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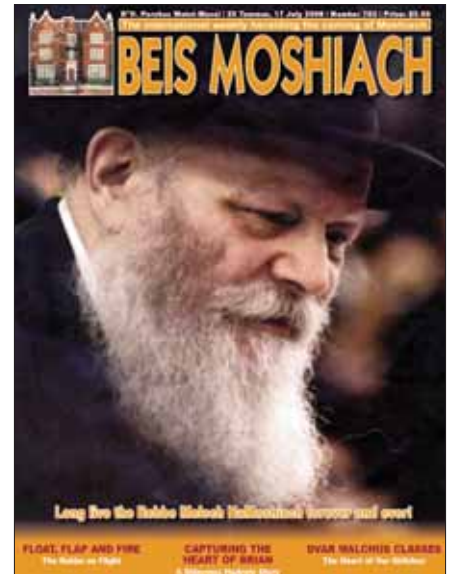
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# THE SOUL'S ODYSSEY

The Baal Shem Tov teaches<sup>[1]</sup> that the 42 journeys recounted in this week's Torah reading are reflected in the lives of every Jew. Birth is equivalent to the exodus from Egypt, and from that point a person makes 42 journeys, until he reaches *Eretz Yisrael*, the sublime Land of Life.

This teaching provokes a question: Several of the journeys featured events that ran contrary to G-d's will. Would Divine Providence structure our lives to follow a pattern that sometimes opposes G-d's will?!

From the Baal Shem Tov's teaching, however, we can infer that the journeys in and of themselves are all phases in holiness. Mankind was given free choice, and it is thus possible to act against G-d's will. The intent, however, is that "You should choose life."<sup>[2]</sup> (Indeed, this command empowers us to *make* the proper choice.) And when this choice is made, all the journeys become stages of ascent.

For example, at the encampment of *Kivros HaTaavah* (the graves of [those possessed by] craving), the Jews buried those who were punished as a result of their lust for meat.<sup>[3]</sup> This encampment had the potential to bring the Jews to an elevated spiritual state, one in which they could "bury craving." But the Jews did not rise to the challenge, and so the forces of evil were able to bring about the outcome described in the Torah.

Every person knows which of the 42 encampments in his life have been used positively, and which have not. With regard to the future, each of us can see to it that every journey leads to a positive goal. This is particularly true if a person "chooses life," thus connecting himself to "the tree of life," the teachings of *P'nimiyus HaTorah*. For *P'nimiyus HaTorah* reveals the good present within every entity, and transforms the negative qualities into positive ones.

Similar concepts apply with regard to *beyn hameitzarim*, the three weeks of mourning between the fall of Jerusalem on the Seventeenth of Tammuz and the destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash* on the Ninth of Av. (*Parshas Masei* is always read during these three weeks.<sup>[4]</sup>) The process which brought about these events was intended to bring the Jews to a spiritual peak.<sup>[5]</sup> But we did not make the proper choices, and the forces of evil were able to transform this potential into a negative pattern.

Consider the Sin of the Golden Calf, which is the source of all the sins which followed it. Our Sages explain<sup>[6]</sup> that this sin came about because, at the Giving of the Torah, the Jews had been granted a vision of "the ox-faced creature" — one of the four archangels leading the Heavenly Chariot.<sup>[7]</sup>

From this, we can see that the event which led to the most severe sin had a source in holiness, and a

potentially holy purpose. And when one desires to "choose life," not only will one not sin, one will be able to tap this positive source. This may lead to a vision of the Heavenly Chariot even more profound than that granted the prophet Yechezkel.<sup>[8]</sup>

To cite another parallel: Yeravam ben Navat is cited<sup>[9]</sup> as the paradigm of one who "himself sinned and caused others to sin." Nevertheless, he was not a simple man. On the contrary, our Sages explain<sup>[10]</sup> that he was able to offer 103 interpretations to the teachings of *Toras Kohanim*.

Similarly, when describing Yeravam's meeting with Achiyah of Shiloh, the *Tanach* states:<sup>[11]</sup> "And he was wearing a new cloak, and the two were alone in the field." Our Sages interpret<sup>[12]</sup> this to mean that Yeravam had achieved new Torah insights which only the two of them could comprehend.

Nevertheless, because of the influence of the forces of evil, Yeravam sank to unique depths, building golden calves for the people to worship. (Herein, there was also a direct connection to his former height, for *eigel*, Hebrew for calf, is numerically equivalent to 103.) If, however, Yeravam had decided to "choose life," he could have used his potential to reach even more elevated peaks.

Similarly, with regard to *beyn hameitzarim* and the events associated with it, were it not for the influence of the forces of evil, this episode would have led to heights of holiness. Moreover, even after the influence of evil has been felt, purposeful sins can be transformed into merits through *teshuvah*.<sup>[13]</sup> And through *teshuvah* we will immediately be redeemed,<sup>[14]</sup> meriting the complete and ultimate Redemption.

At that time, these days will be transformed into days of joy and

celebration.<sup>[15]</sup> From *beyn hameitzarim* (lit. "between the straits"), we will be granted *nachalah bli meitzarim*, "an inheritance without any boundaries,"<sup>[16]</sup> which will be revealed in the near future by *Mashiach*.

(Courtesy of *Sichos in English*.  
Adapted from *Sichos Shabbos Parshas Matos-Masei*, 5719)

1. cited by Degel Machaneh Ephraim, Parshas Masei.
2. Devarim 30:19.
3. See Bamidbar 11:15.
4. See the Sheloh, Cheilek Torah Shebichsav, Parshas Vayeishev which states: "Throughout the year, the festivals have a connection to the Torah portions read at that time."
5. This is evident from the drastic nature of the descent which came about.
6. Shmos Rabbah 42:5.
7. See Yechezkel 1:10.

8. Yalkut Shimoni, Parshas Yisro, sec. 286.
9. Avos 5:18.
10. Sanhedrin 103b.
11. I Melachim 11:29.
12. Sanhedrin 102a.
13. Yoma 86a.
14. Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Teshuvah 7:5; cf. Yoma 86b.
15. Zechariah 8:19; Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Taanios 5:19.
16. Cf. Shabbos 118a.

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Upon this statement I affix my signature, Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> 1amuz 5766



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# FLOAT, FLAP AND FIRE

By Aryeh Gotfryd

The epic wanderings of the Israelites through the desert started with a unique miracle. While the 42 trips from Ramses to the Plains of Jericho were all land roving (even the one through the Reed Sea), the preliminary trip that brought them all to Ramses was something else, a kind of a super-quick local flight that is earlier described in the Chumash as “on the wings of eagles.”

Now 3,300 years later, after our individual and collective wanderings throughout history, we too are poised for redemption, positioned at the “Plains of Jericho,” ready to enter the land in the true and complete redemption with the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach at our head.

And since we’ve reached the time of “As in the days of your going out from Egypt, I will show you wonders,” it’s no great surprise that nearly all the millions of Jews that have come to Israel in recent years have flown there, albeit not on eagles’ wings nor on “clouds of heaven,” but airborne nonetheless.

And wondrous it is, for after all, commercial jetliners only started to ‘take off’ in the 1950’s. Hardly 50 years earlier, the Wright Brothers tested the first airplane, and before then, even the famed scientist, Lord Kelvin, declared that “Heavier-than-air flying machines are impossible.”

Back in the 19th Century, only

lighter-than-air craft like those disaster-prone dirigibles and zeppelins were thought to be feasible. Now in the 21st Century, we have even seen the advent of space tourism, using rockets to propel us beyond the stratosphere.

The Rebbe watched this evolution of modern man’s conquest of the skies and derives lessons in divine service from each of these diverse technologies, as you can see from this fascinating . In the meantime here are my thoughts, flighty as they might be.

## FLOAT

The airships of the 19th Century worked on the basis what is called Archimedes’ Principle. This ancient Greek shouted, “Eureka! - I discovered it!” when he noticed that an object immersed in water displaces a volume equal to its own. Now if the object weighs less than the weight of the water it displaced, the object floats, but if it weighs more, it sinks.

This helps explain how it is that a small ball of metal will sink to the bottom of the sea while a gigantic ocean liner made of the same metal will float. The trick is that the ocean liner is shaped in such a way to hold a lot of air, making its average density less than that of water, and so it floats.

Blimps and helium balloons work

the same way - except they float in air instead of water. The gases inside are less dense than the air around so they float upward. A balloon won’t go up forever, though, because once it reaches thinner air way up high, the densities inside and out are comparable and the balloon holds its height. If you then let out the gases, the balloon deflates and falls.

What can we learn from boats and balloons?

We all get overwhelmed sometimes and when the burden gets too heavy, we drown in our problems and sink into a bad mood. Here are two things you can do to restore your buoyancy and rise above it all.

First, get inspired. Technically speaking, inspiration means to inhale, breathe in. Swimmers and scuba divers will tell you that once you’ve got air inside of you, up you will go. If you let go some of the emotional baggage and generate some ruach, you will lighten up and that will give you the lift you need.

Second, realize that heat rises. Pound for pound, hot air is lighter because it expands. When you act more enthusiastic and expansive, you will overcome your inertia and your elevated spirits will move you to a whole new level.

## FLAP

These days, if flight is your aim, planes are your game - no wings, no go. All the human ingenuity in the world could not come up with a better plan than to mimic the moulding and motions of birds’ wings.

The first feature is the shape, what we might call aerodynamic. Whether avian or aviator, wings are typically rounded on top and pretty much flat on the bottom. The result is that when a bird or plane flies, the air over the wing moves more quickly and therefore exerts less pressure downward. The greater



upward pressure from the relatively still air below results in a lift force that raises the bird or aircraft. This is called Bernoulli's Principle.

The second wing thing is the flapping motion that planes can't do, the downward push that generates an equal and opposite upward reaction, raising the bird upward. But what planes lack in wing muscle and flexibility, they make up in speed-generated lift. Moving ahead is the key.

If I were to wing a lesson for life from all this it would be this: To lift your self up, keep moving ahead. One would think the elevated upper surface of the wing would slow things down, not speed them up but that's not true. The curved wing teaches us two things - First, that if there is a greater distance to travel and a limited amount of time, you can get there faster. And second, alacrity doesn't create more pressure. On the contrary, it minimizes it, and that's an uplifting thought.

## FIRE

Flying is a dream come true, but with floating and flapping we are limited to travels in the atmosphere around the earth. If we really want to transcend, the out-of-this world experience is with rockets. With no air to hold you up or to push down against, your only recourse is self-propulsion, the modality of rocket ships. Firing up the ignition chambers gives you a push in every direction but one ... down, and that sends you on high with or without an atmosphere to support you or oppose you.

One lesson from this is self-reliance. If the goal is to go higher, farther and faster, you must realize that ultimately you go it alone. At some point there's no one to hold you up, nor anyone to hold you back. We are competing only against ourselves. But for this you need

special fuel and lots of it, a very strong vessel, and firepower. The purest motivational fuel is chassidus, a refined personality is the vessel, and heartfelt prayer provides the ignition.

As the Geulah unfolds, we will

experience divine revelations transcending even those at Sinai. Back then it was overpowering - our souls flew backwards. This time, we are ready - so much so that already now we are flying forward to greet it, may it happen immediately NOW!

## THE REBBE ON FLIGHT

The developers of the first "flying machines" were faced with two options:

a) Using materials that are lighter than air (such as hot air, hydrogen, etc.). This is similar to Maimonides' statement that wood floats because it is lighter than the water.

b) Copying birds' movements: Pushing the air creates pressure, which lifts the aircraft.

Although the first method seems to be easier and more reliable, the second method is the one that was favored, and it is the main method of aviation nowadays.

In spiritual terms:

It is impossible to achieve true upward movement without opposition. Just as the air's opposition is employed to create a stronger upward movement than that which could be obtained using flotation, so too for a person to transcend the materialism of the world and get closer to G-d, it is not enough to involve the good inclination alone. It is specifically through the evil inclination's opposition, and the resultant extra drive to overcome it, that one attains a more powerful lift and hence greater heights.

According to Chassidut, the reason that air at lower altitudes is warmer than higher air masses is that sunlight is strengthened when reflected by the ground. This is the advantage of a "reflected light" — which is strengthened upon facing opposition — over a "direct light" which has only its own strength. This, too, is the advantage of the Divine service of those who have faced adversity and overcome it — Ba'alei Teshuva (returnees [to G-d]; literally, Masters of Return) — over those who were righteous all along.

All of the above is true only where there is an atmosphere. What is done where there is no atmosphere, or where the density of the air is very low? How can one generate upward movement in the absence of resistance? How can one travel in space?

Rather than dwelling on the scientific solution to this problem, we will focus instead on the spiritual analogue of such a mode of divine service. The prophet tells us that in the future all evil will be banished from the world. How then will we be able to continue ascending from level to level within goodness and holiness in the absence of opposition?

The absence of external opposition itself will create an internal, self-generated pressure within holiness itself. The attribute of chessed (loving-kindness) flows from above to below, i.e., from giver to recipient. Gevurah (stringency), on the other hand, is expressed through elevation, and a yearning for that which is higher. Through harmoniously blending the two and serving G-d in both directions — a service which is an expression of the attribute of tiferet (splendor) — an "upward movement" is created. Thus, without any "external push," one is able to reach ever higher, until the ultimate goal, when "Israel, the Torah, and the Holy One blessed be He, are all one."

*From Mind Over Matter: The Lubavitcher Rebbe on Science, Technology and Medicine, p.288-290.*

# KEEPING THE KING'S WORD

By Nosson Avrohom

Translated By Michoel Leib Dobry

*Classes in “D’var Malchus,” the Rebbe’s sichos of 5751-5752, are spreading all over Eretz Yisroel. “Beis Moshiach” interviewed three chassidim who told us about the classes they give and the influence that “D’var Malchus” has upon those who study it*

The amazing and wonderful fact is that classes in “D’var Malchus” are starting up virtually on a weekly basis throughout Eretz Yisroel and countless thousands of Jews from every sector and from all walks of life are participating. Even so, we hear the famous (or infamous) complaint time and time again: Why focus so much on those more recent “D’var Malchus” sichos, when it’s so out of proportion to all the other talks the Rebbe gave during more than forty years?

