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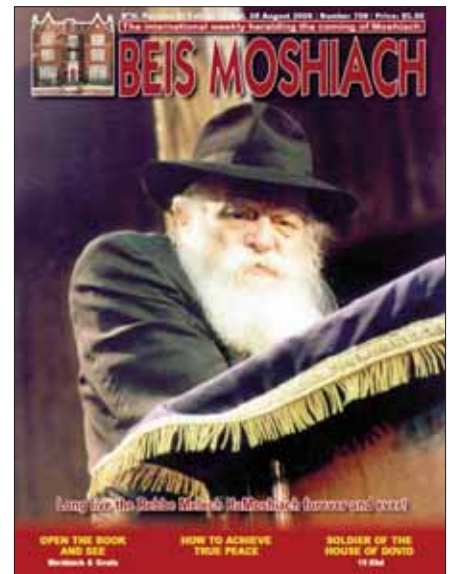
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WAR AND PEACE

Sichos In English

WILL A DOVE GROW CLAWS?

Every day, we conclude the Shmoneh Esrei prayers, praising G-d "who blesses His people Israel with peace." [1]

And when describing the blessings G-d will bestow upon us if we follow His will, our Sages state, "peace is equivalent to all other blessings." [2]

Indeed, our Sages explain [3] that Shalom, Hebrew for "peace," is one of the names of G-d Himself.

Why does peace play such a fundamental part in our Jewish heritage?

Every man's soul is "an actual part of G-d from above." [4] Therefore, he possesses a natural desire to allow that G-dly spark an opportunity to express itself. He seeks to grow in understanding and personal development without being confronted by external challenges.

Unfortunately, however, that is not always possible.

We live in a material world, which by nature encourages selfishness and the search for personal gratification.

In such a world, the search for spiritual growth may often lead to conflicts of interest, and at times, actual conflict.

WAGING WAR

These concepts are alluded to in the name of this week's Torah reading, Parshas Ki Seitzei which begins: [5] "When you go out to battle against your enemies."

In the soul's natural

environment, the spiritual worlds above, there is no conflict or battle.

When, however, the soul "goes out" from that setting and descends to our material world, it becomes confronted by challenges that require it to engage in battle.

For there are two different aspects to our world's existence.

Our world was created because G-d "desired a dwelling in the lower worlds," [6] i.e., it contains the potential to serve as a dwelling for G-d, a place where His essence is revealed.

But as the term "lower worlds" implies, G-d's existence is not overtly apparent in our environment.

On the contrary, the material nature of the world appears to deny holiness and prevent its expression.

As such, the endeavor to resolve these two contrary thrusts is often characterized by conflict.

This is the Torah's conception of war, a struggle to transform even the lowest elements of existence into a dwelling for G-d.

For this reason, the Torah commanded the Jews to fight wars to conquer the Land of Canaan, and thereby turn a land which was renowned for its depravity [7] into Eretz Yisroel, a land "which the eyes of the L-rd, your G-d, are upon it from the beginning of the year until the end of the year." [8]

Furthermore, even when there is no explicit command for war, the potential is also given to extend the boundaries of holiness and enable it to encompass areas which were previously governed by worldliness.

DISCOVERING OUR RESOURCES

A person need not fear undertaking such efforts; on the contrary, he is assured Divine blessing.

This is alluded to by the Hebrew "al ovecha" translated as "against your enemies," in the verse cited above.

Literally the phrase means "above your enemies," conveying the promise that even as the soul descends into our material world and confronts challenges, it always possesses the power to overcome them.

Since the soul is "an actual part of G-d," it is always above worldly influence and has the power to overcome all obstacles [9] and transform its surrounding environment.

Moreover, it is the challenge of the "battle" that brings out the essential power which the soul possesses. For such confrontation compels a person to search for inner strength. This search in turn brings him into awareness of his inner G-dly nature.

And when that G-dly core is aroused, he can overcome all challenges, and spread G-dliness in all settings. In this way, he becomes G-d's partner in creation, [10] making manifest G-d's purpose in creation.

INNER CONFLICTS

In microcosm, the concept of battle is relevant within our own personal lives as well.

Commenting on the verse, “And you shall... see the difference between one who serves G-d and one who does not serve Him,” [11] our Sages define, [12] “one who serves G-d” as “one who reviews his subject matter one hundred and one times,” and “one who does not serve Him” as “one who reviews his subject matter hundred times.”

In Tanya, [13] the Alter Rebbe explains that, in that era, it was customary for students to review their subject matter one hundred times. Therefore, it was the one hundred and first time, the time when the person went beyond his habit and normal practice, which caused him to be distinguished as “one who serves G-d.” For it is the striving to rise above one’s nature and personal habits which merits the award of such a title.

A person must challenge himself; and this means more than a commitment to gradual progress.

“Serving G-d,” involves breaking our individual natures, and showing that there are no limits to our commitment to Him.

This endeavor involves a constant struggle.

A person cannot reach a level of spiritual achievement and then, “rest on his laurels.” Instead, he must continually strive to advance further.

The inner “battles” necessary to express such a commitment tap the essential and unbounded Divine potential each of us possesses within our souls. And the effects of these efforts extend beyond our individual selves. For the aspect of G-dliness which transcends all concept of limitation, is activated by each person’s endeavors to transcend his personal limits. [14]

THE ULTIMATE BATTLES

Because the task of refining the world is often associated with the concept of battle, one of the criteria

given to identify Moshiach - the leader who will motivate mankind to accomplish its purpose - is that he will “wage the wars of G-d.” [15]

For it is possible that the task of refining the world will require actual conflict, [16] that Moshiach must “fill the world with justice” by “destroying the power of the wicked and waging the wars of G-d.” [17]

This, however, is merely a temporary stage.

Ultimately, Moshiach will “vanquish all the nations surrounding him... and perfect the entire world, [motivating all the nations] to serve G-d together,” [13] initiating the era when “there will be neither famine nor war, neither envy nor competition... [and] the occupation of the entire world will be solely to know G-d.” [18]

Seifer HaSichos 5749, Vol. II, p. 676ff; Seifer HaSichos 5750, Vol. II, p. 655ff; Seifer HaSichos 5751, Vol. II p. 796ff

Notes:

1. Siddur T’hillas Hashem, p. 60.
2. Rashi, commenting on Leviticus 26:6.
3. Shabbos 10b.
4. Tanya, ch. 2.
5. Deuteronomy 21:10.
6. Midrash Tanchuma, Parshas B’Chukosai, sec. 3; see Tanya, chs. 33 and 36.
7. See Rashi, Leviticus 18:3.
8. Deuteronomy 11:12.
9. See also Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Melachim 7:15 which offers a promise of safety to those who enter actual battle “with sole intention of sanctifying G-d’s Name.”
10. Shabbos 10a.
11. Malachi 3:18.
12. Chagiga 9b.

13. Ch. 15.

14. To express this concept in traditional Chassidic terminology (Torah Or, Mikeitz, 39c ff.):

The commandment to “love G-d... with all your might (B’chol Meodecha)” is interpreted as a charge to summon up an unlimited commitment. And we are promised that an unlimited commitment on man’s part will arouse unlimited G-dliness.

15. Rambam, loc. cit. 11:4.

16. Although the Rambam mentions the above as one of the criteria through which Moshiach will be identified, this will only be necessary if the Redemption will follow the dictates of the natural order. It is possible that the Redemption will follow a miraculous order (see the notes of the Raavad and others; even the Rambam acknowledges such a possibility in Igeres Teiman), in which case, these wars may not be necessary.

17. Rambam, loc. cit., 4:10 in description of the role of Israel’s kings.

18. Loc. Cit. 12:5. The promise of this era - and the awareness that it is the truth of existence - should inspire confidence and peace of mind in these last moments of exile when we are confronted by challenges and conflict.

Indeed, it is possible to experience a foretaste of the peace of mind to be achieved in the Era of the Redemption at present through the teachings of Chassidus.

An allusion to this sequence can be seen in the fact that Parshas Ki Seitzei (which highlights the concept of war) is followed by Parshas Ki Savo (which describes the Jews’ entry into Eretz Yisroel and the blessings they will receive there).

Indeed Parshas Ki Savo is read in the Mincha prayers of Shabbos Parshas Ki Seitzei. The connection between them shows that the wars of Parshas Ki Seitzei are not separate from the peace promised in Parshas Ki Savo.

MOSHIACH ARRIVES IN TEVERYA ILLIT

By Nosson Avrohom

Translated By Michoel Leib Dobry

Rabbi and Mrs. Omri Ben-Akiva, both natives of Teverya Illit (Upper Tiberias), are preparing the impoverished neighborhood for a rich welcome for Moshiach Tzidkeinu. As a baal t'shuva turned shliach himself, he understands the trail he's blazing for the community. When Moshiach comes, he'll get an Illit welcome in Teverya.

During the three hours that we conducted this interview, Jews didn't stop coming into the Chabad House — each one with a different request. First there were some sweet little children who came in to ask for candies and then made their brachos out loud. A few minutes later, another Jew entered and asked if the Chabad House could lend him some yarmulkes. Not long afterwards, someone came in to find out the time of davening, and yet another to ask a question in Yiddishkait. Thus, the interview progressed, piece by piece, between interruptions. Yet, it

was quite fascinating to see how Rabbi Omri Ben-Akiva related to each inquiry pleasantly and cheerfully.

The location: The Chabad House of Teverya Illit (Upper Tiberias). At the conclusion of just three years, he has managed to create a virtual revolution together with two other shluchim — Rabbi Reuven Ben-Chamo and Rabbi Alon Iluz. “With the passage of time, other organizations are now doing many of the things that we originally started in the neighborhood, foremost among them, the house-to-

house Torah classes. When we began our work here, no such things existed, and we quickly understood the powerful Jewish effect that this would have upon the residents. Today, there isn't an organization operating in the neighborhood that doesn't hold Torah classes in people's homes.”

Rabbi Ben-Akiva conducts his activities with his own unique blend of Jewish pride, characteristic Chabad determination, genuine concern, and unsurpassed Ahavas Yisroel. A close friend of mine had only praise for Rabbi Ben-Akiva, and





Rabbi Omri Ben-Akiva captivating the participants during the Yud Shvat farbrengen at the Chabad House

he strongly recommended that I interview him.

Many families in this neighborhood live in very low socioeconomic conditions, and an integral part in the avoda of shlichus there is to serve as an attentive ear and a source of support in the material sense as well.

When I heard Rabbi Ben-Akiva's personal life story, the full picture became clear to me. His early years were spent in this neighborhood. He knows the dynamics and character of its residents, and he also understands the most advantageous

ways to mix with them. After learning in the Chabad yeshiva in Ramat Aviv, getting married, and starting to raise a family, he decided to return from whence he came, the neighborhood of his youth – this time in different attire and armed with a lot of “L'chat'chilla Aribber” and intense faith in his goal of transforming his home turf.

Rabbi Ben-Akiva had made a long and circuitous journey in reaching the path of his forefathers. Ironically, the fact that he had received a traditional education in his youth was what distanced him

from his Jewish values as he grew older.

“While I grew up in a classic traditional home, I only observed all the mitzvos and other Jewish aspects out of habit and respect towards my parents and family, and not because of any deep inner understanding that this was the proper way to live one's life. I lived a life filled with conflicts: On the one hand, I went to synagogue in Friday night, but I would arrive as late as I could, hoping that the services would end as soon as possible. Friends and acquaintances would come for the



Illuminating Teverya Illit. At the neighborhood's central menorah lighting

Friends and acquaintances would come for the Shabbos evening meal to enjoy some good traditional food, sing Shabbos songs and hymns, and my father would say a d'var Torah. After the meal, I would go with my friends to the local pub or the dance club to spend my leisure time.

Shabbos evening meal to enjoy some good traditional food, sing Shabbos songs and hymns, and my father would say a d'var Torah. After the meal, I would go with my friends to the local pub or the dance club to spend my leisure time. This was a normal mode of conduct for me and my family.

"I would go out every day without a kippa or tzitzis. This continued until the age of seventeen, when I stopped fulfilling mitzvos altogether, as I thought by this time that I already knew everything that Judaism had to offer. While I still had a feeling of emptiness and soul-searching, my search was concentrated outside of Judaism, which I deemed to be a world of

laws and customs without reason or explanation. I was in great turmoil, and nothing that anyone had to offer me could satisfy this inner craving.

"While I was in this state of confusion, I was inducted into the Israel Defense Forces as a paratrooper. Despite the mental and physical hardships of serving in a battlefield unit, I succeeded in completing my service in the role of commander.

"During my time in the army, I had many occasions to ponder the many burning questions that engulfed my mind regarding the essence of life and our purpose in this world. These questions grew in my mind with even greater intensity after I received my military

discharge. Then, as most average Israelis after the army, I decided to take a trip throughout the Far East, traveling to Laos, India, and Thailand. During my months of touring, I still continued to observe minimal kashrus, according to the standards I knew at the time. However, I had stopped keeping Shabbos and other elements of Judaism that I had observed up until then.

"The first step towards returning the world of Yiddishkait came when I met HaTamim Boruch Makmel, of blessed memory. He spoke with me logically and gently, and his words penetrated my heart. He was the first person to tell me that every Jewish law or commandment has a true and profound inner explanation, based in the highest sources of holiness. I was greatly impressed by his logical and heartfelt words, and I began to understand that Yiddishkait is not a world of dry laws bereft of any logic or reason. After a conversation lasting several hours, he managed to awaken my long-dormant Jewish faith and conscience, and I resolved to start putting on t'fillin again each weekday morning. During the first four months, this proved a bit difficult, and I had to force myself to take the t'fillin out of the bag and roll up my sleeve.

"One day, as I started saying the Shmoneh Esrei, and I read the words 'Baruch Ata Hashem' I realized for the first time in my life that that praying was a means of speaking directly to G-d, not just reading a text. I began to understand that there was something deep and profound here, something very inner and essential, and not just the recitation of some monologue. From that moment, a sense of true Yiras Hashem began to sprout within me.

