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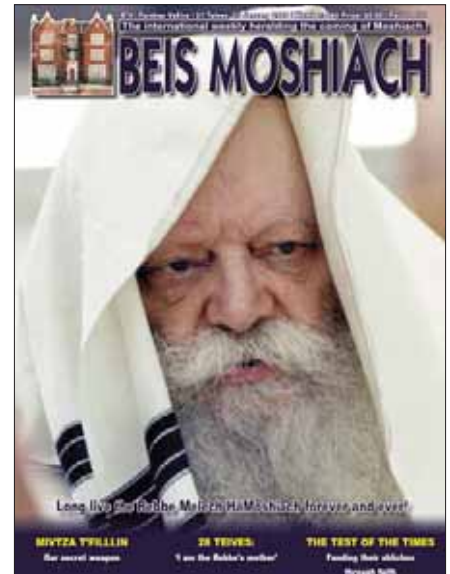
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FOUR CUPS OF REDEMPTION

Translated and adapted by Dovid Yisroel Ber Kaufmann

The four cups of wine parallel the four expressions of Redemption. But the correspondence is out of order: the second expression in the Torah corresponds to the fourth cup. This reflects the difference between the Exodus and the final Redemption.

This week's Torah portion contains the four expressions of Redemption. The best known explanation for the rabbinic institution of drinking four cups of wine at the *seider* is that they correspond to these expressions. This means the four cups of wine drunk at the *seider* are connected to, and are expressions of, Redemption, paralleling the expressions found in the Torah.

Torah is not a history book. And every word is precise. The Torah uses four expressions to describe the Redemption of the Jewish people from Egypt; the four cups of wine drunk at the *seider* every year correspond to these four expressions; and the *seider* is not just a re-enactment of the Exodus of over 3300 years ago, but a reliving of the first Redemption, in such a way that it foreshadows and anticipates the final Redemption. It seems appropriate, therefore, to look more closely at how and why the *seider's* four cups of wine correspond to these four expressions of Redemption – and where they differ. For we know that the pattern and process of the final Redemption with Moshiach will follow that of the first Redemption with Moses, as it says, "As in the days of your going forth from Egypt, I will show you miracles."

This inner connection finds expression in a practical manner, in one of the laws concerning the conduct of the *seider*. The Alter Rebbe writes in his *Shulchan Aruch*, his code of Jewish law, that one must lean when drinking the

four cups of wine. He gives the following reason: "[. . . They] are reminders of Redemption and freedom. The four cups that the Sages established correspond to the four expressions of Redemption stated in the portion of *VaEira*, namely, I shall bring, I shall redeem, I shall take and I shall save. Therefore, they have to be done while reclining, in a manner of freedom."

Just prior to this, the Alter Rebbe writes that in general one should sit in a reclining manner during the

seider, since in every generation one should consider it as if at that every moment – that Passover night – one was going from the slavery of Egypt to freedom. We are told that "in Nissan they were redeemed, in Nissan they will be redeemed." Just as the first *seider* was the preparation for and beginning of the Exodus, so too, we should act and truly feel as if this *seider*, this very night, we will experience the true and final Redemption. The *seider* is more than a commemoration; it is an actual anticipation. Participating in a *seider* gets us ready for Moshiach.

Now there's a curious point in the Alter Rebbe's wording. He presents the four expressions of Redemption in a different order than that found in the Torah. The order in the Torah is: "I shall bring, I shall save, I shall redeem and I shall take." The Alter Rebbe's order is "I shall bring, I shall redeem, I shall take and I shall save." The Alter Rebbe moves "I shall save" from the second expression to the last. Since, as mentioned earlier, everything in Torah is spiritually precise, including the details of the practical laws, we need to understand why the order of the expressions of Redemption is changed.

To understand the change from the narrative of the Exodus to the laws of the *seider*, we have to understand to which aspect of Redemption each of the four expressions refers. Since we drink four separate cups at four different times of the *seider*, clearly each cup was established to

commemorate a separate, unique concept – not just freedom in a general sense, but a particular aspect of Redemption. Thus we would expect the change of order to reflect the order of the themes. The four different stages or themes of the *seider* each centers around one of the cups of wine, culminating in the theme of (and the cup representing) future redemption.

The first cup of wine is used to recite kiddush. The verb associated with the first expression, in both the Torah and the Alter Rebbe's *Shulchan Aruch*, is "I shall bring." It is over this cup that we recite kiddush, in which the verb "to bring" is also used, specifically in the phrase, "in remembrance of being brought from Egypt."

In the Torah, the second expression is, "I shall save," while at the *seider*, the second cup is drunk over the expression, "I shall redeem." Redemption – the first Redemption from Egypt – is connected with the recitation of the Hagada. Although we must remember the exodus every day, on the night of Passover we speak of it at length and with many explanations. This corresponds to the description of the great wonders and miracles of the Exodus, as the Torah says, "I redeemed you with a strong arm and great miracles." Indeed, the blessing for the recitation of the Hagada concludes, "Redeemer of Israel."

Over the third cup, "I shall take," we recite *Birkas HaMazon*, the Blessing After the Meal. In the *Birkas HaMazon* we mention our gratitude for the Torah which G-d taught us. This is reminiscent of G-d's declaration that at the time of the giving of the Torah, "I took you for My people and I became your G-d." So we see that the order in the *seider* follows the historical progression of Redemption: G-d's remembrance of the exile and servitude of the Jewish people – the "I shall bring" of kiddush and the first cup;

the wonders and miracles, the actual events and story of the Exodus – the "I shall redeem" of the recitation of the Hagada and the second cup; and G-d taking the Jewish people and giving them the Torah – the "I shall take" of the blessing after the meal and the third cup.

This brings us to the fourth cup, "I shall save," which we drink after finishing Hallel and saying the blessing over the songs of praise. The conclusion of Hallel, the final blessing and the part of the hagada that accompany it, all refer to the future – the times of Moshiach and the final Redemption. Since the specific details about Redemption would not become known until they occur, the Alter Rebbe uses a generic term such as "I shall save."

We may thus summarize the relationship between the four cups of wine and the four expressions of Redemption as follows: the first cup, Kiddush, represents the potential for Redemption; the second cup, associated with the Hagada, represents the Exodus itself, the actual first Redemption; the third cup, part of the Blessing After the Meal, associated with Torah, represents spiritual Redemption; and the fourth cup, associated with the completion of the *seider* and perfection, represents the coming of Moshiach.

Just as the purpose of the Exodus was Torah, so the fulfillment of Torah is Moshiach.

Thus, the *seider*, which reminds us of the Exodus, also – and perhaps mainly – points to the future Redemption. And the expressions of freedom – symbolized by the four cups of wine – correspond to the structure of the *seider*, which itself alludes and corresponds to the process of the future and final Redemption, with the coming of Moshiach.

(Based on Likkutei Sichos 11, pp. 14-23)

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‘I AM THE REBBE’S MOTHER’

By Z. Horowitz

*The name “Chana” is common in Lubavitcher families since it’s the name of the Rebbe’s mother. Very few were directly instructed by the Rebbe to give their daughters that name. This is the story of one of them, and how it served as a bracha and a refua. * Presented for 28 Teives – the birthday of Rebbetzin Chana Schneersohn.*

Shabbos, 6 Tishrei, 5754 (1993). Although most of my friends were in 770, I was in Eretz Yisroel. I was the shlucha to a place that is sort of a village, sort of a settlement. It was, and still is, inhabited by laborers, owners of small farms, working-class people and many senior citizens who came to the country fifty years earlier from North African countries.

Arriving as young men and women, they were immediately taken to development towns to build up the infrastructure of the fledgling country. Most of them had not attended school and their knowledge was scanty. However, one thing they brought with them was their fiery faith in Hashem and in tzaddikim.

In our area, the population is comprised primarily of these older

people. They are receptive to anything Jewish. Although not punctilious in mitzva observance – whether because of their lack of knowledge or perhaps because they do not understand the importance of mitzvos – they would regularly attend shiurim.

Both men and women would attend shiurim. A typical women’s Shabbos shiur begins with reciting the Rebbe’s chapter of T’hillim, followed by the daily Tanya, the HaYom Yom, and then the parsha.

This time, as it was Shabbos T’shuva and Vav Tishrei, the day that marks the passing of Rebbetzin Chana, I brought special refreshments for a farbrengen and planned on devoting most of the shiur to the fascinating story of the Rebbetzin’s life. I would speak about

the Rebbe’s respect for her, her mesirus nefesh alongside her great husband in Yeketrinislav, and her devotion to her husband’s learning.

(While writing these words I once again marvel about the whole concept of shlichus. The Rebbe took me, a young woman straight out of seminary, and placed me before a group of women who could be my grandmothers. I am not the only one. I am just a cog in the enormous machine that brings Moshiach; one of thousands of young women who stands before lecterns, runs communities and schools, teaches courses in Judaism at universities, etc.

(Many young women are tied to their mothers’ apron strings and receive gefilte fish every Erev Shabbos from Mommy, while the shluchos, rather than living within a supportive family structure, are themselves the support for dozens, if not hundreds, of others.)

At the farbrengen, I recited the words of the Rebbe’s perek slowly and the women repeat it after me, their eyes on me as they await the next word. I finished the Rebbe’s perek and began to talk about the Rebbe’s mother. A woman called out, “I know her name!”

I looked around to see who was volunteering that piece of information. They were all quiet, not understanding the surprise that caused me to stop mid-sentence. These are women who, by and large,

do not even know how to read and write. Their knowledge of Chabad history is nil. My astonishment grew when Chaya, the woman who had called out, went on to say, "The Rebbe's mother's name was Chana!"

Chaya is a pious and modest woman of strong faith. The first time she joined our group, I gave her a cup of water. She asked me to say the bracha with her, word by word, because she didn't know it.

She explained that her father held that it was forbidden to teach women Torah and to him, that included Modeh Ani, brachos and, if I'm not mistaken, even the Shma. Thus, she reached a ripe old age without being able to say brachos without assistance.

Each day, she would place her hand on the mezuzah and say a personal prayer in Arabic, thanking Hashem that she woke up healthy and could serve Him another day. Chaya suffered many health problems and went through a lot in her life, but whenever she mentioned Hashem, she would put her fingers to her eyes and lips with a kiss, in her enormous love for Hashem and His kindnesses to her.

I recovered and affirmed that the Rebbe's mother was, indeed Rebbetzin Chana. "But how do you know the Rebbetzin's name?" At this point, Chaya answered with a story involving my family which, for some reason, I had never heard before.

"A few years ago [I estimate it was around 5750], my daughter had

a baby. The pregnancy went fine, and I accompanied her to the hospital for the birth. I prayed to Hashem, like every mother, that she have an easy birth and that mother and baby should be healthy.

"A considerable amount of time had elapsed, and we had yet to hear any news. Doctors kept on going in and out of the delivery room. I sensed that it had to do with my

I was not told the details of the problem; they merely stressed that for a baby like this, you don't say mazal tov. There wasn't much chance that she'd live.

daughter; maybe because all the other people waiting had gotten 'mazal tov' wishes from the nurse or midwife, and only we continued to wait. Nobody bothered to inform us what was going on, or to answer our questions.

"Only later did we find out that she had already given birth to a girl. We wanted to say 'mazal tov' but the custom at the hospital was that when a baby is born with a problem, mazal

tov is not said. We became frightened. I was not told the details of the problem; they merely stressed that for a baby like this, you don't say mazal tov. There wasn't much chance that she'd live.

"My son-in-law had heard a lot about the Rebbe in America and how he was a great tzaddik who performed miracles. He went straight to your house from the hospital and told your husband everything, what the doctors said and how time worked against us. Your husband figured out what time it was in New York, then called the Rebbe's office and gave over all the information about the baby. The secretary said he would convey the message to the Rebbe and let us know if and when there was a response. The answer came quickly.

"The Rebbe asked that the baby be named for his mother, Chana. The family complied. My son-in-law had an aliya and gave the name Chana, even though they had planned on giving a different, more modern name. If the Rebbe said to do it, this is what would save her!"