In response to this vexing question, I heard a brilliant response from Rabbi **Chaim Levi Yitzchak Ginsberg**:

“There are two main ideas to consider. First, in 5710, after the histalkus of the Rebbe Rayatz, the Rebbe, MH”M, made farbrengens throughout the year and consistently emphasized one central

point: During the last year of his visible life in this physical world, the Rebbe Rayatz had provided all the answers to all questions. The Rebbe even went so far as to say that he searches for and finds the answers to all the questions that people ask in the sichos of the last year. ‘If only *Anash*, particularly the *T’mimim*, would be strict in observing the words of my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, even the *sichos*, particularly from 5710 and the year before,’ the Rebbe said, explaining that there can never be a situation where the Rebbe leaves his chassidim without answers.

“All this was in 5710, a year when there was a histalkus and there was a new Rebbe and a new source for hearing maamarim, sichos, and answers, yet the Rebbe still said that we should look for and find them there. This applies all

the more today, after Gimmel Tammuz 5754, when we are certain that the Rebbe continues to lead us in all matters, and specifically for this reason, we want to hear sichos and maamarim today. Every Jew and every chassid, regardless of their opinions and the level of their understanding, wants to know what the Rebbe wants from him today. The Rebbe thereby says that the answers are found in the most recent sichos that we were privileged to hear. This is the clear and simple meaning.

“Another point: After the well-known sicha of ‘Do everything in your ability’, the Rebbe began to explain about the need to learn the subject of ‘Moshiach and the Redemption’ and particularly the teachings of the leader of the generation. Naturally, all of the sichos throughout the years are important and vital, but not all of them are about the situation in which we find ourselves today. If we want to know what our situation is today and what is the correct way to deal with it, the answer is written primarily in the sichos of 5751-5752. Thus, we see clearly that someone who lives with “D’var Malchus” possesses the strength to deal most successfully with the reality of the doubled and redoubled darkness that we find ourselves in today.”

\*

The fact is that recently there has been a major reawakening in the study of the subject of Moshiach and the Redemption in general, and “D’var Malchus” in particular. We decided to take a survey of this phenomenon from a variety of aspects, meeting with three active and vigorous chassidim in this area of concentration: Rabbi **Boruch Sabag** of Tzfas, Rabbi **Yosef Yitzchak Zilberstrom** of Lod, and Rabbi **Yosef Avraham Pizem** of Kiryat Shmuel. The common

denominator among them is the intense thirst that they feel among those who participate in their classes on these subjects.

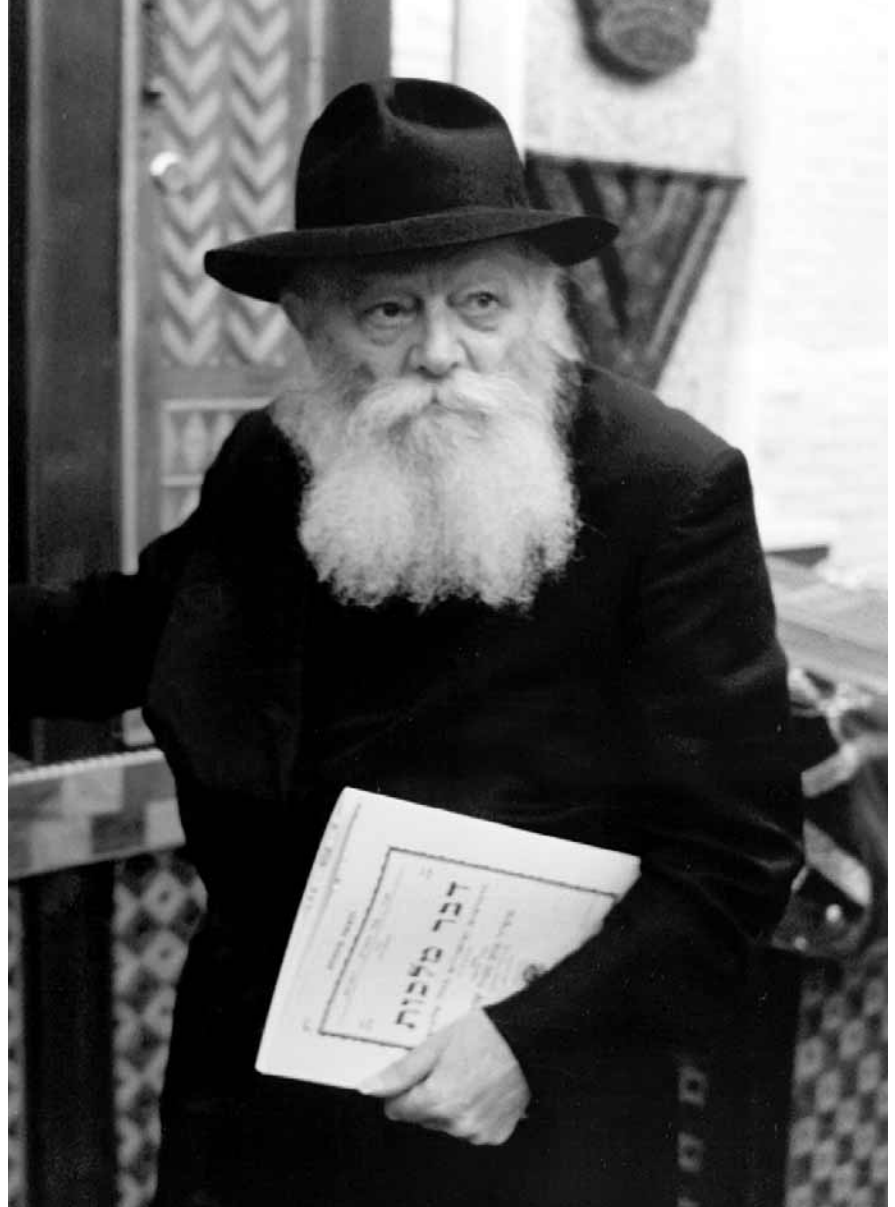
**When was your class established and how is it conducted?**

**Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Zilberstrom:** I have been privileged to give a class in the shul of the Chabad community in Rechovot each Wednesday. This shiur was established two years ago by one of the avreichim who lived in Rechovot at the time, Rabbi Yoel Rosen. I give the class in a clear and flowing style as I try to spend a little time on each concept that requires some explanation. In general, we make an effort to learn the entire sicha, and during those weeks when the sicha is particularly long or due to the shortness of time, we learn as much as possible and then ask the avreichim to complete the sicha on Shabbos.

**Rabbi Yosef Avraham Pizem:** There are two classes in Kiryat Shmuel; the one held in the shul, where the community's avreichim and other people close to Chabad participate, has been taking place for several years now. The shiur had been held previously on Thursday nights, but it was moved a few years ago to Shabbos afternoon. I give another class in the yeshiva.

Since it is difficult to learn the entire weekly sicha in depth, I provide a form of synopsis for each of these classes, concentrating on an interesting point that encompasses the sicha's primary theme. Each week, I choose a specific concept in chassidus and expound upon it in greater depth.

**Rabbi Boruch Sabag:** We founded the class during the week of Parshas VaYechi 5758, and we are now in the midst of our twelfth year. Since then, with the help of G-d, not a week has gone by without conducting this shiur. Even



***'If only Anash, particularly the T'mimim, would be strict in observing the words of my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, even the sichos, particularly from 5710 and the year before,' the Rebbe said, explaining that there can never be a situation where the Rebbe leaves his chassidim without answers.***

during the difficult days of the Second Lebanon War, when Katyusha rockets were falling all over the city, we held firm, and the

class took place as scheduled. We know that the success of this shiur has produced many more such classes throughout the country.



There were chassidim who took part in the class and were so impressed that they copied the format in their own cities.

I previously served as a rosh kollel, and the avreichim came to me and asked that we establish such a class in accordance with the instructions of the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach, to hasten the Redemption. I happily acceded to the request, and we started with six students. Today, each weekly class produces sixty or seventy participants and there have even been occasions when there were two to three hundred people in attendance! In most years, I would learn the sicha and then give an explanation. However, in recent years, we began to implement the approach of “*Ot ot kumt Moshiach*”. Each participant reads a section of the sicha and gives an explanation, and according to the need, I add and expound upon it with particular emphasis.

**Just as your faces are different, so are your views. What is the common denominator that speaks to the heart of each of you?**

**Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Zilberstrom:** I would like to make a certain point clear before I get to the heart of your question. As much as we learn and review the “D’var Malchus” sichos, it is still possible to learn them several more times and get an even deeper understanding. We find that we understand the sicha better each time we learn it. The sichos contain very deep and complicated concepts alongside easier and more understandable matters and therefore, it has something for every audience. Every week that we learn the “D’var Malchus”, we reveal and develop new information.

**Rabbi Yosef Avraham Pizem:** It’s much easier these days than it was before to teach the “D’var Malchus” sichos to all sectors



**Rabbi Yosef Avraham Pizem:** *It changed his position on the subject completely. I always say that we must read the Rebbe’s words inside and state them exactly as they appear – not in a manner of conflict, but simply to read them. When we say things from the heart clearly and plainly, it enters the hearts of the listeners.*

within the community. Today, there is the “D’var Malchus” with commentaries that make it much easier to learn and understand the sicha, similar to those sefarim comprised of summaries of the various sichos. This is most helpful not only to those who have only recently begun studying chassidus,

but also for veteran chassidim who have neither sufficient time nor the ability to invest in acquiring a deeper understanding of the sicha. Obviously, the maggid shiur must prepare the class properly in advance.

From my personal experience, one “D’var Malchus” sicha can produce four or five deeper and more extensive classes, depending upon the specific audience. However, we have to look for appropriate stories, pearls of wisdom, and other interesting episodes to make the class more appealing and enable the participants to understand the material better. In my humble opinion, there is a need to stop periodically and expound at greater length on the “sensational” expressions the Rebbe uses in many of these sichos, all of which infuse us with spiritual strength and vitality. In general, I determine the level of depth for each “D’var Malchus” session, according to the type of audience in attendance.

**Rabbi Boruch Sabag:** It’s impossible for everyone to understand a given sicha in the same manner. In some communities, they skip over most of the sicha and concentrate on select portions. We read the entire sicha, which takes at least two hours of study to complete – and not everyone comes for the beginning and stays until the end. Therefore, in order to handle such a situation, we give special emphasis to the opening section of the sicha, where the Rebbe lays the foundations upon which all the questions that follow are built. After he poses all the questions, the Rebbe then brings another section where he presents the central point that will provide explanations to all the questions.

Even in this section, I customarily take a little longer time to show how by understanding it, all



the questions will be answered. As the sicha continues, the Rebbe proceeds to explain at greater length exactly how these questions are resolved. However, at this stage of our weekly class, we have already answered all the posed questions and we show how it all connects with the initial foundation that the Rebbe laid at the start of the sicha. Each time, I try to clarify the sicha's main theme in the best way possible, removing any confusion from the shiur's participants and leaving a clear interpretation of the sicha's underlying message.

**How do you succeed in learning each year in a manner of 'it should be new in your eyes'?**

**Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Zilberstrom:** The Rebbe says that our generation has a special and unique shlichus unlike any other: The leader of our generation says, "All of you stand ready for the True and Complete Redemption." Our generation has a shlichus and a special quality over other generations, and the Rebbe simply provides all the explanations and answers we need during these times in the sichos of 5751-5752. As a result, we must open up these sichos and learn them, week after week.

When we learn them, there is less friction and fewer arguments between people. All the problems start when we don't learn and we don't know what the Rebbe wants from us. I was speaking with one of the avreichim on the subject of Moshiach, and he told me he knows quite well what the Rebbe says in those sichos. "When was the last time you learned these sichos?" I asked him. "Eleven years ago," he replied. Maybe he has a photographic memory, but I don't. Not long after I learn the sicha, I already notice how certain details and points leave me... "Do you mean to say that you build your



**Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Zilberstrom:** *A highly respected Anash member once told me that the Rebbe never said that he was Moshiach. "Come, let me show you," I replied. In Chayei Sara 5752, the Rebbe says that the Moshiach of the generation is the leader of the generation, "my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe," and in an unedited sicha, he says, "and by the same token, the continuation of the successor who follows him afterwards." How can there be a greater reference than that?*

entire understanding of such an essential and fundamental matter on how you learned it eleven years ago?" I queried.

A highly respected Anash member once told me that the Rebbe never said that he was Moshiach. "Come, let me show you," I replied. In the sicha from the International Shluchim Conference (Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sara 5752), the Rebbe says that the Moshiach of the generation is the leader of the generation, "my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe", and in an unedited sicha, the Rebbe says, "and by the same token, the continuation of the successor who follows him afterwards." How can there be a greater reference than that? Yet, we continue to face many trials, as we struggle on how to respond not only to people outside of Chabad, but also inquiries made by members of our own household. Let's take an example from the sicha of Parshas Korach, where the Rebbe says that if people come and ask what the world will say about such matters, the simple message is that the world is already prepared to accept the loftiest revelations.

**Rabbi Yosef Avraham Pizem:** Technically speaking, the Vaad Chayolei Beis Dovid started putting out the 5751 sichos with hanachos, and they even added a diary with new observations of the Rebbe's day-to-day activities from that year, including how and when he delivered his public statements. You knew which nigunim the Rebbe asked everyone to sing before and after each sicha, and what events had occurred around the time the sicha was delivered. This gives a new vitality and dynamism to the study thanks to the additional stories and chronicles that revolve around each sicha.

If you properly learn these sichos in depth, each time you reveal new things that you didn't

notice the previous year. Plus each year you can focus on a different aspect or topic with numerous examples and commentaries.

**Rabbi Boruch Sabag:** We don't specifically 'try' to make it different every time. It comes as a natural result of studying the "D'var Malchus". When we learn the sichos again each year, we notice things that we didn't notice in previous years, as if we were talking about a new sicha. We see things totally differently, and they reveal a "new face" to us. This especially the case since we are speaking about many different teachers – each of whom illumines the subject from his own unique viewpoint.

We see that these are not just some nice "vertlach", but concepts manifest in the physical world, and this principle is revealed to you only when you learn year after year, when every sicha appears in an entirely different context. In the earlier years, we focused upon learning the sicha itself, which proved to be most difficult. As the years passed, and learning the sicha became easier, we began to notice that all the "D'var Malchus" sichos were actually one long continual process, as had been customary among the previous Rebbeim. Today, we can see things from the overall perspective and the length and breadth of all the sichos, according to the learning approach of the Rogatchover Gaon, who gave his interpretations only after the whole picture, in its entirety, lay before him.