Coming to Chabad was a case of complete Divine Providence, resulting from my desire to contact

my friend from India. “I had met a friend, Yaniv Cohen, when I was in Thailand, and we had traveled together in India. We would customarily visit the local ‘Chabad Houses’ during our stay in the country, and while I was more open, Yaniv was very antagonistic towards Judaism.

When I heard from a mutual acquaintance that Yaniv had returned to Eretz Yisroel, I picked up the phone to chat with him about what had transpired since we last saw each other. His father answered, and he told me that Yaniv was studying in a yeshiva. The very thought that Yaniv would come close to Judaism seemed totally unrealistic to me. I asked his father what he meant, and he replied, ‘A yeshiva for baalei t’shuva.’ I was stunned. I then asked the father where the yeshiva was, and he told me that it was located in Ramat Aviv. When I finally reached Yaniv, he proceeded to tell me with great excitement about his journey to the traditions of his forefathers, and he invited me to spend Shabbos in the yeshiva. We continued to maintain regular contact with one another, and our conversations were very energizing.

“After a few months, he succeeded in convincing me to come to the yeshiva for Shabbos. It was the most unique and marvelous Shabbos in my life. Rabbi Marzel, one of the rabbanim of the yeshiva, gave a d’var Torah before Kabbalas Shabbos, and his words felt like a ‘closing of the circle’. My joy knew no bounds.

“Another aspect to the yeshiva that really moved me was the mutual sense of brotherhood, partnership, and true ‘Ahavas Yisroel’. We don’t always realize what tremendous influence a little gentle treatment can have upon a lost young Jewish soul looking for the right path. Tender loving care, genuine concern, and a warm embrace so that he can



Local revolutionaries. (From left to right): Rabbi Omri Ben-Akiva, Rabbi Reuven Ben-Chamo, Rabbi Alon Iluz

actually feel that you love him and understand his struggle can have a powerful effect that can totally change his way of life.

“After that Shabbos, I decided to accept upon myself the saying of Chitas each day.

“Nevertheless, the inner turmoil within me had still not quieted. Lacking proper guidance, I continued to experience a lengthy period of confusion. I had many conflicts and difficulties, and the absolute transition to a life of Torah and mitzvos scared me a little. Yet, wherever I went, I remained loyal to my kiruv process. I had my ups and downs, but I always learned the daily Tanya shiur. While I understood virtually nothing, I felt that this was something deep and very powerful that poured new life into me each day.”

During his reserve duty in Ramallah, young Omri and another soldier were guests in the home of one of the settlers on a nearby yishuv, where they felt the magical beauty of Shabbos – the challos, the candles, and the peace and tranquility. “After years of running away from tradition, I suddenly understood how precious the Shabbos really was, and it was there



Making seider. Rabbi Omri Ben-Akiva and Rabbi Reuven Ben-Chamo during the final preparations before the Chabad House’s communal Pesach seider

that I decided to keep Shabbos.”

Not long afterwards, Omri returned to the yeshiva in Ramat Aviv, this time as a student, not just a visitor. Now, everything seemed much easier.

At the conclusion of two years’ study in the “Ramat Avivian” yeshiva, where he delved deeply into the magical world of chassidus, he reached the stage when shidduch offers were deemed appropriate, and he established a proper chassidic home with his wife, Yael, another Teverya Illit native who also underwent a similar kiruv process. From the very start of their journey together, it was clear to the young couple that they would dedicate their



Purim costume Gemach. Rabbi Alon Iluz greets children from all parts of the community to borrow Purim costumes

We don't always realize what tremendous influence a little gentle treatment can have upon a lost young Jewish soul looking for the right path. Tender loving care, genuine concern, and a warm embrace so that he can actually feel that you love him and understand his struggle can have a powerful effect that can totally change his way of life.

lives to preparing another spot on the globe for the revelation of the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach, and connecting to the shlichus empire upon which the sun never sets. "The desire to go out on shlichus burned within my bones like an intense inner strength," described Rabbi Omri Ben-Akiva.

During the first months after their marriage, they lived in the Chabad community of Tzfas, while they looked for an appropriate place to go out on shlichus. They eventually decided to go back to the neighborhood where they grew up,

bringing the light they discovered to their friends and acquaintances. Thus, they found themselves coming to Teverya Illit several times a week and establishing Torah classes there, which they held at the homes of local friends. One shiur followed another, and the circle of participants grew continually, until they made the decision to form their own institution. They received the permission of the Rebbe's head shliach in Teverya, Rabbi Yosef Kramer, who gave them use of a vacant building, which had formerly housed a Chabad kindergarten, for

their programs.

"On one of the first days of my neighborhood activities, I met Rabbi Reuven Ben-Chamo. I discovered that not only was I was not the only Chabadnik in the neighborhood, he had even been there for some time, and was already involved in outreach work. We decided to operate as a team in order to enhance and strengthen the spreading of the wellsprings of chassidus.

"The Chabad House was officially dedicated three years ago on Yud Shvat at an especially joyous farbrengen organized by Teverya's central Chabad House in cooperation with Rabbi Shneur Zalman HaLevi Turkoff – director of the 'Ruach Al HaMayim' Chabad House in the city's center, and Rabbi Reuven Gol. Rabbi Yosef Kramer opened the farbrengen with an explanation on the essence of the day of Yud Shvat. Rabbi Ben-Chamo and I detailed our planned activities before the participants and invited them to take part in our daily prayer services and other programs."

Within a relatively short period of time, the pair of shlichim saw evidence of G-d's help and tremendous success in their activities. Their friends and supporters grew in number, as more and more people were exposed to the teachings of chassidus and the light of the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach, including the announcement of the Redemption and the identity of the Redeemer. After six months, they moved to a larger facility, where they conduct neighborhood Chabad activities to this very day.

The amazing story about how they obtained the funds for their new building demonstrates how vitally important it is to remain steadfast in achieving one's goals. "Even before we arrived to start official activities in Teverya Illit, we would come each week to give over

a Tanya class, each time in a different neighborhood home. There was a Jewish resident in the community whom we always asked to participate in our Torah classes. While we could see that he really wanted to come, something always seemed to come up and he couldn't make it. I didn't give up, and I would invite him each week, despite the fact that I assumed that some excuse would keep him from participating. The week I arrived in the neighborhood, I was delighted to meet him on the street.

"Before I had a chance to say a word, he came towards me and gave a warm welcome. 'This week, the class is at my house,' he declared. Since then, this shiur has developed and expanded, and I have come to know many more Jews who are now regular participants in these classes. Each one resolved to become stronger in various spiritual matters. When I needed to find a new building, I decided to make an appeal before these people, and they declared then and there that they would cover the rent expense for the new building.

"The shiurim are an important part of our work," says Rabbi Omri Ben-Akiva. "They possess the power to create great change and reveal the light of the soul. We conduct several classes during the week for men and women on a variety of subjects, all of which are held in a very pleasant family atmosphere. The Chabad House also holds regular prayer services on Shabbos and weekdays. Similarly, there is an extensive array of seasonal activities. Taking into consideration the fact that many Jews in this community are not in a very good financial state, we also find ourselves providing assistance of a more material nature. This is achieved through the distribution of pre-holiday food packages and making weekly Friday night meals for the poor and destitute, and



Bein HaZ'manim at the Chabad House. Yeshiva students farbrenging at the Chabad House with rabbanim and mashpiim



others who simply have nowhere to eat on Shabbos and Yom tov."

The Jewish revolution and the return to true Torah values throughout Teverya Illit is a growing and rising phenomenon. While many other organizations have now become partners in this effort, the trailblazers were, of course, the shluchim. Rabbi Ben-Akiva gives much credit to the neighborhood Torah classes for this inundation. Stories of miraculous instances of Divine Providence happen virtually on a daily basis. When we asked Rabbi Ben-Akiva to give us an example, he told this fascinating story:

"One of our more popular classes for women is a shiur I give called 'The Secret of the Soul of Man', which takes place on Tuesday evenings. Each week before the

shiur, we send an SMS message to all the women in our database to remind them to attend, and more women subsequently join our growing list of participants. One of these women is a longtime friend of my wife who had yet to come to any of our classes. Every time we would meet her during the year, we would give her a reminder about an upcoming event. She would promise to make an effort to come, but it never seemed to work out.

"One week, she did manage to come, and my wife greeted her with a warm welcome. In the meantime, more and more women arrived, and they chatted with one another before the start of the class. I happened to hear this woman mention the name of a certain young man. When I heard his name, I was quite surprised; he was a friend of mine from long ago.

"In any event, the scheduled time for the start of the class had arrived, and we began to learn. At the end of the shiur, my wife began to tell her weekly story about the Rebbe. We had been reading from the seifer 'V'Rabbim Heishiv M'Avon' (And he brought back many from iniquity), and she told about a couple that had been married for several years, but

“During that Shabbos, the first Katyusha rockets fell on Teverya, and there was tremendous panic throughout the city. Everyone ran to the bomb shelters to take cover, and chaos reigned in the streets. All this took place just as we had finished Friday night davening and were on our way home to make Kiddush.”

had yet to be blessed with children despite all the fertility treatments.

They had the privilege of going in for ‘yechidus’ before the Rebbe, where they mentioned their plight and asked for his bracha. The Rebbe asked the husband if he had gone out with a young woman on a shidduch and caused her any emotional pain. He recalled that there was such an incident. The Rebbe said that he must ask forgiveness from this young woman, and as a result, he would be blessed with his own personal salvation and this young woman would find a proper match. The man called the woman’s brother, and by Divine Providence, she was there at the time. He asked forgiveness from the woman, and she forgave him. Just a month later, he heard that the woman was engaged to be married, and not long afterwards, he and his wife learned that they would soon be blessed with a child.

“Suddenly, my wife’s friend reacted. ‘I knew that he hadn’t forgiven me,’ she said out loud. My wife already knew her friend’s story, and she asked her, ‘How do you know?’ The woman replied that after she had broken up with the young man, my longtime friend, he met her in the street and told her categorically that she had hurt him and he would not forgive her. At this

point, she added that she had been married for three years already and still had no children. It turned out that her coming to the shiur was not by chance, as she obviously had to hear this story...

“On the spot, my wife made me a shliach to ask forgiveness from this man. I called him the very next day, and we broke into a little nostalgia with some stories from our youth. At the conclusion of the conversation, I raised the issue at hand and proceeded to tell him the whole story. After he happily agreed to forgive the woman, I quickly called her to give an update on the new developments. This whole story seemed like an incredible case of Divine Providence.

“A short while later, my wife told me that this woman had quietly told her that she was expecting a child...”

A significant part of the neighborhood outreach activities is conducted among the youth, and I asked Rabbi Ben-Akiva what is the most direct path toward reaching the hearts of these young people:

“As time passes along my shlichus, I also make progress in my insight and understanding of ways to relate to them. From the very outset, I established an ironclad principle that I have to listen to people. I can find myself listening to a young

father speak about the problems of his infant daughter, and I try to find the connection necessary to reach his heart and the heart of every such person – without arrogance, without admonition – simply to understand, to listen, to take notice. This is my formula. On the other hand, together with this approach of camaraderie and speaking to them on their level, we must help them understand that we do have some knowledge to give them.”

Rabbi Ben-Akiva receives a considerable amount of assistance from the students of the Chabad yeshiva in Tzfas, who come to the Chabad House as part of the “Yeshivas Bein HaZ’manim” framework, conducted each year during the months of Nissan and Menachem Av. Dozens of T’mimim, who have no constructive way to spend their time at home during the spring and summer vacations, move to Teverya, where they learn half a day and go out on mivtzaim throughout the city during the other half. “This arrangement began during the Second Lebanon War,” recalled Rabbi Ben-Akiva. “Each Shabbos, we would customarily bring two yeshiva bachurim from Tzfas to the Chabad House to assist us in our activities. So it was on one particular Shabbos.

“During that Shabbos, the first Katyusha rockets fell on Teverya, and there was tremendous panic throughout the city. Everyone ran to the bomb shelters to take cover, and chaos reigned in the streets. All this took place just as we had finished Friday night davening and were on our way home to make Kiddush. We debated whether we should go out on mivtzaim or have an extended Shabbos meal. My wife posed the question to the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach, via a volume of ‘Igros Kodesh’. The answer was positively amazing: The Rebbe wrote that even before going off to the battlefield,

soldiers sing Napoleon's March. After this crystal clear reply, we quickly finished the seuda and went out to the bomb shelters.

"We moved from shelter to shelter, giving emotional strength and spiritual encouragement through the Rebbe's holy message. We felt how we were bestowing a sense of hope and faith to these people. As a result, we decided to open an 'emergency yeshiva' in the Chabad House. These two bachurim remained with us, and we would learn the first half of the day and go out on mitvzaim for the second. There is no doubt that the vitality, the strength, and the ability of the T'mimim is many times greater than that of the "balabatim". During the month of Menachem Av that year, one of the bachurim called me and asked if I wanted to renew that same schedule, and I happily agreed.

"We opened 'Yeshivas Bein HaZ'manim.' More bachurim came this time, and we have run this program four times since then. During the month, the yeshiva's rabbanim and mashpiim come to farbreng with us, and all our friends and supporters derive much pleasure from the unique aura emanating from their words. The experience leaves a powerful impression not just on the bachurim, but on the local residents as well.

"The great dream is to establish more institutions. It's possible to plow a deep furrow and lay an abundance of seed, but if there's no place to grow the fruits – this poses a serious problem. We must establish

learning institutions for baalei t'shuva – a yeshiva for men and a school for women – in every city. Teverya has a population of about forty-five thousand people, and there's certainly at least fifty potential yeshiva bachurim out here – we just have to provide them with the opportunity. During the first two years of this shlichus, I didn't give sufficient appreciation to the establishment of mosdos. Today, however, I understand that while mitvzaim and other seasonal activities are extremely vital, they can't compare to full-fledged institutions in preserving and strengthening the level of influence."

