

4

MOSHE AND MOSHIACH

D'var Malchus

6

FATHER, WAIT!

24 Teives | Menachem Ziegelboim

9

A FINE FOR THE REBBE, PAID IN FULL

Story | Nosson Avrohom

12

MIRACLES IN THE SOUTH

Jews At War | Nosson Avrohom

22

MIVTZA HAKHEL, THEN AND NOW

Insight | Menachem Ziegelboim

28

UNITY IS KEY

Moshiach & Geula | Boruch Merkur

30

HALACHA AND SPREADING THE WELLSPRINGS

Feature | Menachem Ziegelboim

36

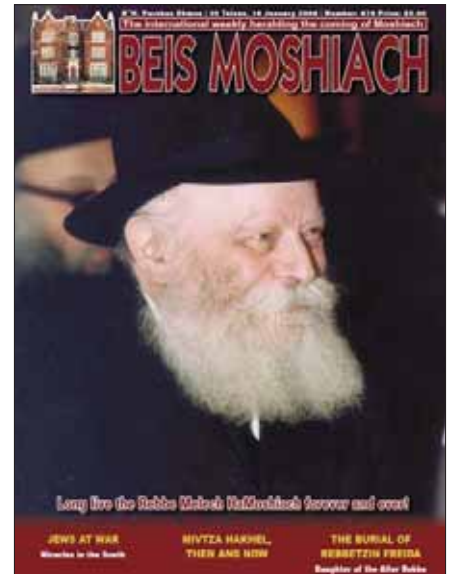
FROM SOUL TO SOUL: HOW TWO TOUCHED MILLIONS

Shlichus | Rabbi Nachman Schapiro

41

OLMERT'S FAKE WAR OR 'OLMERT'S FOLLY'

Perspective | Raanan S. Isseroff



USA

744 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn, NY 11213-3409
Tel: (718) 778-8000
Fax: (718) 778-0800
admin@beismoshiach.org
www.beismoshiach.org

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF:

M.M. Hendel

ENGLISH EDITOR:

Boruch Merkur
ed@beismoshiach.org

ASSISTANT EDITOR:

Dr. Aryeh Gotfryd

HEBREW EDITOR:

Rabbi Sholom Yaakov Chazan
editorH@beismoshiach.org

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MOSHE AND MOSHIACH

Translated and adapted by Dovid Yisroel Ber Kaufmann

There are many points of comparison between Moshe and Moshiach. Both are redeemers and teachers of the Jewish people. But why was it necessary to have a two-stage process, a redemption through Moshe and one through Moshiach?

When Moshe encounters G-d at the burning bush, an extended conversation ensues. G-d wants Moshe to redeem the Jewish people, to take them out of Egypt. Moshe demurs, finding several excuses why he should not be the Redeemer. At one point, he tells G-d, "Please send the one You will send." Moshe was asking G-d to send someone else, namely, Moshiach. Since G-d was going to send Moshiach in the future anyway, Moshe asked G-d to send Moshiach immediately. Moshe wanted the first redemption to also be the last.

Of course, Moshe's request was not granted. G-d wanted Moshe to be the one who took the Jewish people out of Egypt. Moshe was to be the first redeemer. Still, the request, "Please send the one You will send" indicates there is an essential connection between Moshe and Moshiach. Therefore, Moshe could ask that Moshiach be the one to redeem the people from Egypt.

The connection seems rather obvious: both Moshe and Moshiach redeem the Jewish people from exile. This task so unites the two that the Sages declare, "Moshe is the first redeemer and he is the last redeemer." Obviously this doesn't mean that Moshe himself will be the final redeemer, since Moshe was from the tribe of Levi while Moshiach will

be from the tribe of Judah. It means that through the strength of Moshe, Moshiach will come.

How so? The first, and therefore primary, qualification of Moshiach is to be uniquely expert in Torah. This means his ability to redeem the Jewish people comes through Torah, the Torah of Moshe. Also, the Jewish people bring Moshiach and the Redemption through their study and fulfillment of the Torah, given to them by Moshe.

The parallel runs deeper. Both Moshe and Moshiach removed impurity and imperfection from the world. At creation, the world was perfect and unblemished. Through the sin of the tree of knowledge, impurity and imperfection came into the world. When the Torah was given – through Moshe – the impurity was removed. The world was elevated to its original state -and beyond – by the Jewish people at Sinai. The sin of the Golden Calf caused the

world to once again descend into impurity, a situation that will last until Moshiach, when the world will be purified and refined forever.

In general, we may say that the spirituality, the revelation of G-dliness, that Moshe introduced into the world, Moshiach will establish permanently. According to the well-known principal that a descent is for the sake of an ascent, we can understand the connection between the sin of the tree of knowledge and the giving of the Torah. The Torah, G-d's Wisdom, enabled the world to reach a higher spiritual state than it experienced before the sin. At Sinai, the revelation of G-dliness was visible to the physical eye. Still, this was only a temporary state, and therefore only an example of the revelation that will occur at the final Redemption.

We know that Moshiach will teach Torah, and on a higher level than Moshe. This is because the revelation of G-dliness that Moshiach will bring will be much higher than that experienced at Sinai and the giving of the Torah.

The difference between Moshe and Moshiach may thus be said to be the difference between the temporary and the permanent. The giving of the Torah temporarily interrupted the state of impurity of

the Jewish people (and therefore that of the rest of the world). But this revelation of G-dliness from Above did not penetrate and purify the world. So when that revelation was removed, so was the purification, and it became possible for the impurity – and death – to return. However, the Torah set in motion, so to speak, the process of purification. With the coming of Moshiach, the world will be completely refined, death will be swallowed up forever and the purification will permanently penetrate the world.

The “descent for the sake of ascent” parallel between the situations of Moshe and Moshiach goes even further: before Redemption, both the first of Moshe and the last of Moshiach, there is the process of exile, oppression and Divine service. Before Moshe, the Jewish people went into the Egyptian exile. There, despite the slavery and persecution, they maintained their Jewishness and performed the Divine service required of them. The iron cauldron of Egypt prepared them for the Torah, the revelation at Sinai. Similarly, through their Torah study and observance of mitzvos throughout this long exile, the Jewish people have refined themselves and purified the world, preparing both to experience the imminent future Redemption.

Let us ask: Why is the permanent revelation of G-dliness a two-stage process, first the revelation through Moshe and then, over thirty-three hundred years later, the revelation through Moshiach? Why not a one-stage process as Moshe requested?

The purpose of creation is to create a “dwelling place below,” to transform the world so that G-dliness may be revealed within it. This requires two things: the world must be capable of being transformed, and there must be the means of transforming it. The Jewish people, the agents of that transformation, were given the Torah and its mitzvos at Sinai. Also at Sinai, the world received the ability to be affected by the Torah and mitzvos of the Jewish people. When the Torah was given, the world’s existence was temporarily nullified. This temporary nullification

from Above imprinted into the nature of the world the capacity to recognize the G-dliness inherent within it. The Torah and mitzvos actualize that ability, so that recognition of the G-dliness within creation occurs even on the physical level.

Moshe started the process. By bringing to the Jewish people the ability to refine the world, and the world the capacity to recognize the Oneness of G-d within itself, Moshe laid the groundwork for the future Redemption, when the world as a dwelling place for G-dliness would become a physical reality.

Making that happen is the task of Moshiach. But the strength to achieve this, and the very possibility, comes through Moshe.

This explains the two-part process: The primary purpose of the servitude and exile in Egypt, and the subsequent redemption, was for the Jewish people to receive the Torah, and thus the ability and potential to refine the world. This was the task of Moshe. After the Torah was given, the primary purpose of the oppression and exile of the Jewish people was to actually fulfill their potential, to refine the world through their Torah and mitzvos. The coming of Moshiach completes that process, leading to the primary Divine service of the world, after it has already been purified and refined.

Man is a microcosm. The same order that applies to the world at large applies to each individual. As the Torah of Moshe leads to the redemption of Moshiach in a general sense, each individual, through his or her mitzvos, can make it real in the here and now.

The day begins with prayer and

Torah study, which gives the person the strength to work and perform his Divine service. Prayer enables a person’s Divine soul to control his inclinations and influence his part of the world. His conduct, in accordance with Torah, affects and transforms his environment and those around him. It becomes obvious to all who observe him that he is wise, ruling over his “small city,” his body and inclinations, for, acting as the Torah dictates, he brings Moshiach.

(Based on Likkutei Sichos 11, pp. 8-15)

Moshe laid the groundwork for the future Redemption, when the world as a dwelling place for G-dliness would become a physical reality. Making that happen is the task of Moshiach. But the strength to achieve this, and the very possibility, comes through Moshe.

FATHER, WAIT!

By Menachem Ziegelboim

*The story behind the burial of Rebbetzin Freida, daughter of the Alter Rebbe, alongside the gravesite of her saintly father. * Presented for 24 Teives, yahrtzait of the Alter Rebbe, author of the Tanya and the Shulchan Aruch HaRav.*

PART I

It was Motzaei Shabbos Kodesh Parshas Shmos, 24 Teives 5573(1813). “At around half past eleven, the holy ark, the luminary of Israel, anointed one of G-d, was taken captive and required by the Heavenly Academy ... with one bond he was bound up in Kudsha Brich Hu... to Him, he raised up his soul with joy and goodness of heart, as could be seen clearly by all who stood there, who were amazed and astounded by the sight.”

With these few words the Tzemach Tzedek described the histalkus of his holy grandfather, the Alter Rebbe.

Midnight had long since passed. It was pitch black and bone-chilling cold. Sorrow filled the hearts of the Chassidim, as the “great light which went ahead of the camp” for decades and “paved the way” was removed.

The Chassidim could not spend much time on mourning, for they had to bring their Rebbe to burial. After a brief discussion, it turned out that the closest place where Jews

lived was the town of Haditch, about 90 kilometers away.

The Chassidim suddenly recalled that during the previous Shabbos, the members of the household had heard the Rebbe mention the name Haditch and the name of the river that went by the town and the nearby cemetery. At the time, nobody had understood why he had mentioned it, but now they knew. He had been hinting that he wanted to be buried in the cemetery of Haditch.

It was no simple matter to bring the Rebbe to Haditch. The roads were buried under deep snow and slippery ice, and it was extremely cold. Moreover, due to the war, guards were stationed in every town and village to do spot checks of wagons in search of spies who had infiltrated Russia to collect and transmit information to the enemy forces of Napoleon.

However, the Rebbe’s wishes overrode those concerns. After a lengthy consultation with the family and the Chassidim, it was decided to transport the Rebbe by sled, with the Rebbe sitting in his place like a live

person would. The Rebbe would be accompanied by his grandsons Menachem Mendel (later to become the third Lubavitcher Rebbe, the Tzemach Tzedek) and R’ Menachem Nachum (son of the Mittler Rebbe), and another Chassid.

It was a long, exhausting trip with many difficulties. Some time later, the Alter Rebbe came to his grandson in a dream and thanked him for the mesirus nefesh he had in bringing him to burial in Haditch. In that merit, he promised that his grandson would be with him in the next world.

They finally arrived at the Jewish cemetery in Haditch, Poltava, where the Alter Rebbe was duly buried in the frozen ground. “We made a wooden covering and a large building, and they prepared bricks for a wall to be built in his honor,” said the Mittler Rebbe, “like the graves of the Avos and great tzaddikim, where people go to make commitments and pray in times of trouble, for tzaddikim are greater in their death, etc.”

Indeed, throughout the two centuries since then, Jews have made pilgrimage to this holy site in order to pray in the merit of this tzaddik named Shneur, so named after the lights of chassidus and nigleh with which he illuminated the world.

