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YOUR WISH IS MY COMMAND

The will of G-d must be fulfilled simply, in compliance with the rule of Jewish law. Yet here the directive to “Make His will as your will” is not only reserved for the pious but even then only on account of the condition “that He shall make your will as His will.” * A Jew must arouse in G-d a new objective, the will – “as your will,” in line with the will of the Jewish people – that we must leave exile right now! * Insight into Pirkei Avos 2:4.

Translated by Boruch Merkur

DON'T WE FULFILL G-D'S WILL BECAUSE WE HAVE TO?

In Chapter 2 of Meseches Avos, which is being studied this Shabbos, Mishna 4 says:

“He (Rabban Gamliel, son of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi) would say: Make His will as your will in order that He shall make your will as His will. Nullify your will to His will in order that He shall nullify the will of others to your will.”

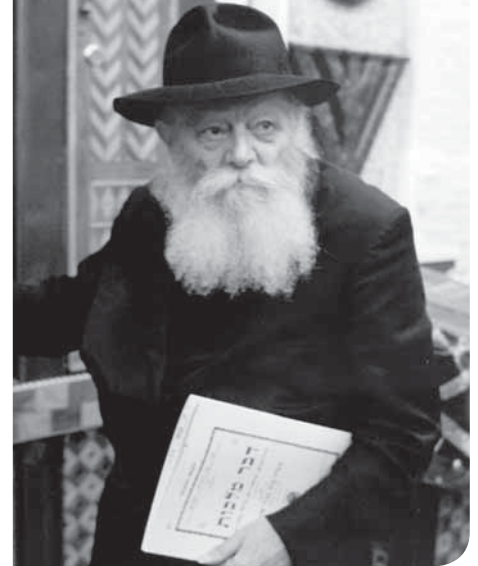
Given that the teachings of Pirkei Avos are “matters of piety,” [outlining conduct that is beyond the letter of the law] the words of the Mishna must be understood:

The premise of *Shulchan Aruch, The Code of Jewish Law*, is that it is mandatory to fulfill the will of G-d, as is readily understood and obvious. Moreover, Jews are not merely bound to G-d's will by obligation; G-d's will actually

defines their own true will. To that extent Rambam rules in Laws of Divorce that every Jew “**wants** to be part of the Jewish heritage, and **wants** to observe all the Mitzvos, etc.” How then is it possible to say that the directive “Make His will as your will” is classified as “matters of piety” [when fulfilling G-d's will is a basic, fundamental directive incumbent upon all Jews equally]?

The difficulty is further strengthened noting that the Mishna provides a reason for “Make His will as your will,” namely, “**in order** that He shall make your will as His will.” Were it not for this reason, this motivation, the concept of “Make His will as your will” would not be so compelling, even for the pious. It is only when this reason is known that there is an additional incentive to fulfill G-d's will.

But this inference is utterly incomprehensible. The will of



G-d must be fulfilled simply, in compliance with the rule of Jewish law. Yet here the directive to “Make His will as your will” is not only reserved for the pious but even then only on account of the condition “that He shall make your will as His will.”

A JEW DEFINES THE WILL OF THE DIVINE

The difficulty is resolved through a careful analysis of the terminology used in the Mishna, “Make (*asei*) His will as your will”:

The more common choice of words would have been “Fulfill (*kayem*) His will” (as in, “the fulfillment of the Mitzvos,” “*kiyum ha'mitzvos*”), which applies to both positively-stated commandments (which necessitate the performance of an action) as well as the observance of prohibitions (abstaining from doing a transgression; not in a manner of “performing” a Mitzva per se). However, here it says specifically, “Make (*asei*) His will as your will,” reminiscent of the saying, “[You have] caused Me to derive pleasure, for I have spoken and My will was done (*naaseh retzoni*)” (Toras Kohanim; Rashi on VaYikra 1:9; Sifri, Rashi on Pinchas 28:8).

The meaning of “Make His will (*asei retzono*)” emerges in light of the teaching of Chassidus on a similar phrase, the saying of our Sages (Brachos 35b), “Doing/making the will of the Omnipresent (*osin retzono shel Makom*)”: Chassidus teaches that a Jew (does not merely fulfill the previously existing will of G-d, rather he) evokes in G-d a new will [i.e., he actually “makes” G-d’s will, as it were].

In saying “Make His will as your will,” the Mishna is instructing us how to serve G-d with piety. In fulfillment of the letter of the law, a Jew does not need to arouse a new will in G-d per se. Within the framework of piety, however, one must “Make His will as your will,” a Jew must elicit in G-d a new will, a will in G-d that is “as your will,” in accordance with the will of the Jew.

ELICIT IN G-D THE WILL TO REDEEM US

One of the applications of the above:

Although we are presently in exile— Indeed, the simple assessment of our situation is that G-d’s will is that the Jewish people should be in exile now. Nevertheless, the Mishna teaches us a lesson – and “one who errs with regard to a matter discussed in the Mishna must rescind his ruling” (K’subos 82b; Tur Shulchan Aruch Chosen Mishpat siman 25, beg.), for error is of no consequence with regard to Mishna. The Mishna teaches us to “Make His will as your will.” A Jew must arouse in G-d a new objective, the will – “as your will,” in line with the will of the Jewish people – that we must leave exile right now!