The Rebbe says that the avoda of shlichus today must be instilled with the concept of Moshiach. When asked how he publicizes "the announcement of the Redemption" and how this is actually carried out on his shlichus, R' Ben-Akiva explains:

"I simply do not get into any arguments with people. I tell them exactly what the Rebbe said, and they accept it. This is the best and most direct approach. In the neighborhood where I operate, the Jews believe in the Alm-ghty with pure and simple faith, so why shouldn't these people believe in the announcement of the Redemption from the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach, especially when they're all familiar with the greatness of the Rebbe? The only avoda left for me is to bring them to a realization of when and where. The Redemption will take place in kindness and

mercy. Our generation is the generation of the Redemption.

"There are those who think that Moshiach is something that pertains only to the distant future, and my job is to educate them to the fact that Moshiach is here and now issue. Anyone who wants to delve into the subject more deeply will receive the relevant explanations. On more than one occasion, I found myself reassuring people about the Redemption, as there are many fears connected with this. I always bring the words of the Rebbe that there can be no worse suffering than what we presently endure in the exile.

"The ideas of Moshiach and the Redemption have penetrated the world to such an extent that everybody knows about it, and there are even popular movies on this theme. Everyone feels that it's imminent, literally at the doorstep, and we only have to state things clearly and succinctly, and with true chassidic vigor. There's no need to be ashamed, as this is the unvarnished truth. We must explain the process of Redemption and the identity of the Redeemer, Melech HaMoshiach, and we see from experience how these concepts are accepted with the utmost simplicity. The Rebbe says in 'D'var Malchus' that Eliyahu HaNavi will come to Teverya and announce the Redemption, and all that remains is for us to tell this to the city's residents and do everything possible that it should happen even one moment sooner."

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MILKA'S MIRACLE

By Nosson Avrohom

Translated by Michoel Leib Dobry

A few days later, we received the Rebbe's answer, written during Chol HaMoed Sukkos of that year. We were told that if the Rebbe writes and puts out a letter on Chol HaMoed, he apparently sees the matter as urgent, but this letter sounded very simple. Without any bracha or any words of encouragement: "Check t'fillin and mezuzos. I will mention it at the Tziyon." I was very disappointed. At least if the Rebbe had suggested some help or assistance; at least if he would have written a few words of support, comfort, or empathy...

"It has been many years since I last told this story," long-time Haifa resident Mrs. Esther Chaim told us with a tinge of emotion. The story itself took place more than forty years ago, when Mrs. Chaim and her husband, Rabbi Yaakov, traveled to Canada as representatives of the Jewish Agency.

"It began a few months after the miraculous victory of the Six Day War," began Mrs. Esther Chaim. "My husband, a trained educator, was called upon by the Jewish

Agency to relocate to Toronto, Canada, and serve as a teacher in Hebrew and Talmud in one of the city's Jewish schools. Sensing that this was a profoundly important task, we decided to accept this mission and set out together with our four small children. Milka, our youngest at the time, was only one month old. We packed up our belongings and boarded a plane headed overseas. When we arrived in Toronto, we still didn't have a house ready for us, and we had to

spend our first few days in a local hotel.

"We got a room relatively small for our large family, and the children, like all children, started to run wild, jump around, and make noise. During the two days we stayed in the hotel, my husband went out with the members of the local Jewish community in search of a house that would suit our needs, while I stayed behind to watch the children. There wasn't much I could do to keep them occupied, as I was primarily involved with caring for the infant. At a certain point, I felt that I was at my wit's end, trying to exercise control over my four young children with nothing to keep them constructively engaged. This was a virtually impossible task to fulfill.

"On the afternoon of our second day in the hotel, I wanted to give the baby a bath. As I was putting her in the bathroom sink, I suddenly noticed my eyesight becoming unusually blurry. I later realized that there was yellow ragweed growing from the bathroom window. It was hay fever season at the time, and it causes many people to endure a severe allergic reaction, with fuzzy vision as one of its symptoms. In any case, I rushed to close the hot water tap, but apparently did not shut it off completely and it continued to drip onto Milka's legs.

"The child began to scream loudly, and when I realized that boiling water was falling on her foot, I was terrified. I quickly took her out of the sink and laid her on the bed. A quick glance at her foot revealed that the burn she had sustained was relatively small, and I began to calm down a bit. Since I saw that there was apparently little damage, I was in no rush to take the bandages out of our luggage and treat the injury myself. Instead, I would take the baby to an expert physician.

"I quickly went to the hotel's

front desk and ordered a taxi to take me to the local hospital. After waiting for a few minutes, I was brought in to the doctor. He noticed a festering area of pus resulting from the burn, but he declared that we have nothing to worry about, as the burn is relatively minor and it should heal within a couple of weeks. He applied some ointment on her tiny legs, placed bandages on them, and warned me not to remove the bandages for the next two weeks. Before I left the hospital, he assured me that everything would be fine.

“To be perfectly honest, I found his diagnosis rather puzzling. When another of my daughters sustained a burn before we left Eretz Yisroel, the doctor applied a special cream developed in Eretz Yisroel and instructed me to change the dressing each day. It simply wasn’t rational to leave the bandages in place for two weeks without airing out the afflicted area. When I expressed my surprise to the doctor, bringing the case of my older daughter as evidence, he became very angry and subjected me to a flood of scorn and derision. ‘You’re in another country,’ he said tauntingly, as if I was questioning his professional qualifications. I preferred not to argue with him too much and did as he instructed.

“Ten days passed, and blood began to seep out of the bandages. A friend of mine, who was with me at the time, noticed this and urged me to go back to the doctor immediately, but I was in no hurry. The doctor had seemed to be so certain of his analysis that I was sure there was nothing to worry about.

“When the baby began to cry bitterly and wouldn’t calm down, we decided to take her back to the same clinic. I can safely say that this was all in the merit of that friend, who wouldn’t let up until I went to the hospital. The same doctor was on duty, and it was he who opened the



When I expressed my surprise to the doctor, he became very angry and subjected me to a flood of scorn and derision. ‘You’re in another country,’ he said tauntingly, as if I was questioning his professional qualifications. I preferred not to argue with him too much and did as he instructed.

dressing. I was in absolute shock when I saw what lay under the bandages, and I noticed that even the doctor had lost all self-confidence. My motherly emotion burst forth in all its strength, and tears flowed down my cheeks.

“The decaying leg emitted a pungent odor and was grossly discolored in various shades, making it clearly obvious that something was seriously wrong. ‘Doctor,’ I barely managed to mutter in my anger, ‘it’s far worse than it was when I brought her to you.’ I already had feelings of

deep regret that I had been lazy about taking the bandages out of our suitcase and dressing the wound myself. I had been so naïve in thinking that a trained physician would treat her better.

“I looked at the doctor with utter contempt, but he just wrung his hands in confusion. Deeply embarrassed, he admitted that I was right and gave me an immediate referral to the central pediatric hospital. The situation left no time to waste. We ran from the clinic straight to the hospital, where the

doctor on call examined the baby. Shocked by what he saw, he emphatically ordered that we have her hospitalized immediately. After expressing a few choice words for the doctor whose incompetence had caused the whole problem, he told us bluntly that he would try to save the legs. 'If you would have come tomorrow, there might have been nothing left to save, and I would have been forced to amputate in order to prevent the decay from spreading to other limbs of the body,' the doctor explained. I stood there paralyzed. It was only at that moment that I understood how serious the situation was.

"The doctor instructed that the baby be placed immediately in a sterile room, where only I and the medical staff could enter with sterile garb and masks.

"Each time that I would enter the room, I would quietly murmur chapters of T'hilim that I knew by heart. Whenever I or some staff member would leave the room, we would have to throw our clothes into the hospital laundry. The baby was given hot baths each day, causing her to scream and cry pitifully. She would writhe and shake in agony, and it tore my heart up. Then, as if all this wasn't enough, the hospital administration informed us that we would have to start paying for each day of hospitalization – a sizable amount of money. I felt that my whole world was collapsing.

"In any event, our story quickly made the rounds throughout the city's Jewish community. Many good people came to offer assistance – whether moral, emotional, or financial. Faced with the deep pain and anguish that this situation created, we still felt a bit uplifted by this revelation of solidarity expressed by people whom we did not know, connected to us by the simple fact that we were all members of the Jewish People.

"Among these local Jewish citizens who came to our assistance was a Chabad woman named Malka Levy. She heard our story and urged us to write to the Rebbe.

"I am embarrassed to say this today, but what she said seemed a bit alien to us then. We had grown up and were educated in Torah observant households, and we knew that in times of trouble, we had the Book of Psalms, through which we could turn to G-d in prayer and supplication. However, the meaning behind the custom of writing to the Rebbe and what he could do to help us – we didn't understand that at the time.

"We refused her offer for several days, but to her credit, she wouldn't relent. We tried to get out of it with a variety of excuses, but she kept insisting and pressuring. Eventually, my husband gave in. 'If it won't help, it surely won't hurt,' he said. 'Let's write and see what happens.'

"She explained to us how you compose a letter to the Rebbe, and we proceeded to write in detail about everything that we had experienced since the day of our arrival in Canada. We asked for the Rebbe's bracha that our daughter should be healthy and her legs should completely heal.

"A few days later, we received the Rebbe's answer, written during Chol HaMoed Sukkos. We were told that if the Rebbe writes and puts out a letter on Chol HaMoed, he apparently sees the matter as urgent. However, the Rebbe's answer seemed very simple, almost routine. Without any bracha or any words of encouragement: **'Check t'fillin and mezuzos. I will mention it at the Tziyon.'**

"I was very disappointed. At least if the Rebbe had suggested some help or assistance; at least if he would have written a few words of support, comfort, or empathy. Yet, the Rebbe instead wrote us an

answer that even my grandfather used to tell us all the time – if there's a health problem in the family or difficulties in making a living, you have to check the mezuzos and t'fillin. Today, I realize that I had a lot of nerve, but back then I was still unfamiliar with the Rebbe and had not been educated according to the principles of chassidus and bittul to the Rebbe. I told my husband that we didn't have to check the mezuzos because we were just moving into our new house, and the mezuzos were brand new. The t'fillin also didn't have to be checked because we had them checked before leaving Eretz Yisroel.

"A few more days passed, and our daughter's condition remained unchanged. Each day that I went in to visit her, my heart simply broke to see her sad state.

"One day, my husband decided to follow the Rebbe's suggestion. 'We've done everything possible that she should recover,' he said. 'What do we have to lose if we do as the Rebbe said?' That same day, he sent his t'fillin to a sofer STaM known for his great *yiras Shamayim*, who checked them with the utmost precision. A few hours later, the sofer called my husband and told him that while he didn't see any real problem, he did notice that certain words with the letter *Tzaddik* needed some repair.

"My husband's t'fillin parchments were written in Ashkenazic script, and the top of the letter *Tzaddik* points in a different direction than it does in Sephardic script. I found out that my husband once gave his t'fillin to be checked by the father of one of his students. This sofer was of Moroccan descent, and he 'fixed' the *Tzaddik* so it would appear according to Sephardic custom, telling my husband later that he had repaired 'a small problem'. As it turned out, not only was the problem not repaired, it

created a new and bigger problem.

"We were most excited by this astounding discovery. My husband immediately stopped putting on these t'fillin, and borrowed from a friend until my parents managed to send him new t'fillin from Eretz Yisroel.

"After a long and tiring month of constant baths, the doctor decided to graft a piece of skin onto the leg. The operation was performed, but the procedure was unsuccessful, as the skin did not attach itself to the wound. He decided to make a second attempt, but the results were the same. When the doctor requested our permission to try a third operation, we refused. I saw how the child was suffering terribly, and I was very concerned that further surgery would leave deep scars in her skin. The doctor fully understood my position and told me that I could take my daughter home. Yet, while he said that for the immediate future, the operation could wait, nevertheless, it would have to take place eventually.

"In the meantime, three days had passed since my husband had discovered the problem in his t'fillin. 'A tzaddik decrees, and G-d fulfills' – I have no other words to describe what happened then to our daughter. I suddenly looked at the place of the wound with disbelieving eyes. Hair had begun to grow on the skin that the doctor had 'unsuccessfully' grafted. The meaning was clear: The wound had healed!

"I was absolutely stunned. All the pain and pessimism that I had endured over the last month had instantly been transformed into great joy. I literally started to sing and dance. When the doctor examined the child, he was no less thunderstruck. He said quite simply that we had experienced a miracle, and we knew all too well in whose merit this amazing wonder had

Today, I realize that I had a lot of nerve, but back then I was still unfamiliar with the Rebbe and had not been educated according to the principles of chassidus and bittul to the Rebbe. I told my husband that we didn't have to check the mezuzos because we were just moving into our new house, and the mezuzos were brand new.

come to pass.

"We have understood ever since about the tremendous strength of the Rebbe. I was sorry for every inappropriate thought I had ever had about the Rebbe's instructions.

"At the conclusion of three years, when we finished our mission in Canada and were getting ready to return to Eretz Yisroel, we decided that we would not miss the unique opportunity of meeting with the Rebbe in yechidus. We received an appointment for two o'clock in the morning. We submitted a written list to the Rebbe containing our names and our parents' names, and we thanked him for the bracha that saved our daughter's life.

"In all the excitement, my husband forgot to write his mother's name, and this was the Rebbe's first question to my husband. He replied 'Chaya', and the Rebbe took a pencil, added the name 'Chaya' to the list, and then nodded his head. I felt this represented the embodiment of the Midrash stating that Moshe Rabbeinu knew each and every member of the Jewish People. I was mesmerized and held spellbound by the Rebbe's gaze, as if I was being x-rayed. One look of the Rebbe was enough for me to feel that he knows my entire past, reads my every thought, and sees what is bound to happen to me. The Rebbe's eyes were filled with love and expression.

"The Rebbe blessed each of the children, and when I eventually asked what we should do regarding our child, who was in need of another operation to remove the scar completely, the Rebbe told us to do as the doctor instructed. I will never forget how at the conclusion of the yechidus, I was so utterly enraptured that I couldn't move from my chair. It was only with great difficulty that I got up and went outside.

"We have been privileged ever since to maintain a connection with Chabad chassidus. I participate regularly in Tanya classes given by the Rebbe's shliach in Haifa, Rabbi Dov Ginsburg, and I previously participated in shiurim with Rabbi Reuven Dunin, of blessed memory."