**Can you tell us about the influence that these classes have upon their participants?**

**Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Zilberstrom:** The influence is great, as all doubts disappear and everything becomes clear and obvious. When we learn "D'var Malchus", we are confronted by the shlichus that the Rebbe designated



**Rabbi Boruch Sabag**

for us in this generation. In addition to all the instructions and guidance, the Rebbe explains the innovation of these times: We must take concrete steps for all Jews to greet Moshiach in actual deed, adding that the leader of the generation is the Moshiach of the generation. Naturally, we must do this "in an acceptable manner", but what exactly does "in an acceptable manner" mean? When we say such things from the heart with pure faith – it is also accepted in the heart of others.

Many ask the paradoxical question: On the one hand, we heard clear statements from the Rebbe. But in practical terms, we look around in the world and see something else. Thus, the question is: How do we relate to what the Rebbe says, in the face of what our physical eyes see? The Rebbe then prepared us on the last Gimmel Tammuz that we were privileged to hear a sicha (5751) by stating that this day was established as an everlasting day of redemption.

The influence from studying "D'var Malchus" is the removal of all uncertainties. In the unedited sicha of "V'Ata Tetzaveh", the Rebbe says that the leader of the generation must exist as a soul within a body. Similarly, we find in two maamarim from 5714, delivered on Acharon Shel Pesach and Shabbos Mevarchim Iyar respectively, in which the Rebbe

speaks twice about three generations: Chanoch, Moshe, and Moshiach. Chanoch arose in a Heavenly tempest, thus creating a change in his body, Moshe Rabbeinu required burial and thus went up to Mt. Nevo, whereas Moshiach will live, as a soul within a body.

**Rabbi Yosef Avraham Pizem:** "D'var Malchus" has a very great influence. I can tell you a story that I personally experienced in connection with the Rebbe's amazing sicha from Parshas Tazria-Metzora, in which he speaks about the identity of Moshiach. Our extended family spent that Shabbos at the home of my brother Shimshon, who serves as the rav of a Sephardic shul in the city's HaTamarim neighborhood, in honor of his son's bar-mitzvah. The community that he leads has a most favorable opinion of Chabad chassidus and the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach, except for one Jew who generally likes Chabad – until he hears about the subject of Moshiach, which provokes his strong opposition.

This particular Shabbos naturally brought many Chabad avreichim to the shul, which aroused his ire even more. As a rule, my brother tries to steer clear of any confrontations that might awaken the forces of discord, but on this Shabbos, it proved unavoidable. Thus, in this very delicate situation, I was asked to give a drasha after Shacharis. I gave over the Rebbe's sicha from "D'var Malchus", and I didn't neglect to mention the concept that the Rebbe discusses regarding the identity of Moshiach. I naturally included all the relevant sources, explanations, parables, and other examples from generations past. This Jew listened to my words and the evidential proofs that I brought, exactly as stated in the Rebbe's sicha – and

silently accepted.

When he and the others saw that I wasn't making anything up, rather I was reading the Rebbe's sicha and bringing all the relevant sources, it broke the ice. The man understood that he can make no complaints against such an approach, and it changed his position on the subject completely. I always say that we must read the Rebbe's words inside and state them exactly as they appear – not in a manner of conflict, but simply to read them. When we say things from the heart clearly and plainly, it enters the hearts of the listeners.

A person can literally waste away without "D'var Malchus". A Jew who belongs to the "knitted-kippa" community once told me: "Listen, Rabbi Pizem, the whole concept of davening is quite difficult for me because it repeats itself every day." This Jew was quite learned and intelligent, a graduate of the yeshiva world, yet he had one problem – he never learned the inner meaning of t'filla. If he would have learned "VaAni S'fillasi" and the other sichos and maamarim of the Rebbe and the previous Rebbeim about the great quality of t'filla, he never would have encountered this difficulty. Similarly, we find with "D'var Malchus", which we learn and internalize at great depth, doing

so each time with renewed vitality.

**Rabbi Boruch Sabag:** It provides a tremendous influence, and I could sit for long hours and tell you a lot of amazing stories. Like this one for example. At the end of each weekly class, we customarily give tz'daka and write to the Rebbe via "Igros Kodesh". We are stringent about putting plenty of "farbaisien" on the table, something that encourages Jews to come and experience the taste of "D'var Malchus".

On one occasion, a young yeshiva dropout came, stood by the side and openly ridiculed the custom of writing to the Rebbe, making a joke out of the whole thing. He even had the nerve to declare that he no longer puts on t'fillin and doesn't believe in any of these things anymore. I asked him to sit near me, but he refused. In the meantime, we opened to a letter in "Igros Kodesh", and the thrilling and heart stopping answer we received amazed even me. The Rebbe was writing to a bochur who decided to leave yeshiva, and he explained why he thinks the bochur is making a mistake. I read the answer out loud, and the young man listened and couldn't believe his ears. He clearly got the message. The very next day, he had already begun putting on t'fillin again and

asked one of the shiur participants to learn Chitas with him each day. As time progressed, he went back to study in yeshiva, and today he is a Chabad avreich in every respect with a proper chassidic family... Everything began with an answer that he was privileged to receive at a "D'var Malchus" class. In general, many Jews who regularly participate in these classes become Chabad chassidim.

In addition to bringing Jews outside of Chabad closer to the warm radiance of the Rebbe, as expressed in the "D'var Malchus" sichos, it also creates a greater sense of brotherhood, friendship, and unity among Anash.

Studying "D'var Malchus" can be compared to a woman whose husband on a journey overseas had written her a generous k'suba that she looks at all the time, and during the hard times when she feels alone and destitute, it gives her the strength she needs to hold firm, knowing that he will return. By the same token, the Rebbe also gave us the "D'var Malchus" sichos just before this frightful period of hiding and concealment. That gives us the faith and trust in the immediate hisgalus of Melech HaMoshiach, and the actual study of it only strengthens our certainty, our prayer and the longing.

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# THE REBBE'S KOSHER L'MEHADRIN CHILD

By Nosson Avraham

Translated By Michoel Leib Dobry

"Zeev'ele is the Rebbe's child." These deeply emotional words came from Mrs. **Ariela Sandroi**, living today on the settlement of Yitzhar with the blessing of the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach.

The Sandroi couple merited two thrilling wonders regarding their first-born son, Zeev. The first occurred when he was still in his mother's womb, and the second when he was only a child. These two events represented for them the clearest possible realization of the Rebbe's blessing and his prophetic vision.

Despite the fact that all this happened twenty-five years ago, Mrs. Sandroi's voice became choked with emotion when we asked her to relate these two stories to us.

## CHECK THE T'FILLIN AS WELL

"The first amazing story took place when I was expecting Zeev. These were very difficult and nearly unbearable months. Almost the whole time, I was hospitalized with a high-risk pregnancy. We were then living in Kiryat Arba, and my husband had become very close to Chabad and the Rebbe with the help of the shliach and chief rabbi of Arad, Rabbi Ben-Zion Lipsker. In contrast to my husband, I had minimal familiarity with Chabad,

just a little through Mrs. Kupchik, who was on the teaching staff at the Kfar Pines prep school where I studied. She would tell us about the Rebbe and chassidus, leaving me with a good feeling about Chabad – but nothing more than that.

"Before agreeing to our shidduch, my husband asked me to write a letter to the Rebbe. Before the wedding, I sent the Rebbe an invitation and received a response with a bracha. My husband also received an amazing letter with a concluding line of instructions, but in all honesty, I had yet to grasp fully the concept of 'Rebbe'. I sent an invitation because my husband had requested that I do so, but when I was privileged to receive an answer, I didn't feel anything out of the ordinary. It was only after I merited to experience a series of amazing and prophetic miracles from the Rebbe that I began to understand and internalize deeply that a Rebbe is not just a rabbi, but a faithful shepherd who foresees everything in the world from start to finish.

"Throughout this difficult pregnancy, there were many moments when I already felt that I couldn't go on any longer. This was a complex and nagging feeling that only a woman who had gone through it could understand. During those months, my husband wrote to

the Rebbe several times about the situation and asked for his blessing that everything should work out. We were privileged to receive an answer from the Rebbe every two months – four letters, all of which contained the same instruction: check t'fillin and mezuzos, together with a bracha that I should merit to complete my pregnancy to term.

"Each time I received such a letter, we would quickly send the mezuzos to the *sofer STaM* to have them checked. For some reason, it never crossed our minds to send my husband's t'fillin, purchased just a few months earlier from Rabbi Lipsker, to be checked as well. We were certain that this was a standard reply from the Rebbe that he sends to those requesting his assistance, in order that they should be a proper 'vessel' to receive a bracha. Furthermore, the t'fillin were totally brand new, bought from a most reliable source. Why the need to check them?

"Naturally, we wouldn't think that way today, as we now know that every word of the Rebbe has meaning. Then, however, as we were taking our first steps into the world of Chabad chassidus, that was the way we thought.

"We were truly surprised that the mezuzos were found to be kosher at each check, while on the other hand, the aches and pains



connected with my pregnancy continued and even intensified.

“Around this time, the Israel Defense Forces’ Operation Peace for the Galilee commenced, and my husband, who was an air force reservist, got his mobilization orders and was placed on alert at an airbase in Tel Nof. The lengthy periods of separation led us to the decision to move from Kiryat Arba to Rechovot, located close to the base. In addition, a lively and vibrant Chabad community was taking root in Rechovot, led by the Rebbe’s shliach, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Gluckowsky.

“At a certain stage, during the seventh month of my pregnancy, I was forced to vacate my hospital bed and rest at the home of my relatives, due to the shortage of hospital beds as a result of the war. After several more days of bed rest, I woke up one morning and suddenly felt that I could turn around without any discomfort. All the nagging feelings of pain that I had endured during those months had completely vanished. A few hours later, when I realized that this was a long-term improvement in my condition, not just a momentary respite, I decided to go back home.

“This was a simply marvelous feeling. All the physical agony that I suffered for months had disappeared as if it had never been there. I was unable to update my husband on this amazing and incredible change, since he was still on reserve duty and the available means of communications back then were still quite minimal and antiquated. Home telephones were not sufficiently widespread, and who would ever dream of mobile phones? I sat and waited impatiently for an opportunity to let my husband know about the good news.

“One night, he came into the house, looked at me, and before I



could open my mouth, he said, ‘Am I right that everything worked out?’ Chills went up my spine. I nodded my head, stunned how he already knew.

“He immediately began to tell me what happened. He said that during his reserve duty, a thought suddenly jumped into his mind: While the Rebbe had written him

four times about checking t’fillin and mezuzos, he actually only had the mezuzos checked, whereas the t’fillin stayed in the house. He then quickly gave in his t’fillin to be checked, and shortly thereafter, the checker told him that he had been putting on unkosher t’fillin, as the word ‘bincha’ (your son) appeared twice consecutively in the same



sentence in one of the parchments. Great excitement gripped him in the face of this discovery. The Rebbe saw through his *ruach ha'kodesh* what needed to be repaired; it just took us a long time to understand this... We could have spared ourselves so much suffering if we had realized this before...

"The conclusion that we drew from this incident was that when the Rebbe writes or says something, we must obey without mixing in our own personal feelings or thoughts.

"About a month later, our son Zeev entered the world in a easy birth without complications, and not as the doctors had estimated throughout the long months of pregnancy."

### HA'LEVI, OR NOT...

"In the meantime, we continued living in Rechovot, strengthening ourselves more and more in all matters pertaining to *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe, including the acceptance of many Chabad customs and

rituals. My husband, who had still been wearing a knitted kippa, replaced it with a black yarmulke and started donning a kapote and a Chabad-style fedora. For my part, I decided to begin wearing a sheitel.

"Right after the bris, we began to make preparations for the pidyon ha'ben, when my husband suddenly heard that a Levi is exempt from this ceremony. He then immediately had a vague flash of recollection from his youth, which told him that his family belonged to the tribe of Levi.

"He quickly called his mother and inquired regarding what she knew on the matter. After thinking about it for a while, she told him that she also thinks that his father was a Levi. My husband then asked her to rummage and search through all her documents, and she eventually found something from his father's bar-mitzvah that states clearly that he indeed was a Levi...

"We wrote about this to the Rebbe, and in the subsequent letters that my husband was privileged to

receive from the Rebbe, there appeared after his name the title 'HaLevi'."

### "THE REBBE'S CHILD" CAN'T MANAGE WITH NON-KOSHER FOOD

"The other miracle that we experienced with our first-born son was truly amazing and very exciting. Despite the fact that we were already very involved with Chabad, we were still unaware of various stringencies and precisions in matters of *kashrus*. I hadn't fully understood and internalized the deep meaning behind eating kosher *l'mehadrin*. I would buy various snacks and treats that had not been manufactured under the strictest *kashrus* supervision, and then give them to my son to eat. Of course, in the case of more significant food products, such as meat and poultry, I would stringently buy only those with special *kashrus* certification. Yet, here too, I took certain leniencies. For example, when my

parents would come for a visit and bring a chicken with them, I wouldn't raise any objection to preparing it for supper.

"I recall on numerous occasions when my mother would innocently bring chocolates and other candies without a proper Bedatz hechsher, and in order not to hurt her feelings, I would let her give them to Zeev to eat. However, since he was 'the Rebbe's child', his body and soul were extremely sensitive. Every time he ate such things, it would make him vomit. It was quite shocking to see. A day did not go by without him vomiting or suffering from stomach pains. When we realized that this was not just some passing symptom, we rushed to bring him to the Assuta Children's Hospital in Tel Aviv. When they heard our description and conducted their own tests, they determined that he was suffering from some problem in his head, but all their efforts to back up these findings through x-rays and more comprehensive examinations proved unsuccessful.

"The doctors arranged several CT scans and repeated ear examinations for him. They used all available medical tools to pinpoint the problem and reveal what was causing him to throw up every time after eating, but to no avail. It reached a certain point when they simply clasped their hands and admitted that they were unable to find the source of the problem. I remember that day as if it was only yesterday. We sat down and wrote a detailed letter to the Rebbe regarding everything that had happened over the past few months and how the doctors seemed helpless to explain the disorder. After we finished composing the letter, we faxed it to the Rebbe's secretariat in Brooklyn.