There is a Jew, however,

“There is a Jew, however, who argues that this is not his approach – to demand and elicit a new will in G-d, to scream out “ad masai?! – how much longer must we suffer in exile?!” and that “the redemption should be here already!” He relies upon the will of G-d, that He will take the Jewish people out of exile when He sees fit...

who argues that this is not his approach – to demand and elicit a new will in G-d, to scream out “ad masai?! – how much longer must we suffer in exile?!” and that “the redemption should be here already!” He relies upon the will of G-d, that He will take the Jewish people out of exile when He sees fit.

But this person ought to be told that this is indeed the directive of the Mishna, “Make His will as your will,” make or evoke a new will in G-d in accordance with “your will,” the will of a Jew that we should finally get out of exile!

Thus, we cry out in earnest that we want the redemption already. And verily, “words that come from the heart [of the speaker] enter into the heart [of the listener, G-d in this case]”; “as water reflects the face, so is the heart of man to man,” referring here – in the second instance of the word “man” – to the heart of “Supernal man,” G-d, in effect establishing within G-d a new will to take the Jewish people out of exile!

BUT I SERVE G-D, NOT VICE-VERSA!

The question could still be asked: True, it is a good thing to Make His will as your will,” that G-d should take the Jewish people out of exile. However, perhaps this is not applicable to matters of Divine service, which

is of primary concern to a Jew, as it is said, “I was created to serve my Master.”

Thus, the Mishna continues, “Make His will as your will in order that He shall make your will as His will”: Evoking in G-d a new will (in our case, that G-d should take the Jewish people out of exile) is itself a matter of Divine service, [expressed in the latter part of the saying] “in order that He shall make your will as His will.”

In fact, this service – evoking a new will in G-d – is the greatest possible height in the service of G-d, the concept of *Raava D’Raavin*!

Thus, we tell a Jew: Why do you limit your service of G-d to those things that are expressed in the world by means of the S’firos, “covers,” “curtains,” and “contractions” in a manner of breaking, falling, descent, etc., when it is within your power to serve G-d in a manner of *Raava D’Raavin*, meaning to evoke a new will in G-d, the will to take the Jewish people out of exile and the like, as stated in the Mishna, “Make His will as your will in order that He shall make your will as His will”!

BUT WE’RE NOT WORTHY!

From the above it is understood that if there is an ignoramus who comes forth with

[Continued on page 28]



SIX SIDES OF 'ALL THAT YOU CAN'

Twenty years have passed since the famous sicha of Chaf-Ches Nissan 5751, and now more than ever we Chassidim need to put into practice its powerful and demanding message. In the spirit of a Chassidic farbrengen, where Chassidim join together to draw insight and inspiration, as well as to encourage each other and take on good resolutions, we present a collection of brief articles by six prominent Chabad rabbis culled from over the years, addressing the main points of this sicha.

THE REBBE GIVES KOCHOS

If the Rebbe said he transferred the responsibility to us, we are responsible to bring Moshiach. It's a weighty job but the Rebbe gave and gives us the kochos we need.

By Rabbi Menachem Mendel Gluckowsky

S'gan Mazkir Beis Din Rabbanei Chabad in Eretz Yisroel

Upon examining the sicha of Chaf-Ches Nissan, we see that before the Rebbe announced that he did his part, he says that the only thing he can do is: "To give it over to you: **do all that you can ... to actually bring Moshiach Tzidkeinu.**"

This sicha ought to move us tremendously, for in this sicha the

Rebbe says that the only thing he can do is give it over to us. Only after giving it over to us, with the requisite kochos, does the Rebbe say that he did his part.

If we can sum up the practical implication of this sicha – the Rebbe gave us the required kochos to bring Moshiach. This is not a one-time conferring of abilities; rather, every day, the



Rebbe gives us renewed kochos to complete our task and carry out the Divine Intent by bringing Moshiach.

It is said that shortly after Chaf-Ches Nissan, someone said to the Rebbe: Rebbe, you must be revealed [as Moshiach]!

The Rebbe said: It's no *kuntz* to throw back to me what I said you should do ...

When the Rebbe said, “do all that you can” – he meant every single one of us. It’s wasn’t a dramatic statement meant to shake us up out of our apathy. It was the truth: the work is now yours and so long as Moshiach is not revealed, we have the obligation not to rest until it happens.

Along with the kochos that the Rebbe gives us, he showed us the “direct means” to bring the Geula. He said that by learning inyanei Moshiach and Geula, we draw down the lofty lights of Geula into a p’nimius and this is the “direct means” whereby to bring Moshiach.

Eleven months passed between Chaf-Ches Nissan 5751 and Chaf-Zayin Adar I 5752. For eleven months the Rebbe delivered numerous sichos and instructions about our work in bringing Moshiach. If we learn these sichos in depth, we will know just what we need to do.

In later sichos (Shabbos Parshas Balak), the Rebbe said that learning inyanei Moshiach and Geula also helps us “live with Moshiach.” The Rebbe explains

“Every day, the Rebbe gives us renewed kochos to complete our task and carry out the Divine Intent by bringing Moshiach.

that in a state of concealment it is difficult to “live” with Moshiach and the solution is to learn Toras Ha’Geula. This lifts us up above the material reality so we can live with the giluyim of Yemos HaMoshiach.

