiurim and learn the Rebbe's sichos, understand it more.

We recently brought a VCR to shul and people see videos of the Rebbe. You cannot remain indifferent to the Rebbe's behaviors. People understand this today more than in the past. Many people also connect to the Rebbe through writing to him by way of the *Igros Kodesh* and have seen miracles.

I'll tell you a story that recently happened. One of our mekuravim, a young man who did not have children for a while, wrote to the Rebbe. In the answer he opened to, the Rebbe wrote a few things he should do including giving tzedaka before lighting Shabbos candles, Family Purity, and another three things. He took it seriously and nine months later he had a baby girl. I told him, "Now write thank you to the Rebbe."

He did so and he asked what he should do so that he would continue to be blessed. He brought me the answer so I could explain it to him. It was incredible. The Rebbe wrote that since he helped the shliach in his town with activities, this was the vessel that contained the bracha. And the gateway through which all Torah study goes through is the study of Chassidus. The Rebbe

wrote that he should strengthen his study of Chassidus.

**Rabbi Rosenblatt:** In our shul people know that Chabad and Moshiach go hand in hand. This was expressed most openly at the Moshiach Seuda we had this past Acharon shel Pesach. Out of 250 congregants, the overwhelming majority of them attended the seuda. I don't speak at this seuda but I prepare three people so they can speak. The Rebbe wants people to live with Moshiach; there is no better way than this because then you enable someone who does not come from a Chassidic background to study this topic, which has a greater effect.

There's a man by the name of Ron Hod who lived with his parents in our community. When I met him, he was not at all observant. Baruch Hashem, he has become more involved and he got married and lives in Kiryat Shmoneh. His connection to Judaism and Chabad has grown stronger.

This year, he came to visit his parents before Pesach and he told me that he wanted to contribute towards the Moshiach Seuda. He

is not particularly well-to-do and the Moshiach Seuda costs a lot of money but he wanted to do it. I suggested that he address the crowd. What a nachas it was to hear him explain how everything must be connected with Moshiach.

We explicitly explain the significance of the proclamation of Yechi and why the Rebbe is most suitable to be Moshiach. We see how the world is ready for Geula. Many people are becoming involved in Judaism. Entire families are changing their lives to ones of Torah and mitzvos. There is a family here, a father, mother and three children, who have become Chassidim.

It began with a flyer for a shiur for women that my wife gave. The mother attended the shiur and was hooked. The next stage was kashering their kitchen and the rest is history. They are involved in mitzvaim and help out a lot. One of the two sons married a young Lubavitch woman, the other learns in the yeshiva in Ramat Aviv. The young daughter adds a lot of new energy to the Mesibos Shabbos in the yishuv.

[To be continued be"H]



Rabbi Yosef Chaim Rosenblatt

***We explicitly explain the significance of the proclamation of Yechi and why the Rebbe is most suitable to be Moshiach. We see how the world is ready for Geula.***