Mrs. Chaim concludes her story with undisguised excitement, elaborating at length about the great privilege she has had in knowing the Rebbe and learning the teachings of Chabad chassidus, which were like cold water for her thirsty soul. "Today," she says, "my daughter, Milka, who merited this miracle as a result of the Rebbe's bracha, is involved in the mitzvah of settling Eretz Yisroel, living on the settlement of Yitzhar, mother of eleven children, and she has already been privileged to dance at the wedding of her second child..."

OPEN THE BOOK AND SEE

By Dr. Yaakov Gottlieb

Teacher at Darkei Noam yeshiva high school

“I had to set aside all my previous ideas and then tackle the sources. I wanted to know how the Rebbe understands the Rambam’s Laws of Moshiach and whether there was a connection between his understanding and all the activities of the Chabad movement.” * The following is a speech given by Dr. Yaakov Gottlieb at a Moshiach and Geula gathering on 3 Tammuz in Bat-Yam.



In my recently published book, *Sichlitanut b'Levush Chassidi – Demuso shel ha'Rambam b'Chassidus Chabad* (Rationalism in Chassidic Garb – the Rambam in Chabad Chassidus), there is a section on inyanei Moshiach and Geula. Before I studied the subject, I had to set aside all my previous ideas and then tackle the sources. I wanted to know how the Rebbe understands the Rambam’s Laws of Moshiach and whether there was a connection between his understanding and all the activities

of the Chabad movement.

After an intensive study of the Rebbe’s writings, I came to the conclusion that I wrote in my book, which was also approved by other academicians before the book went to print. My conclusion is that the Rebbe operates with the consciousness of Moshiach. The Rebbe’s writings leave no room for doubt as to Moshiach’s identity, at least as far as how the Rebbe sees things.

I ignored the statements of Chassidim who said, “The Rebbe told me ...” I was only interested in the sichos the Rebbe gave over publicly, the ones nobody disputes the Rebbe said. I focused mainly on the edited sichos, especially the D’var Malchus which are quite clear.

FORCING ALL ISRAEL

I will focus here on the signs of Moshiach according to the Rambam, but first I will preface that with an important point. In Likkutei Sichos Parshas Shmini, the Rebbe brings a *chakira* of the Rogatchover Gaon as to whether the kosher signs on animals are just signs that let us know which animals are kosher or whether the sign itself is what makes the animal kosher.

So too, when we speak about the signs of Moshiach, they can be used to prove and clarify who Moshiach is, but in my book I took a different and powerful approach, that the simanim of Moshiach in the Rambam are a reason and a cause, and serve as a blueprint for the activities of Moshiach.

In other words, the Rebbe’s activities follow the guiding principles of the laws of Moshiach in the Rambam as he understands them, and these signs are what guide him. The Rebbe’s activities are practical interpretations of the laws of Moshiach.



The Rebbe's activities follow the guiding principles of the laws of Moshiach in the Rambam as he understands them, and these signs are what guide him. The Rebbe's activities are practical interpretations of the laws of Moshiach.

From this perspective, all the mitzvaim (mitzva campaigns) and shluchim around the world are the Rebbe's interpretation of the Rambam's description, "He will compel all Israel to follow in its [the Torah's] ways and strengthen its breaches." There are people who think that the Rambam means forcing people with whips but the Rebbe explains it otherwise. The Rebbe writes that in our generation, the only way to be mekarev people

to their Father in heaven is with love.

We find something like this regarding Har Sinai. It says that Hashem "held the mountain over them like a barrel." Chassidus explains that this doesn't mean physical forcing with an actual mountain but a G-dly revelation that was so powerful that it was impossible to withstand it. So too, the Rebbe's compelling people to return to their Father in heaven is

with the strength of his spiritual force and with the power of the great light that impacts on all Jews in the world.

FIGHTING THE WARS OF HASHEM

The Rambam goes on to say, "He will fight the wars of Hashem." Of course you can explain this literally, that Moshiach will take weapons and fight, but we know that there are other kinds of victories. According to Chazal, when Moshe Rabbeinu killed the Egyptian, he did so by uttering the Ineffable Name of G-d. The Rambam himself, in his *Letter to Yemen*, brings in regards to Moshiach the verse, "with the breath of his lips he will kill the wicked."

The Rebbe wages the wars of Hashem in his own way, with spiritual power. Here too there are different types of wars of Hashem

When I speak about hiskashrus to the Rebbe, I mean a combination of things: letters in the Igros Kodesh, learning his teachings, and readiness to accept instructions from the Rebbe and change my life. This hiskashrus to the Rebbe and his derech brought bracha and healing for my son, and the Rebbe's bracha accompanies my family until today.

that the Rebbe wages.

There is a very interesting expression that the Rebbe uses to infer that in certain areas the matter of “he will wage the wars of Hashem and be victorious” has already taken place. The Rebbe describes the collapse of the communist bloc, which took place without any violence, as a “war of peace.” The way the Rebbe sees it, it happened through the power of Moshiach.

The Rebbe viewed the first Gulf War as part of the wars of Moshiach too. The Rebbe writes that it entailed miracles of “killing the Egyptians with their firstborn,” without the direct involvement of Israel. The nations of the world are already doing the work on our behalf, and this, says the Rebbe, is also through the power of Moshiach.

There are also literal wars that are taking place in Israel and the Rebbe worked on spiritual fronts for victory by sending shluchim to army bases, writing a Torah scroll, mivtza t'fillin, printing the Tanya, and many other activities whose goal was to give spiritual strength for victory in the wars in Eretz Yisroel.

THE WORLD WILL BE FILLED WITH KNOWLEDGE OF G-D

The Rebbe's work in spreading the wellsprings of Chassidus is also connected with the Rambam's Laws of Moshiach. The Rambam placed the knowledge of G-d at the heart of the topic of Moshiach, “and the world will be filled with the knowledge of G-d like waters cover the seabed.” The Rebbe says that it is impossible to make a change from one extreme to another, that the world before Geula doesn't know G-d and suddenly, with Geula, He is revealed. The change must be gradual. Therefore, as a preparation for Geula, we have to spread the knowledge of G-d through the dissemination of Chassidus.

The Rebbe operates not only among Jews but also universally. The purpose of his promoting the Seven Noachide Laws and the Moment of Silence in American public schools is to instill faith in the Creator even among non-Jews.

Some people criticized the Rebbe for these campaigns, failing to recognize them as Messianic activities, in accordance with what

the Rambam writes, “and he will then perfect the entire world to serve G-d together.”

It is because the Rebbe operates not only among Jews but with the entire world that the Rebbe receives universal recognition. The Rebbe's birthday is marked every year as Education Day for the entire country of the United States, in acknowledgment of the Rebbe's achievements.

WHEN THE REBBE SPEAKS ABOUT HIS BIRTHDAY AND THE BEGINNING OF HIS LEADERSHIP

I was asked to speak about my personal relationship with the Rebbe. One of the things that led to my connection with the Rebbe was my oldest son's illness fourteen years ago. He was very sick and time was slipping through our fingers. Medication and treatments were not helping. Then I began to connect to the Rebbe. When I speak about hiskashrus to the Rebbe, I mean a combination of things: letters in the Igros Kodesh, learning his teachings, and readiness to accept instructions from the Rebbe and change my life. This hiskashrus to the Rebbe and his derech brought bracha and healing for my son, and the Rebbe's bracha accompanies my family until today.

Back then, when I began studying the D'var Malchus, each Shabbos I was surprised anew by the intensity and clarity of what was written there, and how in these sichos the Rebbe enables us to understand the era we are in. When we want to understand what Gimmel Tammuz is, we simply need to open the D'var Malchus for Gimmel Tammuz and learn about the significance of the day. It's written there explicitly.

One of the strongest sources which, in my opinion, is not emphasized enough is the sicha of 22 Shevat, the Rebbeztzin's yahrtzeit, 5752. The Rebbe speaks about the number eleven which is *p'nimius ha'kesser* up to and including *Atzmus u'Mehus*. In footnote #50 the Rebbe refers to his own birthday on 11 Nissan and to the beginning of his leadership on 11 Shevat, 5711.

The Rebbe writes there, "and one can say that the eleventh day of the first month (Nissan) is connected with the beginning of the revelation – 'the birth' – of the aspect of eleven, and the eleventh day of the eleventh month is connected with the completion of the revelation of the eleventh month in a way of revealed nesius."

The Rebbe is saying an amazing thing here. On his birthday on 11 Nissan, there was "born" and began the revelation of *p'nimius ha'kesser* up to and including *Atzmus u'Mehus* in this world; on the day that began his leadership, the 11th of Shevat, there was an elevation in the revelation of the *p'nimius ha'kesser* and *Atzmus u'Mehus* to the point of revealed nesius.

I think that this is something that should speak to each one of us. It's a source that needs to be publicized, and requires serious thought as to its implications.

SURPRISING SOURCES

Among Chabad Chassidim there

are varied perspectives on Gimmel Tammuz to the point that some people ask whether we have a source in Judaism for the approach that separates True Reality from the reality we see with our eyes.

Rabbi Zimroni Tzik once showed me a very interesting Midrash from Midrash Raba. On the verse, "and Moshe fled from before Pharaoh," it says, "Rabbi Yanai questioned, is it possible for a human being to run from before royalty? Rather, when Moshe was caught and sentenced to have his head cut off, an angel came down from heaven. They caught what seemed to them to be the image of Moshe while Moshe fled." I merely quote the Midrash; it's up to each person to draw their own conclusions.

There is another source from an unexpected place, a talk that I came across from the previous Tzanzer Rebbe. It's amazing and speaks for itself. He spoke about *hoshanos* on Sukkos, "*Hoshana v'har yeira'eh, zevul tifartecha*" – "It is brought that when the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash took place, the wicked did not have control over the house of Hashem because the Beis HaMikdash and its vessels were hidden and in their place were charred bits of stone and wood.

To the eye, however, it looked like the Mikdash was burned.

"My heart tells me," he continued, "that this idea means it

was hidden from the eye but remained standing in its place till today, except that it became elevated and sanctified so much that it is invisible to our physical eyes, like an angel which cannot be seen. I

"It says that in the future, a Mikdash of fire will descend. If that's the case, how will we fulfill *our* obligation of building the Mikdash? How will *we* be able to sanctify and dedicate the Mikdash? This is why it says, 'Hoshana v'har yeira'eh,' for today we stand and see the mountain in its desolation and the house of worship that appears to be there. Therefore we ask, Hoshana – help us, please, to open our blind eyes – [does this imagery remind anyone of anything? Does it sound a lot like 'open your eyes?' YG] to see zevul tifartecha – the Mikdash in all its glory as it has stood all along."

"Hoshana chono Dovid," the Tzanzer Admur went on, "applies this same idea to Dovid Malka Meshicha. The day of redemption of our soul is near and Moshiach Tzidkeinu is standing in Yerushalayim the holy city in concealed form, and he stands and waits for when his time will come and he will be instructed by heaven to reveal himself for all the Jewish people to see him."

May we merit to soon see Melech HaMoshiach with the true and complete Redemption.

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770 IN ZICHRON YAAKOV

By Nosson Avrohom

Less than a year ago, a replica of 770 was completed in Zichron Yaakov. The shliach, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Freiman, was the first shliach in Eretz Yisroel to build a 770 replica outside of a Chabad community. The new building has generated much interest and attracted people who would not otherwise come to a shul.

For two years, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Freiman and his wife Ruti, shluchim in the northern moshava of Zichron Yaakov, were busy supervising the construction crew as they built a three story shul, modeled after 770. They wanted it to be as identical as possible to the original 770, Beis Rabbeinu Sh'B'Bavel.

When it was finally finished, the shluchim were ecstatic. "I feel that we got a gift from the Rebbe," said R' Freiman. "When we came here eleven years ago, we had two long-range plans, to build a replica of 770 and to open a Jewish heritage center for tourists. Our first dream has come true."

This 770 replica is the first Chabad house of its kind in Eretz Yisroel. The other models in Kfar Chabad, Ramat Shlomo in Yerushalayim, and in Kiryat Ata belong to Chabad k'hillos. R' Freiman hopes that other shluchim will follow him and he would be happy to share the architectural plans and his experience.

"The Chabad outreach here is divided into the period before the new building and the period after it. It definitely upgraded our work many times over and brought us people who we had a hard time reaching previously."

R' Freiman is the son of Rabbi



Rabbi Freiman with the 770 replica in the background

Meir Freiman a"h, who served as chairman of the Reshet Oholei Yosef Yitzchok. He and his wife absorbed an ethos of action and shlichus according to the Rebbe's horaos, in their homes. They went to Zichron Yaakov, a moshava with 15,000 residents, which is located on a mountain that overlooks the Mediterranean, along the coast road between Chaifa and Tel Aviv.

A SURPRISING AND SUCCESSFUL BEGINNING

In the winter of 5642/1882, a group of Romanian pioneers arrived at a peak that overlooked the sea



and they settled the lands of Zamrin. Economic difficulties and disease caused some of them to leave and the new yishuv's existence was threatened.

A few years later, Baron Edmond Rothschild took the new settlement under his wing and began laying the plans for the real estate and farming development of the small settlement. He brought an engineer to lay the plans for the yishuv and after much discussion, the grapevine became the settlement's main crop in the section designated for farming.

Ten years later, in 5655/1895, a winery was established in Zichron Yaakov which exists till this day.

They also founded a vintners union. Since then, the moshava has had its ups and downs but all residents and leaders of the yishuv always appreciated the strategic importance of the place.

Despite the impressive development over the years, the moshava continues to preserve its rustic flavor and today there is a mixed population, most of whom are well established economically and socially.

Chabad's presence in Zichron Yaakov began with shliach, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Katz. With R' Freiman's arrival there was a changing of the guard but the

ground had been well prepared before his arrival.

The day after their arrival, they began their outreach by bringing after-school Torah classes to the secular schools. During the month of Elul, R' Freiman visited preschools and blew the shofar and explained what Elul and the Yomim Nora'im are about, and for Sukkos he built a sukka in the center of the yishuv. Their outreach continued to be small scale and routine like any Chabad house that is starting out. Then, from heaven, came the Hakafof Shniyos, which catapulted them to a whole new level.