“Living with Moshiach” means that in everything, it makes no difference what it is, we see the aspect of Moshiach within it. I saw an interesting example in a letter the Rebbe wrote to a woman who had problems with shalom bayis. The Rebbe writes: Even if we assume you are right, Chazal say that the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed because of unwarranted hatred and the rectification for this is unwarranted love. Ahavas chinam means that even in a situation in which the Torah agrees that there is no obligation to fulfill “love your neighbor as yourself” about a certain person, if you love him, this is unwarranted love. The Rebbe concludes: By your

conducting yourself with ahavas chinam in your own domain, you hasten the Geula!

The woman thought of nothing aside from her problems with her husband but when the Rebbe received her letter, he saw something here about hastening the Geula! This is because one who “lives with Moshiach” sees the aspect of Moshiach in everything.

To conclude: Each of us needs to know that the Rebbe is not a *darshan* (an orator) and if he said that the responsibility is ours, that is the reality – we are responsible to bring Moshiach. It’s a weighty responsibility but the Rebbe gave and gives us kochos for it.

Since so many years have passed since that sicha was said and we still haven’t had the hisgalus of the Rebbe, we all need to come up with a plan of what to do and how to do it.

OROS OF TOHU

The Rebbe asked that we take the “oros d’Tohu” and draw them down into “keilim d’Tikkun.” This means that we need to take the loftiest things and bring them down.

Rabbi Boruch Boaz Yurkowitz, Rav of the Chabad k’hilla in Lud

In the sicha of Chaf-Ches Nissan 5751 there were two points: a complaint directed

Above, as it were, and a complaint directed down below. The complaint directed Above was:

“How is it possible that despite everything – they still did not



accomplish bringing Moshiach Tzidkeinu? This is simply not understandable!”

The complaint directed at us was, how is it possible that “dozens gather at an auspicious time for the Geula and nevertheless they do not make a commotion to bring about Moshiach’s coming immediately and it’s not out of the question for them that Moshiach does not come tonight nor tomorrow nor two days from now ... heaven forefend! And even when they cry out, ‘ad masai,’ it’s just because they were told to do so ...”

We see an interesting chiddush here. The Rebbe says that if they cried out “ad masai” and meant it, Moshiach would have come already! To demand of Hashem and say this is how it ought to be, is something we don’t find by any of the Rebbeim; just by the Rebbe.

“We see an interesting chiddush here. The Rebbe says that if they cried out “ad masai” and meant it, Moshiach would have come already! To demand of Hashem and say this is how it ought to be, is something we don’t find by any of the Rebbeim; just by the Rebbe.

The Ohr HaChayim HaKadosh says on the verse, “that Moshe the man of G-d blessed,” that the only one who can go to Hashem with the attribute of justice and demand what is right by law is Moshe Rabbeinu.

We see this with the Rebbe that gashmius (the physical) and ruchnius (the spiritual) are intertwined and when the ruchnius is all right, the Rebbe demands of Hashem, with the attribute of justice, that the

gashmius be fine too.

When the Rebbe says that the avodas ha’birurim is finished – he demands of Hashem that Moshiach come already! This is the inyan of Moshe who brings the Sh’china down to earth and as a result, every physical thing is bound to ruchnius. In the seventh generation, which brings the Sh’china down to earth, we can demand of Hashem that since we finished the avodas ha’birurim, Moshiach must come!

But the part that mainly pertains to us is the second part – the Rebbe’s demand of us, that each of us feel that we are lacking because we still don’t have Moshiach in the plainest sense.

Of course many things were done since the sicha was said but we are still in galus ... The Rebbe gives us kochos and yet he wants us to do the work with our own

to explain “Yechi” in a way that is understandable to all. As the Rebbe said, it accomplishes “arise and sing Dovid Malka Meshicha” (and at the very least expresses a t’filla and request). If they put effort into positive ventures, it would all look different!

The inyan of Moshiach is the inyan of “lights of Tohu,” for Moshiach is something which is above the Order of Hishtalshlus and anything above the Order of Hishtalshlus is “lights of Tohu,” but the avoda is to draw down the **lights of Tohu into keilim of tikkun** and not, G-d forbid, to ignore it.

The Rebbe wants the tachton, as it is a tachton, to feel the necessity of the hisgalus of Moshiach and want Moshiach, not like at Har Sinai where “the mountain was held over them like a barrel.”

The inyan of Moshiach is the revelation of G-dliness and so, in order to “live” with Moshiach, we need to open our eyes and see Elokus.

The story is told about a bachur who heard from the Rebbe Rashab that we need to see Elokus and in yechidus he asked what that is. The Rebbe Rashab did not answer him.

A few weeks later, after having delved into the Rebbe’s teachings, he had yechidus again and he asked whether what was meant was that after meditating in davening, when he would go out to the street, he would see the G-dliness that gives life to everything. The Rebbe said, yes, that is what he meant.

So too for us – we need to open our eyes and walk in the street and feel that Moshiach is coming!