Chaya didn't have information about the medical miracle; that would be beyond her. In her simple and charming way, she concluded the miracle story with a postscript about her granddaughter.

"Baruch Hashem, that little girl is now in the first grade in a Chabad school, and when people ask her name, she says, 'My name is Chana. I am the mother of the Rebbe of Lubavitch.'"



OUR SECRET WEAPON

By Nosson Avrohom

As thousands of our soldiers are mobilized in and around Gaza, a small group of Chassidim, headed by Rabbi Zev Ritterman and Rabbi Yaakov Tzirkus, have been distributing thousands of booklets as a segula and protection.

Since the ground war of Operation Cast Lead began in the Gaza Strip, dozens of Chassidim have been visiting those areas where thousands of soldiers are mobilized. These Lubavitchers go out every day equipped with pairs of t'fillin, pamphlets with the Shma, sifrei T'hilim, and a pocket sized booklet called "HaT'fillin" which contains letters from the Rebbe and other Chabad Rebbeim about the importance of the mitzva of t'fillin. These booklets were produced by Rabbi Zev Ritterman, who has been involved in this work for many years.

Most of the people who join the veterans, R' Ritterman and R' Yaakov Tzirkus, are from the Nachalat Har Chabad area. They bring along cookies, sweets and lots of Chabad spirit in order to infuse the soldiers with hope and

simcha.

"On Asara B'Teives we had three cars full of Chassidim," said R' Ritterman, "but it's nowhere near enough manpower. The number of soldiers here has doubled and tripled, and we need more people to join us."

It was amazing to see how the Chassidim locate Jewish soldiers in the closed military zone, in even the most remote and concealed locations in the fields and woods.

"The willingness to put on t'fillin is greater than usual. In the past, some soldiers would say, 'I have no strength' or 'some other time,' but now, nearly all of them are happy to comply, even those who are just returning, exhausted, from the battlefield."

Pictures of the Rebbe, T'fillas HaDerech, and sifrei T'hilim are grabbed like hot cakes.

Officers and commanders on bases and military centers, in the midst of briefings and final preparations for military maneuvers, are often surprised to find a smiling band of Chassidim offering some spiritual preparations as well, before they endanger their lives in the booby-trapped war zone of Gaza.

"We do not have official permission to enter a single base or post," R' Ritterman explained. "We get in anyhow because we know the area well, perhaps even better than the commanders who just arrived in the last month as part of the troop increase." This knowledge was acquired over the years in which R' Ritterman and R' Tzirkus, together with other Chassidim, offered t'fillin to the soldiers in the area.

"There is a certain section, and I won't specify its location, that the army closed off completely. When we showed up at the regular entrance and saw that it was closed, we tried paths that were unfamiliar to most but us, but even these were blocked. For two days we couldn't find a way in.

"Our last option was a dirt road that had turned to mud in the rain. We decided to try our luck from there. We passed a number of blockades and sank in the mud. At one point we had to push the car. We finally reached a gravel path, only to be faced with a road block. Naturally, we put t'fillin on with the soldiers, who told us that the area was declared a closed military zone.

"Chassidim on the Rebbe's shlichus are not put off, and we decided that we had to continue and reach the large concentration of forces that was deep within that closed zone. The area seemed familiar to me, and I soon remembered from where I knew

it.

“During the expulsion of Jews from Gush Katif, I had traveled the route where the soldiers currently were, and I decided to try it again now. We drove over a path filled with potholes and through muddy fields, until we finally entered the area where the soldiers were. We saw a group of high-ranking officers, and I thought, ‘Uh oh, we’re caught. Now we’ll be thrown out and all our efforts will have been in vain.’

“I was pleasantly surprised when I heard one of the officers laugh into his walkie-talkie to the soldiers manning the blockades, ‘The Chabadnikim took care of

you all right ...’ Most importantly, countless soldiers put on t’fillin.”

R’ Ritterman says that there is hardly any place in that area that they have not visited. They have been going out every day, and they beg other Chassidim to come and help out.

“The most moving thing in our encounters with the soldiers is the great interest they take. Only the minority refuse to put on t’fillin. We often catch them after a battle or extended operation when they’re filthy and exhausted. They go back to the Israeli zone in order to rest for a few hours. It hurts to see them like this. Some Chassidim felt bad for them

and suggested we leave them alone, but it turns out that they are the ones who are the happiest to see us.”

Many of the soldiers are astounded and moved by the miracles they experienced on the battlefield, and they share their experiences with the Lubavitchers.

“We have numerous stories about the protective quality of t’fillin. A few years ago, before the expulsion from Gush Katif, we would go to bases and posts in the Gush area in order to do Mivtza T’fillin with the soldiers. Our last stop was a high guard tower at the edge of the yishuv Dugit in the north of the Strip,

RABBI HARTMAN’S JOURNAL

The well-known mechanech, Rabbi Yosef Hartman, and his friend, Rabbi Tuvia Litzman, joined R’ Ritterman and his crew for mivtzaim. The following is R’ Hartman’s journal of one day of activity:

When we arrived at the parking lot of the soldiers going into Gaza, a soldier ran over to me and asked, “Do you have the D’var Malchus?” Of course, I gave him the copy from my car. Another time, I had been asked for a Gemara. I had to tell the soldier I didn’t have one. Gemaras are not included in the material we hand out.

“What tractate do you need?” I asked him.

“It makes no difference; the main thing is to learn Torah,” he said.

Yesterday, Wednesday, I took along a Gemara P’sachim. We went to the same parking area facing Gaza, in the fields of kibbutzim, but the armored soldier was no longer there. “He’s already in Gaza,” those remaining behind told me. We saw the soldiers’ military rabbi sitting and teaching a shiur in Halacha before they entered Gaza. Mortars thundered behind them but over here, nobody pays attention. The soldiers are in good spirits, baruch Hashem. We encourage them. “There’s no one like Chabad,” they tell us. “You warm up our hearts.” We

suddenly noticed three of our planes up above. We can see the flash of light and the wake of the plane, and the blast of missiles reverberates mightily.

In a few minutes we see three mushrooms of smoke over buildings in Gaza. The foreign press members are moved away from the area by the police. They go up on hills and other look-outs and photograph Gaza nonstop. Over here, seeing Gaza shelled by the IDF from the ground, air, and sea, we feel the power of Mivtza T’fillin.

There were soldiers who refused to put on t’fillin the first day but agreed on the second day. One soldier who put t’fillin on both days asked, “Isn’t it hypocritical, when I haven’t put t’fillin on for years, to put them on before going into Gaza?”

I explained that a Jew is comprised of two parts, an animal soul – the Evil Inclination - and the G-dly soul – the Good Inclination. The physical part of you refused to put on t’fillin, while your neshama very much wants to do so. Now, when you put on t’fillin, you did what your neshama wants. When you *don’t* put on t’fillin, it’s hypocritical relative to the G-dly soul.” The soldier was convinced.



near the ocean. It was manned by soldiers whose job it was to keep an eye on the area where the Arabs live and follow their movements.

“We found two soldiers there, one Jewish and one not. The Jew came out and asked whether he could put on t’fillin even if the goy would notice, and I said that wasn’t a problem. He asked me what putting on t’fillin would do for him, and I told him that in addition to t’fillin being a segula for protection, it also says that t’fillin instill fear in the enemy.

“He put on the t’fillin. Just then, the other guard came out and exclaimed that the armed Arabs that they had been watching had unexpectedly and inexplicably dispersed.”

R’ Ritterman and R’ Tzirkus have experienced numerous stories like this one, especially as the soldiers they meet are eager to tell them of the big miracles that happened to them in their war against Hamas.

R’ Ritterman recalled an amazing story that he and R’ Tzirkus experienced two years ago. “There’s a base near Kibbutz Erez that we visit regularly on Fridays. There are many soldiers there, they keep us very busy with mivtza t’fillin. One week, a certain soldier told me about a visit he had made to Kibbutz Nir-Am. He said that he heard from the woman who runs the Children’s House at the kibbutz that she had long been looking for a mezuzah to put up there.

“We had a mezuzah and wanted to bring it to her right away. The kibbutz was on our regular route from one base to another. We went looking for the woman, but the kibbutz paths were practically empty and the few people we saw were unable to help us. We left feeling disappointed.

REPORTING FROM THE FRONT

Rabbi Lior Abadi, shliach in yishuv Merchavim in the line of fire, writes:

One can’t describe the feelings of the residents of Merchavim. Dozens of tiny yishuvim have been under Grad and Kassam attack, with each sounding of the siren resulting in miracle upon miracle.

As I sat down to write this, I heard a siren. I ran to take shelter in a protected area as all the windows of the house rattle and the doors burst open from the force of the missile’s impact. I rush to call the regional main offices, and am informed that the missile fell very close by, but in an open area. There’s another miracle. As the Rebbe’s shluchim, we know that it’s no time to be afraid, plus we have the job to encourage others. We need to check mezuzos and be with the IDF soldiers, taking care of their spiritual needs and strengthening them for their mission ahead.

As soon as the first Shabbos of “Operation Cast Lead” ended, I got a phone call from my friend Aharon Cohen who serves in the Golani brigade. He asked me to come and cheer up the soldiers before they go in to battle. Since there are no Lubavitchers in Merchavim aside from myself, I enlisted friends from the Chabad House to join me.

I strapped six menorahs on the mekuravim’s cars, and we were on our way to the soldiers. The mekuravim were caught up in the excitement, and they told the soldiers how they remember that Chabad came and visited them in previous wars and operations.

The excitement continued in the days that followed. People collected used sifrei kodesh, which we distributed to the soldiers and put in every military vehicle we came upon. Nosh was collected and some people even prepared cakes. Everything is brought to the Chabad house, and from there we go out to the soldiers.

The Chabad house mainly helps the soldiers scattered among the yishuvim. There are hundreds of soldiers billeted in nearly every yishuv, in cultural sports centers and public housing in kibbutzim. In my travels among the yishuvim late at night, I noticed a group of officers sitting around a small portable stove and making coffee.

I got out of my car and, since I always have sifrei T’hillim, drinks and nosh with me, I introduced myself as the shliach in the area. Our conversation soon turned into a farbrengen, which was all about praising and thanking G-d for the open miracles.

Some said we couldn’t continue having our regular shiurim in the moshavim for lack of protected areas, but here too, friends of Chabad got involved and offered the shelters in their homes for the shiurim. Those who left the area because of the missiles still participated in the shiurim via telephone, causing each shiur to be heard in several locations and by more people.

Since the beginning of this military campaign in Gaza, the Chabad house provided speedy service for the checking of mezuzos. During the last week alone, 430 mezuzos were checked. In the house calls I make, I hear countless stories of miracles about missiles landing a few feet away from people. In every home I try to offer encouragement and convey the Rebbe’s message on shleimus ha’Aretz and the imminent Geula.

"It was late and we rushed back to Nachalat Har Chabad. We had gotten as far as Nachal Oz when, on the steep down-slope of the highway after Sderot, about twenty-five minutes before Shabbos, the engine died. All my attempts to revive it were unsuccessful, and we didn't know what to do. After a few minutes a vehicle stopped near us. The sign emblazoned on it told us it belonged to a company located in Nir-Am.

"He asked us how he could help, and we asked him whether he knew the woman we had been looking for. He looked at us in surprise and said, 'Of course, she is my niece, my brother's daughter.'

"Excited by this Hashgacha Pratis, we explained about the mezuzah and its protective qualities. He was headed towards the center of the country, and after we gave him the mezuzah for his niece, he was happy to take us home, just in time for Shabbos."

When I finished speaking with



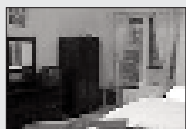
R' Ritterman and R' Tzirkus, they headed off to another busy day of mitzvaim in the Gaza Strip, accompanied by a few other dynamic men from Nachalat Har Chabad.