It was Chol HaMoed Sukkos when the religious city council announced that the traditional main Hakafof Shniyos were canceled because of the anticipated rain. R' Freiman jumped at this opportunity and decided he would make Hakafof Shniyos instead. Hundreds of people showed up to Chabad's Hakafof Shniyos and R' Freiman's first public event was a great success. It was attended by rabbanim of the moshava and distinguished public figures. It was Zichron Yaakov's first chance to get acquainted with the new Chabad house and the one who ran it.

BUILDING IN "DREAMS"

It seems somewhat symbolic that the new 770 building was built in the neighborhood called Chalomot (dreams of) Zichron. Incredibly, precisely 770 apartments were constructed in this new neighborhood. Really!

Those who celebrated the Chanukas HaBayis just under a year ago knew that this wasn't merely the celebration of the shluchim but a special day for all the residents of Zichron, from the laborers to the leadership. People came en masse to see the unusual building.

Even now, when the initial excitement has died down, many

The red, three-story building from New York has become an international Jewish landmark. Even people who are far from Judaism and Chabad identify with the symbol and are amazed to see it in their very own neighborhood.

people still go to visit the place, to see it from up close. The red, three-story building from New York has become an international Jewish landmark. Even people who are far from Judaism and Chabad identify with the symbol and are amazed to see it in their very own neighborhood.

R' Freiman wrote the following on his blog shortly before the Chanukas HaBayis:

When we began building 770 of Zichron Yaakov, I was excited when I saw people passing by and looking at the building and becoming enthused. To us, saying 770 is simple but for people who aren't religious yet, it isn't simple at all.

I explain to them that the Rebbe has been sitting in 770 in New York for decades and from there, light goes forth to the entire world. I remind whoever passes by about the Chanukas HaBayis and nearly all of them say, "Of course we will be there." All the residents here feel that this is their personal simcha. Today, we went to all the store owners in Zichron Yaakov and gave out invitations. People were excited. They all said they're looking forward to the Chanukas HaBayis. Many of them said, "You are only here eleven years, how did you manage this?" I say the same thing to all of them, "It's a gift from the Rebbe."

Today, too, there is no question that the Rebbe is with us and those things which the Rebbe bequeathed - not only are they ongoing; they are growing. A friend who visited here

said to me, "Generally speaking, we are involved in the Rebbe's inyanim but when you see this building, you can say that we are mamash involved with the Rebbe."

The city council head and his wife recently visited our 770. As soon as they walked in, she was very moved, especially after she heard my explanations about the k'dusha and the significance of the place. "I am so happy that my husband and I have a share in this," she exclaimed.

AN OFFHAND REMARK THAT CAME TO FRUITION

I went to visit Zichron Yaakov to check it out and quickly came to realize that this project didn't happen overnight. I must start with the story of how the shluchim came to the moshava.

Eleven years ago, R' Freiman traveled with his father-in-law, Rabbi Elimelech Shachar, director of mosdos Chabad in Rechovot, and some other Lubavitcher families including the Chabad rav of Rechovot, Rabbi Gluckowsky. They had rented a bus for an excursion to the Golan Heights to relax a little during the hot summer. As they passed Zichron Yaakov, the Arab driver decided to quit the journey because of all the noisy children.

Stranded, all the passengers got off and sat on the grass on the side of the road until another bus would come. R' Shachar commented to his son-in-law and daughter, half jokingly but with a note of

seriousness, "There is no shliach in Zichron Yaakov. Maybe we got stuck here because this is where your shlichus is!" They quickly went on to other topics.

Some time later, the Freimans were looking for a place to go on shlichus. Tzeirei Chabad suggested a number of places, including Zichron Yaakov. After looking into it and consulting with people, they decided to check out Zichron Yaakov, and the rest is history.

A few years after that event, the Freimans moved from a rented apartment to their own home. It was only when he arrived there with the moving truck that he suddenly realized that the new house was opposite the grassy area where the bus had stopped on that outing.

"Those who heard of my plans of building a replica of 770 and a museum for tourists thought I was dreaming. This was our dream even though we didn't have the land or connections in the right places, not to mention that - of course! - we didn't have the money."

A GIFT FROM THE REBBE

When R' Freiman speaks about his 770 building he stresses that it wasn't built as a result of his hard work and talent but it's a gift from the Rebbe. Even when he is physically distant from 770, R' Freiman is connected to it, heart and soul. When I refer to this he is dismissive and says every Chassid has a natural connection to 770 and it makes no difference how much time or which period he spent there.

"I learned in the yeshiva high school in Rishon L'Tzayon. It was a special time. I was the chozer of the Rebbe's sichos when we would wake up for broadcasts. As the Chassidim in 770 sang, I would review the sichos, which had been said in Yiddish, for my friends.

"In 5749/1989, when I finished high school, I begged my parents to

let me go and learn in Oholei Torah so I could be close to the Rebbe. At first they refused but when they finally consented, I was thrilled.”

After spending a few marvelous years in Crown Heights, you can understand why all his mekuravim in Zichron Yaakov are aware of the importance of 770, the original one.

“One of the mekuravim, a contractor, is a wonderful person by the name of Oded Turgeman. He felt an enormous connection to the idea of ‘Rebbe’ and ‘770.’ I got to know him when he sold us our house and he is the one we hired to turn the parking lot near our house into a shul. When he finished building the shul, we said we hoped he would be the one to help us build a larger shul one day when the present one would become too small for all the people who would daven there.”

The beginning wasn’t easy. They didn’t always get a minyan.

“One time, when we wanted to begin davening Shacharis on Shabbos, we were only nine men. We waited a long time no tenth showed up. Finally, one of the men offered to go and get a friend of his who wasn’t religious. The two of them came back and completed the minyan. The friend had been asleep but he agreed to come for the minyan and to stay until the end of the davening even though he refused to daven.

“As I always do, before the Torah reading I reviewed a sicha of the Rebbe. This caught his interest. A week later he came to a shiur and over time he became more involved with mitzvos. He brought a friend with him and that friend brought a friend and we soon had five guys who were post-army who began keeping mitzvos and became regulars at the Chabad house. I spent a lot of time with them over the course of many Shabbos meals, farbrengens, shiurim, personal conversations and this is what



Rabbi Freiman with the council head and his entourage at 770 in Kfar Chabad



Rabbi Freiman visiting a Chabad preschool

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helped them to do t’shuva.

“At a later point, that first ‘link in the chain’ told me that when he

traveled in India he rented a room near the local Chabad house. One day, the shluchim came and asked

If a report like this was filed outside of Israel, against the building of a Jewish shul, we would call it anti-Semitism, but here in Israel, here in Zichron Yaakov, you say there is no need for a shul? How could a new neighborhood with 770 families not need a shul?

him to complete the minyan and he refused in such a way that they wouldn't dare ask him again. Yet now, when he was woken from his sleep to complete the minyan in Zichron Yaakov, he agreed, and this is what set him on the path to religious observance."

Problems with a minyan are a thing of the past. The shul in their yard served the community for five years running, during which their attendance increased dramatically. There were Shabbasos when it was so crowded that they had to stand outdoors.

"One day we found out that the contractor who had built our house and was close to us was building a large neighborhood called Chalomot Zichron. The law is that a contractor who gets such a large project has to build public buildings too. I decided to build a replica of 770 in this neighborhood."

He didn't need to convince the contractor about the importance of the project or about the crowded conditions at their current shul. He was happy to oblige R' Freiman and he said he would build a shul and the Chabad house would do as they pleased with it.

"The new neighborhood is populated by irreligious people, some of them even anti-religious," he said, "and the only ones who can run a shul in a place like this is Chabad."

R' Freiman told him he wanted

the shul to be a replica of 770 and the contractor was enthusiastic about the idea. They easily got the approval of the council. The head of the council, Mr. Eliyahu Abutbul, is a personal friend of R' Freiman and a supporter of his work.

WHAT WENT ON BEHIND THE SCENES

When R' Freiman says about the building that it was built not by his efforts or talents but as a gift from Above, he means it. He doesn't recall any particular difficulties. But we listened to a speech given by Eli Abutbul at the Chanukas HaBayis and discovered that it wasn't all smooth sailing:

"I must thank the Creator of the world for enabling me to be the public representative who helped dedicate this Chabad house in Zichron Yaakov." Abutbul began his speech to enthusiastic applause.

"Four years ago, R' Freiman, Oded and I were at a meeting in Tel Aviv in the course of which R'

Freiman asked me, 'Eli, we want a permanent structure in Zichron Yaakov.' We struck an agreement and said that with Hashem's help, we would dedicate a building.

"Today, baruch Hashem, we are dedicating this shul. From the start it was clear that the new neighborhood needed a shul. The contractor Oded said to me, 'Eli, I request, if possible, it should be a Chabad house.' I agreed and I want to tell you that it wasn't easy. Even here, in the State of Israel, sixty years after it was founded, it is sometimes difficult to build a shul. There were opponents within the council but we strongly believed that we must make a shul in the new neighborhood and bring Torah here. Baruch Hashem, we were successful. I must say, and I say this sorrowfully, it's really a happy day today, but it is also a day that we need to make an accounting.

"I will tell you something that the residents of Zichron Yaakov don't know yet. A month and a half ago I was visited by the state comptroller. He filed a report against me, the council head, for agreeing to having a shul built. The report will be publicized in two months. He said another shul in Zichron Yaakov wasn't necessary and there was no need for a Chabad house in Chalomot.

"I argued, 'How could something like this take place in the State of Israel? If a report like this was filed outside of Israel, against the building of a Jewish shul, we would call it anti-Semitism, but here

The shul building is constructed in the city but in appearance it loudly cries out that it's not from here. Now, with its unusual placement which is different than the other buildings, it's as though it proclaims, 'I landed from heaven.'

in Israel, here in Zichron Yaakov, you say there is no need for a shul? How could a new neighborhood with 770 families not need a shul?' He had no answer.

"I figured, the report doesn't matter; what it says doesn't matter; it doesn't matter what they will say, the main thing is: a shul was needed here and we are rejoicing at the founding of this shul, rejoicing with the simchas ha'Torah. I want to thank R' Freiman whom I met several years ago. I think that this is one of the most important developments, that such a dear man as this along with his righteous wife Rabbanit Rut, live here in Zichron Yaakov."

It seems that the ones who alerted the comptroller to come were the residents of the neighborhood who were afraid to have a shul.

"I understand them," said R' Freiman. "They were afraid that their neighborhood would become religious but by the time they became alarmed it was too late already because the building had all the permits and construction had begun."

R' Freiman was preoccupied with making sure the building would look exactly like 770-Beis Moshiah.

"I would nudge my nephew, Mendel Eisenbach, who learned in 770, to check out different details for us so that the building would be an exact copy, from the wrought iron to the fine engravings."

Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Havlin of Yerushalayim, who built a model of 770 in Ramat Shlomo, was a big help to R' Freiman. The architects Yakunt and Gorelick made the replica in Kfar Chabad and they traveled to New York and took hundreds of pictures so they would know just how to copy it.

The blueprint of 770 in Australia, which was built by Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Gutnick, was made by a company that went to New York and



Rabbi Freiman with the houses of the moshava in the background

They finally walked into 770 and he said to his children, 'This is 770, the Rebbe's shul. There is the Rebbe's bima and the Rebbe's chair.' Suddenly, his three year old shouted, 'Where is the Rebbe? I want to see the Rebbe!' He burst into tears.

took measurements and sketches.

"From the moment we got the plans from R' Havlin, things moved forward but we still continued doing research and checking every detail, however minor. We tried to buy the bricks and other articles that were imported, so that it would be as precise a copy as possible and just like the original."

A GEULA LESSON

Another hurdle stood in their way, a hurdle from which R' Freiman learns a Geula message:

"When we examined the plans, I noticed that the rows of buildings in the new neighborhood faced west so that the shul and the aron could not face east, towards Yerushalayim. At first I thought that we could be

lenient and put the aron in a corner but when I checked with Chabad rabbanim, I found out that the Alter Rebbe was particular that the aron be built in the east.

When I learned that, I had no choice but to call a meeting of all involved parties, contractors and architects, and to discuss the problem with them. I asked them to turn the building so that it would be different than all the other buildings in the neighborhood."

R' Freiman didn't realize how much opposition he would have to face.

"They all opposed me, from the simplest laborer to the head architect who told me that he quit. When I told him that I couldn't build a shul if it wasn't made according to



The Chanukas HaBayis for the new building

halachic parameters, he said, 'And I can't build a building in such a poor architectural way.' I stood firm and in the end, they came around and the plans were changed.

"The Geula lesson that I learned from this was based on an injunction of the Rebbe. He said that a shliach who goes to a city quickly becomes an integral part of that city. He knows the people, he learns the language and gets involved in the life there, but he must always remember and remind himself not to get drawn in too much to the atmosphere of the place and change his language and appearance. Like ambassadors, who live in foreign countries and though they fit in well with the locals, they always remain as representatives of their country of origin.

"The shul building is constructed in the city but in appearance it loudly cries out that it's not from here. Now, with its unusual placement which is different than the other buildings, it's as though it proclaims, 'I landed from heaven.' As people's eyes are upon it, they are looking towards Yerushalayim and the place of the Mikdash."



Residents of Zichron Yaakov celebrating at the Chanukas HaBayis

WHERE IS THE REBBE?

R' Freiman speaks excitedly about emuna, Yerushalayim and Geula:

"A good friend told me about an experience he had with his family. He flew to the Rebbe with his wife and children. They landed late at night and they arrived at 770 close to midnight. As they approached 770 his excitement grew and images of all the hours he had spent, crowded with his friends in 770 – t'fillos, farbrengens and seeing the Rebbe - came to mind.

"His enthusiasm was contagious and this included his three year old son he was holding. They finally

walked into 770 and he said to his children, 'This is 770, the Rebbe's shul. There is the Rebbe's bima and the Rebbe's chair.' Suddenly, his three year old shouted, 'Where is the Rebbe? I want to see the Rebbe!' He burst into tears. All who were present in 770 late that night were moved. My friend told me that at that moment he thought to himself: It was worth coming just for this. My son's cry expressed our cry, our desire to see our king once again.