PART II

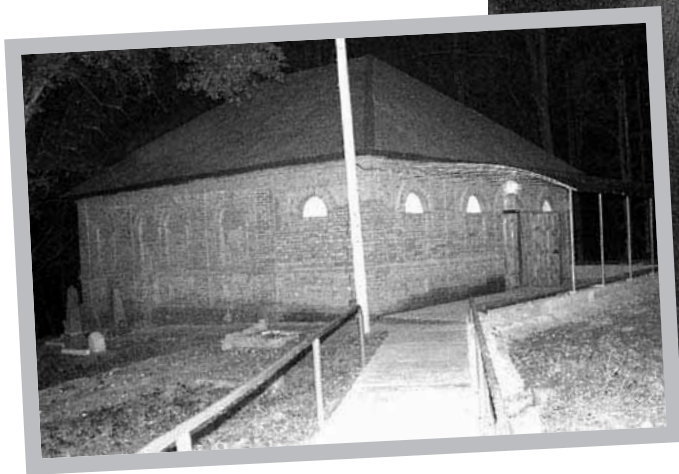
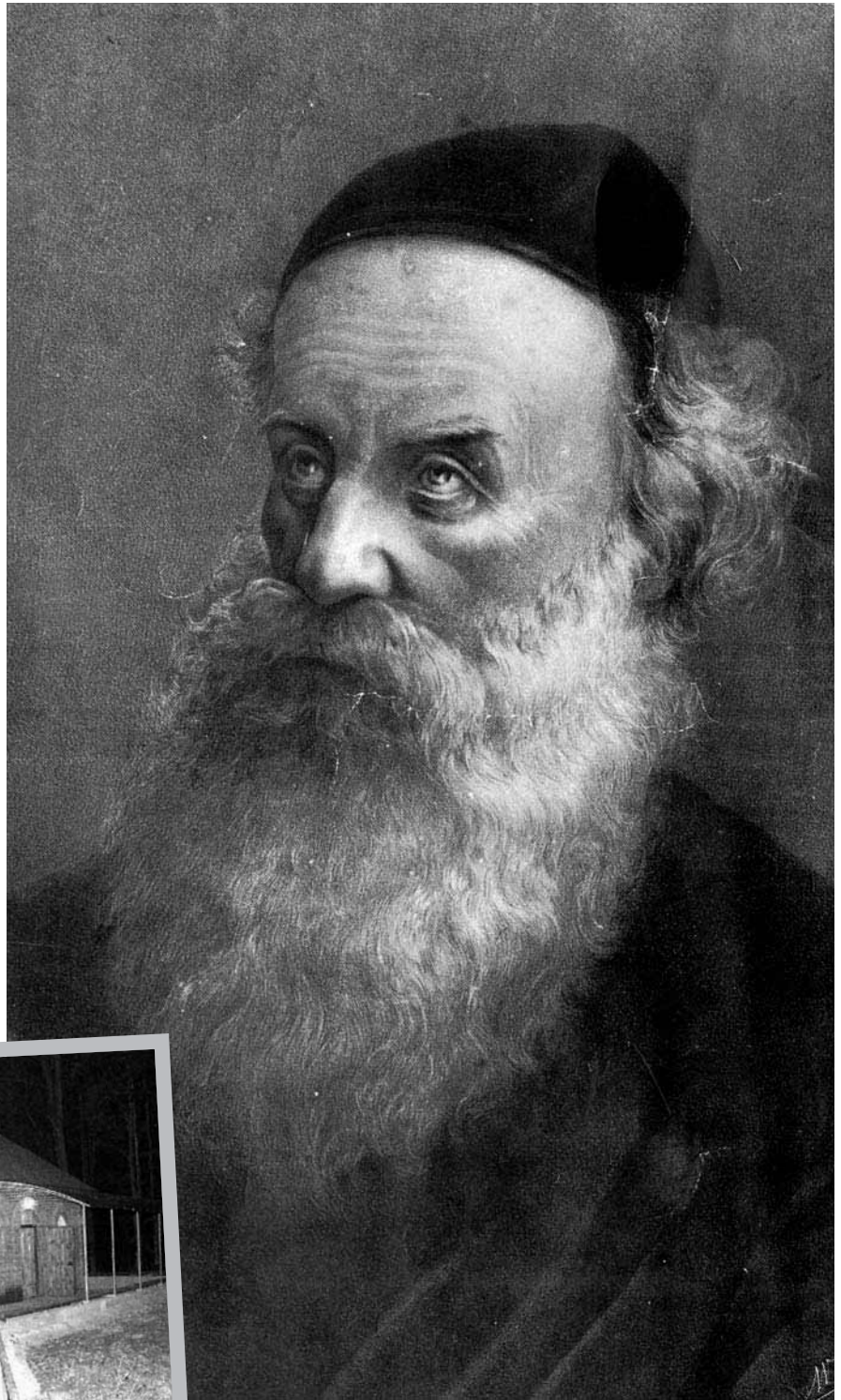
Nearby, to the right of the Alter Rebbe’s Ohel, is a modest gravestone which marks the grave of his daughter Freida. Why was this righteous woman buried next to her father, when it is not the accepted

practice to bury women near the gravesites of the Rebbeim?

The famous Chassid, R' Mordechai Yoel, once posed this question to R' Nachum, the son of the Mittlerer Rebbe. After one of his visits to the gravesite in Haditch, R' Nachum suggested that he have something to eat after his spiritual toil in the Ohel and the preparations he had made beforehand.

The two of them went to the room of the shamash near the Ohel and put a bottle of mashke and a plate of blintzes on the table. It was then that the Chassid inquired about how Rebbetzin Freida had come to be buried next to her father.

R' Nachum, who had participated in the burial of the Alter Rebbe and lived the rest of his days near the Ohel in Haditch, told the following story. When the Alter Rebbe passed away, his son and successor, R' Dovber, was not present, for he had been sent to Kremenchug by his father to find a place to stay on their flight from the battle against Napoleon. The members of the household, who knew the depth of the connection between father and son, arranged for the doctors of Kremenchug to stand by when the news came.



The doctors were not helpful, and R' Dovber fainted time and again. None of the medication he was given to revive him helped, for

as soon as he was aroused and remembered his father's passing, he fainted again. This frightening scene repeated itself continuously over the next 24 hours!

The Alter Rebbe's daughter,

Rebbetzin Freida, also took her father's passing hard. She was a weak and ill woman, and this event weakened her even further. The family had no recourse but to bring her to a country area so she could rest a bit and recover, but before

much time had elapsed, she felt that her strength was waning. She understood that her final day was approaching. She called the Chassidim from Kremenchug to her house, for she had something important to tell them.

"I feel that my time is coming to an end," she told the Chassidim. "I request that you take me to Haditch after I pass on, because I want to be buried to the right of my father in the cemetery there."

The Chassidim nodded noncommittally, surprised by her request. They knew that she was beloved to her father and especially close to him, but to bury a woman next to the Rebbe?

They left the house without promising her anything and waited to see what would develop. She was clever and realized they were uncomfortable with the idea, and that their response was no response at all.

PART III

Another few days went by and once again she sent for the Chassidim. She did not specify the reason for calling them to her. Being

"I feel that my time is coming to an end," she told the Chassidim. "I request that you take me to Haditch after I pass on, because I want to be buried to the right of my father."



At the gravesite in Haditch

that she was a righteous woman and the daughter of a tzaddik, they came right away in order to fulfill their request. The date was 16 Sivan, 5573, less than five months after the passing of the Alter Rebbe.

When they arrived, they found her lying in a bed in the middle of the large room, dressed and ready. She asked them to come around her bed and began to recite the prayer, "My G-d, the soul which You gave me is pure." In clear, measured tones, as though she was counting diamonds, she thanked and praised the Creator of souls, "You created it, You formed it, You blew it into me, and You preserve it within me." When she reached the words, "and You will, in the future, take it from me," she suddenly raised her hands upward, spread her ten fingers and called out, "Father, wait! Here,

now!"

Her hands fell, her head tumbled back, and she returned her soul to her Maker. The Chassidim beheld this wondrous sight, astonished and dumbstruck in awe of the time of judgment.

They were almost convinced that she should be buried near her father as she had requested. But still there was some doubt. They decided to leave matters up to Hashem.

They placed her casket on a wagon and when they came to the crossroads between Kremenchug and Haditch, they let the horses go where they pleased.

R' Nachum concluded his story to R' Mordechai Yoel, "Of course, the horses continued to Haditch, where she was buried with honor next to her great father."

(from L'Sheima Ozen and P'ninei HaKesser)

A FINE FOR THE REBBE, PAID IN FULL

By Nosson Avrohom

Translated By Michoel Leib Dobry

Just then, as if straight from Heaven, a young Chabad chassid entered the Chabad House. I left the seifer on the table and approached him, but before I had a chance to explain to him what I needed, a cry of utter surprise came from the direction of that woman, “Here! this is the man that is constantly aggravating me!”

HaTamim Eyal Kaufman has told the following story numerous times since it happened a year and a half ago. At the time, he was in the early stages of his journey toward the teachings of chassidus and the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach. Today, he is a student at the Chabad yeshiva in Ramat Aviv.

In retrospect, Eyal has determined that though his initial curiosity about the ways of our forefathers was due to his father, his unbridled immersion into the wellsprings of Chabad chassidus and the Rebbe came as a result of the following story:

“In those days, I was just starting to get close to my Jewish roots,” Eyal began. “This was

mainly due to my father, who decided one fine day, without any apparent reason, to celebrate the time-honored traditions of the Jewish People. Until then, we were an average non-religious family in Givatayim. He began to bring G-d into the house – Shulchan Aruch and Jewish customs, midrashim and agados, and stories filled with great meaning and Jewish spirit. The atmosphere in the house began to change. It was thus virtually unavoidable that the drastic change would start to penetrate me as well. I started my journey in the local Chabad House, run by Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Bekerman, located not far from our home. I soon became a regular visitor there.

“The farbrengens, the davening,

the Torah classes, and especially the warmth and friendliness that reigned in the Chabad House, brought me back as if I had been touched by a magic wand. Slowly but surely, I began to change my way of life and daily customs, and became a baal t’shuva. The main thing that drew me in was the personage of the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach, though in the early days of my road to t’shuva I didn’t properly understand the great faith in the Rebbe and all that accompanied it.

“Anyone who knows Rabbi Bekerman personally is surely aware of the fact that he is a unique individual, combining friendliness, patience, warmth and love, along with Chabad intensity and passion. I owe him a great debt of gratitude for establishing my connection to chassidus.

“The story I would like to tell took place late one Friday morning. I had already begun putting on t’fillin regularly each morning, and I was davening upstairs in the Chabad House. As I finished my morning prayers, I started removing my t’fillin. There was no one there at the time except for myself. Suddenly, a municipal inspector came in with a stern look on his face. ‘Who’s in charge here?’ he asked. Without skipping a beat, I gave a little smile and said that I’m in charge, and then asked him why

he's so serious. The man wasn't impressed by my light-hearted approach and got straight to the point: 'Look, you have a debt with City Hall for placing a picture of the Rebbe on the facing of the Chabad House – a sign without a license.'

"Before I had a chance to absorb what was happening, he wrote out a ticket for a fine of five hundred shekels and handed it to me. Without saying another word, he turned around and left the premises.

"My train of thought was then interrupted by the presence of a middle-aged woman. She had a very intellectual look to her – the type of person that you might expect to correct you at the slightest grammatical error. She proceeded to ask where she could find a rabbi, as she had a problem that required a proper solution. I could hear from her tone of voice that she was in a state of great worry and confusion.

"In spite of my outward appearance and the serious steps that I had already taken in the direction of Torah and chassidus, I was still a novice. Yet, there was one thing that I did know from my time in the Chabad House: When a Jew is in distress, in doubt, or has a problem, he/she must turn to the Rebbe, and he will provide the answer and the bracha. Until that moment, I had never written to the Rebbe myself, but I had heard stories from my friends. This was enough for me to calm the woman down and encourage her by saying that there is a 'Rebbe' among the Jewish People, and if she has a problem, she can turn to the Rebbe and he will respond by solving her problem in the best way possible.

"When she showed interest in writing to the Rebbe herself, a little voice within me whispered, 'Why are you suggesting something that

you've never tried yourself? What will happen if the Rebbe doesn't answer?' Her readiness to write to the Rebbe didn't allow me to retract my suggestion. I decided to teach her all the spiritual preparations that I heard you're supposed to make, telling her that with G-d's help, she will be a proper vessel to receive an answer from the Rebbe. I instructed her to wash her hands, say a few chapters of T'hillim, and make some good spiritual resolutions.

"She then proceeded to write to the Rebbe. She took a pen and a white sheet of paper, and began

***The woman who
had experienced
the miracle
continued to sit in
one of the corners
of the Chabad
House and read
the Rebbe's
answer over and
over again.***

writing with great energy. It was obvious that she was writing everything that was bothering her at that moment. When she finished, she placed the letter in a volume of Igros Kodesh on the bookshelf. Just before opening the seifer, she uttered the holy proclamation of 'Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu V'Rabbeinu Melech HaMoshiach L'olam Va'ed!'

"She opened the seifer, and there appeared three letters on the two pages before her. The first letter covered the entire right-hand page and a small portion of the left-

hand side as well. This was followed by a short letter and then another longer correspondence that finished on the next page.

"I was not yet familiar with all the traditional chassidic acronyms and concepts. I read her the letters as they appeared and explained as much as I could understand. The first letter spoke about faith in G-d, while the second dealt with the faith in the coming of Moshiach.

"At the beginning of the third letter, there were numerous acronyms. Just then, as if straight from Heaven, a young Chabad chassid entered the Chabad House. I left the seifer on the table and approached him to ask if he could help me decipher the acronyms. But before I had a chance to explain to him what I needed, a cry of shock burst forth from that woman who sat engrossed in the Rebbe's letter before her: 'Here! This is the man that is constantly aggravating me!'

"I stared at her in bewilderment. "What man?" I wondered. There was no one present other myself and the young Chabad bachur. Meanwhile, quite oblivious to the two of us standing there, she kept reiterating her astonishment at finding some familiar nasty character in the pages of the Rebbe's letter.

"After she calmed down a little, she asked me to read her the letter. The Rebbe was writing in response to a female student who had apparently written that she had a teacher who didn't understand her and was making things very difficult for her. The Rebbe gave her encouragement and asked her to show his letter to this teacher. The name of the teacher referred to in this correspondence was Mr. Pinsker.

"The woman now explained why she had suddenly paled and become so excited. She said that she was a teacher of literature and had been

trying to earn a Ph.D. in the field for several years. However, every thesis project she submitted to the university had been rejected by a certain lecturer named *Pinsker*, who was doing everything possible to fail her. She was absolutely distraught, and it was specifically regarding this matter that she had written to the Rebbe...

"When I heard her story, I too became deeply moved. I was filled with powerful feelings of *hiskashrus* and love for the Rebbe. For the first time, I saw with my own eyes how the Rebbe responds in such a crystal clear and obvious fashion.

"Just a few minutes later, a young woman entered the Chabad House, and during our conversation, I suggested that she too write a letter to the Rebbe and be privileged to receive his answer.