"Less than twenty-four hours

***"We didn't waste a moment. Immediately upon receiving the answer, we rushed to the rav of the Chabad community... In his characteristically gentle tone, he explained all the various hechsherim that we are allowed to use and those which are off limits. That same evening, I threw out a sizable quantity of food from my kitchen cabinets and refrigerator... What happened afterwards was simply unbelievable.***

after we sent the letter, we received an answer via Rabbi Segal in Afula. The Rebbe's instructions were to be more stringent in matters of kashrus.

"We didn't waste a moment. Immediately upon receiving the answer, we rushed to the rav of the Chabad community of Rechovot, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Gluckowsky, and asked him to give us an explanation of all the fine nuances in kashrus and where we

must be stringent. In his characteristically gentle tone, he explained all the various hechsherim that we are allowed to use and those which are off limits. That same evening, I threw out a sizable quantity of food from my kitchen cabinets and refrigerator.

"I updated my mother on all the stringencies in kashrus we had decided to accept upon ourselves. What happened afterwards was simply unbelievable – not some fascinating tale, but an actual event that took place in our home and which we experienced for ourselves. That night after supper, our son didn't throw up. This was an amazing and new phenomenon after a lengthy period of time when everything he ate came up every night. Even the stomach pains had stopped, as if they had never existed. Once when he did feel abdominal discomfort, we discovered that he had put some food without a proper hechsher in his mouth.

"The Rebbe had accompanied him during the pregnancy, when he was a young child, and continues to accompany him to this very day..."

Zeev Sandroi has already merited to establish his own home, and he confirms all the details in this story. He adds that every time he feels a pain in his stomach, it turns out that he had unknowingly eaten something that did not have the best level of kashrus.

"The Rebbe gave me a tried and true gauge to know when the food I eat is properly mehadrin," says Zeev as he concludes the amazing chain of miracle stories begun by his mother, Ariela.

Fortunate are we to be chassidim of the Rebbe, Chabad chassidim, connected to the leader of the generation, Melech HaMoshiach, who directs us along the high road to the House of G-d.



# BORN TO SHLICHUS

By Chani Nussbaum

*The story of a multi-generational shlichus where mesirus nefesh is daily fare \* An interview with shlucha, Mrs. Chaya Nisselevitz of Aubervilliers, France*

A Breslover Chassid and a Lubavitcher Chassid went up before the Heavenly Court after 120 years. Both of them were judged to gehinnom. The Breslover shouted: R' Nachman, you promised that you would take us out of gehinnom by our pei'os! R' Nachman came, pulled him by his pei'os and took him out of gehinnom.

Seeing this, the Lubavitcher began to shout: Rebbe, keep your promise! The Rebbe replied: I will keep my promise but you open a Chabad house here in the meantime.

The Kalmanson parents went through the Nazi and communist hells without breaking and even started the mosad called Shneur in Aubervilliers. Their children have taken over their shlichus and we spoke with their daughter-in-law, Mrs. Miriam Kalmanson and their daughter, Mrs. Chaya Nisselevitz. Chaya Nisselevitz was born on 11 Nissan which is perhaps how she merited such special kocho for this big shlichus.

## EARLY DAYS

Mrs. Chaya Nisselevitz relates:

The shlichus in Aubervilliers, which is north of Paris, began in 1960 when my parents arrived here after more than ten years of wandering, like many refugees who escaped from Russia and then from the Germans.

They came with a group of Lubavitcher refugees and settled here with the help of the American Joint Distribution Committee. The refugees got their lives in order with some of them continuing on to America and some remaining in Paris.

About fifteen families found homes here in a new building with each apartment consisting of four rooms. This was wonderful for refugees who were used to living with a several families in a cramped apartment. Near this building, the refugees were given another building which housed their shul. A small community formed.

Rabbi Leib Adelman came in

1961. Shortly after he arrived, he wrote a report to the Rebbe in which he said everything was arranged for the refugees. The Rebbe responded with a question: "What about the local community?" R' Adelman wrote back that as far as he knew, there were no other Jews aside from the Lubavitcher refugees.

The Rebbe replied: "There are another 200 Jewish families there."

R' Adelman told my father the Rebbe's answer and as a loyal soldier, my father began searching for local Jews. This wasn't at all easy; in fact, it was almost impossible in light of the mass flight because of the war and all that went along with it. My father did not give up but found Jews. There were Jews from Algiers and South Africa. My father took on the task of making them a small shul where they could daven in their own, Sefardic tradition.

The Rebbe wrote that they had to wake up Judaism in France and my father took this seriously. As someone mekushar to the Rebbe he tried, and still tries, to follow the Rebbe's instruction.

I was born in 1961, my parents' seventh daughter. My sisters were born in Russia or during the war while I was born on shlichus which I continue today. It is over 45 years now.

My older sisters went to Paris and stayed in the Beis Rivka dormitory. The younger ones were sent to a regular municipal school here. When my father reported this to the Rebbe, an express letter arrived in which the Rebbe wrote that he was shocked that the younger ones were sent to a non-Jewish school. How could it be, asked the Rebbe, that what they did not do under the communists in Russia, they were doing here, in a free country, in France? My father got the message and he opened a preschool and a Talmud Torah.



The Shneur school opened in 1963. That year marked 150 years since the passing of the Alter Rebbe which is why the school was named for him. In addition, the school represented the wonderful unity among the Ashkenazim and Sefardim. This collaboration was established from the very start. The name Shneur meaning “two lights,” symbolizes the community and perfectly epitomizes the local kehilla till this very day.

## FIRST FEMALE BUS DRIVER IN FRANCE

The school, from its inception, experienced many miracles. My father had made up his mind that just as the communists did not intimidate him, the French wouldn’t intimidate him either. Starting a private school, a religious one no less, is not exactly legal but miraculously, my parents were able to overcome the difficulties. No wonder they are considered the father and mother of the school by all its students.

My parents’ mesirus nefesh for the school knew no limits. My mother went from house to house to convince parents about the importance of sending their children to a Jewish school. She got a license to drive a bus, becoming the first woman in France to get a license like this. She did it in order to show the parents that it would be just as easy to send their children to the Jewish school as to public school.

She didn’t stop with that. She would stop the bus at every house, and put the child on and off so the parents would not have to bother. She did this because she figured that otherwise, some parents might think it was easier to send to public school.

And if that wasn’t enough, although she was no longer young, she woke up at three in the morning



every day in order to kasher the meat which my father slaughtered and to cook a hot meal for the pupils. She left at seven, boarding the bus and picking up the children. Those who remember those days remember that at red lights my mother would say Tehillim.

At lunch time she would walk around and make sure that everybody ate, just like a devoted mother. In the evening she would go back to the dining room to arrange everything and to make sure all was well. She didn’t have a free minute.

### How did she manage?

Chaya: I’ll give you an example. My grandmother, her mother, who stayed in our house at that time, saw all this and said to her, “Please tell the Rebbe your schedule and we will see what he has to say.”

My mother had yechidus and told the Rebbe her daily schedule, the financial difficulties the school struggled with and the difficulties in convincing local people to send their children to Shneur in those early days.

When she finished, the Rebbe said, “There is one solution to the money and enrollment issues. Open a Gan Israel summer camp. Your

enrollment will increase and your financial difficulties will diminish.”

So even the little time she had left was taken from her by the Rebbe. My mother told the Rebbe that she was afraid of what her mother would say. The Rebbe answered, “I will take care of your mother. You should know that Gan Israel will bring you bracha.” And that’s the way it was. My mother returned home and with the full cooperation of the kehilla, they started Gan Israel. The Rebbe’s words were fulfilled and it was a big success.

The mosad constantly experiences miracles. The first miracle was that within a short time of Shneur’s opening, my parents had two sons after seven daughters, Shnei-Ohr, two lights.

Another example, which gives another perspective on the difficulties, is what happened at one of the yechiduyos when my mother told the Rebbe that her daughters worked all day. The Rebbe stood up and said, “You should know that they attained lofty levels with their work.”

My parents, despite everything, put their lives and souls into the school.

The daughter-in-law, Miriam Kalmanson said, “My mother-in-law has nine children and she always says that she has ten children because her tenth child is the Shneur school.”

#### **How did the school develop?**

Chaya: When my sisters got older, my father wrote to the Rebbe about three choices for the continued running of Shneur: to give over the administration to a fellow askan, to give the administration over to the shliach, Rabbi Azimov who was over his head in shlichus work, or for my married sister and brother-in-law who got married before me to

***My older sisters went to Paris and stayed in the Beis Rivka dormitory. The younger ones were sent to a regular municipal school here. When my father reported this to the Rebbe, an express letter arrived... “How could it be, asked the Rebbe, that what they did not do under the communists in Russia, they were doing here, in a free country, in France?” My father got the message and he opened a preschool and a Talmud Torah.***

remain in France and run the school.

The Rebbe chose the third option and my sister and brother-in-law remained here to run the school and expand it. Boruch Hashem, today there are two schools, one for boys and one for girls.

When I got married, I remained here in order to help them run the school. Eight years ago, my sister

and her husband moved to Eretz Yisrael and I remain here to run the school. My brother came to help me. He had completed learning for s’micha in kollel in Australia and he came to work here, along with his wife Miriam who is a teacher, educational consultant, and responsible for the local Gan Israel.

The Rebbe wrote to my father that if only the kehilla here would be worthy of the exalted name, Shneur. We try very hard to ensure that the school lives up to its name.

#### **WORK WITH SOUL**

After 45 years it is reasonable to assume that there are plenty of stories. Here are a few:

Chaya: At age 14, I began working here by walking to the Sefardic shul and running Oneg Shabbos groups for girls. One girl would come with her friends and she constantly made trouble. One time she said to me, “I’ll stop disturbing if you take me to the Rebbe. We want to see him.”

We organized a group and traveled to the Rebbe. She planned on asking the Rebbe whether her boyfriend was her partner in life. She was excited to visit Crown Heights and did not forget to ask her question. To her surprise, the Rebbe said, “Check with a rav on site.” She left the yechidus in confusion, especially in light of the fact that her girlfriend left yechidus a kalla.

When she returned to France she told her boyfriend that she wanted to see a rav. He did not understand why but she went to Rabbi Belinov who told her that her boyfriend needed to learn more about Judaism.

She wanted to progress but he did not. Then she told him that if he wasn’t willing to grow, she would leave him. In reaction, he sent her a horrible letter. She came to tell me about this and emotionally said,

“How great the Rebbe is that he opened my eyes before I married him.”

She became more religiously observant and told her employer that she would no longer work on Shabbos. A few weeks later, before Purim, we had another raffle for a trip to the Rebbe and she won (without even being present). Before she left, she committed to living a religious life.

At this time, we had someone at the shul who was a beginner baal teshuva. He learned seriously and began keeping mitzvos. When she went to the Rebbe she asked whether he was her match. The Rebbe’s answer was, “Bracha and consent, mazal tov, mazal tov.”

She returned to France as a happy kalla. Then everything seemed to go wrong as the mother of the boy originally opposed the shidduch and the girl lost her job. However, in a short time, she found a job in a Jewish place where keeping Shabbos was no problem and the shidduch went through. Today she has nine children and has a beautiful Chassidishe family. They went on shlichus and started a new shul in a place where there was no existing kehilla. Their oldest son moved to Eretz Yisrael and lives in a religious city and is very involved with a group of French Jews who made aliya. By the way, every year quite a few families make aliya in order to be able to progress in their religious lives.

The following story illustrates the power of one talmid:

Years ago, I worked here with my sister and was in charge of enrollment for the school. One day, a father and son walked in and the father said, “I am Jewish, I learned here at Shneur and now I came to register my son.” He didn’t look Jewish but I took his word for it and registered his son.



My sister later asked me, “How could you have accepted him to the school?” Indeed, at first we had a hard time with him but what we were surprised to discover was that on Succos they had a succa on their porch. Their son insisted on it and his parents agreed. One mitzva led to another and the father began wearing a sirtuk and the mother put on a wig. Today, that student has a beautiful Chassidishe family and lives in Yerushalayim. He is also a big meshichist ...

We do our work with neshama; one on one. Every child is Hashem’s only child. We see the results of this

approach.

This year we got a new student from Eretz Yisrael. Her parents separated and the mother returned to France. One month went by and then the mother traveled to obtain her get. But the parents ended up remarrying and their daughter said to me: I am sure that it was thanks to my prayers. To my surprise, she told me that she had written to the Rebbe through the Igros Kodesh and she opened to, “and He will return the heart of the fathers through the children.” This is why she was sure that it was her prayers and additional good deeds that got her



## A CHILD'S REQUEST

Chaya relates:

A Jewish woman was married to a non-Jew and had two children. She began attending our Shabbos shiurim. Her brother, who had become a baal teshuva, had a positive influence on her but the more she learned, the more she realized how complicated her situation was.

Before she married, her husband wanted to convert but she didn't like the idea. Now, the situation had become reversed. She wanted him to convert, but when he discovered that Judaism is not just couscous on Friday, he was not interested. She did not pressure him but continued learning. She went to a month long seminar and came back wearing a wig. The husband was shocked and her family was taken aback too except for her brother who continued to pull strings behind the scenes and was happy at her progress.

She continued to become more observant along with her children. She went through a very difficult time until she and her husband decided to separate. She went to the Rebbe with her children. When they passed by the Rebbe, her five year old son said, "[I want] my father to be a Jew." The Rebbe smiled.

Nine years after she became a baalas teshuva, the father, who was a good husband and father, asked my husband to help him convert. He began studying and became a proper ger. Today you would never know about his previous life since he looks and acts like a born and bred Chassid.

Their third son, age 15 is a Chassidishe bachur.

Shneur. At some point, she told me that she and her husband had not had a Jewish wedding. After some effort, we arranged a Jewish marriage for them. The daughter traveled to the Rebbe for 22 Shevat and while she was there, she asked the Rebbe what to do after she graduated, go to seminary or university.

The answer she opened to said, "Parnassa is in the hands of heaven and what's important is fear of heaven." She got the message and decided to attend seminary.

It is so moving to see her and her mother coming together to a halacha shiur. Every boy and girl in our school is a miracle. The stories in Aubervilliers could fill a book and we got just a taste.

## WORKING FOR GEULA

Chaya: My parents opened Shneur as a preschool and then added an elementary school and a high school for boys and girls in separate buildings. We recently opened a daycare center. We also work on all the Rebbe's mitzvaim, for example, having a Tzivos Hashem club for the lower grades. Lately the community has grown and three years ago we moved to a new building which contains all the divisions. The spacious building also contains a large gym, a simcha hall, and a catering service.