Rabbi Ritterman's message to us is, "I call upon all those to whom the Rebbe's mitzvaim are important, to join us at least once

a week as we go to the bases and the areas where the soldiers are concentrated, so we can give them our support and help them put on t'fillin and do other mitzvos."

May the soldiers be allowed to finish the job this time, unlike our previous wars, and completely eradicate terrorism from Gaza.

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FUNDING THEIR SHLICHUS THROUGH FAITH

By Shneur Zalman Berger

Many billionaires have seen their wealth cut down to a quarter and less of what it was. Overnight, financial giants have tottered and governments have felt compelled to prepare a safety net of trillions of dollars. Does this threaten the shluchim and their work? Shluchim discussed this issue at the most recent Kinus HaShluchim and their answer is, "No." Nevertheless, how can shluchim handle this crisis?

"Economic Tsunami," "Global Crisis," "Utter Collapse." These were just some of the newspaper headlines in recent months and not only in financial papers. Some even went so far as to call it an "Economic Armageddon."

Whether these designations are accurate is debatable but there is no question that this financial crisis is very serious in its scope and depth. It naturally engenders apocalyptic pronouncements and a deep fear.

Numerous politicians and commentators have made dramatic announcements and gloomy prognostications, saying that this crisis marks the end of capitalism, the end of the United States, the end of western civilization, and even the end of the world.

Many governments worldwide were quick to guarantee financial safety nets to the tune of trillions of dollars in order to prevent a domino effect collapse of other

financial organizations, banks, insurance giants, manufacturers and import-export firms. The reaction will inevitably impact other financial concerns, even those considered giants, stable and secure.

A sizable impact of the financial storm is being felt on the major stock exchanges, where things work, to a great extent, on trust and mood. One rumor, whether true or not, is enough to cause institutions and individuals to sell their stock and pull their money out quickly, which puts a huge strain on cash flow and can lead to additional collapses. Major companies, including those which employ tens of thousands of employees and more, have collapsed overnight. These employees were suddenly unemployed which had a chain reaction – they purchased less which slowed down the retail markets which affects the suppliers and so on.

Many businessmen around the world, including billionaires, were cut down to a quarter and less of what they had just had. Within days, they had lost billions of dollars. It was just a matter of time that those billionaires and

millionaires, many of whom are philanthropists who support mosdos of Torah and chesed, would stop or greatly limit their support, at least for a while, until things improved somewhat.

RABBI YOSSE CARLEBACH: NOW'S THE TIME TO MAKE KEILIM!

Shluchim around the world, most of whom are supported by wealthy philanthropists, were affected by this, of course. These days, when a person isn't sure that his money will remain his tomorrow, many affluent people hold on to their money out of purely fiscal concerns.

Shluchim have reported an

immediate cut in donations. Even those who weren't directly affected by the crash, are more cautious with every expenditure.

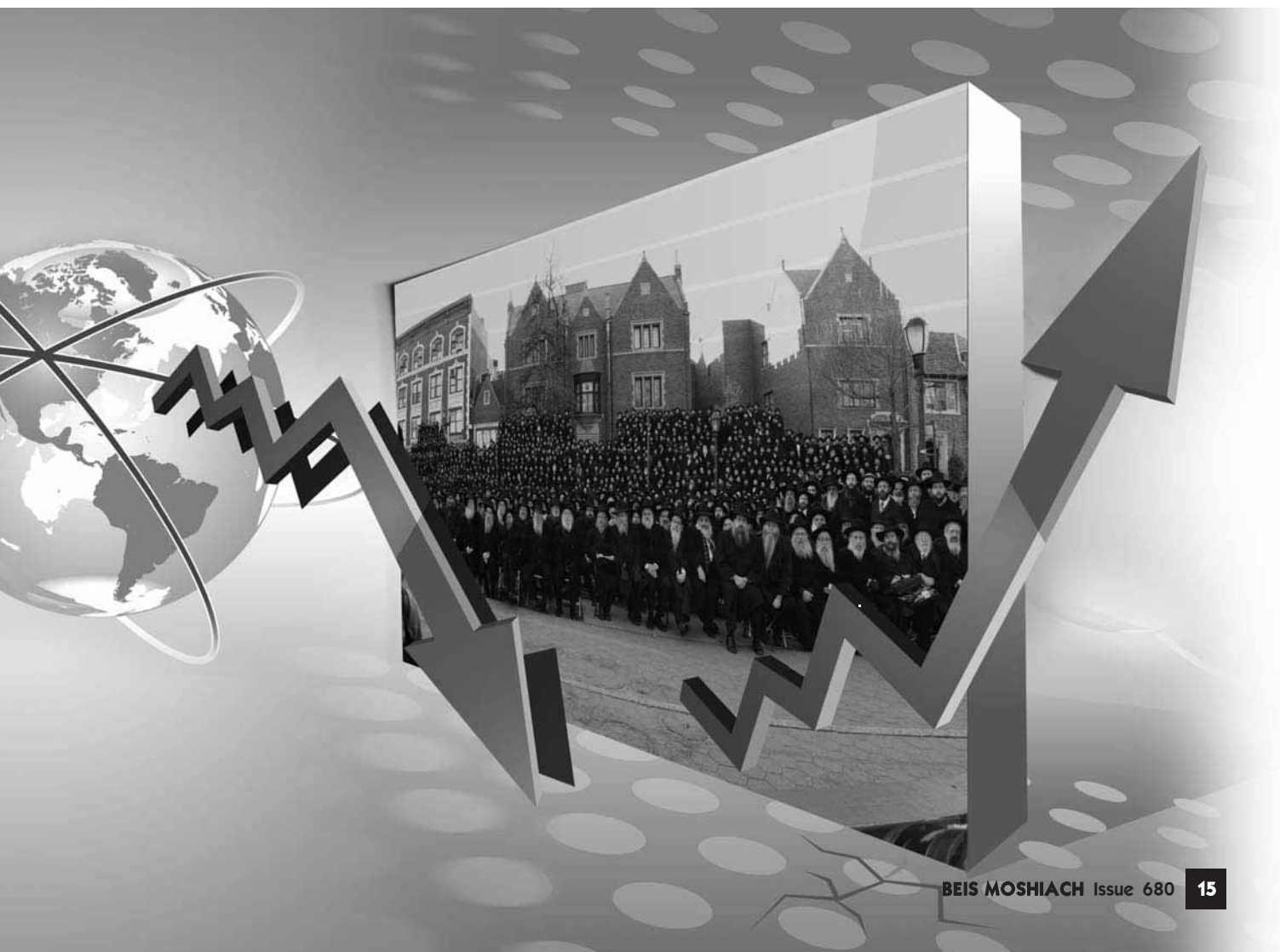
Rabbi Yossi Carlebach, shliach in New Brunswick, New Jersey, is in the midst of building the biggest Chabad house in the world. He is aware of the situation but does not agree that the wealthy are holding tightly to their money.

"It says (in the story with Elisha), 'empty vessels, don't diminish.' One of the meanings of this is that especially when there are 'empty vessels,' there is a blessing of 'don't diminish.'"

"It's not that the wealthy don't have money," he explains. "They're just not rushing to give, but when you involve them in something important, they

definitely give. I went to my wealthy backers and said that I'm building now and they are giving generously. I recently went to someone who promised me \$360,000 a few months ago as a donation. He was hurt by the crash but when I told him that we're starting to build, he was excited and he upped his donation to half a million dollars!"

The shluchim in the CIS and the US are the ones who are most hard-hit, but others are affected too. Many shluchim administer schools, shuls, soup kitchens and Jewish centers, all of which require tremendous financial support. The budgets of these shluchim are at least hundreds of thousands of dollars a year and in most cases, millions (it depends



on the country and the size of the mosdos). If not for a constant influx of financial resources, a large part of which needs to be stable and reliable, these mosdos would fold.

Many shluchim are helped not

only by donations from people who give modest sums but by large donations made by philanthropists who are capable of writing five or six figure checks. The primary donors of many shluchim had money

invested in companies whose stock plummeted overnight or they were adversely affected by companies that are connected to them in some way or another. And again, even those not directly affected are afraid to part with their money now.

This makes it impossible to find substitute donations from other businessmen, as the crash affected most of the wealthy people in the world and they don't want to commit themselves to giving large sums of money and on a regular basis.

Here again, R' Carlebach disagrees. He says that the Rebbe once went into 770 and in the doorway stood Rabbi Shlomo Cunin, shliach in California. R' Cunin was deep in debt and the Rebbe said to him, "Empty vessels, don't diminish. It's the time to make vessels."

How exactly?

"It's hard to say, but it's clear that if you make the proper keilim, the money will come."

R' Carlebach said that one year, his Chabad house went through a very difficult financial crunch. "I wrote to the Rebbe that the financial situation was hard but I thought it was a good time to build and therefore I asked for a bracha. The Rebbe agreed and blessed me with 'blessing and success,' and I was very successful."

How do you explain this inverse equation?

"In addition to the fact that everything comes from Hashem's bracha, and shlichus is above the natural order of things, there is also a certain logic to this 'equation.' I think that now is a great time to build. People are looking for work and are offering to work at low prices. I am starting to expand our Chabad house. In order to do this, we had

ERETZ YISROEL IS THE BEST BANK

The financial tsunami did not quite reach Eretz Yisroel. Although storm clouds are in the distance, they are still distant, and may not reach Eretz Yisroel. The chances are slim since the source of the crisis is in the US and not in Eretz Yisroel. The impact of the crisis on Israel is relatively small.

"The financial system in Israel is much different than that in America," say Israeli economists. "The banking industry's exposure to risk is low."

The exposure of financial markets in Eretz Yisroel to problematic financial institutions in America is low. The oversight over financial institutions in Israel is considered relatively tight. The Israeli economy is considered secure and the economic indicators in Israel are good compared to that of many other developed countries.

The economic bubble that insulates Israel impacts the shluchim in that country and their work in over two hundred cities and settlements accordingly. Although shluchim in other countries are struggling, the work in Israel has remained mostly unchanged. Most branches are independent and each of the shluchim seeks his own sources of income.

The Rebbe's view of investing in Israel was expressed in a conversation with Mordechai Dovid Segal of the Israel Investment Fund during the distribution of dollars to tz'daka on 24 Av 5751:

Segal: I would like your advice. We are experiencing problems convincing certain Jews to invest their money in Eretz Yisroel because they are afraid that the bonds are not secure due to the influx of immigrants from Russia and don't want to invest their money. I request your bracha and your advice, if possible: How can I convince Jews to invest their money?

The Rebbe: My advice is that Eretz Yisroel is the safest place in the world and that means whoever invests his money in Eretz Yisroel – that's the best bank we have in our day. Hashem should bless you so that you can work along these lines, so that you will have many investors, and that you use the money in order to invest in Eretz Yisroel in the proper way, may Hashem bless you.



to demolish three buildings on the lot. The cost of the demolition of three buildings now, is equivalent to the cost of demolishing one building in the 'good' days. The construction too costs less now."

THE SHLUCHIM WILL HAVE TO BECOME MORE EFFICIENT

Many are unaware of this but many shluchim are starting to prepare for Mivtza Matza now. You can't order tons of matza, import it, and supply it to all the Jews in your city or country overnight. Preparations begin months in advance.

We can take this mivtza as a representative example of how the financial crisis has affected the shluchim:

Certain shluchim order tons of matza for their area. Since the

matza has to be ordered now so that it comes on time, the shliach has to pay for the matza, the shipping of containers by boat and train, and then send the matza out by train or truck.

That is just one detail in the Pesach preparations whose costs are very high. Even though we are deep in the clutches of winter, shluchim have their eye on the future.

There are also the activities that are not holiday-related. Many shluchim subsidize the cost of mezuzos and t'fillin for Jews who decide to use them on a regular basis. For some Chabad centers this entails hundreds of mezuzos a month as well as many pairs of t'fillin. This money generally comes from well-to-do people who want to be a part of the Rebbe's work.

These two mivtzaim are merely some of the activities that a

shliach has to finance. The financial crisis doesn't remain on the stock market tickers or in the stock charts published daily in the financial papers.