I went on to explain to her about the recent 'miracle' that had taken place just moments earlier. Meanwhile, the first woman continued to sit in one of the corners of the Chabad House and read the Rebbe's answer over and over again.

"As I turned back to my own business, the woman who had received the Rebbe's answer suddenly got up and gave me a check as a donation to the Chabad House. Before I had a chance to say anything, she handed it to me saying, 'Give this to your Rebbe', and quickly left the building. I took a glance at the check and almost lost my breath in excitement: The check was for *five hundred shekels* – the exact amount of the fine imposed on the Chabad House just half an hour earlier!

"It was several long minutes before I calmed down after witnessing this amazing and miraculous episode."

Eyal concluded his story in a tone of intense excitement:

"I presented both the check and the ticket to Rabbi Bekerman that very afternoon, naturally including the story that accompanied them. The story quickly turned into the talk of the day at the Chabad House, and accelerated my process of *t'shuva* to an even greater extent. Since then, I have told this story on numerous occasions in many places, and I feel a renewed sense of exhilaration every time I tell it. This was literally a revelation of G-dliness. I clearly saw the wondrous direction of the Rebbe and Hashem's guidance over the steps of man."



MIRACLES IN THE SOUTH

By Nosson Avrohom
Pictures by Meir Alfasi

Beis Moshiach visited the cities in the south and followed the work of five of the shluchim, hearing their impressions, witnessing miracles, and observing their massive outreach efforts between siren blasts, mortars and Grad rockets.

As I write, the IDF is in the midst of an extensive ground offensive in Gaza after eight days of aerial attacks. The terrorists have not stopped their bombardment of Jewish cities in the south of Israel. In the previous eight years, missiles landed only on Sderot and settlements in the western Negev, but now rockets and mortars are being shot deeper into the country - at Beer Sheva, Ashkelon, Ashdod and even Yavneh, only twenty kilometers from greater Tel Aviv.

A senior officer admitted in an interview this week that early estimates were that hundreds of people would be hurt, a scenario that miraculously was not realized. Although there have been direct hits on houses and public buildings in various cities, open miracles prevented serious

casualties.

The Rebbe's shluchim are fighting back, intensifying their war on assimilation according to the instructions that their commander, the Rebbe, has given over the years in similar situations. They provide aid to the frightened people of the targeted cities in two ways: materially - with hot foods, refreshments, toys and books for the children, etc. - and spiritually - by putting on t'fillin with men and teens and encouraging the observance of Torah and mitzvos as a segula for protection. They are also busy with activities specifically designed to raise morale.

The enormous numbers of soldiers stationed on the border of Gaza, as well as the rear command, are visited by Lubavitchers who put t'fillin on

with them, subscribe them for a letter in a Torah scroll, and give them sifrei Chitas for their military vehicles and tanks. The Rebbe says that these activities arouse fear on the part of the enemy and are segulos for protection.

Beis Moshiach visited the cities in the south and followed the work of five of the shluchim, hearing their impressions, witnessing miracles, and observing their massive outreach efforts between siren blasts, mortars and Grad rockets.

SDEROT: KEY TO THE MIRACLES, HE REBBE'S KEY TO THE CITY

Our first stop was Sderot, the city that has absorbed nonstop attacks for eight years. "You can clearly hear the reverberations of the powerful explosions," said shliach Rabbi Moshe Pizem with some relief in his voice, "but this time the explosions are in Gaza and in Sderot."

How do you feel about this war?

"Terrific."

R' Pizem paused for a moment, a rarity in his hectic day, and closed his eyes in exhaustion. He opened them again and said, "Finally, after eight years in which we lived like ducks on a shooting range, they are doing something to stop it. I hope, as do we all, that they will finish the job and annihilate the terror organizations. We all pray for a speedy victory."

But in the meantime, you are still "getting it."

"As long as they are doing the work seriously, the people here are willing to take it."

Since this war began, as in the previous eight years, the

shluchim, Rabbi Moshe Pizem and his brother Chananel, along with dozens of others who have joined them, have not rested.

“As far as material assistance, there are old people who are holed up in their homes or in shelters and are afraid to venture out to the grocery store. We supply them with basic food items. Last week we gave out hundreds of boxes of food. It was like a scene out of a movie – volunteers running from house to house with boxes, every so often scurrying for cover in response to the Code Red siren, then returning to their mission with the sounding of the all-clear.”

As for spiritual assistance – “We have lots of people putting on t’fillin, including hundreds of soldiers. I don’t remember a Chanuka like this one. We reached nearly every single person in the city. Last Shabbos all the shuls were closed and the city was like a ghost town, with

not a soul to be seen on the streets.

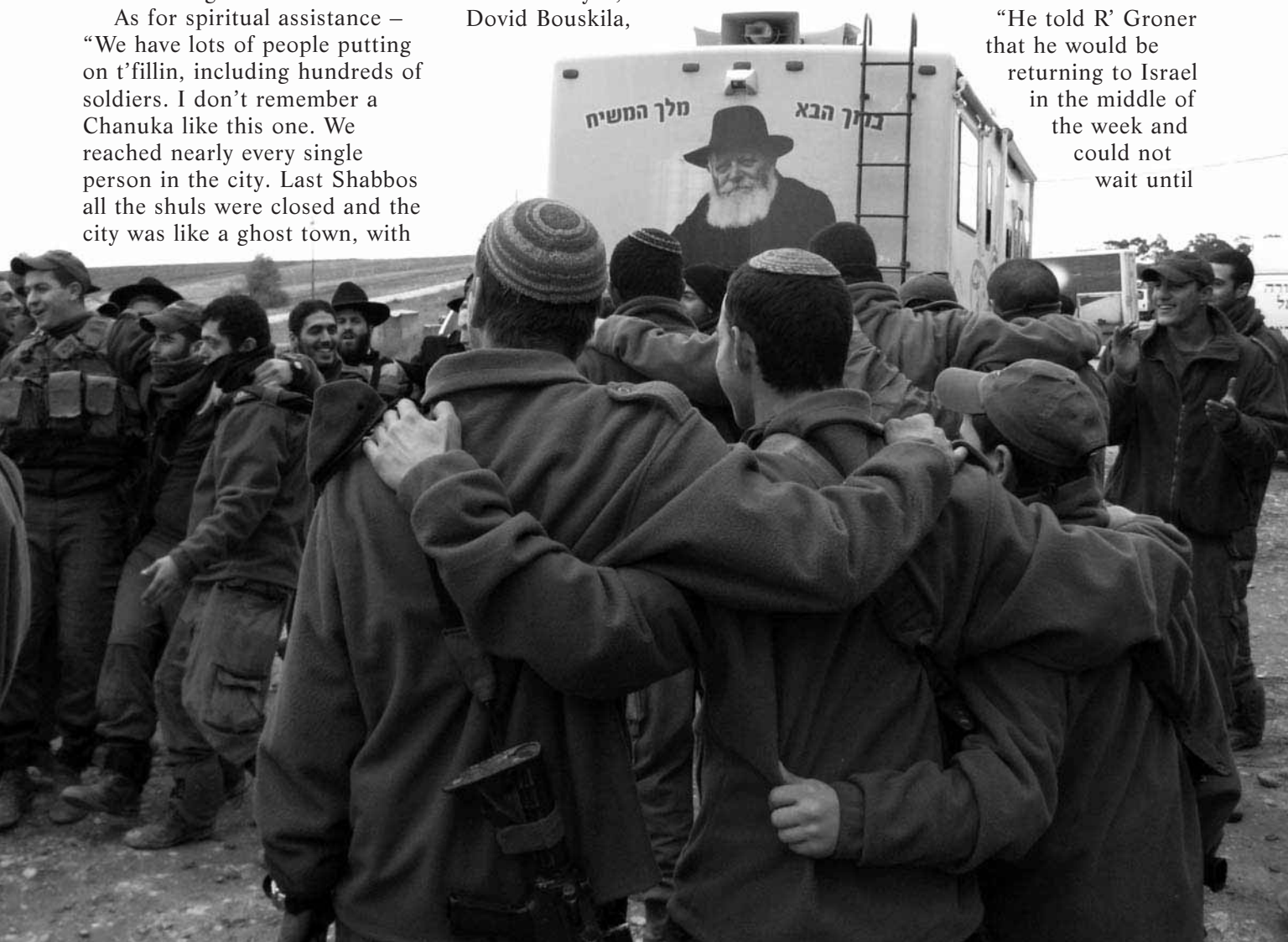
“Only one place was bustling with life – the Chabad house. Many soldiers from the rear command, as well as residents who remained and wanted to daven with a minyan, came. They knew that Chabad doesn’t close and doesn’t go away. There was a large minyan, followed by a farbrengen. At a certain point we got up to dance.”

Admiration for Chabad’s work comes not only from the residents of the city, but also from the leadership. There is a warm relationship between R’ Pizem and the mayor, Mr. Dovid Bouskila,

which greatly helps their outreach work. There is a special story behind this connection, which is being told here for the first time:

“The current mayor is a great friend of Chabad in Sderot. He previously served as mayor for two terms, and now, after a ten year break, he returned to his position. When he was mayor in 5750 (1990), he visited the Rebbe on a Monday to personally give him a key to his city. R’ Leibel Groner told him that he would have to wait until Sunday. He explained that Monday is especially busy, as it is the day the Rebbe visits the Ohel, but Bouskila insisted.

“He told R’ Groner that he would be returning to Israel in the middle of the week and could not wait until



The missile had completely destroyed the home of an older woman, who had left the night before to live with her son in Tel Aviv. The missile fell on a house that was empty of inhabitants.

Sunday. At the same time, he could not have the people in Sderot know that he had been in New York without visiting the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

“R’ Groner told him to wait at the entrance to the Rebbe’s room, where he could see the Rebbe when he returned from davening. And that’s what he did. The Rebbe blessed him, and told him not to get overly involved in the city’s issues, but to preserve shleimus ha’Torah, shleimus ha’Aretz, and shleimus ha’Am. The Rebbe then accepted the key to the city.

“Then an interesting thing happened. The Rebbe entered his room, and after a few moments he emerged and said to him with a smile: ‘Someone from Eretz Yisroel who leaves the country, his wisdom is doubled.’

“At the Yud-Tes Kislev farbrengen that took place this year at the Chabad house, the mayor told us about this encounter. He described it as the

most interesting meeting he ever had in his life. He said it was pleasant on the one hand but frightening on the other, and he looked forward to its conclusion because he couldn’t look at the Rebbe’s face any longer.

Whenever we meet at the sites where missiles struck, he tells me that he is confident that Sderot is protected by the Rebbe’s bracha. The fact that the Rebbe accepted the key, he says, demonstrates that the Rebbe is responsible for the city.”

When I asked R’ Pizem about the picture that was in the media recently, in which he is seen hugging his sobbing son, he explained, “That day we experienced a very big miracle. Missiles fell close to our house, and the explosion was so powerful that our souls nearly flew out of us. It took us a few seconds until we realized that the missile hadn’t hit us directly.

“Afterwards, we went out to where it had landed, a few houses away from us, and saw the magnitude of the miracle. The missile had completely destroyed the home of an older woman, who had left the night before to live with her son in Tel Aviv. The missile fell on a house that was empty of inhabitants.

“The next day there was another big miracle, when another missile slammed into a house and demolished it. The only person there entered the fortified room just moments before, and that was the only area not destroyed to its foundation.”

So you’re used to miracles ...

I once participated in a panel of lectures, in which a Litvishe rav announced that we have to do t’shuva to replenish our z’chusim, because the great miracles that take place are depleting our merits. When I got up to speak after him, I explained the

difference between nature and miracle. Nature is miracles that have become natural, and here in Sderot we see how miracles have become ordinary fare.

ASHKELON: “THROUGHOUT ALL THE ATTACKS, WE SEE OPEN MIRACLES”

Rabbi Menachem Mendel Lieberman, together with the other shluchim and Chabad activists in Ashkelon, have had their hands full. Practically every Israeli television broadcast or interview in Ashkelon showed Lubavitchers doing their work in the background, as the city was bombarded by missiles.

“It’s difficult, it’s wartime, but we feel how fortunate we are to be Chassidim of the Rebbe,” said R’ Lieberman. “While other organizations have packed up and fled, we are here and active.”

R’ Lieberman also divides his work between the physical and the spiritual.

“Many residents of Ashkelon are sitting in shelters. We divide them into two groups. There are the families sitting with their children day and night, afraid to move. We visit them to cheer them up and give them hope to replace their despair and fear. We bring sweets and gifts for the children, say the p’sukim with them, and distribute sifrei T’hillim. There are even organized shelters with daily activities.

“Then there are the people who only go to the shelters when the sirens sound. I’d like to mention an outstanding yeshiva here that is in a shelter. People go to the shelter and see the talmidim learning and davening, and it makes quite an impression on them. Many join them.”

Then there is the work with soldiers and residents when the missiles aren't flying.

"In Ashkelon there are large groups of soldiers from the rear command who stand at the ready for any eventuality, G-d forbid. Thanks to open miracles, they don't have work to do. We also put on t'fillin with and distribute pocket T'hillims to residents of the city and television crews. People need this spiritual fortification and we are well received by them all."

R' Lieberman says that the miracles are so obvious that nobody can deny them.

"We are experiencing miracles in striking the enemy as well. One of the terrorist leaders killed in an aerial attack wasn't even an intended target. They informed him in advance that he has to leave his house, but Hashem hardened his heart and he irrationally remained there with his family. They were all killed.