IT'S OUR TURN

There is a mashpia and a mekabel. The Rebbe is the mashpia and from his part, he did everything. He brought down all the inyanim to us, to the mekabel. Now it's our turn to do the avoda of mekablaim.

By Rabbi Moshe Havlin

Rav in Kiryat Gat



After the sicha of Chaf-Ches Nissan the Rebbe explained that he meant learning inyanai Moshiach and Geula. Later on, he emphasized that learning is not merely in order to prepare for the coming of Moshiach but to “live with Moshiach.” The Rebbe explained that when a person learns Torah, he bonds with the situation he learns about.

Let it be said, it is to the credit of the bachurim in 770 that they revived the topic, which, to a certain extent, was dormant even among other bachurim. Now they “live” with these subjects and this is what the Rebbe wants, that we “live” with Yemos HaMoshiach.

But we cannot allow this to remain the exclusive domain of the bachurim. It has to pervade Anash so that Anash also learns “sugiyos in Geula,” not only in the Rebbe’s sichos but also, as the Rebbe himself emphasized, in the Midrash, Zohar etc. The study of Moshiach and Geula needs to pervade all levels of society, Anash in particular. Wherever Anash live, there need to be shiurim on Moshiach and Geula at least once a week.

Maybe we can adopt the method of “contests” for Anash too and announce monetary

awards for those who excel in the study of inyanai Moshiach and Geula or who write pilpulim, etc.

In general, until Chaf-Ches Nissan 5751, the topic of Moshiach and Geula was dormant as far as public interest in it. To many people, even those who are considered frum, Moshiach wasn’t something practical and realistic. To many people, Moshiach was a utopian concept for a rosy future. So the Rebbe announced that we must bring down this complicated subject so that human intellect relates to it, so that the “lights of Tohu” would come down into “vessels of Tikkun,” by explaining it in such a way that everybody could relate to it on his and her level.

Although the Rebbe spoke about Moshiach for years, it wasn’t in the style of the post-Chaf-Ches Nissan era. The Rebbe never spoke this way before so that there was barely a

sicha or farbrengen in which this topic wasn’t mentioned over and over again.

Furthermore, we always knew that if something was demanded of us on the subject, it was only in the area of intensifying our emuna in the coming of Moshiach, and nothing beyond that. Starting from Chaf-Ches Nissan, the Rebbe began demanding much more – to **actualize** the idea that “Hinei zeh (Moshiach) ba,” to live with Moshiach in our daily lives, and to be a “Moshiach Yid” – these are in the category of “lights of Tohu!”

Despite the serious misgivings that some people had, this inyan was accepted as surprising and unexpected as this may have been. Ideas that people found it hard to believe would be accepted, were accepted by all segments of society starting with intellectuals and scientists and concluding with the ordinary

“Starting from Chaf-Ches Nissan, the Rebbe began demanding much more – to actualize the idea that “Hinei zeh (Moshiach) ba,” to live with Moshiach in our daily lives, and to be a “Moshiach Yid” – these are in the category of “lights of Tohu!”

man on the street who took to it enthusiastically. This goes to show just how possible it is to bring down even “lights of Tohu” in “vessels of tikkun.”

The fact that the world today talks about Moshiach as something practical, shows that it has deeply penetrated the consciousness of the public. I met someone who is not yet religiously observant and he told me that he came to the conclusion that there is no recourse; there

is just Moshiach. Of course this is not enough and we need to do more and more to bring this subject down further into “vessels of tikkun.”

Some people asked themselves after this sicha, “If everything the Rebbe did was for naught, how can we, with our puny abilities, succeed in bringing Moshiach?” The answer is that what is true for other things, is true for this subject too. There is a mashpia and a mekabel. The Rebbe is the

mashpia and from his part, he did everything. He brought it all down to us, the mekabel. Now the avoda is ours to do, and this avoda, the avoda of mekablaim, is something only we can do.

This is also what the Rebbe meant later on when he said, “It is all ready and now you just need to open your eyes” – to see that the mashpia’s part is done. What still needs to be done is our small part.

NOW WE NEED TO WANT!

We have the ability to bring Moshiach and now we have to want! We need to make the time to devote ourselves to preparing the world for Moshiach.

Rabbi Shneur Zalman Gafni

Rosh Yeshivas Ohr T’mimim, Kfar Chabad

In Chassidus it says that “potential ability” is one with the actual essence, and a person can reveal powers from that potential ad infinitum. This is exemplified in the well-known story about the Toldos in which the Baal Shem Tov told him to see Divine Providence within everything. The Toldos said he could not do this on his own. Then, on his way home, he encountered a gentile whose wagon was stuck in the mud and was calling for help. The Toldos thought it wasn’t fitting for someone of his stature to help him and he ignored him. The gentile persisted in asking for his help until the Toldos finally told him that a distinguished person like himself could not come to his aid. The gentile noted, “You can;

you just don’t want to.”

So we have the ability and now we have to want! The sicha of Chaf-Ches Nissan was about how years are passing and so much has been said on this vital subject, and yet people aren’t responding.