One of the American shluchim said that about ten families in his community stopped paying tuition lately because of layoffs. Unlike other schools, a shliach will never send away a Jewish child because of a lack of money, if only to prevent him from going to public school. The shliach doesn't face a moral dilemma but he definitely faces a financial dilemma! He often has no idea how he will make up the shortfall the following month.

This problem is even more stark in the CIS where the Chabad schools are run on a higher educational level than the local schools in order to attract Jewish children. Why would Jewish parents who live on the

Model of the new Chabad house, the largest in the world, Rabbi Carlebach is building.





Philanthropist George Rohr

outskirts of a big city in Russia, send their child to a Jewish school which is an hour away? Their motivation will be that the Jewish school is a quality school with top-notch teachers, an impressive building, good food, computer room, lab, etc.

Maintaining a school is often only one of many activities undertaken by many shluchim and it costs tens of thousands of dollars a month.

A significant number of shluchim in the US and CIS are supported by a few big philanthropists from whom they receive tens of thousands of dollars a month. This money is used for operating expenses as well as capital projects like construction and expansion. Now that donations have slowed to a trickle or even stopped, construction can stop and a soup kitchen can close, but a school or yeshiva can't close.

Most of the mosdos in the CIS have been supported by Lev Leviev's Ohr Avner organization which he named for his father. Over the years, a network of 120 schools and 60 preschools were built in numerous countries and towns in the former Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, Germany, North Africa, and Israel. Leviev's annual donation to Ohr Avner amounted to about 70 million dollars.

Leviev lost billions of dollars, primarily in his Africa Israel company which lost 90% of its worth over the past year. Many k'hillos were supported by Leviev and by donors that he enlisted, like Gennady Bogolobov, who is in the top five of wealthy Ukrainians. The world of Chabad is 'up in the air' over whether donors like Bogolobov and the legendary American philanthropist George Rohr will continue to give as they did in the past.

"All of us will have to increase our efficiency. We are sitting with each school administrator and

examining where we can cut costs; eliminating transportation or asking parents for payment. I hope we won't have to fire teachers. As for the small schools, we may conclude it's not worth keeping them open." This is what one of the heads of Ohr Avner announced recently.

Several shluchim in the CIS expressed their faith that their work would continue despite the difficulties. Many shluchim there raise money from local businessmen.

"After working in this city for a number of years, we have other wealthy individuals who contribute to our work. Hundreds of other shluchim are also supported by local businessmen." This shliach added that these wealthy people gave far more, in the recent past, than they are willing to give today.

The Kinus HaShluchim, which took place nearly two months ago, addressed the money issue extensively. The topic, which used to be one of many discussed at the Kinus, was the hot topic this year. Many shluchim attended the Kinus in the hopes that new ideas for fundraising would be proposed.

Rabbi Berel Lazar, shliach and chief rabbi of Russia, was optimistic. He said that many people wonder how the shluchim will manage now. "We have never seen as much eagerness and strength among the shluchim in the CIS as we do now, to continue their work and open mosdos. With Hashem's help, we will be bringing new shluchim and continue expanding our activities."

The *pidyon nefesh* signed by the shluchim mentioned the financial crisis. Thousands of shluchim asked the Rebbe to arouse Heavenly mercy so that the financial situation improves, along with the ability to expand mosdos and Chabad houses around the world.

GIVING DONORS THE FEELING THAT THEY'RE PARTNERS

So what can we expect? The truth is that economists are not prophets. Some analysts think we are at the peak of the collapse, or close to it, and therefore we can expect a change for the better. Most analysts are convinced that the situation will improve within a year. Then again, most analysts did not predict this crisis! Almost none of them knew when it would happen, so their predictions should be taken with a grain of salt.

The shluchim are concerned but hopeful too. Some of them think that this situation is conducive

to growth. Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Zaltzman, shliach in Toronto, thinks that now is the time to give donors the feeling that they're partners and that the mosad is theirs, the k'hilla is theirs, and not that that they're contributing to *your* mosad.

Shluchim had many stories to tell about how the crisis brought them new donors. One shliach said that on last Simchas Torah a wealthy person, whom he had wanted to meet for a long time, came to shul. This man bought p'sukim and aliyos for thousands of dollars. Afterwards, he told the shliach that in the k'hilla where he usually davened, they expected him to buy p'sukim and aliyos for much more money, as he had given in previous years, but this year he couldn't give so much and this is why he went to the Chabad shul...

"You see," said the shliach with a smile, "he gave me several thousand dollars that if not for the financial crisis, I wouldn't have gotten."

Another shliach told about a woman who wanted to make a memorial for her departed family members. She asked the shliach how much it would cost to have the memorial ceremony and the shliach said he would do it for free and she could donate whatever she liked. The woman gave a generous donation and said that somewhere else they had asked her for an amount that was beyond her and so she was happy to be able to do it with Chabad.



Here too, the donation was a result of the financial crisis.

The shluchim are doing their utmost not to cut services and programs, and certainly not to close schools. They hope that the crisis will pass quickly and philanthropists will be feeling expansive once again.

"WE ARE BEING TESTED"

It was heartening to hear George Rohr, one of Chabad's big donors, speaking at the Kinus HaShluchim about the worldwide financial crisis and the ramifications for his donations. He said, "My father would say, 'In the good times, when things go well, it's no *kuntz* (big deal) to give. When it gets hard, that's when it's important. When everybody is in a pinch, trying to do everything to maintain the level they've been given before - if at all possible; that's where we really get tested."

"We don't know whether this is a test, what we are going to do or how long this is going to last. But we should do everything we can not to cut or to eliminate - to reduce, yes - but for the purpose of coming back, healthier and better in the future. Look, one thing I didn't mention here is that many people in the room remember what it was like after 1998 in Russia. You know, it was awful. The big chesed that... we don't remember pain so much. It was horrible, just as bad as now."

"In many ways you can say that '98 was worse, because the whole system was hanging by a fingernail at the time. We didn't know if the whole place will fly back into darkness for another 70 years."

"Today that's not on the table," Rohr emphasized. "It could be hard and maybe long, but we will do everything we can to survive and hold on. We need to remember there were hard times before and we've overcome them."

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FINISH THE JOB!

By Shai Gefen

Finishing the job means reverting to the situation before the Oslo Accords and the Expulsion; returning the army to all parts of the Gaza Strip and rebuilding the Jewish settlements both in Gush Katif and Netzarim. * Finishing the war in order to give the area to Abu Mazen and continuing with political agreements in Yehuda-Shomron is equivalent to supporting bloodshed.

WHAT DOES “FINISHING THE JOB” MEAN?

Finally! After eight years, the army entered the Gaza Strip in order to stop the shooting of Kassam rockets and missiles into Israel. Everybody is saying that the army must finish the job, but what do they mean by this? In Lebanon, finishing the job – which the Rebbe insisted upon – meant eradicating the terrorist nests and then leaving. In Gaza, finishing the job means something completely different.

Finishing the job in Gaza means returning to the situation before the Oslo Accords and the Expulsion. It means returning the army to all parts of the Gaza Strip and rebuilding the Jewish

settlements in the north of the Strip, in Gush Katif and Netzarim. Finishing the war in order to give the area to Abu Mazen and continuing with political agreements in Yehuda-Shomron is equivalent to supporting bloodshed and will lead to the same state of affairs we have in Gaza.

Back about 30 years ago, after the Egyptians broke the agreement in Sinai, the Rebbe said Israel should re-conquer Sinai. How much more should this reasoning apply now, when we see that they break every agreement and reveal their true goals.

“Finishing the job” is possible only by listening to “d’var Hashem, zu Halacha.” All of

Gaza belongs to us, and the Hamas government must be toppled.

Peace doesn’t mean giving the area to another terrorist organization! Any other step puts us into a greater predicament, even if we achieve quiet for a few months or even years.

With the war in Lebanon in 1982, the Rebbe spoke about this being the third such operation that was not properly concluded. Our ultimate goal must be a return to Gush Katif and the rebuilding of Jewish settlements there.

THE WAR OF “CRIME AND PUNISHMENT”

Many people don’t know how to refer to the current war, but it seems that it’s the war of “Crime and Punishment.”

The first “Crime” was the Oslo Accords. Rabin blustered against “those who fear peace,” who were against the agreement of “Gaza and Yericho First.” Rabin said – “they threaten that Katyushas will fall on Ashkelon, and a year has gone by and no missiles have fallen.” If only Rabin could see the “Punishment,” the destruction he brought upon the Jewish people.

Then Ariel Sharon came along. Tens of thousands of people followed him blindly. He promised security and peace – that the disengagement would bring peace to the south. Well,

we have been seeing the disastrous results over the past three years. More punishment.

Crime and Punishment sums up the war in the south. We don't need to say, "We told you so," but rather we need to learn from our errors. Unfortunately it looks as though it will take far more until we "get it." Israel can win only when the Arabs see that we have stopped talking and that the army is the only force to reckon with in this 'new Middle East' that Shimon Peres dreamed up for us.

Seeing Peres visiting the sites of the attacks when he is directly responsible for the situation, is aggravating. When Kassams began to fall, he called them "flying garbage bins". At the very least we should be hearing him apologize for all the political machinations that got us into this fix, but of course we have yet to see an Israeli politician apologize.

FLEEING ASHDOD AND KIRYAT GAT

When we wrote that missiles would reach Ashdod, people looked askance. They laughed at us. "Those crazy people on the Right who opposed the disengagement are threatening us," they said. They felt so safe in Ashdod that the leaders of some Chassidic groups there, who were begged to mobilize for the people of Gush Katif, said, "Who told them to go and live in Gaza? It's their problem."

This time the frum fled to B'nei Brak and Yerushalayim, but what will happen if they give away Yehuda-Shomron? Where will the B'nei Brakers run too?

And now – tens of thousands of frum people have fled Ashdod in fear of the missiles that have landed on them from precisely those places that they didn't care about. It is difficult to say this, but we would be remiss, both for ourselves and towards others, if we didn't say the truth. *Those missiles that chased the people out of Ashdod come from Gaza, which was evacuated after the frum party and the rabbanim at its head allowed the disengagement to happen and became Sharon's collaborators in that crime.*

"Yahadus HaTorah" could have stopped the disengagement if it had wanted to, but they preferred focusing on money, 290 million shekels



for yeshivos. So they sold out their people. Who would have believed, one year ago, that things would degrade so quickly or so blatantly?

This is not being said in order to mock anyone, but for the purpose of correction. The Rambam says that if something bad happens, you need to examine your deeds. It's so obvious here that we don't have to dig deeply. Everybody sees the reason and the results. Frum Jewry can no longer say, as Litzman once wrote, that we should have nothing to do with security. Ignoring security will ultimately mean abandoning our own cozy frum neighborhoods in the center of the country.

This time the frum fled to B'nei Brak and Yerushalayim, but what will happen if they give away Yehuda-Shomron? Where will the B'nei Brakers run too?

Every Jew, and especially the observant, must do everything in his power and more to stop the insane withdrawals and not be a part of any government that doesn't declare, ahead of time, that it will not give away land. Otherwise the withdrawal process and its unavoidable tragic consequences will, ch"v, spread throughout the country.

DON'T VOTE FOR SOMEONE WHO HELPS ARABS!

When Jewish cities are shelled and we are on the eve of the elections, we need to remember which parties enabled the terrorists to have weapons to shoot at us. Today everybody has turned into Rightists, but we have to remember that the missiles that are flying at us are not an inexplicable decree from

heaven. People from among us gave them the weapons.

The ones who pushed for the disengagement are the ones who brought this upon us, and they need to pay for it at the polling booth. These include religious and ultra-Orthodox, both on the Right and on the Left. The Rebbe says their names should be

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publicized, and we're going to do so. This is what the Rebbe said on 3 Tamuz 5742 (1982):

To publicize to all, so that everybody knows that so-and-so [then Defense Minister Ariel Sharon – Ed.] prevented the completion of the Peace in Galilee campaign in a timely

fashion, despite the conclusive view of the military that they must complete and finish this campaign in its entirety. When everybody knows who delayed it, they won't vote for him, his disciples, or his party in the next Knesset elections!