"In Ashkelon, dozens of missiles have landed, but only one person was killed. Who was that one person? An Arab! Very few Arabs live here, yet Hashem directed that missile so that it killed one of them.

"Throughout the attacks we have seen open miracles. In the first days of the war, a missile landed near a Chabad school, in the parking lot between two eight storey buildings, in which many families live. Aside from minor damage to the road, nobody was hurt! You can imagine what would have happened if that missile had veered just a few meters.

"On Friday I visited a home that had sustained a direct hit. The missile entered the living room window and wreaked havoc, with all the walls of the house pocked with holes. Incredibly, the inhabitants had left the house a few minutes earlier. Then there was the man who helped an old

"In Ashkelon, dozens of missiles have landed, but only one person was killed. Who was that one person? An Arab! Very few Arabs live here, yet Hashem directed that missile so that it killed one of them."

lady cross the street. A second later, a missile fell where he had been standing earlier."

At Tzeirei Chabad in Ashkelon



they are over their heads with work. They are collaborating with Kollel Chabad in providing food for seniors and people who cannot leave their shelters.

“It’s arranged with the city that we will take responsibility for this, and it becomes yet another way that Chabad is helping the

people of Ashkelon. On Friday we distributed a letter which enumerated the things Rebbe said to strengthen as a segula for protection and prevention. It also contained the addresses of all the Chabad houses in Ashkelon that are at their service.”

OFAKIM: AN AMAZING LETTER FROM THE REBBE

The shliach in Ofakim, Rabbi Yisroel Hershkowitz, describes the atmosphere in his city, which has also become a target for terrorists, as one of “pressure and

DIRECT HIT ON SHLIACH’S HOUSE

Among the miracles in Sderot over the last weeks was the miracle that took place at the home of the shluchim, R’ Chananel and Mrs. Pizem. Their home sustained a direct hit and will need extensive repairs to return it to its former state.

“We experienced a big miracle,” said R’ Pizem excitedly. “It was the eighth day of Chanuka and we spent the day with friends in Yerushalayim in order to rest up a bit and have a change of scenery. While we were there, we got a phone call from my brother Moshe informing us that there wouldn’t be school the next day, by order of the rear command. So we decided to stay another day in Yerushalayim.

“The evening of the second day I wrote to the Rebbe about the serious situation. I asked the Rebbe whether to return to Sderot with my family or remain in Yerushalayim for another day. The Rebbe’s clear answer was in volume 7 of the Igros Kodesh. It was a letter that the Rebbe wrote to a couple who asked for a bracha for their imminent aliya.

“The Rebbe blessed them, adding that Eretz Yisroel is the land which has Hashem’s eyes upon it constantly and just as you dress appropriately before going to the king, so too you need to make spiritual preparations in thought, speech, and action for a trip to Eretz Yisroel. To us, this was an answer that our vacation was over and we were returning to Sderot.

“Every Tuesday morning, my wife takes a course in Kfar Chabad in teaching kallos, so we decided to stop in Kfar Chabad on our way to Sderot. I would put my children in the schools there so at least they could learn for a few hours, during which time my wife would be able to take her course at Beis Rifka. Then

we would all return to Sderot.

“At one o’clock in the morning I got a phone call from my nephew Osher. He informed me that a Kassam had landed on our house. It destroyed our bedroom and cracked all the walls of the house. The entire house is covered with holes.

“To drive home the magnitude of the miracle, a dog that had been in the yard at the time was killed. It is frightening to think of ourselves at home, with the children playing in the house or in the yard as they do every day.

“I wrote to the Rebbe and opened to an amazing answer. It was a letter to a couple, in which the Rebbe wrote that they ought to be happy that Hashem placed them in the ‘corner of light’ in Kfar Chabad. The Rebbe extolled the virtues of Kfar Chabad and concluded the letter with, ‘from now on may you have only good news to relate.’ My family remained in Kfar Chabad that day, while I immediately traveled to Sderot to continue our work there.

“On Motzaei Shabbos we hosted a Melaveh Malka at the house, attended by shluchim in the area to demonstrate our trust in Hashem and to thank Him for the miracles. We are soldiers, and soldiers don’t leave their post. One time, when I suggested to a

soldier at a nearby base that he put on t’fillin, he asked whether I had been in the army. I told him that I was born into the Rebbe’s army and I’m still in it, not for three years and Reserves once a year, but constantly. He understood. He rolled up his sleeve and said, ‘Do what you know how to do.’

“A miracle here, a miracle there – we are soldiers and that is what keeps us going.”



The shliach’s house in Sderot

tension.”

“The constant sirens cause panic among the people, especially children. Even missiles that fly overhead towards Beer Sheva cause the sirens to go off, and it’s very frightening. Far fewer people are in the streets than during normal times. Anyone who doesn’t have something specific to do on the street doesn’t go out. Many people have left the city. The biggest source of encouragement for our own children is the knowledge that the Tanya was printed here.

“Miraculously, most of the rockets sent our way fell in open areas outside the city, and the few that landed in the city only caused property damage. A big miracle took place when one of the mortars smashed right into a one-storey home surrounded by a wall. Although the missile entered the house, the blast was absorbed by that wall, which is riddled with holes like a sieve. Experts who investigated were amazed. If the wall hadn’t absorbed the blast, the house would have probably been destroyed along with the people in it at the time.”

Ofakim, unlike Sderot and the Gaza area, is unused to Code Red and flying missiles. The inhabitants still haven’t gotten into the routine of dashing off to shelters, and even those who seek a shelter don’t always have one accessible to them in the few seconds they have when the siren sounds.

“Due to the situation, there is no school. The IDF rear command does not allow it. We decided that we have to do something. Teachers go to the shelters in neighborhoods where some of our students are concentrated and teach the kids so that they don’t spend days

without any learning structure. The children are given various workbooks. Even children who are not registered in our schools have a similar program.

“The parents are also given special attention. Many of them spend days in the shelter, afraid to go out. They can’t cook and there’s a serious shortage of food. Among them are new immigrants and a large number of elderly people.

“At our soup kitchen we prepare hundreds of extra meals every day, far more than we can logistically and financially handle. We bring them to the shelters and other places that need them. We have also given out large quantities of cakes and sweets in the shelters, mostly, though not exclusively, to the children. In some shelters we noticed that it’s very cold because there is no one going out to buy heaters. We took care of the matter with the help of some businessmen. We are in the midst of enlisting the help of all of Anash in the city and assigning each a job.

“There are many soldiers at the improvised headquarters for the rear command that was set up

The missile entered the living room window and wreaked havoc, with all the walls of the house pocked with holes. Incredibly, the inhabitants had left the house a few minutes earlier.

here. We opened t’fillin stands and many of them are happy to don t’fillin. We give out pictures of the Rebbe and sifrei T’hillim everywhere, and give people chizuk. The only thing that will overcome fear is emuna and simcha.”

When we visited shelters with R’ Herskowitz, we were able to see for ourselves how after a few



The shiurim at the Chabad house continue.

minutes everyone was caught up in the simcha.

At one point Rebbetzin Hershkowitz wrote to the Rebbe about the terror that reigned with the sirens and the attacks. The answer she opened to in the Igros Kodesh, volume 24, p. 332 said: **In response to your telegram, they and all their students should diligently study and surely, the Guardian of Israel will not slumber nor sleep, and you will relate good news.**

This is not at all the time to travel from Eretz Yisroel and we will meet again, with Hashem's help, in the upcoming happy month of Tishrei.

I am not at all pleased with

the panic and exaggerations and Hashem will protect, as mentioned before, all our brethren, wherever they may be, especially the place that has Hashem's eyes upon it constantly.

Obviously there is no cause to be afraid and you should not allow others to frighten you nor should you frighten yourselves, and it should be fulfilled, "and I will give peace in the land, etc." If outside of the Holy Land there is no reason to be afraid - as it is written, "behold, the Guardian of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps" - then certainly in Eretz Yisroel, about which it says, "[the eyes of]

Hashem your G-d are upon it constantly, from the beginning of the year till the end of the year," surely this is nothing to fear.

With such strong encouragement from the Rebbe, they redoubled their efforts to boost morale in the city along with their humanitarian aid..

BEER SHEVA: FROM THE SIREN TO THE SHIUR

Beer Sheva suffered the least hits, but its residents are in shock, since they were sure the missiles wouldn't reach them.

"Reality has shaken the people's confidence and peace of mind," said Rabbi Shneur Zalman Garelik, director of the central Chabad house in Beer Sheva, "although we have not been attacked with the same frequency as Ashkelon, Netivot and Ofakim - and definitely not like Sderot, which has been under attack for eight years.

"For now, our work is based in the Chabad house bomb shelter. This is the reason that many more people than usual are stopping in, which requires us to increase our preparedness."

The Chabad house is open 24 hours, in accordance with the directive of the rear command. People who had no shelters or fortified rooms in their buildings, as well as some who were simply afraid, went to the Chabad house and asked to be allowed to sleep there.

"The same is true of the other Chabad houses in Beer Sheva, like the Chabad house in the Nachal Beka neighborhood, where all the houses are made of wood. People came to the Chabad house throughout the day and night, and we consider it a big

TANKS VERSUS TANKS

The Chabad Mobile Mitzva Tanks have been busy at work with the soldiers entering Gaza. As soon as the tank convoy that travels about on Chanuka was finished, some tanks drove down to Gaza and began working with the thousands of soldiers there.

The regular crew was joined by the director, Rabbi Dovid Nachshon, and the shliach from Kiev, Rabbi Moshe Reuven Asman. They put t'fillin on with soldiers all day, gave out sifrei T'hilim and registered men for letters in a Torah scroll.

The work of the Mobile Mitzva Tanks was covered at length in a positive radio report on Galei Tzahal. The broadcast said that the IDF's secret weapon in the south is not an advanced robot or a new missile but the tanks of the Chabad Chassidim which travel from base to base and raise the soldiers' morale. The Galei Tzahal staff joined the group, which brought a Torah scroll with them to the various bases and played Chassidic music as a welcome relief from the Code Red sirens.

The tankistim spent last Friday in Sderot, along with the shliach from Moscow, Rabbi Yitzchok Kogan. The soldiers were thrilled when a Torah was brought out of the tank, and they danced with it with great joy.

Rabbi Asman and Rabbi Nachshon spent Shabbos in Sderot at the Chabad house. They held a farbrengen with R' Moshe Pizem, director of the Chabad house in Sderot, while most shuls in Sderot were closed. The rabbanim encouraged the residents of Sderot and infused them with hope while, during Shabbos, more mortars landed in the city.



The shliach giving out sifrei T'hillim in Ashkelon

bracha.

“Chabad work hasn’t been affected. It continues as always, since we are in a shelter. The people who regularly attend shiurim and t’fillos feel calm. We are also upping our activities on all fronts.

“Twice last week, the siren went off in the middle of Chassidus classes, one for women and one for men, given by R’ Velvel Green. Not only didn’t the shiurim stop, more people joined since they wanted to be in a shelter. They heard part of the shiur and stayed till the end.

“At the Chabad house there is programming for children in the morning with Lubavitcher counselors. The kids are out of school and need a program. The Chabad house is busier than ever. We have a library with a VCR that shows scenes from ‘Beis Chayeinu,’ which has a calming effect on people. We also have set up t’fillin stands and other operations throughout the city.”

Miracles have taken place in Beer Sheva too:

“Two missiles landed here. The first one fell at night and hit a kindergarten. Despite the terrifying location, as the kindergarten is located in a densely populated residential neighborhood, nobody was hurt. Had it landed even a meter away, it would

Rabbi Asman and Rabbi Nachshon reaching out to soldiers.



have caused much loss of life. The second missile landed during the daytime in a school.

"The night before, the city decided not to have the schools open. There were opinions either way, but since this was their decision, a tragedy was prevented. Someone told me that people were amazed that the missiles landed in empty schools. Really, it's the other way around – because they were empty, that's why they landed there."

NETIVOT: COUNTLESS MIRACLES

Our last stop was Netivot. The shliach, Rabbi Yashar Edery, was making his final preparations for his son's wedding taking place that night. Although rockets have landed in Netivot before, the residents here aren't used to living under constant fear like their neighbors in Sderot.

"People are terrified, which is only natural under these circumstances," said R' Edery, "but there's no hysteria. People stay indoors unless there is a necessity to go out, but it's not the same as Sderot, where falling

missiles are a daily occurrence, even several times a day.

"The siren is scarier than the actual missile. You're walking around outside, tensely anticipating a siren necessitating your locating the nearest safe place. We have schools with over 400 students who haven't attended classes in over a week because of orders from the rear command. We try to get to them in other ways through their teachers, but it's far from satisfactory.

"We are going all out with mitvza t'fillin. There are many soldiers and other security and rescue people here, and we put t'fillin on with them and encourage them, in addition to the people of Netivot. We give out various booklets to raise morale. Children in shelters get reading material with stories of Chassidim. Just this morning we ordered a large quantity of booklets so they will relieve their boredom with worthwhile Jewish material.

"On Motzaei Shabbos there was a direct hit on the Netaim neighborhood, which is mostly constructed of wood. A house

was demolished, yet only one woman was lightly injured. It was an open miracle that more people weren't there at that time.

"There was also a direct hit on a villa on the street where the mayor lives. Moments before, the residents of the house entered the fortified room and were thereby saved. I visited the demolished house, and it's incredible that people emerged from it alive."