Boruch Hashem, we have seen miracles; we also need more miracles in order to be able to maintain the building. We needed a permit in order to build the building that cost about a million dollars. Right now the building is mortgaged and we need a miracle every month so that we don't lose it. We have to pay monthly salaries and as long as the building isn't owned outright by us, it's in danger.

Since my sister and brother-in-law moved to Israel, we are responsible for the financial end of



parents back together. That was a result of a short stay at Shneur! Boruch Hashem, the family is doing well.

Another story:

A woman began joining our shiur and as a result, sent her son to



things. In really hard times we see the Rebbe's desire and bracha for the mosad to grow. It is because of all these hardships that the entire staff works in wonderful harmony.

Every Tuesday we have special lectures for teachers between ten in the morning and five in the afternoon, in Tanya, tefilla, halacha, and chinuch. Between classes we serve a nice meal. It's wonderful to see all the teachers sitting together and learning.

We have a math teacher who began learning Tanya with us and loved it. Lately she has started giving a shiur in Tanya herself.

Every Shabbos we have farbrengens for women and on Sunday we have special shiurim in inyanei Moshiach and Geula. A local doctor, who is a baal teshuva and an ardent Chassid, teaches the sichos of 28 Nissan 5751 through 27 Adar 5752 and does a great job of it. It's exciting to see.

For 24 years in a row now, every Wednesday night there is a shiur for mothers of students of Shneur. We never postpone it. By having it we fulfill the instruction sent by the Rebbe through Rabbi Chadakov, "If you want to succeed and make the school grow, you have to strengthen the connection between the parents and the staff." This shiur does just that.

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The fact that this interview took place erev Yom Tov prompted another lesson in shlichus:

It's a lesson that I learned from preparing for Pesach. I feel that I have to do everything myself or things don't move. But the moment we carry on and don't despair, working with our situation while looking to Heaven for help, things work out.

Right after Purim I planned to get ready for Pesach but my cleaning lady became sick and did not come. I was extremely busy with the family,



the house, and school. I prayed: Please, I will do everything I can do, please help me. A few minutes later my daughter called from Chicago and said she would be coming two weeks earlier in order to be able to help me prepare for Pesach. Once I again I looked up and said: Thank you.

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You won't be surprised that I spoke to Chaya at eleven o'clock at night and she had just come home. She's never tired, it's hereditary.

The sister-in-law said about Chaya's husband, that he barely finds time to sleep and when she

asks him, "Meir Simcha, when will you sleep?" he says, "When Moshiach comes!"

Miriam Kalmanson added:

My in-laws are older people.

When R' Leibel Groner came here, my father-in-law asked him, "My children are doing the work and we want to move to Eretz Yisrael." R' Groner said, "What do you mean? When the Rebbe gives you permission, you'll go."

My father-in-law obeys like a loyal soldier.

Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu V'Rabeinu, Melech Ha'Moshiach L'Olam Va'ed!

# WHO'S DOING WHO A FAVOR?

By Rabbi Chaim Ashkenazi

## PURE PROFIT

In the Rebbe Rayatz's reshimos, he tells of emissaries of the Alter Rebbe who went to a Chassidishe town in order to raise money for an important charitable cause.

Everybody gave according to their means, thrilled that the Rebbe had enabled them to take part in this mitzva. Two Chassidim were out of town at the time and consequently their wives were not on the list. Undeterred, they brought their personal items as their donation. When the emissaries refused to accept the women's contribution they burst into tears for their families' losing the privilege of participating in the Alter Rebbe's tzedaka campaign.

In addition to the women's love and devotion to the mitzva, there is another important message in this story. Chassidim always knew that the Rebbe could accomplish his goals by himself. It is just because he wants Chassidim to have a share that he includes them. This is why Chassidim would wish themselves at a farbrengen that "the Rebbe's ratzon will surely be carried out but may we have a share in it!"

The Rebbe said this, for example, regarding the "Torah of Moshiach"

that the Rebbe Rayatz began writing, and the public was given the opportunity to buy letters in it. The Rebbe Rayatz could have written it himself but he wanted us and all the Jewish people to have a part in it.

On the basis of this principle, the Rebbe Maharash explained what Mordechai said to Esther when he asked her to appeal to Achashveirosh to cancel Haman's decree, "If you remain quiet at this time, relief and salvation will come to the Jews from elsewhere, but you and your father's house will be lost." The question is, if she did not endanger herself and go to Achashveirosh then not only her family but *all* the Jewish people would suffer. Why did Mordechai say only that, "you and your father's house will be lost?"

The Rebbe Maharash explains that they would lose the merit that the salvation would come about through them. Since it was Hashem's will that there be relief and salvation, the Jews would be saved regardless. They couldn't prevent it from happening, but they would lose out on the privilege of being the ones to bring about the salvation.

The bottom line is that a Jew does not do G-d a favor, or the

Rebbe a favor. If someone does something for someone, materially or spiritually, he is doing it for himself. If he doesn't do it, he is the one who loses out, for Hashem will make sure that the needy person gets what he needs.

## "BLESSED IS HASHEM FOR CREATING US FOR HIS HONOR"

This is also the meaning of the statement of Chazal, "more than the householder does for the poor man, the poor man does for the householder." The simple understanding of this is that the poor man enables the well-to-do man to do the mitzva of tzedaka. The Rebbe adds that when a person gives someone tzedaka, he needs to know that he was supposed to be that poor man, and the other person was meant to be well-to-do. It's just that the other fellow agreed to be poor in order to enable him to do the mitzva of tzedaka. Therefore, of course he should value this poor man and feel indebted to him and not think he's doing the poor man a favor.

This idea, that a Jew isn't doing G-d any favors by doing His mitzvos, is brought in many Chassidishe sayings and stories. If someone is unfamiliar with Chassidus, he may not be aware of this. This is illustrated by the person who eulogized a relative by saying: He (the departed) was involved in chinuch and he sent many children to yeshivos. Can we imagine how much he helped Hashem?

A Chassid says: "*Boruch Hu Elokeinu shebra'anu lichvodo*" (blessed is Hashem who created us for His honor) – Why do we bless Hashem for this? Because by being created for His honor, to aggrandize Hashem's honor in the world by fulfilling His will, He ascribed importance to our existence in the

world. “*V’hivdilanu min ha’to’im*” (and separated us from those who err) – those who think He created us for *our* honor.

## “WHAT DOES HASHEM ASK OF YOU?”

If the ability to fulfill Hashem’s will (by giving tzedaka, fulfilling any mitzva, or learning Torah) is a gift from Hashem which enables us to participate in carrying out Hashem’s will in the world, we must constantly ask ourselves: What does Hashem want of me? Like in the story of the Chassid who complained to the Alter Rebbe about his material circumstances – that he needed money since he had debts and he had to marry off a number of daughters. The Alter Rebbe said: You have told me what **you need**, but you are not thinking at all about what Hashem **needs you for!**

We also see this idea in the story of Lozhe der Krumer who left his home in Tzfas after he heard an emissary of the Alter Rebbe review a maamar Chassidus, and went to Liozna where he became one of the great Chassidim. When he was asked what made him become a Chassid, for he had been a great scholar and owed Hashem back in Tzfas, he said that before Chassidus he wondered: From where would Hashem get the tremendous reward that he deserved? (Since he did so much for Him that perhaps Hashem couldn’t even manage without him ...).

Now, after learning Chassidus, he wondered: How is it that Hashem restrains Himself from crashing the roof down on his head since he was nothing, and who knew whether he fulfilled any purpose in the world, so what was he needed for?

This line of thinking is based on chapter 34 of Tanya in which it explains what joy the soul has in serving Hashem. The example



***Angels are named for their missions (Raphael, Gabriel, etc.) because that is what they are about... For angels, the mission is clear, while for a Jew in this world, his specific mission is obscure and it will only be revealed in the future if he did his assigned task. Only those mekusharim to the Rebbe find out what their specific mission in life is.***

brought there is of a lowly person, the homeless person of our day who smells bad, from whom people keep their distance. Suddenly, the presidential candidate shows up and

talks to him, hoping the man will vote for him. The members of the presidential candidate’s entourage pat him on the back and this is photographed and is seen in the media and on the Internet. He is sent a car on the day of the elections to drive him to vote. However, in this analogy, the homeless man is only treated this way until after the election and then he’s back in the garbage.

In the nimshal, Hashem’s respectful way of treating us is eternal because a person has importance simply for the reason that Hashem gave him the ability to choose Him. Choosing Hashem is something that is done at every moment. It’s a nonstop choosing and therefore, man’s importance is forever. If a person were to say: Who am I, what am I? He will be told, true, you are nothing, but Hashem decided that you, and only you out of all created beings, supernal and earthly, can choose Him and that’s why you are important.

## A SOLDIER DOES NOT CHANGE POSITIONS

In the sichos of the Rebbe Rayatz it says that there are neshamos that wait for thousands of years in Gan Eden in order to merit descending to this world to carry out a mission. Whoever merited to come here, having been given one mission or another, needs to know that everybody got a mission tailor-made for him and it is through this that he acquires importance. If he takes someone else’s job, he loses his importance. It’s like a hat – as long as it covers a head, it’s fulfilling its function. If a person tried to cover his foot or other limb with it, it would lose its value.

The Rebbe compared a talmid who closes his Gemara and goes to work to a soldier who leaves his



post. If he was assigned to guard a weapons warehouse and he decides that instead of that he will drive an officer home or guard another base, he is a deserter. This is because his importance is only measured only according to the job and location he was assigned.

Chassidim in Russia used the soldier a lot in their analogies. They would say – Why does a soldier have a head? So the rifle will have a place to hang and won't slide off his shoulder. A soldier isn't important because of his head but because the army decided what to hang on his neck, i.e. what job to give him.

The difference between the mashal and the nimshal is that in the mashal, first the soldier is created with all his qualities and then, when he is drafted, the army decides – based on his abilities and their needs, what to hang on his shoulder. In the nimshal, Hashem first chooses the mission which is, “Hashem desired a dwelling for Himself,” and then He created man with his abilities, according to the mission he has to carry out to do his part in creating this dwelling for Hashem.

## REAL AVODAS PERECH

So there is no place at all for man's personal ambitions; there is just what he needs to do to carry out the mission Hashem assigned him. If someone tries to do someone else's job, it's ridiculous, like a man who tries to make himself into a woman and a woman who tries to fill a man's role, which is prevalent in today's crazy world. Each one thinks that importance is ascribed to who and what he considers important.

Generally speaking, a person values other people's jobs because it seems to him that the grass is greener on the other side. So he changes his form, his clothing or his

style and takes on roles that are not suited to him. He seeks to reinvent his place in the world and doesn't realize that this is suicidal.

If someone was assigned to chinuch and he wants to be involved in askanus, it's like he's taking a shoe and using it as a hat, or vice versa. A shoe is very important when it serves as a shoe, and a hat is very important when it functions as a hat. If they are not used properly, they may as well be in the garbage.

Regarding the exile in Egypt it says that the people worked avodas perech which meant that the Egyptians assigned men's work to women and women's work to men. Why is that so bad - if you give a man heavy loads to carry for hours on end without properly feeding him, *that's* avodas perech! If you give him women's work to do, it may not be pleasant because he isn't used to it but we can assume that he'll learn how to do it fairly quickly. What's backbreaking about it?

The significance of avodas perech is that when a person seeks roles for which he was not created, it's a part of galus life. Even if he gets used to it and he becomes comfortable doing it, he is destroying his self worth. This person, who was supposed to achieve his worth by doing that which he was created for, and yet he exchanges it for that which opposes his nature and abilities and he even gets used to it and enjoys it – is in galus.

This is the reason that angels are named for their missions (Raphael, Gabriel, etc.) because that is what they are about. For people it works the same way, that man's mission is what he is about. For angels, this is clear, while for a Jew in this world it is obscure and it will only be revealed in the future if he did his assigned task. Only those mekusharim to the Rebbe find out what their specific mission in life is.

## TO “YAAKOV” ALL JOBS ARE EQUAL

The difference between Yaakov and Eisav, where Yaakov said, “I have everything,” and Eisav said, “I have plenty,” is also based on this principle. They related differently to the source of man's importance. Yaakov saw everything in an inclusive manner even though he had so many possessions, while Eisav saw each thing separately and therefore spoke of having a lot. What does this signify?

To Eisav, his self worth came from himself and his achievements. Therefore, every physical item that he acquired increased his importance according to its individual value. Consequently, he had an enormous number of items, each of which built him up in another way, because there are different degrees of importance conveyed by land holdings or movable property or gold and silver, sheep and cattle, or servants. All of this contributes to the ever expanding world of Eisav- the Eisav of today is not the Eisav of yesterday.

Yaakov, by contrast, about whom it is said, “For Yaakov is small,” is nothing. His importance lies in the role which Hashem assigned him and it makes no difference what the role is. What's important is the fact that he has been assigned a role by Hashem. His role is “to make Hashem a dwelling,” and therefore – it says in Chassidus – it makes no difference whether this is done by putting on tefillin or chopping wood. The difference between physical mitzvos and spiritual avodas Hashem is only in their degree of revelation - how to reveal his importance (as someone building a home for Hashem) in the world and in his body. Tefillin for example, instill this in the heart and mind, and the other mitzvos do so in the



other limbs.

All mitzvos have a common denominator which is that their importance is derived from what Hashem said at the Giving of the Torah, “‘and I will begin’ and Hashem descended.” Hashem descended from His place of glory and picked up the one lying in the garbage and said to him: I want you to learn, I want you to do mitzvos, I want you to be a shliach over there, and I want you to be a shliach to do such-and-such. I want you to be a bachur in yeshiva or an askan, and I want you to be a woman or a man, and so on.

It makes no difference what the role is. Each of us ought to feel uplifted because the role of every person is important since it was assigned by Hashem.

### **HAPPY WITH HIS LOT**

Being happy with one’s assignment is spoken about in Tanya regarding the beinonim. They feel themselves to be lowly because even though they constantly do the will of Hashem, the evil within them is still powerful and they deal with it on a regular basis. They are pained by their state but do they complain – Why must we spend our days squelching evil and never attain the point of eradicating evil by transforming it into good?

The Alter Rebbe’s response is that there are two kinds of delicacies. One is good and sweet from the outset and one is spiced until it becomes a delicacy. In other words, there is the avoda of the tzaddikim which is in a way of constant elevation in the realm of goodness and the avoda of the beinonim who have to constantly sweeten the bitterness of the evil within them.