They won't allow him to speak on behalf of the Jews of Eretz Yisroel. He and his friends can speak on behalf of the Arabs, since they benefited them by delaying the completion of the campaign, but not on behalf of Jews! Apparently this is the only thing that will work!

It's no secret that the leader of "Yahadus HaTorah V'HaShabbos" is one of those responsible for bringing the disengagement upon us. Then there is Z'vulun Orlev of "Bayis Yehudi," Binyamin Netanyahu – who supported it and wanted to "keep his hands clean" by leaving the government. All this is documented in the annals of Jewish history, and we must remember to punish them and not vote for them or anyone like them.

NOT TO BELIEVE ANYONE

One thing we need to learn – all those who prided themselves on being security hawks and got into politics, ended up bringing the greatest churban upon us. All those who try to unearth some new "security experts" discover that there is no one to rely upon. The Torah is the only source of our security, and together with HaKadosh Baruch Hu, the only one to rely upon is the prophet among us, the Rebbe MH"M, who will soon redeem us.

TAL'S ASCENT

By Yisroel Yehuda

Translated By Michael Leib Dobry

R' Tal Mandel trained as an IDF pilot and 'made it' as an American businessman, but his greatest achievements have been organizing groups and events as a director of the Ascent Institute in Tzfas. His father was born as the Frierdike Rebbe was being released from jail, but the significance of the date was lost on him, until he embarked on his path of t'shuva. * Part 1 of 2.

On any given afternoon, you can see R' Tal Mandel sitting in the "Tea Garden" at the Ascent Institute in Tzfas, a magical place by all accounts. While he is a confident and energetic young man, he also conveys simplicity and calm. In this wondrous and inspiring place, the Ascent guests gather during the evening hours or late at night. When they urge their hosts to let them hear "something special," Tal complies by telling his personal life story.

"I was raised in Rechovot by my Russian immigrant parents," R' Tal begins. "They came to Eretz Yisroel during the seventies – old-fashioned 'Zionists' who emigrated for purely ideological reasons. There was not a shred of Judaism in our home – even my grandparents had no connection to Yiddishkai.

"Until the age of military induction, I learned and lived like anyone else. Life started becoming more interesting when I passed the physical examinations at the army induction center and then graduated the tests for acceptance into the air force. This was the beginning of the long journey to induction as an air force pilot.

"On the appointed day, I eagerly presented myself at the special offices at the Tel HaShomer Hospital in Tel Aviv for the first series of air force physical exams. These physicals check out the candidate's fitness in a variety of areas: psychometric, coordination, and more.

"After a few days, I was called in to present myself at the air force base at Tel HaShomer, for two

complete physical examinations lasting six hours, followed by a discussion with a psychologist.

"About ten thousand young men came for the first series of physicals. At the next stage, there were a little more than five hundred. Eventually, about three hundred and fifty were left to start the pilot course, and only fifty made it through to its completion...

"The week of hardening up that followed the successful passing of all the physicals was one of the most frightening weeks of my life. This was a whole week devoted to the declared objective of breaking the soldier emotionally and physically, as the command staff unceasingly 'encourages' recruits to drop out 'honorably.' Statements such as 'Look, anyone who feels that it's too hard for him can go; it's not that you're not successful, you're simply not suitable' rang in our ears to no end.

"The training program was designed in a way that the soldier won't have a minute free to himself – and I mean a minute! For example, breakfast went as follows: The soldiers stand outside of the mess tent with food plates called "mesting" in army slang, and are given no more than two and a-half minutes to eat, wash our plates, and fall in line for inspection – all with the sergeant constantly following us. We would go in, shove whatever we could into our mouths, and run out. We were given a little more time for lunch," Tal added with a tinge of sarcasm. "Something like six or



seven minutes.”

“One day, they placed us above a slope on a very steep incline, and distributed a stretcher and a sack to every few men. Our task was to descend the slope, fill the sack with sand, and bring it up via the stretcher, and then do it all over repeatedly, while the sergeant checks and counts how many ‘trips’ it takes each group (at least, they told us

that he checked). This bone-breaking competition lasted about an hour.

“Worst of all was a night or two later. After ‘bolting’ us out of bed three times that night, they woke us up again and brought us to....that same frightening slope. The commander announced in a very businesslike manner, ‘Men, we are about to conduct the competition

again.’ We didn’t do it in the end, as this was merely an act to try and break us. These are just some examples of what we went through that week.

“The final night of the hardening up week was ‘White’ Night – they didn’t let us sleep. In the morning, we were all called in and given a talk. ‘Men, the names that will be read out now are of those whose participation in this course is over. It’s not that they are not as good, merely that they are less suitable, and things will surely work out for them elsewhere.’ The commander then proceeded to read out about two hundred names.

“This was an exciting moment. We were already well acquainted with one another, and we parted from our friends who ‘missed out’ with hugs and tears, and I was filled with a marvelous feeling of exultation when my name was not called out on the list. I was in!”

UP TO FIFTEEN

“We started the pilots’ course a few months later, during the winter of 5754. About three hundred young and excited soldiers came to the air force training camp somewhere in the south. They divided us into a number of groups, each one starting with a different subject: logistics, flights, general studies – and moving to the next subject after a month or two.

“My division started with the study of aeronautics, with actual flights coming last. We started the flights themselves several months later.

“The flight portion of the course took about four weeks. During the first week, we learned about and were tested, word for word, on a text called *Vital Inspections*. The next three weeks were called Check Five, Check Ten, and Check Fifteen – named after the number of flights planned each week. These were very

critical weeks for the most of the pilots, as about two-thirds of the participants drop out at this stage of the flight course.

“When we began the flight stage, our commander entered the tent and said, ‘Don’t slack off. There’s maybe one in every division who can pass the flight course without study or investment of effort...’ During the course, we were called in at regular intervals to hear the names of those who had been dismissed. At that moment, every soldier said to himself, ‘Here I go’, and in order to cushion his ego, tried to show how

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list. I was in!”***

much he really didn’t invest his best efforts.

“In any event, the great moment came, and I found myself pulling at the throttle of a small Piper aircraft, taking off for the heavens. I had the marvelous feeling of ‘I made it.’ These were truly days of sheer euphoria. I took off every day, as the demands grew for greater skill and dexterity in operating the aircraft. We were given time off after each series of flights, which I utilized to study for the exercises that we would have to do the following day.

“We passed Check Five, Check Ten, and Check Fifteen. Then, at the end of Check Fifteen, they told me, ‘Tal, go home!’”

FROM THE LOWEST DEPTHS

“At that moment, together with the disappointment, I felt a tremendous relief. The course itself was very demanding; any slight deviation would lead to immediate dismissal. You felt as if there were a million spotlights pointing directly at you, and now suddenly I could do as my heart desired. I also understood that I would not be remaining in the military more than the mandatory three years.

“I was sent home, and was assigned some time later to serve in the artillery division in the security zone in south Lebanon. It was soon afterwards that I began to feel that I couldn’t make it any longer. The air force base conditions were the best anywhere in the IDF. There was good food, a cafeteria, a swimming pool, and much more, while now I was ‘cast away’ somewhere in the mud, several kilometers over the border, in a small outpost under wartime conditions. I simply couldn’t tolerate situation, and I demanded that they send me back to the air force.

“I somehow managed to get back into the air force and passed a course on military operations. Upon completing the course, I served at the Sde Dov airport with great pleasure. I was discharged from my military service as a security officer with the rank of lieutenant. Then, as anyone else after finishing the army, I decided to do some traveling.

“My parents wanted me to start my academic studies as soon as possible, while I wanted to travel first. So we made a compromise: They would help me finance my trip, thus saving me the need for the usual pre-travel employment, and for

my part, I made a commitment to return within nine months to begin my studies.

“Within a short period of time, I found myself touring the length and breadth of New Zealand, Australia, and Thailand. Even though Chabad was spread all over the world, I wasn’t ‘grabbed’ by any Chabad House. I remember only the Seder night that I spent at the Chabad House in New Zealand – I came along with everyone else, but that was it. In general, I had no background in Judaism. The first time I had ever heard or seen Kiddush was in the army.

“During my military service,” Tal recalled with a smile, “there was a fellow recruit who had become a baal t’shuva. He tried to give me some Amnon Yitzchak cassettes, but I only found them to be a source of amusement.

“I returned to Eretz Yisroel, and immediately registered as a student at the University of the Negev in Beersheva. This was at the height of the hi-tech surge, and I started learning for one of the most difficult and sought after professional degrees at the time: a joint bachelor’s in economics and computer science. Due to the course study’s unique nature, they accepted just ten students, only two of whom successfully completed it.

“I commenced my studies in Beersheva on the right foot, and I remember this period as one of the most pleasant in my life. The first year passed quite well. During the second year, things began to take a turn...”

A WASH TO REMEMBER

“At the start of my sophomore year, I moved into a small two-room caravan. My roommate was due to arrive the following week. One day, as I was getting ready to do my laundry, I recall placing my hand above one of the closet shelves, and



**A young Tal Mandel in
the Israel Air Force**



**Living the American dream
in Houston, Texas**

***I began to
shake! How did
this get here?
I'm alone in the
room, the
caravan is
empty, and I'm
the only one
with a key...***

feeling a piece of fabric. I pulled it out and discovered a small pair of tzitzis! I began to shake! How did this get here? I'm alone in the room, the caravan is empty, and I'm the only one with a key... I went to find out if perhaps the tzitzis had been left behind the previous year, but the only person who had lived in the caravan then was an Arab student...

"About a week later, my roommate arrived. To my surprise, he was a baal t'shuva. He was apparently in the early stages of his

return to traditional Judaism, and he tried to arouse my interest in the new light that he had discovered. The truth was that whenever the question arose regarding the existence of G-d, I had always said that for logical reasons, I believed that He did exist. However, if the 'religious' were His representatives (as they were perceived by society in general), then I felt comfortable in my belief that this was not what He had in mind, and I could rely upon my current lifestyle as being

'acceptable' in His eyes...

"In any case, my roommate began to try and interest me in Judaism, quickly drawing us into arguments. Since I believed in principle that there was a G-d, the arguments centered primarily on the topic of 'What does He want from us?' I thereby reached the conclusion that I needed to acquire a little Torah knowledge in order to have the tools to give some answers.

"I started looking into all types of 'books on Judaism'," Tal recalled with some embarrassment, "such as those written by Rabbi Tau, discussions on the Rambam with Professor Yeshayahu Leibowitz, and more. However, I quickly understood that those authors did not write the truth; Torah and mitzvos was the truth."

The process for you was so simple?

"Not really, but it did happen rather quickly. My roommate would tell me stories from the Midrash, and a little Gemara, but what really got me was its wisdom. I had discovered something tremendous. What I really loved was to hear stories of the tzaddikim. It could be that this is what made the great change within me.

"I would return during the



Tal Mandel with his brother and late father

His eyes bulged out and he asked, “Tal, what is this? Are you wearing tzitzis?” I began to squirm. “No...I just made a bet with my roommate, and I lost, so I had to go to my exam with tzitzis.”

evening hours to the student union, hang around a little with friends, and then study and arrange my class schedule in such a way that I wouldn't have to start before mid-morning, so I could sit and learn with my roommate until three or four in the morning. We would literally sit throughout the night and listen to recorded stories. For example, I remember one of the s'farim that he gave me that really grabbed me was 'Seifer HaAgada' by Chaim Nachman Bialik, who

collected various Midrashim on Moshiach. I came to the conclusion that this was the truth. Then came the issue of how to tell my family without alienating them.”

Had you already decided to become religious?