JOURNALISTS TESTIFY

Reporters and people in the media are amazed by the miracles they have witnessed during this war. Rafi Reshef, one of the most respected television personalities in Israel, was heard saying that at the end of the war, it will be necessary to find some way to express the miraculous aspect of it.

Dina Abramson, reporter for Channel 1, described a direct hit on a house in Sderot. The house was completely destroyed. She and the daughters of the woman who lived in the house were shocked to see her walk out, on her own two feet, disheveled and frightened but intact.

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MIVTZA HAKHEL, THEN AND NOW

By Menachem Ziegelboim

“Mivtza Hakhel” commemorates “days of light in the Beis HaMikdash,” said the Rebbe in 5748. This year, as we make Hakhel gatherings wherever we can, our chayus helps us also relive our “days of light” when we saw the Rebbe with physical eyes.

It is hard to believe that over twenty years have passed since Tishrei 5748(1987). I had the z’chus of making my first trip to the Rebbe then, a two month visit which lasted until the end of Tishrei.

Since I was young, I didn’t know the ins and outs of life in 770, and surely not what Tishrei was like – where to be, where to stand, when the Rebbe came in and out, when the Rebbe gave out dollars or offered his lulav, when to submit a pidyon nefesh and when to receive lekach. I was too embarrassed to work up the courage to ask the bachurim or knowledgeable balabatim. Instead, I sat in 770 day and night so I wouldn’t miss a thing.

Overall, that trip I made to the Rebbe is engraved in my soul more than any other, longer, trip I made in the years that followed,

even though later visits were longer. Nonetheless, some of the details in my mind are blurred, not because of the years that have passed, but because I was young and didn’t always realize how important it was to imprint those majestic images of Tishrei in my innermost soul.

I can still visualize the farbrengen that took place on 13 Tishrei, the day that marks the passing of the Rebbe Maharash. The big zal was full and the pyramids were packed with guests, in addition to the regulars who had set places for years. Guests who had come for the first time wandered from place to place, trying to get another look at the Rebbe’s face and maybe even to hear something.

One sicha followed another, one niggun followed another. One memorable moment of that

farbrengen took place during a niggun. I was standing on a pile of green crates, attached together with a chain and lock. The owner of the crates had kindly granted me a few inches on which to stand. I raised my cup to bless and be blessed with l’chaim.

The Rebbe looked out at the sea of faces, nodding l’chaim at various Chassidim, and I waited my turn. Then, just as the Rebbe’s gaze fell upon me, the crates collapsed with a crash, and I fell from a height of about 4 feet onto the backs of the people around me.

Shaken and confused, I quickly picked myself up and restacked the crates on which I stood. That’s when I discovered, to my dismay, that the Rebbe had been watching and waiting the entire time, his gaze upon me. As soon as I raised my cup of vodka, the Rebbe nodded.

L’chaim! L’chaim Rebbe!

This farbrengen was different than the rest. At this farbrengen the Rebbe announced the Hakhel campaign for the first time, a campaign whose message permeated that special year (which was also the year of Tismach V’Tisamach, the Year of the Jewish Child, the Year of Building and the year the Rebbetzin passed away). The

Rebbe had started talking about Hakhel previously, but at this farbrengen he presented a number of ideas for this mitvza.

Being young, new to the scene and not conversant in Yiddish, I understood only a little of what was said. Fortunately, for that which I did not understand, I was aided by chozrim who sat down immediately after the farbrengen and reviewed what the Rebbe said in Hebrew. The following is based on memory, reviews, and diaries that were written at that time.

In the General Letter which the Rebbe wrote “to all Jewish sons and daughters wherever they are,” for the New Year, he already referred to the uniqueness of the upcoming Shnas Hakhel. Again, on Parshas Netzavim-VaYeilech

5747, the Rebbe spoke about Hakhel, but nobody anticipated where the Rebbe was going with it. It was elaborated upon at that 13 Tishrei farbrengen.

After the maamer, “Borei Niv S’fasayim,” the Rebbe spoke about Hakhel and the significance of the mitvza. The Rebbe set the tone for activity in a Shnas Hakhel and for Mivtza Hakhel.

The Rebbe began with a question: although many things in Torah that were done in the time of the Beis HaMikdash, like the mitvza of Shmita, are continued to some degree even after the Mikdash was destroyed, there is nothing for Hakhel. There were some g’dolei Yisroel who wanted to renew the idea of Hakhel, but nothing ever came of it. Why?

However, continued the Rebbe, the idea of Hakhel is “to fear Hashem your G-d all the days,” and we see that when men, women, and children gather to discuss matters that lead to “fearing Hashem,” it inspires people.

The Rebbe’s practical suggestion was: “It would be fitting to make a big commotion, to gather men, women, and children in a shul or beis midrash, and to tell them in simple words, ‘Listen up Yidden,’ you are being given auspicious times and days...”

The Rebbe got into the nitty-gritty of how to carry out the new campaign. The Rebbe suggested designated someone to work on this fulltime, to be the one



Tishrei 5748 – The Rebbe encouraging the singing during Kos shel Bracha

***Just as the
Rebbe's gaze fell
upon me, the
crates collapsed
with a crash, and
I fell from a
height of about 4
feet onto the backs
of the people
around me.***

responsible for coordinating activities and encouraging people to take an active part in the mitvza.

The Rebbe even suggested that special membership cards be made, as is done in every self-respecting organization, on which members would fill out their personal details. The person in charge would then urge them to organize gatherings.

The Rebbe even specified the size of the cards, “tefach al tefach,” (a size associated with several Torah matters) and the wording, so that the message would be clear to all. The Rebbe said that the person’s name should be written on the card in Hebrew.

The farbrengen was written up as a “tumultuous farbrengen.” It ended with the “Hachana Niggun,” “Dalet Bavos,” and “Sh’Yibaneh Beis HaMikdash.”

The farbrengen shook everyone up. Everybody was puzzled and excited about the new mitvza, which had landed on them with all its details. The askanim were still not clear about how to go about it, but that same

night a group of people gathered in one of the offices in 770 to learn the topic and discuss means of carrying it out. That night they prepared – based on the instructions the Rebbe had given during the farbrengen – the wording on the card that would be given out, including a short explanation about the significance of the mitvza of Hakhel nowadays. After the Rebbe’s review and corrections, it appeared the next day in some newspapers.

One of the T’mimim wrote to a friend who had remained in Eretz Yisroel for Tishrei:

“The inyan of Hakhel is central to all of the Rebbe’s sichos and farbrengens, and each time, he repeats and emphasizes that the entire year is a Shnas Hakhel. He explains the lessons from this in the avoda of every one of us now, while in galus and outside Eretz Yisroel. You will see in the notes of the sichos all the details and wonderful explanations that were given.

“In any case, we see how the general inyan is not something that once was, thousands of years ago in the Beis HaMikdash, once in seven years, but as something spiritual that is still alive. Anyone who hears, even a little, of the sichos, can see how the Rebbe lives with it ...”

On Chol HaMoed Sukkos in 770 there was the 32nd gathering of Tzeirei Agudas Chabad in America. This kinus, a longstanding tradition, turned into a Hakhel gathering. All of the rabbanim, shluchim and askanim who spoke, without exception, discussed the uniqueness of this kinus which took place at the start of a Hakhel year.

The inyan of Hakhel became the theme which ran through the

entire day of speeches, which were said to the crowds who packed the large beis midrash. During the kinus the first reports about Hakhel activities came in. Rabbi Dovid Raskin, chairman of Tzach, gave a detailed report about the many activities underway, including the establishment of a special committee that kept a list of registrants, and widely publicized Hakhel activities among diverse communities.

Rabbi Dovid Chanzin a”h, a senior Chabad rabbi from Eretz Yisroel, delivered a powerful talk on the subject. He concluded emotionally by saying that through Hakhel, the Rebbe elevated us and the entire world several hands-breadths above worldliness.”

The headline of the issue of *Kfar Chabad* which came out right after Yom Tov proclaimed, “Hundreds of thousands of Jews around the world are uniting around the big mitvza of 5748 – Hakhel.” It went on to discuss the mitvza briefly and how to carry it out symbolically in our days.

The first national Hakhel event in Eretz Yisroel took place in Bat Yam. Thousands of Chassidim gathered for the occasion. The word “Hakhel” associated with the event galvanized everyone. Buses brought people from all over the country. Tzach made sure that every square inch was utilized to accommodate the throngs. When the kinus began the hall was packed. Of course, the speakers spoke about the significance of the new mitvza.

When Tishrei 5748 was over, the numerous visitors to the Rebbe returned home in an uplifted frame of mind. Words are unable to convey the great

inspiration they felt. One word was on everyone's lips: Ashreinu! (Fortunate are we). They excitedly described the spiritual Gan Eden they had experienced during Tishrei – the hakafos, the giluyim, the holy fire that blazed in the big beis midrash during Tishrei.

"Along with the feeling of 'Ashreinu' which everybody felt, the guests had one thing in their hearts and on their minds: Hakhel!" wrote Kfar Chabad. The report went on to say:

"You had to be there in order to feel the passion with which the Rebbe relates to the inyan of Hakhel; how this was the theme that permeated every farbrengen and all the sichos; with what holy fire the Rebbe sees the Mifal HaHakhel HaOlam, far more

than any 'call of the hour.'

"In every conversation with returning guests, you would hear the question, 'How many people have you signed up with Hakhel cards?' or 'How many people did you gather to share divrei Torah and words of inspiration?'"

"You couldn't help but see the wonderful results. So let us, brothers from all groups and segments of society, join as one man with one heart to the Mifal Hakhel HaOlam!"

In a series of articles in Kfar Chabad over the following months, Rabbi Yosef Karasik, one of the chozrim in 770 at the time, discussed the mitzva of Hakhel from various angles. There was also a series of articles by Rabbi Tuvia Blau.

Rav Blau writes, "Whoever

The farbrengen was written up as a "tumultuous farbrengen." Everybody was puzzled and excited about the new mitvza, which had landed on them with all its details.

had the privilege of being in the Rebbe's presence for Tishrei, especially for Sukkos and the



The new mitvza gets underway.

***Whoever had the
privilege of being
in the Rebbe's
presence for
Tishrei, felt as
though he was in
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parshiyos read
from the Torah
directly from the
King of Israel...***

days that followed, felt a rare uplifting of spirit, until he felt as though he was in the Beis HaMikdash, listening to the Torah being read by the King of Israel.

"Nobody disputes the fact that if there is a king in Israel, he [the Rebbe] is king. I think that whoever sees him, even once, no matter who he is and what group he belongs to, will from then on make the natural association whenever he hears, reads, or thinks about a king. This is the case from every perspective, be it the essence of a king, the manner of a king, the power of a king, etc."

As for spreading the Hakhel idea to others, these are reports from those days:

"The Rebbe's holy call to include more and more Jews in Hakhel, has had a broad impact in Jewish communities around the world.

"The idea is simple and easy to implement – to get any group of Jews with whom you are in contact to hear divrei Torah and words of inspiration promoting fear of Hashem and Jewish unity, in the context of Hakhel in the Beis HaMikdash and its spiritual relevance today. Wherever possible, they even suggest

keeping a list of participants so as to be able to check on them, roughly every month or so, to see whether they actually held a Hakhel gathering.

"Apparently, as the Rebbe said on Sukkos, it's much easier to implement than one would think. Those who have tried it have seen that this is so. If they make a Hakhel even once with any group, they immediately see that they can reproduce their success elsewhere. That is how the circle widens."

We are in the fourth month of Shnas Hakhel 5769. One of the key phrases that the Rebbe emphasized regarding Mivtza Hakhel was "a remembrance to the days of light of the Beis HaMikdash." Similarly, as a remembrance of the "days of light" when we saw the Rebbe with physical eyes, the Rebbe's horaa to make gatherings in every location needs to be followed this year too, and with the same chayus with which we fulfill the other mivtzaim!

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UNITY IS KEY

By Boruch Merkur

*Although the character and perspective of Jews differ in each individual, the most fundamental quality of the Jew, the essence of the Jew, which transcends intellect, is equal in all Jews. Thus, in order to access the Yechida and attain unity, Jews must go beyond reason and serve G-d with self-sacrifice. * Tracing the Rebbe MH”M’s instructions on how to perfect our Divine service in the Final Era.*

[Continued from last issue]

UNITY IS KEY

In order to achieve complete unity with G-d, at every level of experience, an essential unity – the ultimate point of the Final Era – there first must be unity among the Jewish people. Thus, the Giving of the Torah – when all Jews merited an unprecedented experience of unity with G-d – was preceded by the attainment of true unity among the Jewish people:

“At (and as a preparation for) the Giving of the Torah, all Jews were in complete unity, as it is written, ‘Yisroel camped there (*va’yichan sham Yisroel*) opposite the mountain,’⁹³ using the singular form for ‘camped (*va’yichan*)’ [testifying to their utter unity], ‘as a single person, with one heart,’⁹⁴ because in order to receive the One Torah from the One G-d, the recipients (the Jews) must be united, as it is said,⁹⁵ ‘Bless us, our Father (especially when we are) all as one with the light of Your countenance.’”⁹⁶

Thus, the revelation and experience of the Oneness

of G-d, in the physical world, is dependent upon the Jewish people uniting “as one.”