"On one of the last Shabbasos before we moved to our new shul building, I was reminded of this story, as every Shabbos of the past year my wife would walk over there with the children to see the progress made on our new Chabad house. On the final Shabbos, as they came close to 770, my wife announced that the building was 'mamash ready.' When my three year old Chezky heard this, he ran inside the building and began looking and looking until my wife went inside too. When he saw her, he asked in surprise, 'How could the building be ready but the Rebbe isn't here?'

"In the Zohar it says that the third Beis HaMikdash will descend from heaven "built and perfected," and the Rebbe says we will only need to finish the construction so that we too will have a share in building it. We feel similarly about everything connected with the 770 in Zichron Yaakov, that the Rebbe sent us a gift, a building made in the likeness of 770.

"There is a mekurav who recently went to 770. Afterwards, I understood what a trip to the Rebbe can accomplish. Once, when I explained to him about the atmosphere and the giluyim and the feelings from back when, he said, 'I was a part of that, I was in 770. I know what you're talking about.'

"When I farbreng with mekuravim every Shabbos and tell

them about the giluyim that we were privileged to experience, I can point and say, 'Here is where the Rebbe stood,' 'here is where the Rebbe spoke,' 'here is where the Rebbe passed by.' It's completely different than just telling about it.

"The son of one of the mekuravim, went home with his mother, and said, 'Ima, I want to go home.' When she asked him what he meant and said, 'You are home now,' he said he meant 770. He absorbed what the adults were talking about, that 770 is the real home."

770 BELONGS TO ALL

The Chanukas HaBayis took place a week before the Yomim Nora'im last year. The number of people who attended shul on Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur was so large that the shluchim were taken by surprise.

"During the t'fillos of Yom Kippur there were so many people that many had to be outside. Among those who came we also saw some who were opposed to the building and had filed the official complaint with the comptroller. One of these people came over to me at the end

of the davening and thanked me for the amazing experience. When I asked him what was so special, he said it was the first time in his life that he had entered a shul."

Even those who had been afraid quickly realized that Chabad doesn't come to impose itself on anyone and everything is done for their sake.

"At the blowing of the shofar on Motzaei Yom Kippur, there were hundreds of people. When the davening was over we sang niggunim and danced and rejoiced. Sukkos and the hakafof were extra special because of the many participants."

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EXPULLED 3 TIMES

By Sholom Ber Crombie

R' Meir Goldmintz and his family joined hundreds of others putting their lives on the line defying Israel's suicidal expulsion policy in Gush Katif. After weeks of resistance in Kfar Darom they were forcibly removed. Their next stop was the yishuv Yad Yair, but they were expelled from there too. Now they are being driven out from a third location, yishuv Chorsha. * Goldmintz wrote a book in which he describes the experiences of the illegal residents of Gush Katif four years ago.

R' Meir Goldmintz went with his family to Kfar Darom in Gush Katif in an effort to prevent the expulsion. They stayed there for five difficult weeks, with mesirus nefesh, but failed to save the settlement. Since then, he has been expelled from Yad Yair in Binyamin and now his new hometown, yishuv Chorsha, is on the chopping block.

The repeated expulsions have not defeated his spirit. He devotes his energy to explaining why Jews should not be uprooted. His book, *Sippuro shel SHeVaCH* [story of a Shoheh Bilti Chuki – illegal resident] describes the final days in Gush Katif and tells the stories of hundreds of families who arrived to join the residents of Gush Katif for their last stand. Although no distributor was willing to sell the book, it is turning into an

underground bestseller with the help of the Gush Katif Museum and private sales.

Goldmintz hopes the message of the book will get through to as many people as possible and foster an understanding of the heavy price we are paying for destroying our settlements.

The book is one of numerous publications since the expulsion from Gush Katif to document the crime of expulsion. The goal of these books is not only documentation but to underscore the toll of the destruction. The books tell the stories of “shevachim,” (an abbreviation in Hebrew for those stay illegally) who went to Gush Katif after it was closed to Jews and only official residents were allowed to enter. He tells of the tremendous courage of those who sacrificed

everything in order to bodily stop the handing over of our settlements to our enemies, up to the bitter end.

Goldmintz went to Gush Katif the night the Gush was closed together with his wife and their two small children. The tent they were given in the canvas community that was erected in Kfar Darom became their home for the five weeks until the expulsion. During those weeks, he continued to teach in yeshivas Shalom Banayich in Yerushalayim. Every Sunday he would travel to Yerushalayim while his wife and children remained “at home” in Kfar Darom. On Wednesday he would return to be with his family in Gush Katif. Each time, he had to come up with a complicated way of re-entering the sealed Gush. He was not alone. Dozens of other men, who brought their families to live in Gush Katif, did the same thing.

Until the actual expulsion, Kfar Darom had 150 of these illegal families living in tents that were set up on the edge of the settlement.

What happened to those families?

We all have that era engraved in our hearts as one of mesirus nefesh, of courage and spiritual strength that uplifted all who were there for a long time to come. It was an incredible time in which the focus in life for whoever was there was belief in Hashem's kindness, belief in miracles, and bitachon in Hashem. People sacrificed everything for their bitachon and emuna in Hashem and we take this period of time with us everywhere we go in life.

For those five weeks, we lived there in tents on the beach and used grocery store boxes as mats for the

floor. There was a communal kitchen and the bathrooms and showers were also shared. When you're talking about a family with little children living in the heat on the beach, this was no simple matter. It was far from easy, but it was all worth it to be part of the protest against Jews uprooting Jews.

Kfar Darom was packed with yeshiva bachurim. Two yeshivos, yeshivas Alon Moreh and Beis El, simply relocated their staff and student body to Kfar Darom. Estimates are that there were about 3000 yeshiva bachurim there and the entire yishuv was full of Torah. Until the actual day we were expelled, learning did not stop in the beis midrash. With the building full beyond capacity, the entire yishuv turned into one big beis midrash. There were bachurim sitting and learning everywhere you looked.

Many also used the time to study Chassidus and learned from the Lubavitchers to do mitvza t'fillin with the numerous soldiers who were there. The atmosphere was fantastic and everybody was devoted to dedicating their time to Torah study, mitzvos and good deeds, for the sake of heaven.

Do you remember what the Lubavitchers did during the final days of Gush Katif?

"Of course. We saw them putting on t'fillin with the soldiers and we followed their example to do the same. Many food packages were sent by Chabad Chassidim for the shevachim. The families who came to live in Kfar Darom were without kitchens and we all had to rely on the generosity of others for our meals.

"I remember the printing of the Tanya in Kfar Darom. It was one of the evenings when I returned from Yerushalayim. The trip to Kfar Darom always entailed unpleasant hours crossing army blockades in the trunk of a car. Every Sunday, when I left Gush Katif, I didn't know whether I

would be able to rejoin my family. Each time I traveled back to the Gush, it was an adventure. That night, when I returned to Kfar Darom, I noticed a large crowd around a Lubavitch vehicle and a printing press. I asked what was going on and was told that they were printing the Tanya.

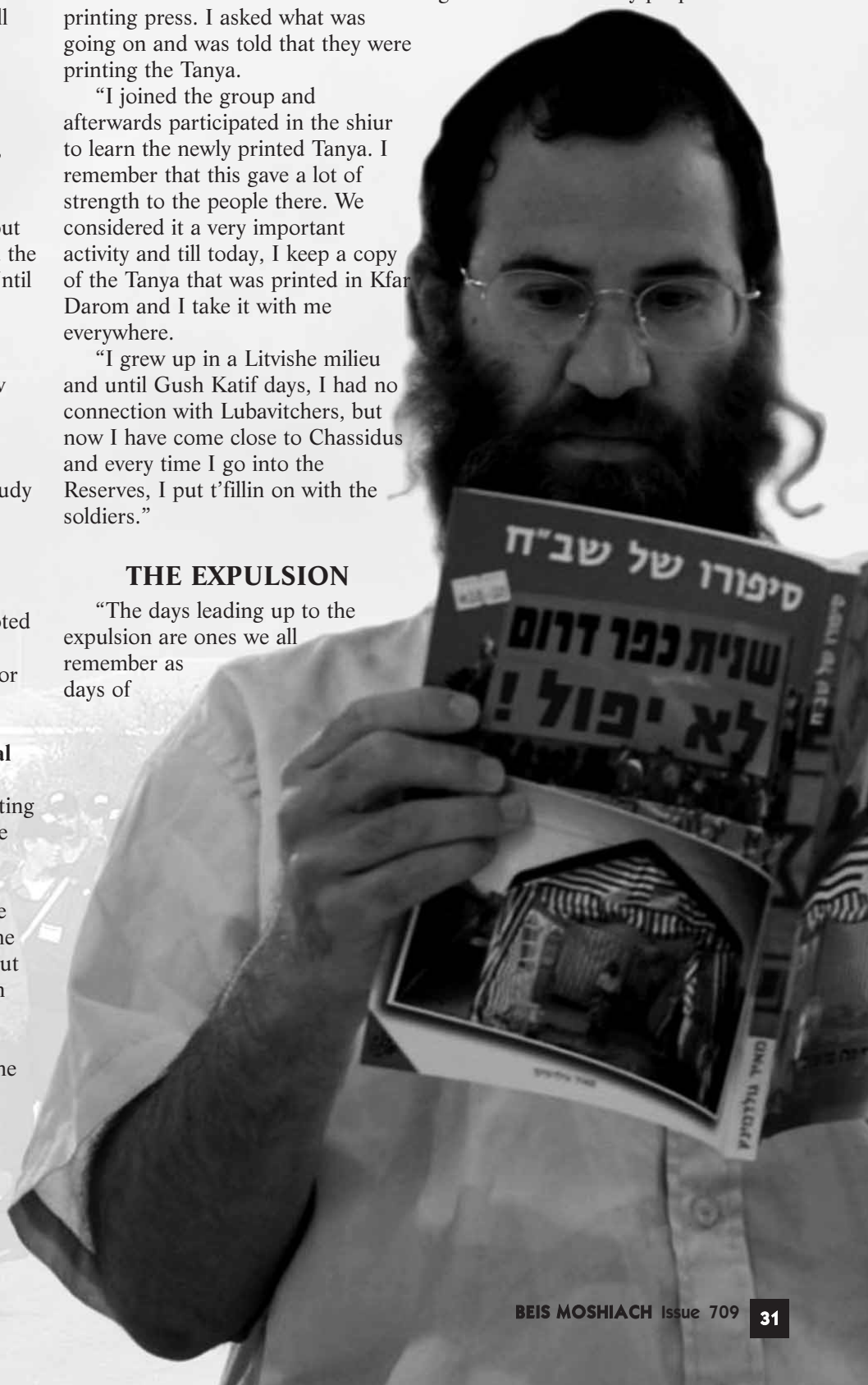
"I joined the group and afterwards participated in the shiur to learn the newly printed Tanya. I remember that this gave a lot of strength to the people there. We considered it a very important activity and till today, I keep a copy of the Tanya that was printed in Kfar Darom and I take it with me everywhere.

"I grew up in a Litvishe milieu and until Gush Katif days, I had no connection with Lubavitchers, but now I have come close to Chassidus and every time I go into the Reserves, I put t'fillin on with the soldiers."

THE EXPULSION

"The days leading up to the expulsion are ones we all remember as days of

indescribable glory and strength. In Kfar Darom you could feel the power of emuna, the hope, the bitachon. Aside from that, the very fact that such a large crowd had gathered for this holy purpose



On the morning of the expulsion, after Shacharis, we locked ourselves into the gym and watched from the windows as Kfar Darom began to fill up with thousands of soldiers... The feeling was one of helplessness, a plummeting of all the courageous feelings we had had until that moment.

created an amazing atmosphere.

"I especially remember the Shabbasos. All the families were in tents, eating the Shabbos meals. From every side you could hear the Shabbos z'miros and the divrei Torah.

"We had the third Shabbos meal together, all the shevachim families. On Friday all the women would prepare the Shabbos meals in the central kitchen where there was a big counter. Each one would place the things she bought on it for everyone to use. Each woman shared with the others those things they were lacking. In general, we saw tremendous Ahavas Yisroel and demonstrations of great refinement that we don't see elsewhere.

"As far as tznus and privacy, the shevachim did their utmost and this made a tremendous kiddush Hashem. Kfar Darom was a Torah center and all over, people were discussing halachic sugiyos. I remember the evenings, when sometimes, while waiting on line for a shower, a Torah discussion would develop."

How did the expulsion of shevachim families in Kfar Darom happen?

"In Kfar Darom, not a single family packed its bags. It was a way of demonstrating our bitachon in Hashem, in the miracle we hoped would happen any minute, and also a tactical move. All families observed

their daily routine until the end.

"The shevachim families dispersed in the yishuv's public buildings. My family and I stayed in the building that housed the play facilities. On the morning of the expulsion, after Shacharis, we locked ourselves into the gym and watched from the windows as Kfar Darom began to fill up with thousands of soldiers. According to military reports, 25,000 soldiers came to Kfar Darom, all dressed in black. The feeling was one of helplessness, a plummeting of all the courageous feelings we had had until that moment.

I would like to point out here that we saw how *every soldier present, even if he rationalized that he only stood there and didn't expel anyone, contributed to the expulsion.* The fact that the people of Kfar Darom did not go out to fight was because of the feeling of despair that we felt when we saw the enormous numbers arrayed against us, the mass of soldiers who filled the yishuv with black. Every soldier who was there, even if all he did was stand there and cry, contributed to the expulsion. His presence led to the fall of Kfar Darom; it makes no difference if his job was as a medic or a chaplain who came 'only' to take down mezuzos.

"I had injured my leg a short while before and had a fracture that hadn't healed yet. The doctor told

me that I could not fight and could definitely not allow myself to be brutally dragged. When they broke into the gym and began dragging out families with women and children, I told the officer that I would forgo being dragged but I just wanted to say a few words to the soldiers before I left the building.