“I had come to an inner recognition that this was the truth. It was clear to me that at a certain stage, it would come to practical steps, although the time had not yet arrived. There were people who did t'shuva due to a crisis in their lives, but I was at a peak in my own life. However, I knew that the truth was found within Torah and mitzvos. I would tell my friends that the day would come when I would be observant. In the meantime, I preferred to take more delicate steps, because I had an objective – to bring my family to t'shuva as well.

“My religious progress was expressed primarily in my studies – I learned and learned. My friends saw that I had not changed in an external way, and they understood that I hadn't gone crazy yet. They saw that I didn't daven or wear a kippa – so they calmed down...

“At a certain point, my roommate advised me, ‘Tal, start putting on tzitzis every time you have a test’, and so I did. Once I was sitting with my friends after an exam, when one

of them noticed a fringe coming out my clothes. His eyes bulged out and he asked, ‘Tal, what is this? Are you wearing tzitzis?’ I began to squirm. ‘No...I just made a bet with my roommate, and I lost, so I had to go to my exam with tzitzis.’”

How did you start having an effect upon your family?

“My father came from a Russian family, and Russians were known to make ‘L'chaim’ together... As Divine Providence would have it, we found out that he was born on Yud-Beis Tammuz, 5687! When I would come home from college, my parents and I would sit together and say ‘L'chaim’, and I would start ‘pouring out’ the stories I had heard. I saw that it was taking a hold upon them! This continued for about a year and a half, until I completed my undergraduate studies. I was extremely close with my brother, and I revealed to him the process that I was undergoing. Not only didn't he attack me, he sat together with me and we learned. We eventually decided to move forward together...”

[To be continued be”H]

Dedicated in memory of R' Tal's father, R. Yechiel Mandel, of blessed memory, who passed away on Shabbos Parshas Lech Lecha, the 10th of MarCheshvan 5769.

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& KINDNESS
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MOSHIACH NOW!**



TOTAL SELF-SACRIFICE: BODY AND SOUL

By Boruch Merkur

*The self-nullification of the Giving of the Torah was primarily associated with their souls, whereas in the time of Achashverosh, when the Jewish people put their lives on the line, sacrificing their bodies to be killed for the sake of the unity of G-d [by rejecting idolatry], they had absolute self-nullification in every respect, including their bodies. * Tracing the Rebbe MH”M’s instructions on how to perfect our Divine service in the Final Era.*

[Continued from last issue]

THE ULTIMATE UNITY: IN SPIRIT AND IN BODY

The ultimate expression of unity is when it is apparent at every level of experience, especially the material level. It is not enough for Jews to recognize that in essence we are all equal, for we all possess the Yechida Sh’B’Nefesh, and thus we have unity with others in our spiritual life. Rather, perfect unity is attained specifically when the recognition of our

equality is apparent even in our physical life, with regard to material concerns.

The Rebbe MH”M discusses these two levels of unity by further tracing the difference between the Divine service associated with the Giving of the Torah and Purim. The Giving of the Torah is typically linked to Shavuot, when the First Tablets were given. However, to further underscore the advantage of Purim, the Rebbe contrasts it with the second and more complete phase of the Giving of the Torah, when the Second Tablets were given, which took place on Yom Kippur.

We discussed above how the advantage of Purim over the Giving of the Torah, the First Tablets, is that on Purim the initiative for self-sacrifice came from the Jewish people themselves, without the revelation of G-dliness and revealed

miracles to spur them on. The difference between Purim and the Giving of the Second Tablets, however, is more subtle, insofar as the Giving of the Second Tablets also possesses this quality, as the Rebbe writes in Footnote 44 of the original:

“On Yom HaKippurim the giving of the Final Tablets took place (Mishna Taanis 26b and commentary of Rashi), which was precipitated by the self-inspired service of man, ‘As You have spoken.’ This is the advantage that it

possesses over the Giving of the Torah, associated with the First Tablets, which was inspired from above ... However, the primary expression of self-inspired service is on Purim. In fact, in comparison with Purim, even Yom HaKippurim is 'K'Purim' [i.e., it only resembles Purim], because on Yom Kippur we are removed from physicality, etc., as discussed in the body of the text."

There the Rebbe elaborates that on Yom Kippur,

"the self-nullification and self-sacrifice is expressed through the removal and nullification of the body and physicality, through the five abstinences ("you shall afflict yourselves"¹⁰⁰). Indeed, the 'sustenance' provided then [on Yom Kippur] is specifically 'through hunger.'"¹⁰¹

This manner of asceticism, Biblical commandments to be observed on Yom Kippur, the Giving of the Second Tablets, is an expression of self-sacrifice that "connects the person with G-d through the Yechida Sh'B'Nefesh." Unlike Purim, the self-nullification associated with the Giving of Torah (in general) is spiritual, as the Rebbe writes in Footnote 32:

"The self-nullification of the Giving of the Torah was primarily associated with their souls, whereas in the time of Achashverosh, when the Jewish people put their lives on the line, sacrificing their bodies to be killed for the sake of the unity of G-d [by rejecting idolatry], they had absolute self-nullification in every respect, including their bodies."

The Divine service associated with Purim, therefore, possesses an advantage over Yom Kippur in that it represents complete self-sacrifice, the sacrifice of body as well as soul. On Yom Kippur the body is transcended and the soul revels in its experience of unity with G-d; on Purim the body is celebrated, for it too is bound to G-d in absolute unity and oneness, by means of the Yechida Sh'B'Nefesh, which spans the entire spectrum of experience – from the most spiritual (Yom Kippur) to the most physical (Purim), as the Rebbe writes:

"Purim approaches greater heights (for which reason Yom HaKippurim is only "K'Purim"), insofar as the self-nullification and self-sacrifice (which derive from service of man that is **independent** [of inspiration from above]) permeate the person's entire being,¹⁰² including their **physicality**. Thus, there is an obligation on Purim to celebrate by feasting and rejoicing – 'A person is

obligated to celebrate on Purim until he doesn't know.'¹⁰³ That is, the self-sacrifice of Purim – [alluded to by the phrase] 'he doesn't know' [for one must transcend reason to attain self-sacrifice] – is connected with 'to celebrate' (drinking wine) and eating a physical meal (meat and bread¹⁰⁴), bodily pleasures. Physicality is also permeated with the self-sacrifice and self-nullification of 'he doesn't know,' insofar as one's entire being (including his physicality) becomes a vessel to the aspect of 'he doesn't know' of above."

[To be continued, b'ezras Hashem]

NOTES:

¹⁰⁰ Acharei 16:31.

¹⁰¹ [Referencing the verse, "to sustain them in famine/hunger."] T'hilim 33:19. See *Likkutei Torah Shir HaShirim* 14b, *Birchas Erev Yom HaKippurim* 5746 *siman* 8.

¹⁰² See *Shaarei Ora* ibid Ch. 11, where it explains that on account of the self-sacrifice and self-nullification of the Days



Painting by Baruch Nachshon

of Purim the merit of the Jews was twofold: a revelation within them from the aspect of G-d's Being and Essence, etc., and that the G-dly light should be accommodated by their faculties, etc. [i.e., it should be consciously experienced and absorbed]. See there. And see *Torah Ohr* in the Hosafos 121d, end ff.

¹⁰³ Megilla 7b, etc. – see Footnote 46 in the original.

¹⁰⁴ See *Likkutei Sichos* Vol. 11, pg. 336 Footnote 5, where it is discussed.

GEULA ON THE AIR

By Nosson Avrohom

The most listened-to radio program in Eilat began with an offer made to a Lubavitcher to put alternative music on the air. He and his friends decided to include not only alternative music, but the alternative lifestyle of Chassidus. With the Rebbe's bracha, the rest is history.

If someone were to take a stroll at seven o'clock on a Wednesday evening along the main thoroughfares in Eilat, he would wonder whether his ears weren't playing tricks on him. From the radios playing in restaurants, stores, bistros and motels, he will hear the voice of the Rebbe MH"M singing a rousing Chassidic niggun. No, the residents and store owners of Eilat did not all simultaneously decide to play the same recording – they decided to tune in to the same radio program.

It's a regular Lubavitcher show on the southernmost station in Israel. The pleasant voice of Yisroel Asulin can be heard announcing the program – one of the most popular programs on local radio – "Kol HaYam HaAdom" (Voice of the Red Sea) In his "radio voice," Yisroel brings up a Jewish concept, which is clarified each week by a special guest. It might be a mashpia, a shliach, an army officer, the head of an organization or even a member of the Knesset.

The program is diverse, with an interview followed by eloquent thoughts on the parsha by Rabbi Uzi Kaploun, one of the shluchim in Eilat. The Chabad Rosh Yeshiva in Eilat, Rabbi Erez Bendetovitz, explains the chosen topic of the week in depth. Conductor and musician Roni Pellou is in charge of the musical portion of the program. Mrs. Rochel Shavi of Kfar Chabad (an occasional writer for *Beis Moshiah*) explains how the world is ready for Moshiah.

The program, called *Ketzat Acheret* (A Little Different), has tens of thousands of listeners throughout Eilat and the Arava.

If you had asked the shluchim in the city a few years ago whether a program like this was doable, they would have looked at you as if you were crazy. It wasn't even a dream back then. Today, three years after it went on the air, the polls show a very large listening audience.

I met Yisroel Asulin at the radio studio as he prepared for the next

show. We sat down together to discuss the program, a conversation which turned into this article.

How did it begin? How do you get such high ratings?

I am a bachur shliach in the yeshiva here. While on mitvtzaim, we started to get to know the young people in town. We were surprised to discover a great openness, on their part, to Judaism. Unlike other places, here in Eilat we encounter hardly any opposition. Maybe it's because Eilat is so spiritually low that it's easier to work here.

At a certain point we noticed that there were a host of courses being offered in Kabbala and mysticism, which attracted lots of young people. Many of these are of dubious content, and there was a need to provide a genuine Jewish alternative. Various ideas were raised, including the suggestion to do a radio broadcast which could spread the wellsprings to the masses.

It seemed like a wild idea, especially since the leanings of the radio station were so liberal and out of touch with traditional values. Why would they allow us to do a radio program?

As we wrestled with the issue, one of the members of the k'hilla (a former major entertainer), Ronnie Pellou, got an offer from the manager of the radio station to put an alternative musical program on the air. When he told us about it, we knew we were on the right track. We decided that the program would have not only alternative



From right to left: Roni Pellou, R' Uzi Kaploun,
R' Erez Bendetovitz and Yisroel Asulin

music, but the alternative lifestyle of Chassidus. The answer we opened to from the Rebbe was in volume 7 of Igros Kodesh, p. 270:

You write about the radio, that one of the T'mimim will speak occasionally and the others will listen. The efforts of our N'siim are known, and that they demanded that we too spread the wellsprings and their tributaries to the farthest reaches. Therefore, if you are to consider the aforementioned, you need to seek a way to reach a broad audience, and not only a limited number of people. Since I am not knowledgeable in the laws about this in that country, I won't write

in more detail but surely, through inquiry, you can find out.

We were stunned. Not only had the Rebbe given his blessing, he had also set out our approach – to treat it in a professional manner and in a way that would be well-received. The next day we went to the radio station manager with a proposal. At first he waffled and asked us to prepare a sample program so he would be able to understand what we were talking about. He liked the sample – including the Jewish-Chassidic-Geula content – as well as the professionalism and the high level. All we needed to do was choose a jingle, and we were on our way.

The manager was so impressed that he decided to put the program in one of the most popular time slots.

“The show is built around a weekly topic,” said Yisroel. “During the program we discuss the topic from different angles, and sometimes we interview someone who helps us with it.

“When people in Eilat turn on the radio at home, they don’t expect to hear a shiur or a discussion of a Jewish topic, so we try to keep things brief though meaningful. We want to inspire the listener to go a Chabad house later on and ask for more information about what he heard. And it happens. Listeners sometimes call the radio station and ask to speak to one of the broadcasters.”

Yisroel doesn’t forget his apprehension over the first program:

“There was excitement in the air, but we didn’t know what the public thought of it. As we left the studio in the direction of the yeshiva, we discussed the program. On the main street someone called out, ‘Hey, was that you on the radio? It was great! We sat here

and took in every word.’ And that was that. It was a hit.”