YECHIDA: THE COMMON DENOMINATOR IN JEWS

Although each person is unique in body and spirit, in character and in spiritual qualities, there is a common denominator among all Jews, establishing the potential for true unity among us. Namely, the very essence of the soul, called the *Yechida Sh’B’Nefesh* (Singularity of the Soul). The Yechida of every Jew is equal. Thus, in virtue of the Yechida, one is able to truly unite with his fellow Jews:

“In order that Jews should be ‘all as one’ – notwithstanding the fact that, considered individually, Jews are diverse – each individual must stand with self-nullification and self-

sacrifice to G-d. This capacity stems from the simple will of the Yechida Sh’B’Nefesh,⁹⁷ which surpasses reason and intellect, and is **equal** in every Jew. Specifically in virtue of the Yechida are all Jews united. With respect to reason and intellect there are differences between Jews – ‘their opinions are not equal and etc.,’⁹⁸ however, self-sacrifice that surpasses reason and intellect establishes the equality of all Jews.”

Although the character and perspective of Jews differ in each individual, the most fundamental quality of the Jew, the essence of the Jew, which transcends intellect, is equal in all Jews. Thus, in order to access the Yechida and attain unity, Jews must go beyond reason and serve G-d with self-sacrifice.

GREATER SELF-SACRIFICE EQUALS GREATER UNITY

In the context of the two modes of self-sacrifice discussed above, there are two corresponding levels of unity. The self-sacrifice associated with the Giving of the Torah, a self-sacrifice that was inspired from Divine revelations, etc., gave rise to a great level of

unity and brotherhood among Jews. However, this unity was only perfected in the time of Purim, when the self-sacrifice of the Jews was self-inspired:

“Just as the above applies to the Jews’ achievement of self-sacrifice in Purim in comparison to the self-sacrifice at the Giving of the Torah, the same is true of the unity of Purim in comparison to the unity at the Giving of the Torah (which was a result of the self-sacrifice and self-nullification discussed above). In the time of Purim the unity resulted from the effort of man independently (and not from inspiration from above⁹⁹). Therefore, specifically as a result of this mode of self-sacrifice, it is said that during Purim there was the completion of the Receiving of the Torah.”

The great revelation and manifestation of G-dliness associated with the Giving of the Torah was only perfected when there was a unity among the Jewish people that resulted from self-inspired self-sacrifice.

[To be continued, b’ezeras Hashem]

NOTES:

⁹³Yisro 19:2.

⁹⁴ Commentary of Rashi on the verse. Also appearing in Mechilta ... in different terms.

⁹⁵ Blessing of Sim Shalom. See *Tanya*, Ch. 32.

⁹⁶ See Footnote 15 in the original.

⁹⁷ *Torah Ohr* Hosafos 121d, end.

⁹⁸ See Brachos 58a, Sanhedrin 38a, among others.

⁹⁹ Notwithstanding the fact that “Yisroel camped there” (on Rosh Chodesh Sivan) took place prior to the revelation of love described as, “He overshadowed them



Painting by Samuel Rothbart

with a mountain, [suspended over them] like a barrel,” this too was a result of an inspiration from above that occurred beforehand. Namely, “I bore you on eagles’ wings, etc.” (Yisro 19:4), including the miracles and revelations (the revelation of love) of the Exodus from Egypt and the Splitting of the Sea of Reeds, etc., in a manner that resembles what is explained in the teachings (*Shaarei Ora* ibid, Ch. 28 ff; *Ohr HaTorah* ... pg. 2352) concerning the self-nullification associated with saying, “we will do an we will listen,” which also occurred prior to, “He overshadowed them with a mountain, like a barrel.”



HALACHA AND SPREADING THE WELLSPRINGS

By Menachem Ziegelboim

Let us begin with the Shulchan Aruch Admur HaZakein, or as it is known, Shulchan Aruch HaRav. Why did the Alter Rebbe have to rewrite a Shulchan Aruch? Why wasn't the one written by Rabbi Yosef Karo sufficient?

Rabbi Yosef Karo's Shulchan Aruch with the Rama's glosses is irreplaceable. The rest of the Acharonim clarify and amplify halachos therein, starting with the Magen Avrohom, who the Alter Rebbe called, "the greatest of the Acharonim." For Chabad Chassidim, however, we are all in the 'place' of the Rebbeim, and as the rule in Gemara states, "in Rav's place the Halacha is like Rav."

An important fact to realize is that there are *psakim* (halachic decisions) of the Alter Rebbe which we follow, regarding questions that are not even found in Rabbi Yosef Karo's Shulchan Aruch.

In general, works of halacha don't always refer to the Alter Rebbe's *p'sakim*, aside from the few that are brought in the Mishna Brura etc. And sometimes, when they do bring from the Alter Rebbe, they are not always precise or complete.

The Maggid of Mezritch assigned the task of writing a Shulchan Aruch to the Alter Rebbe,

his disciple. The reasons were twofold. Due to the many years that had passed since Rabbi Yosef Karo's Shulchan Aruch had been written, many new questions and issues had arisen. Someone was needed to decide the Halacha.

In addition, the Shulchan Aruch of Rabbi Yosef Karo is actually a summary of his lengthy Beis Yosef commentary on the Tur. He did not intend for people to pasken according to the short Shulchan Aruch. According to Rabbi Yosef Karo, every person would first have to learn the Gemara and Rishonim, the Tur with the Beis Yosef, and only then the Shulchan Aruch.

Obviously, in later generations this became difficult, so the Alter Rebbe wrote his own Shulchan Aruch. The Shulchan Aruch HaRav is longer and more detailed than the Shulchan Aruch of the Beis Yosef, because he includes the reasons for the halachos.

What makes it possible to pasken Halacha on topics that are not written explicitly in Shulchan Aruch is an understanding of the root of the issue. For this reason, the Alter Rebbe did not suffice with bringing the Halacha, but he explains the rationale behind it. Someone who understands it is able to draw

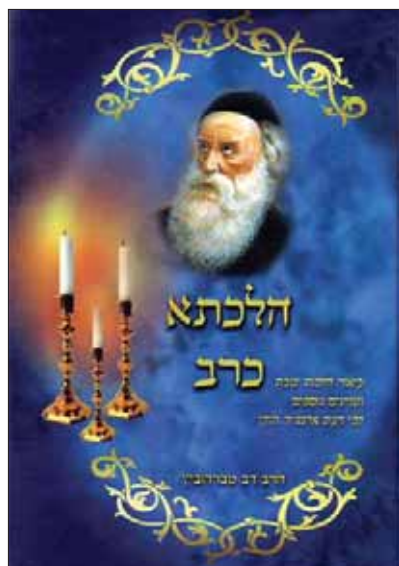
comparisons from one topic to the next based on the principle of the issue.

In his Shulchan Aruch, the Alter Rebbe explained and decided many questions that cropped up over the years. He also made many *chiddushim* (innovations), but in his modesty, he generally did not emphasize them. Sometimes he quotes one view or reason and conceals another, changing the style or hinting at halachos. In most instances, he did not explicitly write out his *chiddush*.

Does that mean that whoever learns Shulchan Aruch HaRav can pasken Halacha?

If the Halacha is directly applicable to the situation at hand, then yes. However, in our generation most current subjects are not written about explicitly in either the Shulchan Aruch, or the Shulchan Aruch HaRav and one needs to refer back to the original sources and understanding. In order to pasken on questions that are not brought up explicitly in the text, you need wide-ranging knowledge and a person should be over forty.

The Rebbe once said regarding the statement "*Daas balabatim hefech daas Torah*" (the opinion of balabatim is the opposite of the



Left: A seifer written by Rabbi Tevrdovitz on the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch

d'Oraisa, if it is done with a *shinui* (change).

Today there are many rabbanim who don't follow one posek all the way through; in many instances they take the stringencies of all the *shittos*, just to be on the safe side.

Is there something novel in the Alter Rebbe's approach to Halacha?

The Alter Rebbe possessed an exceedingly broad mind and deep understanding. For example, he understood certain p'sakim in the Mechaber, Rama or Magen Avrohom differently than many Acharonim. I am obviously not the one to decide between them, but it is clear that the Alter Rebbe had a deep understanding and he relied on it. After you delve into a topic, you see how wonderfully his view fits with what they say. His approach is to clarify an issue till the end, and he isn't afraid to make a decision according to his understanding of the matter.

The Alter Rebbe, unlike other poskim, was also a Rebbe. Are there any Chassidic elements to his Shulchan Aruch, or are the halachos he wrote "dry," with the Chassidishkait left to Tanya and his maamarim?

From what we can tell, the Alter Rebbe included "Chassidishe considerations," especially in the later edition, but very little of that edition has come down to us. In the first edition – which is most of the Shulchan Aruch that we have – there are hardly any reasons given whose source is

Kabbala or Chassidus. You also have to remember that he wrote the Shulchan Aruch before he became Rebbe. He wrote it as the talmid of the Maggid.

Still, there are occasional references to the Kabbala of the Arizal and other Sages of the Kabbala. Sometimes, it's mentioned as a hiddur, but the opinions of the kabbalists are always quoted with great respect.

In Rabbi Yosef Karo's Shulchan Aruch that is not apparent?

The Beis Yosef brings a bit less of that. He and the Arizal were related by marriage, and lived in Tzfas at the same time. He admired him greatly, but the Arizal told the Beis Yosef that his mission is to study Halacha and Nigleh, not Kabbala. He did not want to teach him the secrets of Torah. Also, at that time the Arizal's writings were not widely known, and we can assume that the Beis Yosef did not see those things

Torah view), that this is not referring to someone who never learned and doesn't have Smicha. Of course a person like that can't pasken! It is referring to someone who learned and received Smicha but is not a rav, but rather he does something else for a living.

In order to pasken Halacha, you need *siyata d'Shmaya* (Heavenly assistance), which is given only to a practicing rav. Since his job is to teach people Halacha, he is helped from Above. Of course, someone who wants to be a practicing rav has to do *shimush* (an apprenticeship) with someone who is a practicing rav himself and be immersed in the world of p'sak, clarifying new questions and reading new works that are written.

As a rule, is the Alter Rebbe lenient or strict?

The Alter Rebbe generally follows the Shulchan Aruch and the Rama, even though he has his own perspective on the issue. He doesn't have one approach, lenient or strict, but rather forms his own opinion and isn't afraid to make a decision. For example, regarding a person who is sick in bed, the Alter Rebbe paskens leniently and says that Shabbos can be desecrated for him, even by a Jew, even with a *melacha*





that we now know from the Ari.

COMBINING LEARNING FROM THE SOURCE WITH CURRENT RULINGS

In Chabad yeshivos there is a strong emphasis on the study of Shulchan Aruch, since the Rebbe repeatedly urged the learning of halachos that pertain to daily life. Unfortunately, at least some of the talmidim don't know how to apply the p'sakim to their daily lives. What do you think about also learning from s'farim on Halacha that are written for our generation?

Both are needed. There is no substitute for learning from the source, especially as we adhere to the rulings of the Alter Rebbe. There are many contemporary works of Halacha that relate to current issues, but not every author can pasken halachos for our lives today by extrapolating from the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch. And they might not all agree with him. There is therefore no substitute for

learning from the source, the Shulchan Aruch HaRav.

At the same time, a rav who paskens has to try to gain expertise through the many fine s'farim that are published nowadays. They don't all stress the Alter Rebbe's shitta, but you have to use what's available.

In those yeshivos where they learn the Shulchan Aruch HaRav, there isn't always a rav who specialized in a given topic on staff to help the talmidim or give shiurim with a particular expertise. It would be a good idea to occasionally bring in someone who specializes in the topic they are learning, to delve into it with them and give them other perspectives and practical tools.

Lately, we observe a special interest in learning Shulchan Aruch HaRav. Even groups outside of Chabad have published s'farim of explanations and commentary on it, and there have been many articles in frum publications. There are organizations, not necessarily Lubavitch, which encourage the learning of Shulchan Aruch

HaRav with the incentive of stipends. What is the reason for this and what can be done to support this phenomenon?

Back in Poland, most, if not all, Chassidim followed the p'sakim of the Alter Rebbe. However, as the years went by, more and more began to follow the Mishna Brura. Perhaps this is due to the fact that for many years it was hard to get the Shulchan Aruch HaRav.

In recent years – this might have to do with external factors – Chassidic awareness has increased, Chassidim's "self-esteem" has risen, and to a great extent they have returned to the Shulchan Aruch HaRav.

As far as publishing s'farim – the spies in the desert said, "and we were like grasshoppers in our eyes and so were we in their eyes." One of the explanations given is that because we considered ourselves grasshoppers, we appeared thus to them.

In earlier generations, people looked askance at writing s'farim; it was considered self-promotion. The Rebbe, however, encouraged every one of us to write his chiddushei Torah and to print them (obviously after someone has checked them). So since the Rebbe encouraged the learning of Halacha, there are s'farim being written with chiddushim and explanations of the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch.

Tangentially, I'll just add something that happened to me. Motzaei some Chassidishe Yom Tov, I was in shul studying the daily Rambam during the break between Mincha and Maariv. Someone came over to me and laughed at a Chassid learning Halacha on a *yoma d'pagra*. What perturbed me was that he considered refraining from learning Nigleh and Halacha on a *yoma d'pagra* as something Chassidish.

THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

You once served as head of a Smicha program. When studying for Smicha, an emphasis is placed on studying the laws of taaroves (mixtures of kosher and not kosher food), treifos (animals which have fatal conditions which render them unfit to eat), meat and milk and salting. Most rabbanim today, however, have to deal with questions about Shabbos, t'filla etc. Even shluchim and rabbanim of small k'hillos have more questions about Torah scrolls than about the kashrus of a chicken or blood in an egg. Should the curriculum be changed?