A Chassid went to the Rebbe for yechidus and when the Rebbe told him to increase in “spreading the wellsprings,” he said he didn’t have time for that. The Rebbe told him that he should use the time he spent reading the newspaper to spread the wellsprings.

So too in our situation, each of us can find more time to prepare the world for Moshiach. We need to keep in mind the Rebbe Rayatz’s comment on the Mishna, “all the days of your life

to bring the coming of Moshiach” – that with every single action the thought should be about how this is a preparation for the coming of Moshiach.

If we “lived” with this idea, we would prevent numerous undesirable things that we presently are living with such as dissension within our own ranks etc. The Tzemach Tzedek said that the achdus of Chassidim will lead them to Moshiach (and he said this under similar circumstances to ours in which we don’t see the Rebbe). We need to work on achdus, to see the truth that all of us, without exception, want to hasten the coming of Moshiach. There is no disagreement about this!



These days, most of Jewry is confused and don't know what the morrow will bring. It is specifically at a time like this that it is incumbent upon each one of us to encourage other Jews. We need to be a role model for emuna in the coming of Moshiach. The emphasis ought to be on reaching every person we come in contact with and telling them the Besuras Ha'Geula in a calm, "normal" way.

Let's not forget that a major part of preparing for Moshiach is "spreading the wellsprings outward." We need to find ways of conveying thoughts about Moshiach through teaching Chassidus. Occasionally, we can devote an entire shiur to teaching about Geula. In this way, we can

“He told the Rebbe he didn't have time to spread the wellsprings. The Rebbe told him that he should use the time he spent reading the newspaper.”

reach all sorts of people.

Everything we do needs to be done with "lights of Tohu" which means "plentiful lights" – going beyond limitations, that is to say working on those things that seem to be beyond your abilities and bringing them down into "vessels of tikkun."

The sicha of Chaf-Ches Nissan follows the Yom Tov of Pesach whose main theme is leaving that which limits us; and as the Rebbe innovated, this must be done at every moment, i.e. the avoda at every moment needs to

be an avoda that is incomparable to the avoda of a moment ago!

As much as the Rebbe values every single activity, he is never satisfied and today too, he is not satisfied with what we did a moment ago. We are always asked to do more and in a qualitatively better way than previously.

When we give this our constant attention, surely we will be mevatel (negate) ourselves and our desires to the desire of our Rebbe to actually bring Moshiach.

THE POWER (CHAF-CHES /KO'ACH) OF NISSAN

Our shlichus is: "For all the Jewish people to clamor and cry out sincerely and take action to bring Moshiach."

Rabbi Mordechai Shmuel Ashkenazi

Rav of Kfar Chabad and member of the Beis Din Rabbanei Chabad in Eretz Yisroel



There is a connection between the sicha of Chaf-Ches Nissan – "do all that you can to bring Moshiach" – and the significance of the month of Nissan. The month of Nissan in general is "the Rebbe's month." Although it has Pesach, to us, the Rebbe's birthday on the 11th of Nissan is the main event of Nissan.

Where do we get this from?

"As in the days of your going out of Egypt, I will show you wonders." Just as it was with the first redeemer, Moshe Rabbeinu, so too with the final redeemer, the Rebbe MH"M.

Regarding the first redeemer the Gemara says (Megilla 13b), "Since the lot fell in the month of Adar, he (Haman) rejoiced greatly. He said, the lot fell in the month that Moshe died. He

did not know that on the 7th of Adar he (Moshe) died and on the seventh he (Moshe) was born."

The question is, true, the seventh of Adar has an advantage in that Moshe was born on this day but it is also the day he died, so why does his birth on this date supersede his death on this date?

Rashi answers, "The birth is worthy of **atonement** for the death." The Rebbe explains (Likkutei

Sichos, vol. 26, p. 1) that from this phraseology we learn that the birth erases the negative aspect of it being a day that Moshe died and what remains is only the birth – “Moshe Rabbeinu **did not die**,” since he is physically present in every generation. All the more so when we speak of the “final redeemer” – the Rebbe MH”M, who was crowned and accepted as king by tens of thousands of people.

So the month of Nissan, the month the Rebbe was born, is also the month of his eternal hisgalus, **so that all see that “he did not die.”**

We see that the Rebbe said the sicha in the month of **Nissan** and on the **28th** (Chaf-Ches, the letters of the word ko’ach – strength), i.e. that this is the ko’ach of Nissan as the Rebbe explains at length in that sicha.

To us Chassidim, “ko’ach”

has a deeper meaning. **Ko’ach** is numerically equivalent to **Yechi**. The connection between **Chaf-Ches-Ko’ach Nissan** and the proclamation of: “**Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu V’Rabbeinu, Melech HaMoshiach L’olam Va’ed**” is clear:

In the month of Nissan, the month in which the Rebbe was born, in which “his mazal is powerful,” the effects of the cry/request of every Jew, “**Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu V’Rabbeinu Melech HaMoshiach L’olam Va’ed**” are realized in a more powerful way.

However, this is not enough. Our shlichus (as the sicha says) is: “**For all the Jewish people to clamor and cry out sincerely** and take action to bring Moshiach,” i.e. we all need to sincerely cry out, “Moshiach now!” We want to see the hisgalus of the Rebbe!