What is the beinoni’s consolation? The beinoni could go

***A talmid in a yeshiva in Eretz Yisrael wrote to the Rebbe that he wasn’t successful in his learning and he wanted to go to 770 to learn there and that is where he would be successful. The Rebbe answered: On the flight to New York you will take the Evil Inclination along with you and you will have the same problem here... If you decide that you have to do your job, you will be successful in Eretz Yisrael and then you can come here in order to progress even further.***

on to say: If so, I want to be sweet from the outset! But he is told – Don’t imagine that before you were created all positions were open before you, and then you were given this task and therefore you have a right to complain that you want a different task. Don’t think that way!

You should know that from the outset everybody was created for a specific purpose and there is no point in wishing you could do something else.

### **YESHUS**

Abandoning one’s purpose and going off in other directions is sourced in yeshus (ego) and is very prevalent in our generation. The Rebbe says in Likutei Sichos that we have something similar in the physical sphere, the terrible illness of out-of-control, multiplying cells. Unlike other diseases where there is something lacking in an organ of the body, with this illness it’s the opposite, something is growing which endangers the person.

Why is this illness prevalent in our generation? The Rebbe says it’s because the feeling of yeshus is commonplace and yeshus is unlike other sins. The non-observance of Shabbos or kashrus or family purity can be compared to something lacking in the soul. With yeshus-arrogance there is an addition.

This is apparently the reason why, in our generation, so many people are easily offended and overly sensitive and they don’t find their place within society or the family etc. This is due to people searching for their selves but not looking in the right place. The right place is in the fulfillment of Torah and mitzvos, each according to his ability.

Hashem considers the abilities of His creations. Therefore, even when someone accomplishes little relative to others, whether in learning, avodas Hashem, in the capacity of an askan or in life in general – it’s no proof that he is worth less than others. The source of this reasoning is fundamentally flawed because each person is asked to do what he can do. Whoever does so, according to his abilities, has justified his creation as much the other person

who accomplishes more.

One's importance is according to what Hashem decided He wants of you and not according to what you think you are worth. If you measure your worth according to your accomplishments as compared to others, your starting point is your ego/yeshus which is what is giving you that feeling of worthlessness.

## SHLEMIEL HERE, SHLEMIEL THERE

This inyan is alluded to in the statement in the Gemara (Kiddushin): If a woman gave money to a man and he said to her, be sanctified (married) to me with this, is she sanctified?

The halacha is that in kiddushin, **the man gives** something to the woman that is worth at least a *peruta*, then in exchange for the benefit she receives she is acquired by him. So apparently, if **she gave him** the *peruta*, she is not sanctified. But there is an exception – if the man is an important person who does not receive gifts from others, the fact that he was willing to accept the gift from her is considered a benefit for her of at least a *peruta*'s worth and she is married to him with this benefit (on condition that he says, “*harei at mekudeshes li*” and not that she said, “*harei ata mekudash li*” or “*hareini mekudeshes lecha*”).

Hashem is called the man and we, the Jewish people, are called Hashem's wife. We have to be married to Him through the avoda that we do for Him. The fact that Hashem, the supreme King of kings, is ready to accept as a gift the avoda he assigned to us, benefits us with importance and pleasure and we are sanctified to Him.

This is why we say in the bracha before doing a mitzva, “who sanctified us with His mitzvos” –

that we give Him a deed or speech or a thought in Torah and mitzvos according to what Hashem is willing to receive from us, and in lieu of the benefit that we receive from the fact that Hashem “accepts” our mitzvos, He says to us, “*harei at mekudeshes*” – *kidshanu b'mitzvosav*.

I once heard a similar explanation from a lecturer. It says in the Gemara that if a man sanctified a woman with a date although the date is not worth a *peruta*, the woman is considered “*safeik mekudeshes*” (there is a doubt as to whether or not she is married to him) because maybe in some other location where dates are not abundant, the date is worth a *peruta*. The darshan asked, if that's the law then if a woman gives money to a man for the purpose of being married, the halacha ought to be that she is *safeik mekudeshes*, because even if he is not considered an important person in this country, perhaps somewhere else he would be considered important. Since the halacha is not like that, the darshan said, this teaches us that if someone is considered a Shlemiel (good-for-nothing) here, he is a Shlemiel anywhere.

Likewise, if someone thinks that Hashem gave him an assignment that he thinks is the job of a Shlemiel, and he decides to be clever and will go somewhere else and take a better job assignment, it won't help him. He will remain the same Shlemiel there too.

A talmid in a yeshiva in Eretz Yisrael wrote to the Rebbe that he wasn't successful in his learning and he wanted to go to 770 to learn there and that is where he would be successful. The Rebbe answered: On the flight to New York you will take the Evil Inclination along with you and you will have the same problem here as in Eretz Yisrael. It is he and

only he that causes you not to do what you are supposed to do and if you decide that you have to do your job, you will be successful in Eretz Yisrael and then you can come here in order to progress even further.

The Rebbe gave a similar answer to many people who complained to him about shalom bayis, chinuch, lack of parnassa etc. who wanted to make drastic changes in the hopes of changing their situation. He said: you can't run away from G-d!

## MORE BITTER THAN DEATH OR ASHREINU!

This appears to be the point of the Gemara about two verses that seem to contradict one another. In one place it says, “I find woman to be more bitter than death,” and in another place it says, “One who finds a woman has found good.” One of the answers given is that the difference is in who found her. If he finds her on his own, then it's more bitter than death, but if someone else found her for him as is the practice of those who conduct themselves in a tznius manner, then it's good.

Similarly, we can say that if Hashem found him like the woman who gives Him her avodas Hashem in order to be married – that's good. But if he himself found his assignment and importance, that is more bitter than death. It causes various psychological problems and then so many advisors and therapists get involved. Even those who are not religious say that a confused identity and the resultant confused role are prevalent in our generation as a result of excessive freedom.

In the past, there was a higher authority which set the rules. People behaved according to the rules of the king and children conducted themselves according to their parents' authority. Everybody knew

precisely where he fit in at home, at work, and in society.

Nowadays, when psychological theories promote freedom and downplay the setting of boundaries, children and adults are confused. Sometimes they are fearful or lack stability in everything that relates to their individual role or place in the world and within the framework that they live and work.

Contrary to the lack of certainty in direction and goals that frustrates our generation, we have confidence in our path and destination as well as the knowledge of what our role is, because the Rebbe represents the ratzon Hashem and therefore in the same way that a Jew bonds with and sanctifies himself to Hashem – we do those same things in order to connect with the **Rebbe**.

Chassidim used the imagery of marriage to describe the connection between Chassid and Rebbe. They said: In the Mishna it says that a woman is acquired in one of three ways: money, document, *bi'a*. Likewise, the Chassid is acquired by the Rebbe in one of three ways: money – with maamud money; with a document – learning his teachings; *bi'a* – going to the Rebbe.

By “giving” to the Rebbe the fulfillment of one’s mission in the world, and the Rebbe “taking” this and being willing to include us in his avoda, we achieve a bond of “if she gives and he says, she is sanctified – when it is an important person.”

Each Rebbe chooses the souls

who will be with him in his generation and every Rebbe chooses what the role of that generation is in a general sense and then for each Chassid in particular. By doing precisely what the Rebbe wants, this imbues us with importance because, as we said earlier, the Rebbe can do it all on his own. He gives us the privilege of joining him. When we learn Chitas or Rambam, by doing what the Rebbe said, we gain in importance and without it, we are worth nothing.

This is what Yaakov meant when he told Eisav: I am ready for the Geula but I want everyone to have a part in it and they, i.e. all the Jewish people of that time, are still “young,” and the time isn’t right for Geula just yet.

## THE ONLY SHLICHUS

Here’s the main point of it all. The Rebbe told us explicitly what the role of our generation is. We heard him say it at the Kinus Ha’Shluchim on Rosh Chodesh Kislev 5752: **the only remaining shlichus is kabbolas pnei Moshiach tzidkeinu.**

If so, this is where our importance lies; an importance that was not assigned to earlier generations even though they were great people. So if people seek other jobs, as great as they may be, but they are not focused on the only shlichus of our generation, it’s like the Shlemiel who is not worth a *peruta* anywhere in the world. His avodas Hashem is not considered

worth a *peruta* in helping to renew the kiddushin between the man-Hashem and the woman—us, with the Geula.

If you look for a role according to your understanding and what you take pleasure in and you think that you will take that and sew beautiful garments with which to greet Moshiach, you might find yourself like the Emperor in that children’s story.

In the shlichus you choose for yourself according to your understanding and yeshus you may be involved with very important things like mitzvaim and learning maamorim and sichos of the Chabad Rebbeim, but they are unrelated to the avoda ha’yecheda. Or perhaps you do learn inyanei Moshiach and Geula but you do so as a theoretical study and don’t publicize the identity of Moshiach and inspire people to accept him, then you are like the tailors in the story who worked hard to sew clothing for the king. When the king went out wearing them, nothing was visible since the garments were transparent.

When we greet the Rebbe MH”M, the uniform of the king’s army, the levushim, are thought, speech and action that are associated with the **only shlichus** and probably the signs and flags will be there too ... That gift will be accepted and thanks to it we will be told, “*harei atem mekudashim li*” with the true and complete Geula, soon now!

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# A MITZVAH WITH A BANG

By Nosson Avrohom

Translated By Michoel Leib Dobry

*For our emergencies, we leap into action to save the day, but what about the Rebbe's urgencies? Are we paying as much attention to what he wants from us? A story of the Rebbe's guidance, a mother's bitul, and a baby's recovery*

Mrs. Nechama Chaya Navon, principal of the Ohr Menachem girls' school in Tzfas, helps people both within and outside of Chabad write letters to the Rebbe via the Igros Kodesh on an almost daily basis. Though she's experienced many stories of clear answers and awe-inspiring instructions, it is the precise responses she received regarding her daughter, Miriam Mushka, that stand out above all. Every year, on the eve of the last day of Pesach, she retells the story of this miracle.

"This story took place on the eve of Shvi'i Shel Pesach, a little more than ten years ago. With considerable effort, we had finished all the preparations for Yomtov early enough in the day to go out for a little relaxation outside of town. Chol HaMoed Pesach is our only opportunity to go out with the children on trips and we wanted to utilize this time to the fullest.

"Miriam Mushka was the baby of

our family, only a year and a half old at the time, and I asked one of my older daughters to take her to her room and dress her. Seconds later, the tranquility was shattered when the baby slipped out of her hands and fell on the floor. It happened from a spot a bit too high... and the natural concern intensified when she started vomiting...

"We stood around with a feeling of helplessness, wondering what to do. On the one hand, my clear instincts told me that we shouldn't waste any precious time and it would be advisable to take her to the nearest hospital for tests. On the other hand, it was Erev Yomtov, and it stood to reason that even if nothing really serious had happened, she would have to stay for observation for at least twenty-four hours. Making Yomtov in a hospital was far from an attractive option.

"We quickly came to our senses. We are chassidim, and the best and most proven formula in such

situations is to write to the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach, and ask for his advice and blessing. I quickly washed my hands, went to the bookshelf, made a good resolution, and placed my question in a volume of Igros Kodesh. The Rebbe's answer appears in Vol. 22, pg. 322, in a letter from the 19<sup>th</sup> of Elul, 5722:

**...For since a person must act according to nature, and there are other situations like his, especially nowadays, he will surely ask the opinion of an expert in the field and carry out his instructions. But the main thing is that he should contemplate the existence of the Creator and Ruler of the world, for obviously the world is not forsaken and there is Someone running things generally and even in the smallest details. Especially with a human being, we can't say that there is no order or that things operate haphazardly.**





This is also the approach of science, that if certain laws apply in 99% of observed cases, then they also can be safely assumed to apply in the 1% of cases that has not yet been tested or observed.

What's relevant here is that order and goodness eventually prevail, and this gives surety and an encouragement to the spirit that even when the good is temporarily concealed by a certain occurrence or a certain sensation, the person is surely given the strengths to overcome it if he wants. It's only that according to nature, changing the situation comes step by step, and not at once from one extreme to another. Thinking about all this, especially since he is educated and involved in science, should bring an encouragement of the spirit and an increase in self-confidence and optimism in general, as all this will also increase vitality and improve the situation, albeit step by step as mentioned above.

*Seconds later, the tranquility was shattered when the baby slipped out of her hands and fell on the floor. It happened from a spot a bit too high...and the natural concern intensified when she started vomiting...*

And since we are always need the blessing of our Creator and

Ruler – the Almighty G-d – then we surely need an increased blessing and a special blessing in all the aforementioned. The channel and the vessel for this is proper conduct in daily life according to the instruction of our Torah, the Torah of life, and the fulfillment of its mitzvos, regarding which it is said, 'and live by them.' It doesn't make a difference if you understand the connection between the conduct and the blessing or not, as is the case with taking medicine, particularly when the healing comes only later. The main thing is that he should follow the prescription. No need for lengthy elaboration. I look forward to good news in all the aforementioned.

"I read the answer again and again, totally shocked. The Rebbe writes explicitly that while we must consult with professionals, we first must understand and internalize the fact that there is a Creator and Ruler of the world who direct everything, and therefore, we need to strengthen ourselves in matters of Torah and mitzvos.

"In all honesty, when I read the answer, I initially didn't understand what relevance this had to me. We are Torah observant Jews, even chassidim, and adherence to chassidic conduct and custom is an integral part of our lifestyle. What is the Rebbe trying to suggest or request from us with this answer? I was totally perplexed.

"I decided in any case to implement the latter portion of the answer, about healing, resolving to speak with a doctor and ask for his advice.

"There wasn't much time to waste, as we were most anxious about our daughter's condition. We called our family physician and told him what had happened. While we were on the phone, the child fell asleep. I knew that after someone falls on their head, vomiting or

falling asleep can potentially increase the danger regarding the injury and its aftereffects. We tried everything to prevent her from dozing off, but to no avail. Nonetheless, the doctor merely asked that we continue trying to wake her up every fifteen minutes and to update him if there were any developments. These were very tense and troubling moments.