The shluchim, who were skeptical, are reaping the benefits, with a dramatic increase in the number of participants in the Lag B’Omer parade, Chanuka and Purim parties, and more adults attending shiurim and farbrengens. The staff at the radio station – the broadcasters, programming editors and producers – reacted positively to the four bearded Chassidim who present a quality program, smoothly and with flair.

“At first they were taken aback

It seemed like a wild idea, especially since the leanings of the radio station were so liberal and out of touch with traditional values. Why would they allow us to do a radio program?

and were highly suspicious. They didn’t know what to think of it. They kept a watch to make sure everything was going according to the rules and we weren’t turning the program into a fundraiser or brainwashing. They soon became our ardent supporters. One of the broadcasters confided that he couldn’t believe religious Jews could speak on such a high intellectual level...”

In the first season, one of the producers complained to the Lubavitchers that they showed up

too close to the beginning of the program and he didn’t have time to get ready. The next program fell out on Erev Tisha B’Av and once again, the bachurim came at the last minute.

“The producer had a Tisha B’Av face, but we were immersed in the Rebbe’s sichos about Tisha B’Av soon turning into a day of rejoicing. Instead of our usual beginning, we started with a Chassidishe farbrengen in which we explained the significance of the churban as a step towards Geula. This program was decidedly different, and we didn’t know how people would react to it. When it was over, I got a phone call from the station manager, who said, ‘Yisroel, I listened to you and it was really touching.’”

As mentioned earlier, polls taken by the radio management show that the program is extremely popular. It reaches a broad audience, who aren’t necessarily the type to attend shul.

“One of the female broadcasters met the rosh yeshiva, Rabbi Bendetovitz, during a recess we took in programming. She complained about the temporary break, “You have no idea how much the messages you convey give me strength.” She added, “My program is on before yours, but I always stay in my parked car in order to listen to you.”

One of the bachurim relates:

“Near the dormitory lives an old woman who would sometimes ask the bachurim for help with various things. They tried to speak to her about Judaism, but she, a Holocaust survivor who was angry at G-d, refused to listen. One time, one of the bachurim started talking to her about Judaism, and she surprised him with her knowledge of the parsha and sichos of the Rebbe on it.

“When the bachur asked her



During a broadcast

how she knew that, she said that there was a nice radio program. 'They're not scary rabbis like you, and I enjoy listening to them.'

"One week we interviewed Dr. Yosef Shussheim of EFRAT, who spoke passionately about his work in preventing abortions. The next day, a Jew who didn't look religious came over to me on the street and said, 'At least one baby was not aborted thanks to your program,' and he walked on."

To what do you attribute your success?

"The secret to our success, as far as I know, is conveying material in a clear, clever way without compromising on the truth. We don't try to pretty things up. You have to say it how it is, and people accept that. People are looking for the truth.

"As for success, how do you define that? I think a successful program is measured by whether it touched someone's neshama and inspired him."

Yisroel recalled a program that was aired before Yud Shevat and focused on the Rebbe's leadership:

"We decided to interview people who are not Lubavitch. People were fascinated by the account of Tzvi-Pik, a famous Israeli pop star, who described the moments before his yechidus with the Rebbe and the actual yechidus, when all barriers dropped and all that remained was the neshama. 'You don't want it to end; you feel that you are standing before the King of kings,' he said.

"Another interviewee was Brigadier-General Ron Pekkar, a commander in the Air Force. He is a warm Jew who was happy to talk

about the Rebbe. When he related his meeting with the Rebbe he said, 'I felt I was melting. It's the only event in my life which compares to the first time I flew an F-15.' Itai Rappaport, a journalist, spoke about the immense Jewish phenomenon called shlichus, which the Rebbe built."

For the new season, the program's name was changed to "Geula," a name that says it all.

"The goal is to focus more on Geula and Moshiach. The program will take the listeners on a Geula journey, a journey that will include visits to shlichim throughout Israel and around the world."

Meir Ben-Yeshaya, a member of the Lubavitch community, joined the team. In a promo broadcast before the Yomim Tovim, a Chabad niggun played in the background as the announcer invited listeners "to feel the Geula."

Yisroel concludes:

"The world is ready to hear about Geula. After a season of broadcasting, I say that unequivocally. People want to hear about things as they are, and there is an enormous openness to hearing almost anything, even things having to do more with faith and less with logic.

"People want truth, and the truth gets through. We see what the Rebbe meant when he said the world is ready for Geula. People ask questions and want to understand more about Geula as a tangible, happening thing, and not just as a nice dream."

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FATHERS GO TO WAR

By Aliza Karp

Jewish lives are not statistics. Every victim of war and terror is one hundred percent someone's Jewish son, husband, father, brother, cousin, friend, classmate... There is pain because there is love.

Teives 5769 – January 2009

To My Daughter's Dear Friend
Mushka,

The other evening, you asked me if it was not irresponsible for a father to leave his family and go to war. I am not satisfied with the way I answered you.

I answered about danger. If the definition of danger is the odds – one out of one hundred or one out of one million – of getting hurt, then there is a greater chance of being hurt in traffic accidents in Eretz Yisroel than going to war, and yet every day we willingly go into traffic.

My answer may have made sense, but in retrospect, I find it heartless. We are emotional beings – not computers with and on and off switch.

On our way to the hillside restaurant where you asked me the question, just before we made our final left turn towards Bat Ayin, there was a sign to Rosh Tzurim. Rosh Tzurim is an attractive, well

kept town in the Gush Etzion Bloc south of Yerushalayim, not far from Efrat, half way to Chevron. It is home to a few hundred religious families, and also has an excellent school for special needs children and young adults. They even have horses for the students to care for and ride.

The morning after you and I and Huvi had dinner on the hillside under Bat Ayin, I came back to Rosh Tzurim with Chaya, a friend of mine from the nearby town of Alon Shvut. Although she is the one who lives in the area, I showed her something she had not known about. I took her to the highest point in Rosh Tzurim. From there we could see Yerushalayim in the north and Ashdod and even Ashkelon to the southwest. The country is so small! From our restaurant, had we been gazing out windows at the back, instead of the side, we would have been able to see the war zone in Ashkelon.

There is a little park where Chaya and I were standing. As we entered, we saw a group of young men landscaping and gardening. At first glance the group looked unusual – I was on my guard for something suspicious. But as we got closer, I realized it was a group of special needs teenagers with their counselors.

The park is called Mitzpeh Tzachi. Mitzpeh means a lookout. Tzachi is a nickname for Yitzchok. The park was established and beautifully designed in memory of Tzachi Sasson, who was shot in the head by a terrorist as he was driving between visiting his parents in French Hill, Yerushalayim, and going home to his wife and sons in Rosh Tzurim. He was one of the earlier casualties of the 2001 Intifada.

Tzachi was a gem. I showed Chaya the stone memorial the family had made for him. On it is engraved the words of a letter he sent to his younger brother when his brother was entering the army. It is a long letter telling his brother in loving detail to daven and study Torah regularly, to carry out his army duty with excellence and to be a good example to others.

I remember Tzachi as a good looking, fun loving teenager who was respectful, kind and generous. The letters etched in stone reveal the goodness engraved in his heart, and now engraved in the heart of all who read it.

Tzachi's mother's name is Aliza, like mine. When I was neighbors with Aliza, we did not have a common language, but I knew her well. When I first read the news about Tzachi on the internet, I knew Aliza would be devastated beyond comparison. Even though he did not die in battle, his death was at the hands of those who want to destroy us, in a different form of warfare. So I

THERE IS A SOLUTION

“There is a solution: Return to Gush Katif,” is the slogan being advertised on 1,500 busses to promote the latest campaign by SOS Israel, an organization under the direction of Rabbi Wolpo. The project was launched with a major press conference in one of SOS Israel’s previously completed projects, the Gush Katif Museum in Jerusalem.

One might wonder: who would go to Gush Katif now that the terrorists have had their Golden Era of being able to train and arm themselves without hindrance of ‘pesky’ settlers and protective soldiers? This question was answered when Gush Katif community leaders showed up at the conference to affirm their willingness to re-engage Gush Katif, starting with the northern community of Netzarim.

The Disengagement convinced Hamas that the result of terror is victory with land acquisition. The re-settlers want to undo the lesson of the Disengagement and educate Hamas with the reality that terror will not bring the desired results. The only way to stop terror is to stop responding with positive reinforcement.

The re-settlers are ready to live in tents the way they did the first time they moved to Gush Katif. Their living conditions in the Gush Katif refugee camps are as protective as cardboard boxes, so they do not feel they will be putting themselves in any more danger than they are already. They lived with Kassams before; they are ready to live with Kassams again *ch”v*.

Re-settlement will take the sweetness of victory from Hamas and prove that Jews are serious about living on their own land and that terror does not produce the desired results.

This is the reasoning behind the re-settlers’

willingness to enter the perils of re-establishing a Jewish presence in Gush Katif. As more time goes by, the terrorists gain more control. The sooner the Jews prove that they are serious about living on their land, and not running away, the more Jewish lives will ultimately be saved.

The Rebbe told us that all areas where Jews are now living in Eretz Yisroel should be considered border towns. As the Kassams from Gush Katif gain distance and the rockets from the north have proven their range to be penetrating, the reality of the Rebbe’s

words becomes more and more obvious. From a hilltop outside of Yerushalayim you can see Ashdod and Ashkelon, and at night you can hear the bombs. The country is too small for people to be imagining the war is ‘somewhere else.’

The media campaign about returning to Gush Katif is the first step in readying the public that this needs to happen and it will happen. It also reminds the public that the current war in Aza is a result of the self-imposed Disengagement.

Rabbi Wolpo’s involvement in promoting the return to Gush

Katif comes closely after his tactical resignation from a different campaign. His stepping aside is facilitating the development of Shleimus HaAretz by others. Chevron activist Boruch Marzel praised Wolpo’s rare dedication to Shleimus HaAretz, unhindered by personal goals or personal gain.

In a recent interview, MK Arie Elad spoke about working on several projects with Rabbi Wolpo. “His dedication for Eretz Yisroel is unquestionable – no one can doubt it. He is regarded as one of the strongest fighters we have. His name is appreciated in many communities.”

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think from his death, we can learn the impact of a father going to battle and not returning home. Hashem should avenge Tzachi's blood and all those who have lost their lives Al Kiddush Hashem.

The Sasson family built the beautiful park atop Rosh Tzurim. Other projects were also done in his memory. I donated a full Chitas to each family in Rosh Tzurim so they could put it in their car as a safety precaution.

The Sassons have other children and they have grandchildren, including Tzachi's children, Bli Ayin HaRa. His wife did what Tzachi would have wanted her to do. She pulled herself together and re-married. Tzachi's sons are taken care of, and they know their father died Al Kiddush Hashem. They have a loving mother, step-father and grandparents – but no one and nothing will replace their father. If I still feel pain when I think of Tzachi – I cannot come close to fathoming how his family still suffers.

Mushka, my answer to your question was about statistics, but Jewish lives are not statistics. Every victim of war and terror is one hundred percent someone's Jewish son, husband, father, brother, cousin, friend, classmate... There is pain because there is love.

Our Rebbe repeatedly stressed the section in Shulchan Orach that when we have an enemy we have to make a pre-emptive strike. We have to go to war. Who is more

qualified to fight to protect his children, than a father? As the fathers battle alongside young men who do not yet have families, the younger men are encouraged and empowered by the unique energy of fathers fighting to protect their children.

In the Chumash, Yaakov sent Binyamin, his remaining son from Rachel, down to Egypt when keeping him home was risking the lives of the whole family. As much as Yaakov feared for Binyamin's welfare, he realized that there was

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a risk of the entire family perishing, including Binyamin, if he kept him safe at home.

If there were no imminent danger, fathers would not go to war. But when there is danger – real danger – fathers go to war.