There are Smicha programs where the emphasis is on Hilchos

Shabbos rather than Hilchos treifos, but there is still good reason for a rav to have a broader knowledge of halachos. There is no substitute for general knowledge.

The rav will study the more difficult halachos in shiurim, and he can fill in the more common halachos afterwards, on his own. A rav who rules on Halachic matters, as well as a shliach, must become proficient in everyday halachos. There are many Smicha programs which also test on the laws of errors in a Torah scroll, food cooked by non-Jews, etc.

Would you say that someone studying for Smicha does not need to learn the halachos of treifos and would be better off learning the laws of t'filla, etc.? Are there laws whose study can be set aside?

There is nothing more important than Torah study, and it's vital for chinuch. When children see that their father spends his free time learning, it makes a deep impression on them.

The laws of taaruvos, meat and milk and salting must be studied, since they have many ramifications in the laws of kashrus that are relevant to us. As for Hilchos treifos, there are places where they don't study these halachos or they don't spend much time on it, since they pertain more to those who work in slaughterhouses.

Still, there is the principle "*maalin ba'kodesh, v'lo moridin*" (ascend in holiness and do not descend). We don't take away from the curriculum we had in the past, even if it's not as pertinent. Ideally, one should learn Hilchos treifos, too, though the emphasis should be placed on more relevant halachos.

What other halachos would you recommend that shluchim learn?

I would say they should become proficient in the laws of t'filla and Krias ha'Torah. There are frequently mistakes in the Torah reading and questions about the writing in the scroll, and often you have to pasken on the spot.

The laws of mourning should also be studied, since this is an area in which rabbanim and shluchim are

BIO

Rabbi Tevardovitz is from a Litvishe family. When he became Lubavitch, his family was upset, fearing that he would be trading in his learning for mivtzaim.

Rabbi Tevardovitz is a "nosei v'nosein" in Tomchei T'mimim in Kfar Chabad, and he responds to halachic queries on family purity, Shabbos, and kashrus.

He wrote two s'farim on Shulchan Aruch HaRav, on Hilchos Shabbos in general and Hilchos Muktza in particular. He also wrote a book titled *Chosein Yeshuos*, which is about shidduchim, marriage, pregnancy and birth, according to Chabad custom and Shulchan Aruch HaRav. He is considered an authority on halachic matters and is invited to lecture on the subject. He often travels to Chabad houses to give shiurim to mekuravim.

He is considered an expert in kashrus, and has been involved in kashering kitchens for Mivtza Kashrus for many years.



regularly consulted, often by people who are not religious.

I would also recommend that they should learn and know the halachos having to do with behavior between people: avoiding disputes, lashon ha'ra, and rechilus. Aside from the importance of these halachos for the individual, it is very important for someone in a community not to get into petty quarrels and for his speech to be in accordance with Halacha.

That's not common sense?

No! These are halachos paskened in Shulchan Aruch! For example, the Alter Rebbe writes in his Shulchan Aruch that a person may not repeat anything he hears about someone unless he is given permission to do

so. If people were careful about this, we would prevent most machlokes and problems. If everybody kept a secret (and not just a secret, but anything said to him without an explicit mention that it can be repeated) and did not repeat things they heard, it would prevent many negative things. This is an explicit Halacha in Shulchan Aruch HaRav.

USING THE TIME IN KOLLEL

Bachurim rely on the yeshiva kitchen and have people to turn to with halachic queries, but when couples marry, all questions become their responsibility. What would you recommend that a

young couple study?

If the husband spends a year or two in Kollel, he should set goals for himself, such as proficiency in the halachos of Shabbos, t'filla, tahara, stealing and *ona'a*, as well as the aforementioned halachos *bein adam l'chaveiro*. Of course, one should also be proficient in the laws of Talmud Torah regarding the obligation to have set times for Torah study, especially the study of practical Halacha.

The study of Halacha is not limited to the early years. It must be studied constantly, adding and yearning to fill one's time with Torah study. There is nothing more important, and it's vital for chinuch. When children see that their father spends his free time learning, it makes a deep impression on them. But if they see that after a day's work their father does not learn, not even the shiurim of Chitas and Rambam, it is hard to find words for the damage this causes.

Have you been taken aback by people's ignorance when they ask basic questions?

Some people have little knowledge, but you have to be careful not to offend anyone who asks a question. It doesn't surprise me, because the Torah is vast and if only people felt more of a need to know...

I heard a shliach say: when a person is about to take a test for his degree or his job he uses the time to study. That is how a young man should feel, especially when he is in Kollel for a short time. He needs to pack it in and emerge from Kollel with as much knowledge as possible.

Do you see that problems arise in homes because of the lack of study of Halacha?

I don't deal with shalom bayis problems, but I know that many of those problems arise from a lack of knowledge or the absence of proper guidance.

MIVTZA KASHRUS

For many years, Rabbi Tevardovitz kashered kitchens for Mivtza Kashrus. Many evenings were devoted to this difficult work.

In his book *Hilchisa K'Rav*, there is a section on the topic of kashering utensils for the public at large and especially for those who work in Mivtza Kashrus.

"At the end of the Hilchos Hagalas Keilim in Hilchos Pesach, the Alter Rebbe writes that there are many laws involved in kashering keilim and only someone proficient in the halachos should be involved in it. Nowadays, there aren't many who are knowledgeable in these halachos, so it's important to read the s'farim that explain the details or to call someone who knows.

"I have kashered kitchens for people who were not at all religious and then, years later, I will meet a Chassidishe man with a sirtuk and beard who tells me, 'You kashered my kitchen for me.'

"One such story happened in the home of a woman who wanted her kitchen kashered. Her husband did not want it but preferred not to fight about it. He stood on the side and didn't mix in, saying, 'Don't bother me and I won't bother you.' I bumped into him a few years later, in full Chassidishe garb.

"There was one situation that I came to regret. I was asked to kasher a kitchen, but it was hard for me to go that night. I felt I had to ask the Rebbe whether to forego it or not (even though I do not usually ask under these circumstances, because obviously the Rebbe wants it). From the answer I opened to in the Igros Kodesh, I understood that the Rebbe did not want me to go, and I didn't go.

"After a few months, I decided I should not postpone it any longer, and I went and kashered the kitchen. While I was there, I found out that it was questionable whether the woman was Jewish, for which reason kashering her kitchen was forbidden, as it would create a pitfall for others. I then understood why the Rebbe did not want me to go there."

Generally speaking, when a couple marries with the understanding that “I was not created except to serve my Maker,” they will think less of their own needs and the chances are greater that they will have a good marriage. When each one is out for him/herself and feels they are not getting what they deserve, that is likely to lead to anger and quarrels. If a person is focused on their shlichus in this world, they are less particular, even if they do not get what they think is coming to them.

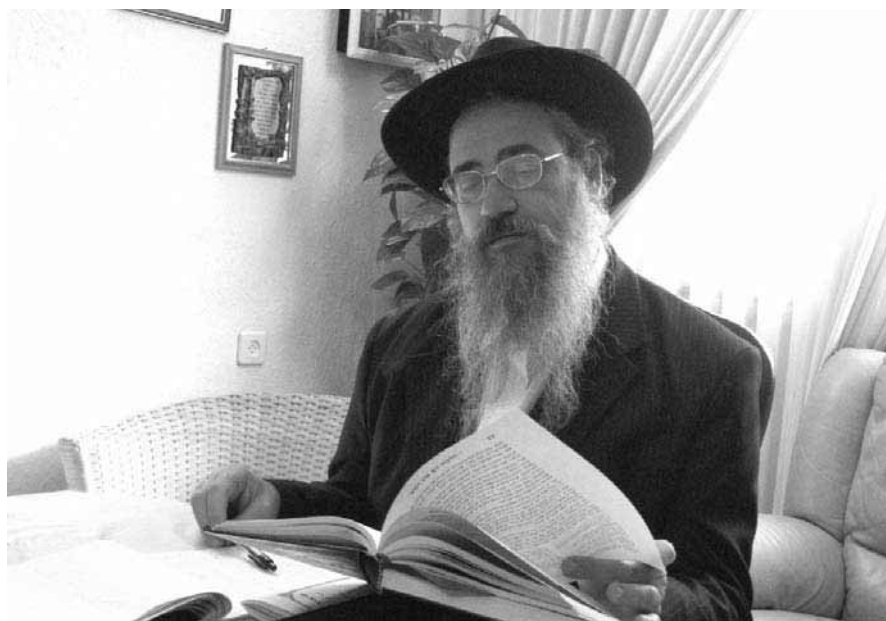
Chazal say that whoever has fear of Heaven, what he says is listened to. The Rambam describes genuine repentance in the laws of t’shuva: “When the One who knows all secrets testifies regarding him that he will not repeat this folly...” R’ Mendel Futerfas once said that the “one who knows all secrets” is your wife. She knows what’s in your heart, and if she testifies that you did a proper t’shuva, then it’s true. Along these lines, I would say that if a person is G-d fearing enough so that his wife realizes it, then problems aren’t likely to arise since what he says will be listened to.

You mentioned guidance. What guidance is lacking? What would you emphasize?

First, there are the halachos themselves. Second, there is the part that is not Halacha per se but is important nonetheless. Young couples need proper guidance, or at least they should know to ask when necessary. Apparently, some couples are not getting proper guidance, and this can have a terrible affect on a relationship.

Does this affect chinuch, something you lecture about frequently?

Chinuch is comprised of many components, but there are two basic elements. One is a united front by the parents. If they fight amongst themselves or don’t agree about parenting, that creates trouble for



the children. The second is setting a personal example. If a father, for example, teaches his children to daven properly while he talks during davening or the Torah reading, what use is it to exhort his children to daven nicely? The child sees his father doing the opposite, and actions speak louder than words.

DISSEMINATING THE P’SAKIM OF OUR REBBEIM HASTENS THE GEULA

The Rebbe says that everything must be permeated with inyanei Moshiach and Geula. How do we connect the study of Halacha in general and Shulchan Aruch HaRav in particular, with the preparations for kabbalas p’nei Moshiach Tzidkeinu?

It says in the Gemara “the exiles are not gathered except in the merit of Mishnayos, as it says, ‘even if you are among the goyim, and now I will gather you.’” The Mishnayos of those days are the halachos of nowadays.

The Rebbe constantly urged the inyan of shlichus, which contains two dimensions: first, that the purpose of a Jew is, “I was not

created except to serve my Maker,” and second, to spread Judaism and the wellsprings. Among the pillars of Judaism is the pillar of Halacha, to know what you need to do. That is a part of the wellsprings.

The Rebbe states in a sicha that spreading the wellsprings to bring Moshiach also includes teaching the p’sakim of the Alter Rebbe. In our days, we have not only the p’sakim of the Alter Rebbe, but also those of the Tzemach Tzedek and the Rebbe, which are included in spreading the wellsprings.

It would be a good idea for people to give more respect to those men and bachurim who learn Halacha. Long ago, R’ Zushe “Partisan” Willemovsky a”h was pained by the scarcity of lamdanim in Chabad. He said that when public gatherings are made, the ones who sit at the head are the askanim, while you don’t always see talmidei chachamim and rabbanim. This has an effect on the youth.

We need to support bachurim and young rabbanim and those who learn Torah and Halacha, whether through stipends or even through giving them due respect. This will demonstrate to the young generation the importance of Halacha.

FROM SOUL TO SOUL: HOW TWO TOUCHED MILLIONS

By Rabbi Nachman Schapiro, Member, Vaad L'Hafatzos Sichos; Mashpia, Yeshivas Oholei Torah, Brooklyn
Translated By Michoel Leib Dobry

*The Kiddush Hashem of the Holtzbergs aroused millions of Jewish neshamos the world over, kindling their Jewish spark bringing about a great spiritual awakening. * Delivered at the Yud-Tes Kislev farbrengen in 770 – Beis Chayeinu.*

A SPIRITUAL AWAKENING GREATER THAN YOM KIPPUR

Kiddush Hashem is considered one of the most hallowed qualities among the Jewish People. It is brought in s'farim that when a Jew is killed *al Kiddush Hashem*, this actualizes two of the loftiest concepts in Judaism:

First, his soul rises to such spiritual heights that no created being can attain. This is the reason why Rabbi Akiva yearned to die *al Kiddush Hashem*, asking, "When would I ever have the chance to fulfill this

commandment?"

The Rebbe emphasized the great privilege in giving one's life in *al Kiddush Hashem* from the story regarding Rabbi Yosef Caro, compiler of the Shulchan Aruch. He was informed from Heaven that he would be privileged to die *al Kiddush Hashem*, but this was later retracted as punishment for a certain mode of conduct. The Rebbe states that after this "punishment," Rabbi Yosef Caro lived to compile the Shulchan Aruch, a source of guidance to the Jewish People for all generations to come. Yet, despite the tremendous merit in compiling the Shulchan Aruch, it

was considered a "punishment" in relation to the merit he could have received from being killed *al Kiddush Hashem*!

Recently, there was a most thrilling story printed about the "Divrei Chaim" from Sanz. At the height of the Second World War, he came to his son in a dream and told him that the very next day, the Nazis (may their name be erased) would come to the town where he was staying and kill all its residents. He said that he could reveal to him a passageway through which he could make his escape, but he added, "Just know, that those being sacrificed now *al Kiddush Hashem* will reach a level that you could not attain even if you would learn Torah and serve G-d for a thousand years (and we're talking here about the avoda of a true tzaddik)."