It’s not a slogan! It’s a

request/cry: the darkness is doubled and redoubled, on all sides we see there is no option other than the hisgalus of Moshiach.

We don’t know why it had to be this way. As the Gemara says, “what business do you have in the hidden matters of G-d,” which means that it is not our place to mix in, but even if this is how it has to be (since the kingdom of Beis Dovid is compared to the moon which is revealed and concealed and then “revealed again,”) – we have met that requirement already!

We are waiting for the revelation, for the hisgalus, and so the shlichus of every one of us is to spread the Rebbe’s horaos more and more, the Rebbe’s promise that our generation is the first generation of Geula, and the prophecy of “hinei zeh (Moshiach) ba.”

DON'T SLACKEN!

If anybody thought that the Rebbe saying “do all that you can” was just to provide an extra impetus, Gimmel Tammuz came along and dispelled that notion. The Rebbe meant what he said! We need to bring Moshiach and this must be the focal point for every one of us.

By Rabbi Menachem Mendel Wolpo

Rav of the Chabad community - Netanya

In the sicha of Chaf-Ches Nissan, the Rebbe said that he wants to transfer responsibility for bringing Moshiach to us, the Chassidim. The difference between Chabad

Chassidus and Chassidus in general is that in the latter they rely on the tzaddik, while in Chabad, Chassidim have to do the work themselves. The same is true for bringing Moshiach, the Rebbe



wants us to do it, as he said in the sicha that if we cried out “ad masai” sincerely, and not because we were told to do so, Moshiach would have been here already.

Obviously, the Rebbe can bring about the hisgalus on his own and the reason he gave

the job to us is because he is an Oheiv Yisroel and he doesn't want this awesome event to be *nahama d'chisufa* (lit. bread of shame, i.e. a handout). He wants to include us so we too have a share in making it happen.

This is not a new approach. It started way back in the desert when Moshe built the Mishkan. He could have made it with his own money for he was wealthy, but he preferred to include all the Jewish people. The same is true for the first Beis HaMikdash and the second, in which all the Jewish people had a share in the construction. All the more so when we're talking about the third Beis HaMikdash – surely all of us need to participate in preparing for the coming of Moshiach and its construction.

As the Rebbe explained many times, victory has to come through the midda of netzach. The Rebbe opens all the treasure houses but the actual work, achieving the goal, is the avoda of the Chassidim.

Practically speaking, every one of Anash has to feel that it is up to him. Each of us needs to feel that the coming of Moshiach

is the essence of our life and to work on it “stubbornly.” Stubbornness means not to stop for even a moment. A simple example would be a person who has something to take care of in a government office. He goes day after day, arriving before they open the doors, in order to try his luck. We need to have the same attitude about Moshiach, to be entirely focused and consumed with it.

We need to do this according to our abilities and talents, since I can't necessarily do what my fellow can do, but what I **can** do is put my heart and soul into it, and by doing so, I will be doing what the Rebbe said to do, “do all that you can.”

If anybody thought that by the Rebbe saying “do all that you can,” it was merely to provide an extra impetus, along came Gimmel Tammuz to dispel that notion. The Rebbe meant what he said! We have to bring Moshiach and this ought to be the goal of every one of us.

The Rebbe also said in the sicha that the avoda needs to be done in a way of “lights of Tohu” in “vessels of tikkun.” In

Chassidus it explains that “lights of Tohu” are “intense lights,” which is why they could not be inclusive of each other, but in the world of tikkun, the lights are inclusive of each other and not as intense.

The point is that the “intense lights” of any and all matters involved in preparing for Moshiach's coming which can lead to conflict (like the students of Rabbi Akiva who did not treat one another with respect), have to be brought down into “vessels of tikkun” – in such a way that not only won't it lead to conflict, but it will draw in each person on an individual level, as the Rebbe said in that sicha, that “one, two, three” people should do it. The direction ought to be towards inclusion and unity. We can accomplish this by acting with bittul, which is the defining characteristic of the world of tikkun, bittul to the Supernal Will. When a Chassid operates in this manner, he is assured that his actions will not produce any untoward results and moreover, his avoda will lead to greater inclusiveness between himself and those around him.

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Issue 786 • BEIS MOSHIACH **13**

MEDIA, MARKETING AND THE MESSAGE OF MOSHIACH

How do you explain lofty concepts about the Geula and the Resurrection of the Dead to people with no background in these subjects? In the era of Facebook and Twitter, where everything is down to a “sound byte”, is there a way to teach inyanei Moshiach and Geula in short “tweets?” Why is the topic of Geula considered a Lubavitcher subject? * We present an interview with Dr. Yechiel Harari, professor of communications and public speaking, who worked as a journalist, parliamentarian aide, communications consultant, and in recent years has been involved in “bringing down” Tanya in the form of advice for daily living.* For Chaf-Ches Nissan

Interview by Menachem Ziegelboim

It is twenty years since the Rebbe said a sicha about learning inyanei Moshiach and Geula from the sources in Torah, an activity that inspires one to “live with Moshiach.” This was said following the sicha of Chaf-Ches Nissan in which the Rebbe cried out, “do all that you can” to bring Moshiach. Chassidim were left reeling. They didn’t understand it. What was “all that you can?” Where do you begin? With whom do you start? To whom do you turn?