We looked at the memorial for Tzachi and I told her stories about him. We also spoke about the three soldiers who had been killed the night before, at the war in Aza, and the trauma their families were now feeling. Chaya's twenty six year old daughter knows someone

in each of the families of the fallen soldiers. I did not know yet that I also was connected, through my work, to one of them.

I was in a sad, pensive mood as we walked back to the car.

We passed the group from the special school who were now sitting by the walkway, taking a break from their landscaping. Chaya asked one of the counselors to take a picture of the two of us. As she was explaining how to use the camera, one of the students came towards me. A counselor called to the student to come back and sit with the others. I guessed the student had Down Syndrome, but I was not sure. As the call to return was ignored, I asked, "Are you coming to give me a hug?" Without speaking the student continued to approach and then to embrace me. It was just what I needed. A little Ahavas Chinam, love without ulterior motives. The counselor took the picture with the three of us.

This group of students will never become parents, nor will they go to war. But they will sense when hugs are needed and not be afraid to do what they do best. I think their hugs make the world a better place. Who can understand the ways of Hashem?

There is pain and there is love, and the only definitive answer is Moshiach Now,

With love,
Huvi's Mom



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TOP OF THE EIGHTH AND WINNING

By D. Levanon

For the past two years, Rabbi Yossi Bryski has run a terrific motivational program for the eighth grade boys of Oholei Torah in Crown Heights. We spoke to him about why he started the program and what makes it so successful.

A GREAT IDEA

If you've ever worked in chinuch, whether as a teacher, principal, or a counselor in camp, you know that teaching eighth graders is a challenge.

"They consider themselves to be adults although they are barely adolescents," said one teacher. "He's at an age when he's starting to think for himself but he still doesn't have the tools to do so productively," said another teacher.

You can't put them together with the younger grades because they won't like it, yet they aren't ready enough to join older boys either. It's a transitional age and a youngster who starts eighth grade can find his enthusiasm waning since he "graduated" Tzivos Hashem when he turned thirteen and is now part of the "Limudei Hashem" (as the Rebbe calls them). This is especially problematic for a child who is starting to find his way in life, for a

lack of chayus in positive things can have disastrous consequences.

Before the 5767 school year began, a number of parents spoke with Rabbi Yossi Bryski and suggested that he run a Chassidishe program for the eighth graders



Rabbi Yossi Bryski

during the upcoming year. The idea was to bring the excitement of camp into the school year. The goal – to increase Chassidishe chayus. Nobody (not even R' Bryski) dreamed how successful this program would be.

R' Bryski, who was a camp counselor before he got married, looked into funding and thought about what the curriculum should be. He decided to go ahead with it to the delight of the boys, some of whom knew him from camp. One of the boys, with whom he "consulted," suggested a name for the organization, OTEG – an acronym for Oholei Torah Eighth Grade, and designed a logo.

A meeting with the parents took place at the beginning of the school year and R' Bryski presented his plan for the year. Although the idea was new and untested, the parents approved it and OTEG got underway.

KEYS TO SUCCESS

Each boy received an envelope with his name on it (the personal touch). They were given weekly assignments for which they received points. The points are later used for trips and prizes.

The boys responded positively. It was something new for them and new for the school, not another program that even the younger grades did. It was solely for them,

the eighth graders!

A calendar, which marked future events, drew the attention of the sixth and seventh graders which made the eighth graders feel all the more important. That is one of the keys to OTEG's success. Another key, according to R' Bryski, is seriousness:

"I gave out the plan for the year which made the boys treat it more seriously and want to partake in it. When a boy sees all the upcoming events that are planned, he is more attracted to it and wants to be involved."

The trait of responsibility is developed by giving the eighth graders the responsibility for activities that are done for the younger grades like a Purim carnival and a s'farim sale for Hei Teives. There were also new ideas like school-wide games, Mesibos Shabboses and the Ach Gadol (Big Brother) program.

MIRACLE AT THE VERY START

"The first big mitvza was going to be Mitvza Shofar, but in Elul something happened that showed me how much the Rebbe wants this program," said R' Bryski.

"During Elul I was in Belgium since my wife had to get her Green Card. I planned on going in Elul and returning a few days before Rosh HaShana. I arranged with two bachurim who would be helping me in Oholei Torah, to check and see who had a shofar, who could blow it, and to make the initial arrangements. I planned, upon my return, to arrange the mitvzaim.

"The bachurim did a great job in playing up the mitvza and the children were excited. As for me, during our first weeks in Belgium the emigration offices were closed. Since you can't get a Green Card within a week and a half, we thought of going right away and we hoped



Rabbi Shloma Majeski giving a workshop on inyanei Moshiach and Geula

that we would get it by the end of the month. On the first day that the office was open, we made an appointment in which we submitted our documents. The clerk said we needed to arrange more things and after we arranged them we had to make an appointment and would get the Green Card.

"The day after that, everything was ready. We had gone to the police and all the other places and had taken care of everything. We called the office and told them that we were ready and to our dismay we were told that our appointment would be in another three months! We tried explaining that this was out of the question and then agreed to reduce it to two months.

"Now according to American law, if you fly within those months, you lose everything. All the documents that we spent hours getting, not to mention the money, would be down the drain. The clerks were not interested in hearing that I couldn't be there for two months.

"I took the phone from my wife

and I said that the Jewish New Year was coming up and that I had work to do and had to fly and that I already had a ticket. To my astonishment, she said, 'Sir, we will call you in another few days.'

"I wasn't sure about what she meant and so I called her right back as though the conversation had been cut off and she said, 'I told you that I'd call you in a few days.'

"I poured my heart out to the Rebbe and said: Rebbe, I have to go because of your mitvzaim. Help me!

"A few hours later the woman called me back and said, 'When is your ticket for?' 'Thursday,' I told her. 'Okay, you can come on Wednesday.'

"I had the nerve to ask her, 'Can it be earlier? It takes 24 hours for the ticket to arrive and it will be very hard, maybe impossible, to make the plane.' 'Sir, do you know what I did for you? I can't do more than that.'

"On Wednesday I went to the consulate and waited in line with everyone else. I saw the clerk I was going to be speaking to and he

didn't seem too cheerful, but when it was my turn he was smiley and friendly. He examined all the forms and said, 'Okay sir, come back in 24 hours. Have a nice day. Hey! Wait a second. It's coming now!'

"Although it generally takes the computer 24 hours to approve the information, in our case it took less than five minutes!"

"There are people in America who are praying for us,' I said to the clerk who was more surprised than I was. He said, 'You can tell them that their prayers were answered.'

"In the meantime, the bachurim had hung up signs that said T'hillim should be said so I would be able to go. My arrival in New York made a big commotion. I went to all the classes and spoke to the boys. Mivtza Shofar was a big success. Nearly all the boys in the eighth grade went on mivtzaim that Rosh HaShana. It was a great start to the program and the Rebbe's miracle gets a lot of the credit. Out of something negative came a big shturem for Mivtza Shofar which launched the rest of the year's activities."

THE PROGRAM

"OTEG runs special activities for Yomim Tovim and Chassidishe

special dates, as well as ongoing activities throughout the year. We make a Melaveh Malka every other week for each class. The week in between, we have a Seder Niggunim for all the classes with R' Menachem Mendel Kalmanson. The boys learn a lot of niggunim thanks to this activity.

"One of the main goals is to instill a Chassidishe chayus in the kids especially an enthusiasm for the Rebbe's Inyanim and Chassidishe dates in the calendar. Before Rosh Chodesh Kislev we brought R' Leibel Groner to tell the children the significance of the day. The children found it fascinating, hearing the story from someone on the 'inside'.

"The kids have to see what shlichus is. They went to Port Washington and R' Sholom Paltiel, the shliach there, told them about shlichus. He took them on a tour of the Chabad house and they enjoyed it very much. They discovered that being a shliach is not only the hardships they had heard about – no Chassidishe environment, no kosher food, no chinuch. They saw what a shliach does, what he builds, and this gave them an entirely different perspective.

"If a child starts out thinking that shlichus entails debts and

loneliness, he won't be interested in going on shlichus. If he sees that shluchim accomplish so much and are successful in what they do, that's another story.

"One of OTEG's great successes is workshops which are actually shiurim on various topics that are delivered in very interesting ways. We called them workshops because that has a different sound to the boys. It's not, "Now we're going to learn about mivtzaim," it's "a mivtzaim workshop." The packaging makes a difference.

"What is a mivtzaim workshop? When you go to someone's office, how do you talk to him, how should you be dressed, basic things that a kid going on mivtzaim needs to know. On Chanuka the children made an exhibit and they took it on mivtzaim.

"An example of another workshop is "Da Ma Sh'tashiv" (Know How to Respond) in which the boys heard answers to questions they are likely to be asked. Rabbi Shloma Majeski gave a workshop on Moshiach and Geula.

"After a workshop there are forms for the boys to fill out which are worth points. The questions that are asked afterwards, on the material that they learned, are worth additional points.

"When the children see that professionalism, they value it. They see that they are being treated with respect, like adults.

"Boys from Oholei Torah volunteered to play basketball with special needs children in the Friendship Circle program, each month with a different class. The teachers were amazed to see eighth graders going all out so that other children, who don't have the ability to play, would win without feeling that they had been allowed to win. The boys acted like shluchim with their mekuravim."



GIVING THEM RESPONSIBILITY

We mentioned responsibility earlier. One of the projects is Ach Gadol in which eighth graders learn with second graders. Before they did so, there was a workshop – a lecture with an expert, and little exhibits that showed them how it will look when they learn together. It was unbelievable.

There were children who didn't want to do it. They didn't think they would be suitable. But after the workshop, that all changed. They had papers to fill out with the instructions they had learned: the child is the only child in the room, talk nicely, look at him, etc.

"I remember that the first time the principal came to see it, he was pleasantly surprised. Second graders, who five minutes earlier were jumping on the tables, were sitting quietly and looking at the eighth grader who was explaining the material to him. The teachers were amazed.

"A lot of work went into it. The Ach Gadol boy in eighth grade has to feel that he has whom to turn to, whom he can consult with if it's not working out with his assigned second grader. You have to work with each pair of boys.

"Someone asked me how I made the pairs and I said I didn't think about it at all beforehand, I just assigned them. Baruch Hashem it's one of the most successful activities. In the past two years we had to make maybe two changes and why only two? Because we gave the eighth graders a challenge and they took it on.

"This led to another project, Mesibos Shabbos. Boys from eighth grade make Mesibos Shabbos for boys in third grade in the house of one of the boys. This was so successful that last year's class asked to continue the Mesibos Shabbos this year too so that this year there



The eighth graders selling s'farim for Hei Teives

will be Mesibos for two grades.

"This idea required a lot of work because you can't just take two eighth graders and give them the responsibility for an entire class. So what we did was have a bachur from zal be present and intervene when necessary. Most of the bachurim did not have to intervene at all.

"Another thing we did was, on Friday, we took all the boys who were going to Mesibos Shabbos and we made them a Mesibos Shabbos. We told a story, sang songs, etc. and this is what the eighth graders did with their charges the next day.

"We also went to the lower grades and warned them that if they made trouble, we would stop the program. After Shabbos we reviewed what happened and we went back to the younger kids in order to warn them again and to show them that we were on top of things.

"It was amazingly successful. The children of the lower grades sat and listened in fascination to the stories that the thirteen year olds told them or played the games that

had been prepared. Many people who had been skeptical at first, admitted that they had been pleasantly surprised. The truth is that the children in both grades were pleasantly surprised too, the third graders by their counselors and the eighth graders by themselves.

"One of the eighth graders who continued to the yeshiva in Staten Island the following year told me that he started making Mesibos Shabbos there – he had had experience in eighth grade.

"The second year of OTEG the program was greatly expanded. Boruch Farber joined the staff and he brought spirit and new ideas which the children love.

"I hope that the goal will be accomplished, that the boys will graduate elementary school and go to mesivta with the necessary chayus in order to grow as true shluchim of the Rebbe. This will surely hasten our main goal – the hisgalus of the Rebbe MH"™!"