"I left the attempts to wake her to the other members of the family, and returned to the bookshelf to update the Rebbe on developments and to ask again for his bracha and advice. My heart was filled with unbearable anxiety that only a mother could feel. I poured out my soul to the Rebbe and pleaded that her health be successfully restored. The second answer appeared in the same volume, pg. 170, in a letter from the 26<sup>th</sup> of Adar, 5722:

**And the main thing in all that has been stated is that everything depends upon the blessing of G-d Alm-ghty, Creator and Ruler of man, and therefore, conduct in daily life should be fitting according to the instruction of our Torah, the living Torah, and in the fulfillment of its mitzvos. This is also a channel and vessel to receive G-d's blessing in what is required, and particularly that each daughter of Israel is called a daughter of Sara, Rivka, Rochel, and Leah.**

### **"SURELY THERE HAS BEEN AN IMPROVEMENT IN HER HEALTH"**

"The subject matter in this answer was similar to the first. The Rebbe was explaining again how everything depends upon G-d's blessings, and therefore, the channel to receive the bracha is to improve the daily conduct that G-d has established. At the conclusion of the letter, the Rebbe writes that every daughter of Israel is called a child of

***When she did wake up, it was frightening to look at her. She gazed at everyone around her with a distant expression, rolling her eyes, as if she recognized no one***

Sara, Rivka, Rochel, and Leah. I couldn't seem to make the connection or fathom what the Rebbe was demanding of me.

"While this was going on, the children kept trying to wake her up. She would open her eyes for a few minutes, then drop off again. It was becoming increasingly difficult to wake her, and when she did wake up, it was frightening to look at her. She gazed at everyone around her with a distant expression, rolling her eyes, as if she recognized no one. We were unable to elicit any reaction or cooperation.

"This situation left little room for doubt, and I quickly called my husband and told him to come because we had to go to the hospital with the baby. With the vomiting, the drowsiness, and her alarming lack of responsiveness, this was already a dangerous situation. Then, in the midst of all the hubbub, it suddenly hit me like a bolt out of the blue: The Rebbe wants me to make a good resolution in strengthening my observance of Torah and mitzvos. The Rebbe wrote to me explicitly that this is the channel through which G-d's blessings will flow. So what am I waiting for?

"There was a particular matter that I had been struggling with for

years already without success. This was a hard resolution to make, as I wanted to accept this extra hiddur in my mitzvah observance on numerous occasions, but I had always put it off because I simply found it difficult to carry out. Now the Rebbe was hinting to me that the time had come.

"As I was pondering the good resolution I had made and how to implement it, I heard my daughters calling me.

"They had maintained their vigil by their injured infant sister's side, and they were calling me to come immediately. Their voices were joyous and exuberant, filled with excitement and enthusiasm. 'Ima, she woke up,' they cried happily. I rushed to her room and saw her with her eyes wide open, and when she noticed me, she stretched out her hand in my direction to let me pick her up. In a moment, everything had returned back to normal as if nothing had happened. All the feelings of fear and anxiety were replaced by sheer joy. I was literally shaking in the face of this Divine miracle that had been revealed before my eyes. Had the whole family not experienced it with me, I would have thought it was a tale out of a storybook.

"I remained near for several more minutes, picking her up and playing with her to make absolutely certain that everything was alright. And it was. It is simply impossible to express in words the deep sense of joy that this brought to the entire family.

"Finally, after everything got back to normal, the children renewed their request that we go out on our trip, as originally planned. My initial reaction was: 'What are you talking about? The child just recovered from her injury. I'm not prepared to take any unnecessary risks and go out on a field trip.'

"On second thought, I realized



we should ask the Rebbe about this matter as well.

"I proceeded to write to the Rebbe a third time. Naturally, I thanked the Rebbe for the great miracle that his holy blessing achieved for our daughter, and I also wrote about the good resolution I had made, which I have kept to this very day. I placed my letter in one of the volumes of Igros Kodesh that I took off the shelf, and opened to the following answer (Vol. 12, pg. 309):

**And regarding what he writes about the health of his**

**relative...tichye – if they fulfilled what was written in my previous letter, then surely there has been an improvement in her health.**

**May he merit to have G-d Almighty cause a spirit from Above to flow upon him and see Divine Providence with kindness and mercy in all the aforementioned.**

"When I read these four lines from the answer, I had to pinch myself to be sure that I wasn't dreaming," Mrs. Navon concluded her unique story. "You couldn't get a clearer answer than that. Tears of joy

welled in my eyes. How fortunate are we to be chassidim and to be privileged to walk in the light of the leader of our generation, the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach. Even in these times, when darkness covers the earth, the Rebbe does not abandon his flock, making certain to guide and lead them openly as a merciful father every step of the way.

"We all went out on our day trip – the whole family – exactly as we had planned at the outset..."

[Continued from pg. 35]

speaks out, even against a huge majority while everyone else remains silent, still that lone opinion carries a weight! It *will* be taken into account and effect a change.

The rally was put together by the

Crown Heights Committee For Shlaymus HaAretz in conjunction with Chabad of Flatbush, Kensington, Georgetown, Mill Basin and Brooklyn College, HaMateh LeHatzalat HaAm VeHaAretz, SOS, Chabad4Israel, True Peace and Crown Heights Women For

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ב"ה

# CAPTURING THE HEART OF BRIAN

By Raanan S. Isseroff

*Chabad's "small" delegation of anti-land-giveaway protesters in Washington captured not only media attention but also the heart of Brian, the Jewish leader of the pro-Palestinian demonstrators*

The power of protest cannot be overestimated.

Seven a.m. Monday May 18th Netzach sheb'Yisod, a busload of determined Lubavitchers and "Friends of Chabad" left Crown Heights for Washington DC, to propagate the Rebbe's timeless message of "No Land For Peace" as the way to keep Israel's citizens safe.

This episode in the saga really began with when Israel's new Prime Minister assumed office. From all indications, it seemed that he would be following in the footsteps of 40 years of predecessors to this important post - to simply do what the last guy did.

Israel has a long history of a "hidden hand" behind its government's leaders. They campaign that "Now everything will

be different", only to end up doing exactly what the last Prime Minister did. As such, nobody was surprised when Mr. Netanyahu announced after being elected that he was anxious to again resume Peace talks.

Knowing that giving away land is a sensitive issue, especially as now that Jerusalem is on the table, no open mention was made of this "trifling detail." However, the simple act of going to sit down with the expressed intentions of "Peace" was interpreted by one and all as Mr. Netanyahu's opening offer to give away more land. Indeed, it was revealed later that it was not only land that was up for discussion, but it was also being requested that Israel reveal the extent of her nuclear arsenals, a disclosure which would seriously prejudice Israel's

national security.

Sadly, only 60 short years since the Holocaust, the blind promotion of Israel's suicidal policies demonstrates that Jews generally and Israeli politicians particularly have really learned nothing.

"Remember!" and "Don't Forget", slogans touted for so long, have today become meaningless in the face of a potential second Holocaust in the making.

Thus, our brave busload set off in the face of the impossible - to bring the message of the Macheneh Schechina to the doors of Washington.

The event was big news even before it got off the ground. In Israel people were excited to hear that someone is finally standing up to advocate against this life threatening situation. Now the Israeli press was interested. Who were these small mice to roar at the lion?

On Sunday, Arutz Sheva ran an article in Israel about the upcoming rally. "Lubavitch is sending busloads of protesters to Washington DC!" screamed the headlines in excitement. The Israeli Charedi Radio Station "Kol BeRamah" called to get a live interview with the organizers. Rabbi Yekutiel Rapp spoke on the upcoming rally and the Rebbe's message that the governments need to ensure the security of Israel and the safety of its citizens. He explained that just as the whole Torah is called a Torah of Peace, so too the totality of Israel with all of its land brings safety and peace for both Jews and Non-Jews in Eretz Yisrael and around the world.

A remarkable thing came out of this pre-rally press. In Israel and all over the internet, on countless Jewish blogs and shul lists, went out the call that Lubavitch was joining the fray and sending buses to the rally in Washington!

In fact, although the Sri

Lankan's had staged an enormous demonstration thousands strong, the front page of the Washington Times the next morning was graced by a picture of the paltry 200 member Jewish demonstration with signs proclaiming: "It says in the Bible that the land of Israel belongs to the Jews!"

Upon arrival at the rally, our delegates joined the AMCHA contingent from Riverdale, headed by Hillary Markowitz, and another group who came from Manhattan. Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Keller was invited to speak, after which he recited the Rebbe's 12 Pesukim for children. The concept was to recall the merit of the children who are the guarantors that the Torah be kept – a fitting statement shortly before Shavuot at the scene of a political battle against those who wish to forfeit not only the Torah but the Land of Israel as well!

With us were Rabbi Yehuda Friedman of "Chabad House of Flatbush" and Rabbi Mendel Gafni and his wife Menucha with a group from Baltimore. As the rally progressed, we wished to distance ourselves from the Sri Lankan rally and the protesters for Palestinians, and moved down the street, away from the designated rally area. The police, in an effort to keep all the rallies in one place, pushed us back into the faces of the pro-Palestinian group.

In the words of HaTamim Levi Kofmanský:

We stood across from the White House – about 100 "No-Land-For-Peace" demonstrators. Each of us was there to bring across the Lubavitcher Rebbe's messages: "...*The act of protest is effective...*" and "...*even a vocal minority benefits the entire generation!*" (See the book: "When Silence is a Sin," chapter 6.) Stuffed between us and the fence in front of the White House was a small group



of around 15 pro-Palestinian activists with a noisy bull horn. Separating us was a row of 20 police officers.

We exchanged comments with them for about a half hour. They argued their ideas and we championed the Rebbe's logic. Myself, I kept declaring that G-d gave the entire land to the Jewish people. I confronted the largest and loudest one, who appeared to be their leader. I asked him how it is that as a self-proclaimed "liberal," he is able to support terrorist groups whose desire is to create a Taliban style terror state in the heartland of Jewish Israel – a state which suppresses the very same human rights that he himself espouses and holds dear! He responded that the "Palestinians" have only resorted to homicide bombings out of "desperation".

If this is the case, I argued, why aren't others doing this? One does not see suicide bombers from Tibet, Sudan and other places where people are far more desperate and worse off than Israel's well treated Arab population. I contended that Arab suicide bombings are purely motivated out of a national desire to commit racist mass genocide against Jews.

He was left speechless. He did not have an answer to this. Conceding defeat, the group's leader asked if he could come over the police line and shake hands with me!

We motioned for him to come over and he ran around the row of police officers to our side. The first person to greet him was my friend Matisyahu, who shook his hand, embraced him and asked if he is Jewish. The young man, who identified himself as Brian, revealed that his mother is indeed Jewish. In typical Lubavitch fashion, Matisyahu asked if he wanted to don tefillin. Though he had never even heard of tefillin, after Matisyahu explained their spiritual significance, Brian decided to put them on for the first time in his life!

Wrapped in the tefillin, Brian jokingly called out to his fellow co-political activists on the other side of the row of police officers that he had "switched sides". We all laughed, cheered and waved our "No-Land-For-Peace" banners. Brian's colleagues on the other side were all in a state of shock! They didn't know how to react. Finally, he took off the tefillin and after a short, friendly exchange, he motioned for his group to leave!

His group, which was quite loud just a short while before, now dispersed in silence, leaving the square all to ourselves and the Rebbe's message. Such is the power of tefillin.

The Rebbe explains in a Sichah the deep lesson to be learned from the episode of the Meraglim (the spies). It was only Yehoshua Ben Nun and Kalev Ben Yefuna who spoke out when the Meraglim began loudly maligning the land. Even though they were talked down, their minority opinion still won out.

We learn out from this an important lesson. When a tiny minority, or even a single individual,

[Continued on pg. 33]



# WHAT IS REALLY GOING ON HERE FOR A CHASSID?

*The Alter Rebbe explains in Tanya that when a Jew comes to Kriat Shma and he has a machshava zara, he could get depressed and think: “What good is all my avoda...?” After all the work I have done in serving Hashem and here I am still having foreign thoughts at such a holy time!”*

The Alter Rebbe explains that the reality is exactly the opposite of how he looks at himself! The time of Kriat Shma is “Shas Zlotza, Shas Krova” – a time of offering, a time of closeness. However, the word: “Krova” has a second meaning which is “War” – Hence a person doing his avoda at this time experiences a time of closeness to G-d, but also it is a time of “war.” This is a time of such holiness, that specifically now, the “right-side of the heart,” the source of holiness in the Jew, is so strong and so overpowering that the “left-side” of the heart (the source of the animal soul) gets afraid and begins to make a fight!

Why? Because now, the k’dusha from the right side of the heart is so

intense and so strong that G-d gives an equal measure of ko’ach (power) to the left side. It is now able to rear its ugly head against such overwhelming holiness. Hence, the source of the machshava zara (disturbing thought).

The Alter Rebbe explains there, that instead of being depressed, really this Jew should be joyful because he has proof that his service of G-d is really affecting things! Before, what was he doing really? Not so much that his yetzer ha’ra should be so worried. Now however, the Yetzer ha’ra is really being threatened and this is why now davka it begins to fight!

The same dynamics apply elsewhere in life and in the world around us. Chassidus teaches us

that what happens internally is a reflection of what’s happening around us, and vice versa. We see now, in Eretz HaKodesh (the holy land), such deep evil, we wonder, “Why here?” – why specifically in the birthplace and central home of all mankind, the source of hashpas chayim (spiritual enlivenment) for the whole world as explained in Kabala. The answer in short is, that if you want to make something impure, where do you contaminate it? At its source. The land of Israel is the source for holiness in the world.

This is why now specifically, we are unfortunately witness to such terrible things that Jews are doing to each other. Last generation, it was the non-Jews who were doing such things – uprooting Jews from their homes, confiscating their property, destroying their communities, handing them over to their mortal enemies, defenseless. Today, insanely, it is our own brethren who are doing their evil work for them, rachmana litzlan!

We can look at this, get depressed and think: “What good is our Avoda if despite all the mitvzaim and all the shturem (noise) that the Rebbe and Chassidim made, instead of an Israel moving towards Geula and unity, the government has turned

more openly anti-religious, anti-Jewish, and more dictatorial than ever before?"

But that's just on the surface – actually the opposite is what's really going on!

Even with all the above going, even because it is going on, we should be joyful, because this is surely a sign that all our positive activities in and for the land of Israel are actually making a difference.