Meetings held at that time did

not result in anything substantial. People were in the dark. The Rebbe gave his first clarification of what he meant in the Tazria-Metzora farbrengen when he spoke about the “direct path” to bring the Geula through learning inyanei Moshiach and Geula.

The Torah is the key to the whole world and Torah is the way to kick off any effort, firstly to impact one’s own inner consciousness, and then on to the family, one’s circle of friends and acquaintances, and then wider circles.

The idea of speaking to Dr. Yechiel Harari turned out to be a terrific one. Dr. Harari is a professor of communications and public speaking, who just published his fourth book in the series on *Eitzot HaTanya: L’Hakir et HaBorei* which is based on Shaar HaYichud V’Ha’Emuna in Tanya. Harari, 37, completed his doctorate in public speaking and Messianism six years ago at Tel Aviv University. He previously worked as a journalist, parliamentary aide, communications consultant, and senior professional consultant to



the Housing Authority.

Today, Harari lives with his wife Anat and three children at Moshav Shakeif in the south, and heads the *Hitbonenut* institute, which offers the public the philosophy of Chassidus in accessible language. He has a popular blog on the subjects of Kabbalah and Chassidus.

Dr. Harari is also a professional in the field of public relations who is familiar with the lofty ideas associated with the era of Geula as he sees it in Chassidus, on the one hand, and with the man on the street and

his yearning for a positive and uplifting message on the other hand. Above all else, Harari is very experienced in “bringing down” lofty Chassidic concepts into plain talk that all can understand through his series of books, *Eitzos B’Tanya*.

HOW TO BREAK THE BARRIER OF FEAR

To what extent are the subjects of Geula and Moshiach known in Israeli society?

To be honest, I have the feeling that these subjects are far

from being accepted or popular. I know that there is a tendency to focus on that which is familiar to us. It’s only natural that it seems to us that the problems that preoccupy us are the problems that take center stage in Jewish life. Actually, many people avoid these subjects. Even people who already expressed interest in Geula and Moshiach often stay away from Chassidic works as a source of knowledge and are skeptical about ideas culled from the Gemara and Midrash.

What is the reason for this?

There are two opposing first

impressions regarding Moshiach and Geula that render them unappealing to the broader public. The first is that the topic is deemed irrelevant and impractical. The second is that the topic is seen as delusional and not serious.

As for the first view, people today are thirsty for meaning and this is the reason they are attracted to spiritual things. But if the material they are presented with is not seen as useful in their everyday lives, they won't buy it. The moment the topic of Geula is explained as something far off in time and place, the less relevant it is in our daily lives. It's common to think of it as something in the future that does not relate to us now, to our lives and time, and that's why it is not considered worth pursuing. The challenge is to create a sort of psychological shift towards the subject matter by repackaging it in a way that shows how ideas about Geula relate to everybody as they are, even within the tumultuousness of modern living and post-modern culture.

How do you do this?

Let's examine the approach that operates in most New Age teachings, which attract millions of people throughout the consumerist western world. Most of these teachings don't say there is a truth that the believer needs to serve. They ask how can their teachings serve the believer! The secret to the success of New Age beliefs is that they teach how the one who studies these teachings can become more at peace,

relaxed and successful. How he can produce more and actualize the infinite potential that lies within him.

Judaism, of course, says just the opposite. It teaches Truth and shows how a person needs to serve it. The fact is that the study of Moshiach and Geula can be very useful and there is no reason not to emphasize this. Learning about it can have a real impact on the soul. It enables us to accept the world rather than fight it. This content and understanding of the structure of the world as it is contained in the study of Geula can also make us far more successful in life and give us the necessary toolbox to deal with the exigencies of daily existence.

I think that the average psychologist will see in the study of Geula an effective tool for dealing with fears, for example. Fears dissipate when we understand the nature of the G-dly existence that we are living in and how things will appear when True Existence is no longer concealed.

You mentioned another reason that people avoid the subject of Moshiach and Geula...

I remember that before I became a baal t'shuva, whenever I used concepts like "Geula," "Moshiach," and "End of Days," I was sure that someone would be offended. I was amazed the first time I heard people refer to themselves as "Meshichistim." That's when I realized how great was the gap between the negative connotation that these concepts

are associated with in the public at large who are not religious and even within broad segments of the religious public, and the positive regard it has within Chabad.

I don't think that the flinching from ideas associated with the End of Days is because they are associated with the irrational. The Messianic concept is not less rational than belief in G-d and other principles of Judaism.

Even if we were to say that at first glance, this is not a rational subject or it lacks scientific backing and demonstrative proof, this is not enough to explain people's discomfort with it. Nowadays, mystical ideas are widespread. That they aren't rational arouses criticism only within certain groups, and this criticism doesn't impede their popularity.

The avoidance of inyanei Moshiach comes from other reasons. Of course the first reason is the confusion and lack of knowledge, but no less important is that the antagonism comes from these ideas sounding unreal and maybe even threatening to accepted societal expectations. They give enormous power to people in that they impact on the believer's sense of his purpose in life, and from there onto his daily routine.