"He left me for last, together with my children, along with dozens of soldiers who were responsible for expelling Jews from the gym, and he let me address them. I told them that throughout the generations Jews were expelled from their land, whether in earlier exiles, the Inquisition, and the Holocaust. Then I said, 'How will you look into the eyes of your children when you tell them that you had a part in the expulsion of Jews from their land, when you acted like the men who chased Jews out of Europe and Spain? How will you be able to look at our holy ancestors, Avrohom, Yitzchok, and Yaakov? We, the expelled families, will be uprooted from here and dragged with terrible suffering and humiliation, but we will start our lives anew and rise up from the destruction. The ones who will suffer the most will be you, those who are doing the expelling. The terrible sights of Jews being dragged from their land will follow you throughout your lives. Your souls will pursue you and cry out from inside: why did you uproot Jews from their land? You have a final opportunity to save your lives. Refuse your orders and save your souls.'

"Then I said to my daughter, who was crying on my lap, 'You are still young and don't understand what is going on, but one day you will ask us – Abba, Ima, what did you do when they uprooted your brothers? We are here now so that we can look into your eyes and have an answer. So we can say, 'our hands did not spill this blood.' So we can say, 'it wasn't easy my

daughter, it demanded tremendous mesirus nefesh, but we did it so that we would have an answer to your question.’

“Then I took out a small pair of scissors and I tore kria with Hashem’s name, as all the soldiers lowered their gaze and some of them quietly answered ‘amen.’ As I left, the officer asked me whether I had anything I wanted to take with me. I told him that when Eretz Yisroel is destroyed, my personal belongings didn’t matter.”

THE EXPULSION CONTINUES

Since then, you have gone through another expulsion at the Yad Yair outpost.

“Yes. Last year, 18 Nissan, I was once again uprooted from my home. The outpost was founded 18 years ago, after the murder of Dolav Yair Mendelsohn. The residents asked Yitzchok Shamir, then the prime minister, to start a permanent settlement there in reaction to the killing, but all that was established there was a military base and a memorial to Yair.

“Five years ago, PM Sharon decided to uproot the base and move it elsewhere. All that remained was the memorial, which was constantly vandalized by Arabs and Leftist Jews. One day they went up there and burned the site and hung PLO flags there.

“Following this, and after the land had been legally bought, my wife and I decided to have our home there in order to protect this strategic position. We built a house and some yeshiva bachurim from Nachliel lived there with us. The place was maintained with the approval of the security forces, who held military exercises there. But there were people who didn’t approve and five months after we arrived, the army came and destroyed our home. This was



Yad Yair after the army destroyed it

contrary to the decision of the court, who issued a stay injunction against the destruction.”

What importance does it have from a security standpoint?

“Most of the commanders of units in the area understood the importance of the place and the need to defend it. They sent regular scouting units and even held exercises there.

“The area is three and a half kilometers from Dolav and about 100 meters away from houses in Ramala.

“At first, the location of the outpost led the occupation authority to claim it was in Area A. After we pointed out to them that if they are right, they had no right to mix in with whatever was going on there, and they should let us deal with the Palestinian Authority, they admitted that the ‘border’ passes 17 meters from the edge of Yad Yair.”

Now you are facing a third expulsion from Chorsha, where you live now. What is your message to the nation witnessing these expulsions?

“The Gemara says that when a thief secretly enters your home, there is no culpability if he is killed. This is because he entered secretly and he must know that ‘there is no

person who sees his money being taken away and keeps quiet.’ The thief had to be aware that the owner of the home might kill him.

“With the expulsion from Gush Katif people cried out and we managed to create a situation in which the nation cried together with the expelled, but there wasn’t a real battle. According to the principle which states that a person doesn’t keep quiet if his belongings are taken away, the message that we conveyed was that if they take our home we don’t fight back, which makes it seem we agree with them and don’t think this is our home and our possession.

“The elections that took place half a year later showed that we failed, since the party that expelled us rose to power. We are the guilty ones for not fighting to save our homes. We conveyed this message to the nation that these are not our homes and therefore, we weren’t going to fight for it. We lost the tremendous identification people had with us earlier, when the nation was with us and opposed the expulsion.

“By politically embracing the forces for expulsion, we said that those expelling us were right. We need to correct this in the next battle.”

WHO CAN BE A 'SOLDIER OF THE HOUSE OF DOVID'

By Rabbi Yisroel Halperin

Shliach and Rav kehillas Chabad in Hertzliya

One whose views are shaped only by the reality he perceives cannot be a 'soldier of the house of Dovid' who brings the revelation of G-dliness to the world. * Presented for 15 Elul, 112 years since the founding of yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim.

It has been 112 years since the Rebbe Rashab founded yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in the town of Lubavitch. This yeshiva, from the moment it was founded, was a factory that produced thousands of "soldiers of the house of Dovid," who would fight on two fronts in the decades to come. The two fronts are [atheism, i.e.,] "that Your enemies have reviled, Hashem" and [orthodox opposition to Moshiach, i.e.,] "they have reviled the footsteps of Your anointed one." The yeshiva

was, and still is, the source for the heroism that these "soldiers of the house of Dovid" displayed throughout the years, up until our generation, the generation of Geula.

The Rebbe Rashab's first public reference to the mission of its students was in 5661/1900. In a special kuntres he clarified the main task of the talmidim as being "soldiers of the house of Dovid," to fight those who revile Hashem and then those who revile His anointed one.

At the farbrengen on Shabbos, Parshas Chayei Sarah 5745/1985, the Rebbe discussed this kuntres and said that the Rebbe Rashab spoke with "great prophecy about our days." Today, more than ever, we can understand how important it is for the T'mimim, "the soldiers of the house of Dovid," to take part in the war which has been waged in recent years against those who "revile Your anointed one."

Actually, the job of the T'mimim as "soldiers of the house of Dovid" pertains to every Chabad Chassid, for "Chabad" is an acronym for "Chayolei Beis Dovid." Not everybody is accepted into the army. At the draft office they check out the candidates and reject some of them. The same is true for Moshiach's army, the "soldiers of the house of Dovid."

The Rebbe Rashab, in that kuntres, sets out the main clauses which every soldier must carry out and without which he is dismissed. The main one, and the most famous, is "whoever goes out to the wars of the house of Dovid gives a divorce to his wife," i.e. he is divorced from the matters of this world.

There is another point the Rebbe Rashab makes, which is even more significant nowadays, and that is "those who accept the premises that the world operates with." Someone like this is assigned the lowest profile and can be immediately rejected by the army.

What does it mean to accept the premises that the world operates with? He's a Chassid in every way but he has one problem. His views are shaped by the reality he sees in the world. What he observes, he believes; what his physical eyes see is correct and true to him. But when there's a sicha of the Rebbe that doesn't comport well with what his physical eyes see...everything changes.

Over thirty years ago, I was a young man with a lot of questions, lots of expectations, and very curious. That's how I arrived at yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim. I went there after reading letters of the Rebbe that I found fascinating. The first place I went to was the library, so I could find more interesting proofs to G-d's existence.

I looked and looked and didn't find any. Other bachurim referred me to the mashgiach. I went over to him and said that to the best of my knowledge, Chabad – chochma, bina, daas – is an intellectual analytical system which proves there is a G-d and that the Torah, which includes the Oral Torah, is true. I asked him to explain the proofs to me so I could present them to my friends and bring them to Tomchei T'mimim too.

He gave me a mischievous look and said, "We don't have proofs for G-d's existence, nor do we have proofs that the Torah is true. If you want a proof for something, in Chassidus there are lots of proofs that the world does, in fact, exist."

I didn't get it. I had come from where I had come from to Tomchei T'mimim, had accepted so many things upon myself, and all so that, in the end, they would prove to me that I exist? I've known that since I was born!

The mashgiach understood my confusion and explained, "Start to learn Chassidus and little by little you will understand that the fact that G-d exists is a certainty, while the fact of your existence is not at all sure."

That's an example of a soldier who doesn't accept the premises the world operates with. It's not what he sees that establishes, for him, what true reality is. It's only that which it says in the Torah, in the sichos and maamarim, that is the only truth!

Someone who accepts the world's premises, who accepts ideas



from the world (*olam* from the root *he'elem*, concealment) where G-dliness is concealed, cannot be a "soldier of the house of Dovid" who brings the revelation of G-dliness to the world.

If he accepts the premises of the world, he has an additional problem in that he cools off any feeling of warmth to k'dusha. This is a serious problem since that is what Amalek, the one who "cooled you off on the road," is about. Amalek is also numerically equivalent to the Hebrew word for doubt, because when you are cooled off, you are skeptical. At first Amalek says you should say Yechi but in a cultured manner, quietly, and in the end he says it's wrong to say it.

The mashgiach understood my confusion and explained, "Start to learn Chassidus and little by little you will understand that the fact that G-d exists is a certainty, while the fact of your existence is not at all sure."

We cannot accept the premises of the world. They have nothing to sell us. Our views must be shaped exclusively by what the Torah tells us, only by what it says in the sichos. When we have utter bittul to the Rebbe, it's all simple.

What does the Rebbe actually say? In the sicha of Shabbos Parshas Mishpatim 5752, the Rebbe explains that the word "miyad," the word the Rebbe uses as the speedometer for the coming of Moshiach, is an acronym for the generations that hasten Moshiach's coming: **Moshe**, **Yisroel** (Baal Shem Tov), and **Dovid**.

More particularly, the Rebbe says, it refers to three generations that pertain to the Rebbe Rayatz and works backwards: **Moshiach** (whose name is Menachem), **Yosef** Yitzchok, and **Dov** Ber. These are the three final leaders of Chabad, the seventh, the sixth, and the fifth, for who is Moshiach whose name is Menachem who comes after the Rebbe Rayatz? Obviously, the Rebbe is referring to himself. And this was written, and he edited it, so that it would be publicized to the world!

It's interesting that in speaking about the coming of Moshiach "miyad," the Rebbe connects it with the previous Rebbeim. For the truth is, the Rebbe Rashab set things in motion by founding the yeshiva whose students were and are Moshiach's army.

This is just one example out of many. It's all in writing. The problem is with us, in our belief. What must we believe? The Rebbe

The job of the T'mimim as "soldiers of the house of Dovid" pertains to every Chabad Chassid, for "Chabad" is an acronym for "Chayolei Beis Dovid."

spells it out for us in the sichos of 5752. In Parshas VaYitzei the Rebbe tells us that everything is already here in the physical world. Moshiach is already here! In Parshas Toldos, the Rebbe explains that we already have the beginning of the revelation of his existence and his activities.

In Parshas VaYishlach the Rebbe says explicitly: in our days we need to merely open our eyes and see the

reality, that we are sitting together with Hashem at the set table at the wedding feast, at the feast of the Leviasan. There in a footnote the Rebbe writes that not only has the avoda needed to facilitate the revelation been completed but we already have the revelation in an actual and revealed way!

We just need to open our eyes! Moshiach is already here! That we are still in galus is a painful, bitter

fact, but it's not because the Geula hasn't come but only because we still haven't opened our eyes. The question is who believes with complete faith in the coming of Moshiach; who believes in the Creator of the world, in His Torah, in tzaddikim, and most importantly – who does not accept the premises of the world and shapes his views exclusively through the Rebbe's sichos.

Only one who disconnects from the foolishness of the world and starts building his ethical code not according to the premises of the world but according to the Rebbe's sichos, will be included in Moshiach's special unit of **Chayolei Beis Dovid**.

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ב"ה

WEATHER OR NOT, WE ARE GOING TO THE REBBE

By Nosson Avrohom

Translated by Michael Leib Dobry

There's no one in the old shul in Yerushalayim's Shikun Chabad neighborhood who doesn't know Rabbi Chai Samja, a learned chassid and a patient and pleasant conversationalist with a hearty smile on his lips and a radiant and enlightening appearance. After many years living in his native France, where he had been brought to Chabad chassidus by his brother-in-law, Rabbi Meir [later it's Yosef] Sitbon, of blessed memory, he decided to fulfill his dream and move to Yerushalayim. During those days, he invested much of his time translating texts on Judaism and chassidic philosophy from Hebrew into English, with a sizable amount of this time set aside for the ambitious project of translating the entire Mishnayos.

When we met with him last week in Yerushalayim, he revealed a whole series of amazing instances of Divine Providence that he was privileged to experience from the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach. We chose to bring

here the first of these stories, which took place over thirty years ago, when he was in the early stages of his journey along the path of chassidus. Rabbi Samja says that it was this episode that put his transformation to a Chabad chassid into high gear. He was privileged to be the second Lubavitcher in Sarcelles, where today there is a dynamic Chabad community and a particularly active and lively Chabad House.

"This story occurred more than thirty years ago. We were living at the time in the Paris suburb of Sarcelles. Like many French Jews, we steadfastly maintained our Jewish identity. While we did not belong to any chassidic or ultra-Orthodox faction, nevertheless, we tried to observe the traditions of our forefathers to the best of our ability. The ancient faith instilled within us burned within our very essence. It was my brother-in-law, Rabbi Yosef [before it was Meir] Sitbon, who exposed me to the magical

world of Chabad chassidus and the greatness of the Rebbe. Slowly but surely, we found ourselves drawn to Chabad.

"Just before the auspicious day of Yud Shvat, we participated along with hundreds of chassidim throughout Paris in a raffle for an airline ticket to Beis Chayeinu. Imagine our surprise when it turned out that my wife had won. Despite the fact that we didn't yet understand the full meaning of 'Rebbe' and the importance of traveling to 770, we were still very excited about this great privilege, and we decided that if my wife was already going, the whole family should join her. That same day, we went to the travel agent and bought tickets for my wife, myself, my son Meir, my brother-in-law and his son, and my brother and his wife. The flight was scheduled for midweek. Excitement was building and we all waited with much impatience.

"Then, as we completed our pre-flight preparations, I heard a news item on the radio that put a damper on all the excitement. The French correspondent in New York reported that the city was enduring record freezing temperatures. 'What do I need this for?' I wondered, and I shared my sentiments with my wife. I told her that at best, we could wrap ourselves in winter coats and other layers of clothing, but we wouldn't be able to enjoy our stay in New York. At worst, we could get really sick – so what's the point in making the trip?