Eretz Yisroel is the land that "G-d's eyes are constantly upon, from the beginning of the year until the end of the year." Because Hashem is moving us into the Geula (redemption) and the world is filling with such intense holiness, we are experiencing the "birth-pangs" of redemption. To challenge all the holiness of Moshiach coming into the world, the "other-side" is also given permission to raise its ugly head.

The right side is now so strongly bringing about the final redemption, that the other-side is in a panic! What we are witnessing are its final "death-throes." Ken Yehi Ratzon!

Another thing that we Chassidim should bear in mind is that we are the Rebbe's: "Pach Shemen!"

How so? As the Torah says, we are a small nation. G-d did this intentionally. We operate on quality, not quantity. [Someone once told Winston Churchill that he was surprised how short he was to which he replied, "Yes, I feel like a dime amongst pennies." – ed.]

Yehoshua didn't win his wars because of such great fighting skills. His men were not trained in war. Looking in Tanach, we see the stories of Ehud, Devora & Yael, Shimshon HaGibor, Yiftach, Gidon with his 300 men, Shmuel HaNavi, Shaul HaMelech, Yonatan, David HaMelech with his 600, the Chanuka Story and the story of Esther, to name a few. We see over and over again a clear message, that G-d, when he wants to save us, doesn't need the biggest weapon, the most powerful army or the smartest general.

Today as well, G-d doesn't need for Israel to have the biggest bomb, the smartest missile, the best satellite defense system or the most powerful general. All G-d needs is for a few people to be His "Pach Shemen," like we had in the Chanuka Story.

The Rebbe talks many times about this story and asks: Why didn't the Chashmonaim use regular oil for the menorah? According to Jewish Law, there is no problem to use regular oil. But they only wanted to use the purest of the pure. It was from this sealed "Pach Shemen" (bottle of oil) of the purest oil that the miracle of Chanuka came about and the menorah stayed lit for eight days.

We are the Rebbe's "Pach Shemen." The Rebbe has asked and still asks us through his sichos, yechidusin and letters, to take on this issue and do something about the Land of Israel.

We Chassidim do not constitute a massive army. The vast majority of us never studied the arts and sciences of public relations, warfare, civil disobedience or espionage. But our situation is somewhat similar to the many stories in Tanach and the story of Chanuka where people were not invited to have mesiras nefesh. It was just "put on their plate." Today, we too are each being given a "plate" that we can't afford to ignore, a mandate from which we cannot turn our backs, a mission to rise to the aid of our fellow Jews who are in such terrible danger in Eretz Yisroel.

The life and blood of Chassidus "makes us swear" (so to speak) "Tehi Tzaddik" to have mesiras nefesh and not ignore their plight by turning our backs on the terrible danger the government is putting everyone around the world into. For it is not just Jews in Israel.

A "ransom" mentality has developed in Israel, where the government is responding to suicide bombings by giving up land and giving the terrorists money. Around the world Jew haters are getting a clear message: "Hurt Jews and they will pay you off."

Chabadniks! We are the "Pach-Shemen!" It is through us davka that the Rebbe will and is now working miracles! All that needs to be in place is for each of us to accept upon ourselves this sacred mission. Ken Yehi Ratzon!

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# THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN “ASUR” AND “TAMEI”

By Rabbi Yosef Karasik, District Rav Bat Chefer – Emek Chefer

In parshas Mattos we read about the victory the Jewish people had in their war against Midyan and about the vast spoils of war that they took. They were told to kasher the utensils in two stages: (1) *libun* or *hag’ala* – purging by fire or boiling water, and (2) immersing them in a mikva.

The verse says (31:21), “And Elozor the priest said to the men in the army who came from the war: This is the statute of the Torah that Hashem commanded Moshe. Whatever was used with fire should be passed through fire etc. and it must, however, [also] be cleansed with [mikvah] water.”

Let us see the difference between something that needs kashering and something that needs immersion in a mikva.

## TWO TYPES OF EVIL – FORBIDDEN AND IMPURE

There are two types of evil, that which is *asur* (forbidden) and that which is *tamei* (impure). For example, non-kosher food is called *asur*. An example of becoming *tamei* is being under the same roof as a dead body.

A pot in which non-kosher food was cooked needs to be kashered (either by *libun* or *hag’ala*, depending on how the food was cooked. If it was cooked in boiling water, it needs to be purged with boiling water. If it was cooked by fire, it needs to be purged by fire). A pot that became *tamei* by being in a room with a dead body needs to be immersed in a mikva.

Although many are considered *chukim* (laws we cannot understand) most *isurim* have a logical component, since human logic understands, for example, that the Torah forbids certain foods because they are harmful to us. Our health and character are affected by the food we eat and eating the flesh of predatory animals and birds, which have a cruel nature, confers bad middos on a person.

That which makes something *tamei*, on the other hand, is not rational. We don’t see the problem with it. For example, we don’t understand why, if a person is under the same roof as a dead person, even though he did not come into contact with him, that he becomes *tamei*. *Tuma* is something, says the Medrash, that is a *chok*, “I legislated a statute, I decreed a decree” and “it is not of the things that a person’s

mind would conclude,” and understands.

## EXTERNAL – INTERNAL

Another difference between an *isur* and a *tuma* is that an *isur* “enters a person” and *tuma* “surrounds a person.”

When it comes to forbidden foods, a person transgresses only if he puts the food in his mouth and eats it, digesting it and making it part of his body. If he merely touched forbidden food, it would not be a sin.

With *tuma* though, a person becomes *tamei* with external contact, and even if they are both under the same roof, the dead person and the living person, and don’t touch, just being under the same roof is enough to make him *tamei*.

To sum up, it’s an *isur* only if the item is ingested, and it’s *tuma* even if the person is in the same room and it doesn’t enter him.

The two points cited regarding *tuma* (that it is irrational and that it is *makif*) and the two points cited regarding *isurim* (that it is understandable and that it enters *b’pnimiyus*) are interconnected:

Since forbidden food enters a person internally, its impact is open



and tangible which is why we can understand the evil in it. Since tuma affects a person even if it does not get inside and make him tamei, they are not understandable because their impact is not apparent.

## **CORRECTION FOR AN ISUR AND FOR TUMA**

In order to be cleansed of an isur, there is a logical process – if you cooked non-kosher food in a pot, the pot became treif because it absorbed the treif food. The way you correct this is by removing the treif taste from the pot through purging it in hot water or fire.

In order to purify someone from tuma, you need the super-rational spiritual cleansing in a mikva. Even if the impure person washed himself in a bath or shower and was clean, he is still spiritually impure and the only way to remove this impurity is by immersion in a mikva. Even if the mikva water is dirty, if he immerses in it, he becomes spiritually pure.

Here too there is an essential difference between an isur and tuma. When you kasher dishes, utensils or pots, you don't have to do it all at once; it can be done in stages, first purging the bottom and then the top. It makes no difference if you do it all at once or one part at a time if, in the end, the entire item has undergone purging.

With tahara, the person or item must be immersed completely. If it was partially immersed or immersed in stages, it does not become tahor. Why is this so? What difference does it make if you immerse it in its entirety or in stages when in the end, all parts come in contact with the water? The answer is we don't know. Tuma is not something that can be rationally understood. The Torah tells us so and that's that.

## **WHICH IS WORSE – AN ISUR OR TUMA?**

*As for the tumos in the world, these refer to the materialism and hedonism of the societies we live in, and the selfishness that dulls our attraction to spiritual things and service of Hashem. In Yemos Ha'Moshiach the prophet's words, "and I will cast upon you pure waters and I will purify you," will be fulfilled. Hashem will purify us and the entire world will become pure and be drawn exclusively towards goodness and holiness.*

Which is more severe, which is worse – something asur or something tamei? Each one has a distinct negative impact but the bottom line is that tuma is more severe.

On the one hand, an isur is more severe because the evil has penetrated the person or item and has negatively affected it, like eating forbidden foods which has a negative impact on one's middos. With tuma, since the evil does not penetrate, it does not corrupt the middos.

On the other hand, it is explained in kabbala, that tuma is worse than an isur because the negative spiritual power in tuma is stronger than that in isurim (because the source of tumos is from "kochos makifim shel bechinos ha'ra" – the encompassing powers of the forces of evil - and the source of an isur is "kochos pnimiyim shel ha'ra" – the inner powers of the forces of evil - and the latter are not as powerful). Since the spiritual power in tuma is stronger, it affects a person with far greater spiritually negative energy than that of something asur.

This is why the spiritual cleansing from the evil of tuma is more complicated than the cleansing from isur. The forces of tuma are much stronger and they cling to a person, thus requiring the more complicated immersion process.

So, when you buy from a non-Jew a new pot that was never used, the pot is only tamei by being owned by the gentile. It did not absorb anything asur. All it needs is immersion. But if you bought a pot from a non-Jew that he used to cook something not-kosher, you have to purge it with libun or hagala and then immerse it in a mikva to remove the tuma. That is the mitzva in our parsha.

## **THE PURIFYING THAT MOSHIACH DOES**

In Yemos Ha'Moshiach there will be a purification process to rid the world of both types of evil, isur and tuma. Isurim are in the world within our three soul garments: thought, speech, and action:

In thought – the issurim are the erroneous ideas in the world, especially the idea that the world runs naturally and without divine providence, goes counter to the truth that G-d runs everything and nothing takes place without Him.

In speech – the main issurim are negative speech such as outright forbidden talk like lashon hara and lies, and even mundane talk, for a Jew is commanded to use his free time for Torah study and mitzvos (unless the talk is necessary for his involvement in worldly matters to provide for his family).

In action – the category of asur actions includes those forbidden by Torah and actions that, although not forbidden, aren't necessary for his

existence and are just done for pleasure. As the Chassidic aphorism goes, "That which is forbidden is forbidden, and that which is permissible is unnecessary."

With the coming of Moshiach all three areas will have their tikkun. "When Yisrael does teshuva" and correct their actions and speech, and their thought is corrected through Torah study and knowledge of G-d which is the study of Chassidus – then the entire world will know G-d (as the Rambam writes at the end of his work) and all will come to the true recognition that all is from Hashem.

As for the tumos in the world, these refer to the materialism and hedonism of the societies we live in,

and the selfishness that dulls our attraction to spiritual things and service of Hashem. In Yemos Ha'Moshiach the prophet's words, "and I will cast upon you pure waters and I will purify you," will be fulfilled. Hashem will purify us and the entire world will become pure and be drawn exclusively towards goodness and holiness.

In the future there will be not only the personal tahara of every Jew but also the purification of the entire world. Evil will no longer exist and there will be no more tuma or isur for the world will only be full of goodness.

May we immediately experience the true and complete Geula and the purification from tuma and isur.

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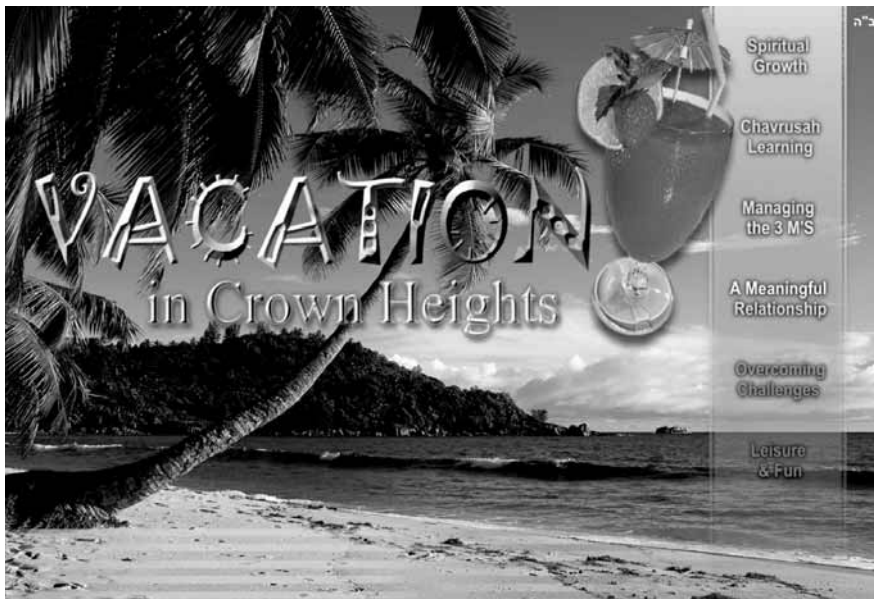
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# VACATION IN CROWN HEIGHTS?



Summertime is the Jewish Exodus from Brooklyn. At this time every year, a fleet of well packed mini vans, tour buses, trains and SUVs depart the crude, overheated city to journey to that magical land of wonderment, known as the country. But what happens to those who choose to forgo the country and remain in the city during the long hot summer? For many urban Mommies, this can be a very trying time. In response, Machon Chana has launched a new “Vacation in

Crown Heights” program of shiurim, day trips, interesting courses and just plain fun. The program began this week with several exciting classes and workshops.

Machon Chana administrator Mrs. Sarah Labkowski says she created the program to meet the needs of mothers in the community. She relates, “I see a vast need for this type of program. As a former Mechanes of Bais Rivka and administrator of Machon Chana, I

feel a responsibility to the women in this community to provide for their needs. Programs like these reach out and bring the feelings of warmth and caring of a small community to this large one.”

A quick review of the program’s website [www.VacationCH.com](http://www.VacationCH.com) reveals a calendar full of interesting activities. There is a “mother’s night off” which includes a demonstration on arranging fruit platters. Also on the exciting summer schedule are day trips to fun locations such as the Museum of Natural History and the South Street Seaport, art classes and even Shabbatons. In addition, there are many shiurim on such topics as Shalom Bayis and Chinuch keeping with Machon Chana’s long standing tradition of classes par excellence. Chavrusah learning is also offered.

Reaction from women in the community have been very positive, especially concerning the availability of babysitting if needed. Machon Chana alumna and mother Chana Forrester expresses her excitement at the opportunity. “I find that there is no forum to connect with other mothers. Therefore, I appreciate outlets where babies are welcome. I see this program as a tremendous community building opportunity. I would love to go to a Mommy’s shiur for a much needed spiritual recharge.”

The program is in its pilot year and suggestions on the types of programs that should be included are welcomed and encouraged. Visit [www.VacationCH.com](http://www.VacationCH.com) to provide your input on the types of programs you would like to see or to volunteer to teach a workshop. Also on the website is the schedule of programs and registration information. Machon Chana looks forward to welcoming you at 556 Crown Street for a rewarding and fun summer.