Second, besides the tremendous advantage for the individual soul, *Kiddush Hashem* creates a marvelous illumination for the whole world, bringing great salvation to the Jewish People. It is stated in Midrash

that Kiddush Hashem shines until the chamber of Moshiach Tzidkeinu. Texts in Chassidic philosophy (not Chabad) bring that during the years 5573-5575, there were ten prominent tzaddikim who were taken by Heavenly decree in order to save the generation. This parallels what is explained in Tanya, regarding how the death of the righteous atones for the sin of the generation. As great as our avoda may be in the fulfillment of Torah and mitzvos, it can never attain the level of tzaddikim who died in sanctification of His Holy Name, for this has such an effect in the higher worlds that it cannot be duplicated through any other avoda.

The Kiddush Hashem of the holy shluchim to Bombay, India, which took place on Rosh Chodesh Kislev, elicited a quality even greater than the two mentioned above. Beyond the great elevation for the souls of the holy shluchim, and the great merit and spiritual effects in the supernal worlds, these holy shluchim brought about a tremendous spiritual elevation and purification in this world.

The Kiddush Hashem of these shluchim aroused millions of Jews all over the globe, kindling the Jewish spark within them, and bringing a great spiritual awakening. The Rebbe's shluchim throughout the world have been in awe of this tremendous arousal. Veteran Chabad emissaries, who have been on shlichus for decades, say that they have never experienced a spiritual awakening of such intensity.

My son related that on the first Shabbos after the murder of the shluchim, his shul was fuller than during the busiest seasons of the year. And what type of people

came? Not only people who usually go to other synagogues and would never step foot in a Chabad House, but also the type that would never step foot in any synagogue – even on Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur! Jews who had never agreed to have a bris mila announced after the prayer service that they want to be circumcised. There were even Jews who were married to Gentiles, who decided to leave their non-Jewish spouses as a result of the Kiddush Hashem of these shluchim!



One shliach told me that his Chabad House has a bulletin board for posting good resolutions. After the tragedy in Bombay, dozens of Jews submitted good resolutions for the first time. Many who made a commitment to start putting on t'fillin didn't just settle for posting something on the bulletin board; they immediately went out and bought a pair of t'fillin.

The reaction was something not of this world. There are times that are known to bring out a spiritual awakening, such as Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur. Jews are stirred to action, make good

resolutions, and increase their mitzva observance. However, the current revival is something else entirely, both in quality and in quantity. As I mentioned earlier, people who wouldn't even go to synagogue on Yom Kippur are suddenly coming to shul.

It can definitely be said that in all of the years of Chabad shlichus, shluchim have never seen such qualitative and quantitative growth in such a short time.

The Kiddush Hashem of these shluchim has achieved great things, not only for their own souls, but for the souls of the entire Jewish People throughout the world.

THE ESSENCE OF THE SOUL WAS REVEALED ON ROSH CHODESH KISLEV

All this happened on Rosh Chodesh Kislev. In the sichos the Rebbe delivered around Rosh Chodesh Kislev, 5752, he explained the great quality to Rosh Chodesh, the time when the essence of the soul is revealed, higher even than the aspect of yechida.

It is known that the soul possesses five levels of revelation: nefesh, ruach, neshama, chaya, and yechida. In general, when chassidus discusses the loftiest portion of the soul, it refers to the level of yechida. The Rebbe states in the sicha that since the level of yechida is one of the five names given to the soul, it is thereby understood that despite the great quality attributed to "yechida," it is only a name, whereas the essence of the soul is far higher and loftier. The Rebbe explains that Rosh Chodesh Kislev is an expression of the revelation of the soul's essence,

Veteran Chabad emissaries, who have been on shlichus for decades, say that they have never experienced a spiritual awakening of such intensity.

corresponding to the very metzius of Moshiach – higher than the revelation of yechida.

This year on Rosh Chodesh Kislev, we saw the revelation of the essence. What Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur, which effect the revelation of yechida, failed to achieve, these holy shluchim accomplished when they revealed the actual essence of the Jewish soul to the whole world.

Everyone speaks about the damaged Torah scroll, pointing out that the tear in the parchment appears in Parshas Acharei Mos, the portion that mentions the passing of Aharon's two sons when they drew near before G-d. But a closer look reveals that the words which were pierced by the bullets, were, "With this shall Aharon enter the Holy," the entry of the Kohen Gadol into the Kodosh HaKodashim on Yom Kippur, symbolizing the connection of essence with essence, higher than yechida.

REVEALING THE ESSENCE – CONCERN FOR PHYSICAL NEEDS

Most of the stories that we

have heard from the parents of the holy shluchim, and countless others who were contact with them during their lifetimes, dealt with outreach in physical matters – eating, drinking, and hospitality – acts of charity that weren't even directly connected to mitzva observance. While they eventually had a spiritual influence, until then each person felt that he could come back to eat and have a place to sleep.

Incredibly, when the Rebbe spoke about the great quality of Rosh Chodesh Kislev, the revelation of the essence of the soul, he emphasized that this

revelation is expressed through concern for a Jew's material needs:

"[There must be] a renewed awakening with renewed strength from the essence of the soul (as with waking from slumber) 'to bring the days of Moshiach', thereby adding 'one more mitzva' in order to tip the scales for himself and the whole world to the side of merit and to bring rescue and salvation to him and them.

"And all this is not necessarily in lofty matters connected with the level of yechida, such as the study and spreading the teachings



of chassidus, the yechida of the Torah, rather primarily in simple matters, such as providing a Jew with his physical needs, connected with the essence of his existence (a soul in a body)."

Thus, the essence of Moshiach is revealed even through physical activities in and of themselves. This is what we saw with Gavriel and Rivka.

THE AKEIDA BEFORE THE GEULA

I heard that on the Shabbos after the tragedy, the gaon, Rabbi Moshe Wolfsohn from Boro Park, said the following in his shul:

It is stated in the writings of the Arizal, that prior to every

great occurrence among the Jewish People, there is a sacrifice, an akeida, a Kiddush Hashem of the righteous. Before the dedication of the Mishkan, marking the beginning of "And I shall dwell within them," there was the death of Nadav and Avihu, regarding whom it is said, "I will be sanctified through those near to Me." Prior to the acquisition of the Temple Mount from the people of Yevus in order to build the First Beis HaMikdash, Avishai ben Tzuria, considered equal to the majority of the Sanhedrin, was killed. Similarly, before permission was given to write down and publicize the Oral Torah, there was the murder of the Ten Martyrs.

Finally, the Arizal concludes that prior to the revelation of the Moshiach, there will be a Kiddush Hashem by great tzaddikim.

The Rebbe's shlichus is to bring the Redemption, and they were shluchim of the Rebbe. This incident of the sanctification of Hashem's Name through the Rebbe's shluchim must be that akeida of the great tzaddikim prior to the revelation of Moshiach.

May it be Hashem's Will that we should immediately merit to see the hisgalus of the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach, and all those who dwell in the dust will arise and sing, led by the holy shluchim, *mamash* – NOW!

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NEWS FROM GHETTO ISRAEL: OLMERT'S FAKE WAR OR 'OLMERT'S FOLLY'

By Raanan S. Isseroff

On the 6th night of Chanuka, 30th of Kislev, the 27th of December, world Jewry breathed a huge sigh of relief as Israel finally commenced retaliation against Gaza for over a year of non-stop missile and rocket fire.

But is this a real retaliation?

Israel has stated that it has no plans to retake Gaza, so what will any military offensive accomplish in the end of the day? As soon as the troops unceremoniously pull out, missiles will start to fall again! What, then, will have been accomplished?

A few goals will be accomplished – unfortunately none of them good for Israel.

First, Olmert will use this “war” as a springboard to revive the flopped peace process and give away more land. Olmert’s image in Israel nowadays is terrible. He is being investigated for fraud, breach of trust, accepting bribes, and leading Israel into a war in Lebanon that he never planned to win. He is a complete loser in the

Israeli press. Even the United States has lost confidence in his ability to pull off the land-giveaway scam. Olmert is using this war to

Olmert’s second goal, as reported by *Yediot Achronot* in November, is nothing less than to destroy the integrity of Jerusalem.

Headlines screamed:

“Olmert calls for concessions in Jerusalem.”
The paper quoted PM Olmert: “We must concede parts of the homeland we have prayed for and dreamt of for generations, as well as Arab neighborhoods in Jerusalem, and return to the State of Israel in 1967 with amendments.”¹

This is the Israeli government’s great peace “solution” as an answer to terror: “*buken zich*” (bow down to them) and be a good ghetto Jew. Suffer the bombings, kidnappings, killings and more terror, even release hundreds of convicted terrorists. Give them all you own – your land, your water, health

care, ransom money – in exchange for what? The promise of peace? Nobody promised peace.

This is an exact repeat of what the Israeli Prime Minister did after the failed war in Lebanon. Lebanon



boost his sorely deflated image and gain a power base that will enable him to give away more land. Best of all, like in Lebanon, he will garner religious support for his “hawkish” stance.

was not only a miserable loss militarily, but left the Hamas (Aka: PLO) with untold thousands of short and long range missiles that Israel never managed to find or do anything about. How Israel even allowed them to build up to such a point, when they were obviously aware of them for a number of years, is a wonder. But Olmert is preparing to repeat his mistakes.

Third goal: It could well be that Israel's ruling class is simply getting rid of anyone in Gaza that their friends in the Hamas / PLO group in the West Bank area don't like. In a sense, Israel is doing the terrorists a favor by getting rid of their rivals and doing the US a favor at the same time by helping to revive the dead "Peace Talks." Hence, the US's wholehearted encouragement of "Olmert's Folly."

Fourth: Olmert appears to be using pressure on Gaza as a bargaining chip with the United States to get more aid for Israel and loan guarantees which will later be reneged upon. What usually happens is that the Arab countries put pressure on the US who then calls Olmert to make offers of money and aid to stop the fake war.

The worst part of this is that like in Lebanon, Israel makes a show of a war they will leave having done "half of a job." There is nothing is more demoralizing for a country than to fight a battle that everyone knows will accomplish nothing in the long run or even the short run.

Israel's religious is today a significant portion of the population – reading the 2006 census, one understands that religious Jews in Israel today account for about half the population.² When will the religious population in Israel and around the world unite in the

fervent demand that Israel's government act like the protectorate it is supposed to be for Jews?

It is not unreasonable to expect or demand that one's government exert its sovereign powers to stop the policies of befriending its citizen's enemies. One pays taxes to be protected, not to be victimized. So too for Diaspora Jews, who contribute money to Israel with such an expectation. Wasn't this always Israel's fundraising theme? "Buy a tree and build the land" and "Chalutz"?

Since when does one fundraise to self-destruct or plant a tree to give it away?

The only way Israel's security can be properly ensured at this point is by heeding the Rebbe's call to retake lands Israel was never mandated to give away and by stopping all talks for peace that involve territorial concession.

Why doesn't Israel's government seek safety for its people? It certainly seeks the safety of the poor Arab terrorist. Even after the Holtzberg couple was so cruelly murdered, Israel helped the Arabs celebrate by releasing 250 terrorist prisoners. It would seem that Olmert might be better suited to be Prime Minister of the PA terror state than for Israel.

All these considerations are from a logical perspective.

Taking Torah into consideration, the time has come for Israeli foreign policy to acknowledge our true and fundamental claim to the Land. Rashi says on Genesis 1, verse 1: "One day people will come to you and say you have stolen the Land of Israel. At that time you will tell them: This land was given to us by G-d!"

According to Torah and as emphasized in Chassidus, the Jew is the Baal HaBayis over worldly

matters and not otherwise! They and only they are the ones who must take charge of what goes on in Israel! Since this is a directive from our Holy Torah, it comes with a promise that a true and everlasting peace *will* finally be achieved speedily in our days. In a sicha on Chanuka,³ the Rebbe states about how our Torah is a "Torah of Peace": "Gadol Shalom She Kol HaTorah Nisna Laasos Shalom BaOlam!" So great is peace that the whole Torah was given to make peace in the world."⁴ *Ken Yehi Ratzon.*

NOTES:

1. Ynetnews.com (Yediot Achronot's internet edition) November 10, 2008. See article entitled: "Rabin Memorial: Olmert calls for concessions in Jerusalem".

2. "Social Survey For 2006" Israeli Bureau of Statistics – (In Hebrew). This survey sample used the whole population of all Jews in Israel over 20 years old: 7% of Jews 20 and above considered themselves to be "Chareidim"; 10% - Religious; 14% - "Masorti" (Traditional) and 25% were "Traditional but not religious." Taken together, this means that 31% of Jews over 20 are religious in one form or another according to their own estimation. If we include children and teens, pushes the total well over 50% because of the birth rate among the religious. One should also consider attitude of the 25% of the populace who consider themselves "traditional but not religious." They may not keep kosher or Shabbos but they tend to have traditional values.

3. Sichos vol 3 pg 812 from a farbrengen Parshas VaYeishev 1962

4. Rambam – End of Laws of Chanuka: "If a person has only enough money to buy either Chanuka candles or Shabbos candles. He should buy Shabbos candles". The reason given is because Ner Shabbos brings Shalom Bayis and Rambam paskins: "So great is Peace (Shalom) that the whole Torah was given to make peace in the world."