"When my brother-in-law, Rabbi Sitbon, heard that I was considering a cancellation of the trip, he was beside himself. He tried to convince me in every way he could, describing the experience that I would have in 'Beis Chayeinu' with the Rebbe in most colorful terms. I simply didn't understand what he wanted from me, as I was just taking my first steps into the world of chassidus.

The Gentile's reply stunned me, and when I heard it, I thought that I must be dreaming. 'Look,' he said to me, 'if you're going to New York, and you find yourself in Brooklyn, there's an outstanding and righteous Jewish leader there called the Lubavitcher Rebbe. I suggest that you go to visit him – you won't be disappointed!'

Still, he didn't let up for a moment, adamantly saying that I have nothing to worry about from traveling to the Rebbe.

"I returned from Maariv on Monday, and I decided that in concession to the stubborn pleas of my brother-in-law, I would call the international meteorological service in order to determine what the extended weather forecast would be in New York. I had firmly made up my mind that if the record freezing temperatures would continue, I would stay home. The person who answered the phone regretted to inform me that the offices were closed, but he was polite enough to inquire if he could be of any help. I thanked him for his courtesy, and I asked him how cold it would be in New York during the coming days.

"He checked and told me that indeed it was very cold there, and then he asked me what I was looking for in New York at this time of year. He spoke with a French accent, and I reasoned that this Gentile obviously won't understand the concept of visiting the Lubavitcher Rebbe. So I told him that I was going to visit my cousin. The Gentile's reply stunned me, and when I heard it, I thought that I must be dreaming. 'Look,' he said to me, 'if you're going to New York,

and you find yourself in Brooklyn, there's an outstanding and righteous Jewish leader there called the Lubavitcher Rebbe. I suggest that you go to visit him – you won't be disappointed!'

"For the next several minutes, I thought that I was hallucinating. How did this Gentile know about the Rebbe? After confirming that he is actually not a Jew, I asked him this very question. 'Among my distant relatives, there is a Jewish couple,' he told me with surprising candor. 'One fine day, they went out on a pleasure trip with their son on the prestigious Parisian street, the Champs Elysees, when suddenly a ball came hurtling by and struck the boy in the head. He fell to the ground, blood streaming from the wound. He was quickly transported to the hospital, where the doctors tried to stabilize his condition. After a lengthy series of operations and treatments, they regretfully informed the worried parents that the situation was hopeless.

"Since this was their only child, the parents would not give up so quickly. They consulted numerous experts throughout the world dealing with serious head injuries. They spared neither cost nor effort, and whenever they heard about a specialist in this field, they did

everything possible to meet with him and take suggestions for treating their son's condition. Yet, to their great regret, all of them said that the situation was quite complicated, and the chances were very high that the boy would never recover from the serious injury he had sustained. The parents still refused to give up, and one day they traveled with him to New York to meet with a prominent doctor in Manhattan.

"Some young Jewish men met the father in the street, heard his story of personal agony, and brought him to the Rebbe," the Gentile meteorologist continued. He didn't know exactly what advice the Rebbe gave to the parents, but what he did know was that a few days later, the boy's medical problem miraculously disappeared as if he had never been injured at all. He then told me again and again, 'I saw the boy before he met the Rebbe and afterwards, and I suggest that if you're traveling to New York, don't waste the opportunity to meet with the Lubavitcher Rebbe.'

"I thanked him for his help and hung up the phone but remained glued to the spot. For quite a while, I was bewildered by what had just happened and I still get overwhelmed when I think about it. I was sure that the Rebbe was essentially sending me a strong hint that he wants me to come to him.

"When I got over my initial shock, I called my brother-in-law, Rabbi Sitbon, and told him, 'Listen, it's very hot now in New York, even hotter than the peak of summer.' He didn't understand what I was getting at, but after I told him what had just transpired, he too became very excited.

"The following afternoon, we all flew together to New York and went straight to the Rebbe's beis midrash. The weather was awful and we were frozen to the bone, but deep inside we were warm, and our hearts



aflame

"This was my first flight to the Rebbe, and many more followed.

"The first encounter with the Rebbe – the warm and lively chassidic experience, the enthusiasm, the excitement, the unique hospitality – will remain emblazoned in my memory forever.

"Another thing that I will never forget from that trip was the amazing miracle that we experienced with our son Meir, who serves today on the Rebbe's shlichus in the city of Eilat. Every time he would eat food comprised of eggs, fish, chocolate or other sweets, his body would break out with a strange rash. We were extremely careful about the food that we would serve him, and it was very challenging. One slip-up, and the child began to writhe in intense pain.

"Chassidim advised us to stand near the entrance to 770, and when the Rebbe came back from the Ohel, we should approach him and ask for his bracha.

"That's just what we did. After a few hours, the Rebbe's car arrived, and the Rebbe emerged, walking

quickly in the direction of his room. Our son Meir approached him, and the Rebbe leaned over to hear what he had to say, like a good and loving father. Meir told the Rebbe about the condition from which he was suffering, and asked for a bracha. The Rebbe looked at him with a big smile and asked him to make certain to check the kashrus of anything he puts in his mouth.

"We became even more stringent in our kashrus, and ever since that bracha, the rashes have stopped completely."

Rabbi Samja's life story on its own can fill a long and thrilling article. His journey to Chabad is a tale of great struggle, and then there are all the other occasions when he had the privilege of traveling to 770 and seeing the angelic appearance of the Rebbe.

When we asked him to conclude his story with one of these many episodes, he complied by revealing for us an amazing and marvelous incident:

"One year, after we had already

established ourselves in the world of Chabad chassidus, and had sent our son, who was nearing the age of bar mitzvah, to learn in the Chabad Talmud Torah in Paris, I again merited the opportunity to see and be seen by the Rebbe.

"In those days, the Rebbe would customarily go into the small 'zal' upstairs to hear the Torah reading, and I was privileged to be there with him on one such occasion. The Rebbe approached the bima for an aliya, and I was standing right next to him. When the Rebbe finished making the concluding bracha and turned to go, he wished me a '*Mazel tov*'. I stood there stunned and bewildered. I didn't understand why the Rebbe was blessing me, as I was unaware of any simcha in our family. When I called home that night, they just happened to mention that our son Meir had begun to put on t'fillin that morning, as it was two months before his bar-mitzvah. I had totally forgotten, and I saw this as literal proof of the Rebbe's *ruach ha'kodesh*."

HOW TO ACHIEVE TRUE PEACE

By Rabbi Yosef Karasik
District Rav Bat Chefer – Emek Chefer

*How can we make peace between opposites? Why is combining two things like kosher meat and kosher milk no good while mixing two positive things is seemingly “shalom?” And what does this have to do with us? * A fascinating look at the parsha from the perspective of Chazal, Kabbala and Chabad Chassidus.*

TWO KOSHER THINGS THAT CREATE A TREIF ENTITY

In Parshas Ki Seitzei we learn about things that are kosher, in and of themselves, but their combination is forbidden:

Food: the mixing of meat and milk, as it says, “Do not cook a kid in its mother’s milk”

Clothing: the mixture of wool and linen, as it says, “Do not wear *shaatnez*, wool and linen together”

Land: the sowing of wheat in a vineyard, as it says, “Do not sow your vineyard *kilayim*”

Animals: “Do not plow with an

ox and donkey together.”

How do we understand this? Each entity on its own is fine but in combination, like milk and meat, it becomes treif – why? One would think that the combination of two positive things would make “shalom,” which is said to more than double the good so why does the combination create something negative, something that goes contrary to Hashem’s will?

Generally, when we graft or combine two different types of things, the resulting entity has the best of both and is more useful,

more powerful, more resistant than the original, so it would seem desirable to create a combination between two things and yet the Torah says it’s forbidden.

Parenthetically, there are two ways to graft trees: 1) *harkava* – you take a branch from a tree that bears many fruits but is weak and prone to disease and damage and you graft it to the trunk of a strong, resistant tree that doesn’t produce much fruit. The resulting tree has double the advantage because it is both strong and bears many fruits. 2) *hachla’a* – the natural process is when bees, etc. bring pollen to the flower; with *hachla’a*, this is done manually and a new fruit is created which has the advantages of both of the original fruits.

PEACE AMONG PEOPLE

Let us now examine “peace” – how peace can be made between two opposite entities, for example, between husband and wife, when male and female are opposites in nature as Chazal say, “Women are a nation unto themselves.”

A practical life situation – how can couples bridge opposing views when the husband wants to go and learn in the beis midrash and the wife wants him to stay home and be with the family?

An easy solution is for one of them to give in to the other for the sake of peace (sometimes a compromise can be made in which one gives in part way, the husband going to the beis midrash for half the time he wanted to be there, but sometimes a compromise isn’t possible like when the wife wants to spend Shabbos in one place and her husband wants to be somewhere else; in that case, peace is when one side gives in completely).

The problem with this peace is: 1) you don’t always have someone who is willing to give in, 2) even if you find one willing to concede by

giving in on what he wanted, the positive thing he wanted to do, didn't happen. In the above example, the husband didn't learn Torah or he wasn't home. So we need to achieve a higher level of peace which doesn't entail one of the sides giving in but a different perspective on relationships and shalom bayis.

DISCOVERING THAT BOTH SIDES WANT THE SAME THING

Superficially, the desires of the couple mentioned above are mutually exclusive. If he gets what he wants and goes to learn, he is not sitting at home; if she gets what she wants and he stays home, he doesn't go out to learn. But if you look at things more deeply, you discover that both the husband and the wife want "to build and sustain a faithful house on the foundation of Torah and mitzvos, as Hashem desires." In other words, the husband wants to learn Torah in beis midrash because thus Hashem commanded, and the wife wants him to stay home to have peace in the home because this is what Hashem commanded.

Furthermore, the two activities lead to shalom bayis. The husband's Torah learning creates a serenity of the soul which leads to shalom bayis and his staying at home with his wife leads to building family life with love and peace.

So their different wants are merely external for they both have the same goal of true shalom bayis, as Hashem wants it, whether through the husband's learning Torah or by being home together. Torah study makes their home full of love and fellowship, and the pleasant atmosphere of the home enables the Torah study to be with menuchas ha'nefesh and k'dusha allowing him to grow in Torah.

When this truth becomes something both of them are aware

of, it becomes easy for each of them to give in to the other, knowing that he or she is not giving in on their true desire because that will be fulfilled even if the other one gets their way.

This is real shalom bayis and in every action, each of them is happy and feels that their desires are being fulfilled.

GOOD PEACE AND BAD PEACE

To summarize, there are two possible types of peace between two positive entities: 1) Shalom that does not eliminate the desires of the parties; on the contrary, the two sides retain their good qualities and at the same time do not interfere with the other and they live in harmony, knowing that even the other's person action helps advance the positive goal that I have – which is true peace.

2) Shalom in which one side gives in and forgoes their (positive) desire and only the other person's desire is fulfilled. This is not a good peace.

Therefore, the combination (i.e. peace) between meat and milk and the other forbidden mixtures, create a new entity canceling out the positive qualities of each and this is pasul.

This idea is explained at length by Rabbeinu Bachyai in his explanation for the mitzva of kilayim. This is the gist of what he says:

On the level of p'shat: Someone who combines two entities, changes and undermines Creation which made separations between types. He demonstrates that he thinks Hashem did not create enough things in the world and he wants to be smart and add new entities.

On the mystical level: All created beings have a force, a mazal up Above. If offspring are established down below within each species,

there is peace up Above but if offspring are established down below by mixing species, this confuses the celestial forces which is the opposite of peace.

When someone breeds an animal with another animal not of its kind or mixes seeds and they are nourished one from the other, the celestial forces which provide the ability to give birth or produce plants are mixed. Therefore, kilayim is forbidden because it combines opposites that should not be combined. Seeds should be separated from one another and the one who does so causes peace in the world; the one who combines them, chases peace away from the world because he mixes celestial forces and creates tension in the Supernal Worlds.

PEACE IN MOSHIACH'S TIME

The Rambam writes in the Laws of Kings that Eliyahu HaNavi will be revealed in the future "to make peace in the world." Why will Moshiach's coming entail peace?

The purpose of the world and all created things is to "make Him a dwelling place down below," to build a home for Hashem. All differences of opinion are derived from a veering away from the main point which reveals the G-dly truth in the world and the creations. When truth is revealed there will be no difference of opinion. The world will be full of the G-dly truth that Hashem is one and His name is one.

(It would seem that even in those days there will still exist differences in human makeup and character like the division of the Jewish people into tribes, for the root of each soul is derived from and is connected to a different spiritual source (chesed, g'vura, etc.) and each of them has a special name and spiritual force; but in those days there will be no difference of opinion for all will

recognize that the differences in each one are derived from its spiritual source and not from a desire to hurt another or to become famous etc. Consequently, people will not fight).

Moshiach will reveal the G-dly truth to all and a natural consequence will be real peace in the world. The preparation for Moshiach's coming, as the Rebbe taught us in the last farbrengen, Parshas VaYakhel 5752, is "ahava and achdus Yisroel."

It's not a secret that there are, unfortunately, arguments among us. But every Chassid is mekushar to the Rebbe and wants to fulfill his desire and make a kiddush Hashem, so he does away with his ego and personal desire and devotes himself to the goal the Rebbe set forth for us – bringing the Geula, with great love amongst us, especially among the Chassidic family.

You can't bring the Geula through division but only through love and peace. No excuse, no

explanation can be a cause for fights. Arguments have nothing to do with Chassidus and fulfilling the Rebbe's instructions; on the contrary, hiskashrus to the Rebbe is only through getting rid of one's ego, at home, in the family, among friends and neighbors and among Chassidim. As the song goes, "with ahavas Yisroel we will bring the goel," may it be now!

Sources: Likkutei Sichos vol. 29, p. 122; Toras Menachem Tiferes Levi Yitzchok, Shmos p. 154; Hisvaaduyos 5750 p. 448. Bayis Yehudi p. 226

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Upon this statement I affix my signature, Sunday 20th Tamuz 5766



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