The Geula idea is a tremendous source of motivation. This motivation is completely different than the motivation that capitalistic society is used to — money, materialism, consumption. The Geula concept causes people to do things that are hard to understand. People can't understand why guys put t'fillin on with people in the Central Bus Station without understanding the Geula concept. And this motivation is



The moment the topic of Geula is explained as something far off in time and place, the less relevant it is in our daily lives.

seen as foreign, delusional, cut off from reality.

THE CHALLENGE: THAT EVERYBODY SHOULD KNOW THAT MOSHIACH IS GOOD!

There are subjects that, before you talk about them, are assumed to be positive. Can the topic of Geula be transformed so that people stop thinking about it as something unrealistic and realize that it's real, worthwhile, and will happen imminently?

That's the challenge in a nutshell. As far as I understand, the Rebbe's goal is to get people to look at the present reality differently. Someone who learns Chassidus acquires not only specific insights or Torah ideas; he acquires tools, the glasses, to interpret the world differently, its processes, and himself. So the goal is not to suffice with emphasizing that Geula is an important idea but to give people the framework with which to understand what is going on in the world. Whoever accepts the way Chassidus understands reality, ultimately cannot ignore the central tenets of Chassidus – Moshiach and Geula. They eventually develop a positive approach and a healthy curiosity about it.

So how do you change people's "glasses?"

People will be willing to change their glasses only if they are involved in the process of learning and understanding. Changing your outlook on reality is not a passive process; it's an active one and the person must be a part of it.

I'll tell you a story. About seven years ago I finished a draft of my doctorate work. My mentors approved the draft ,



When we understand the idea of the constant creation of the universe and the fact that the G-dly life force is within every created being, suddenly the End of Days doesn't seem like a far-off event but something that can happen at any moment.

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giving it high marks, and I was sure that I could move on. One of the examiners, who was also religious, told me that I had to change my perspective; that I could not understand the Geula-Moshiach idea from my ivory tower. I had to try and think like a Messianist. He compelled me to think differently. For quite some time I was annoyed with him for giving me new work to do, but in the end I thank him till today for forcing me to change my perspective, to see things differently, definitely in a deeper, more correct, way. I am not sure I would have become convinced if I hadn't put in all that work myself.

People do want to connect with ideas like hope, light and joy but sometimes negative things happen and when you tell people the Geula is about to happen their reaction is: Don't you see what's going on in the world? You call that Moshiach?

So how can we deal with this and explain that this is part of the Geula process?

Research shows that tragedies, natural disasters and economic downturns arouse interest in the subject of Moshiach just as unexpected success does. The point is not what is going on in the world but how we look at and interpret what happens. That's why it's so important to use the glasses that Chassidus offers. These glasses enable us to better understand what is happening. Every worldview offers a way

of analyzing reality. Chassidus needs to offer its top-quality merchandise as opposed to other worldviews.

THE DEEPER THE BELIEF IN HASHEM, THE DEEPER THE BELIEF IN MOSHIACH

Geula is seen as a Lubavitcher topic in the Jewish world. How come it's not treated seriously among other Jewish groups when it's one of the thirteen principles of faith?

How one regards the topic of Moshiach is directly connected with the degree of one's emuna and the degree of effort one invests into the Creator, understanding Him, learning about Him and in attempting to know Him.

On Purim I was at a farbrengen by Rabbi Wechter who, thanks to the "ad d'lo yada" and simcha, said some sharp things. He emphasized that there are tzaddikim and holy people, there are many clever vertlach, and there are many groups that teach how to attain a form of personal shleimus (perfection). However, the Baal HaTanya is one of the only ones who grasped the point of Judaism, the point that the Baal Shem Tov desired to disseminate. The point of who is the Creator, where He can be found, and how He is connected to us.

A systematic, all-encompassing and deep understanding of the Creator

(to the extent that we are able to achieve it with our paltry intellects) is the most important key not only for strengthening emuna but also, and especially, to be open to these ideas about Moshiach and Geula.

When we understand the idea of the constant creation of the universe and the fact that the G-dly life force is within every created being, suddenly the End of Days doesn't seem like a far-off event but something that can happen at any moment and which is mainly dependent on our changing our way of looking at the world. For, in any case, the world is being created at every moment anew.

How can we understand that the Geula is imminent? What does this mean?

A deep understanding of Shaar Ha'Yichud V'Ha'Emuna, of the structure of creation, reveals that Geula, meaning the revelation of the presence of G-d in the world, is simply the removal of that which conceals. When you understand the two chiddushim that the Baal HaTanya emphasizes in the name of the Baal Shem Tov, that Hashem recreates the world, in all its details, at every moment and that the G-dly energy is the inner life force of every aspect of creation, then the concept of Geula is no longer foreign. It becomes the true reality, and this understanding impacts on our ability to control feelings of anger and sadness and to overcome worries about parnasa, improve our relationship with our children and our spouses. Obviously, it also impacts on our ability to be open to our environment. Everything suddenly become a unified G-dly entity.

HOW DO WE AROUSE THE FEELING OF LONGING FOR THE GEULA?

In the sicha of Shabbos Parshas Tazria-Metzora 5751, twenty years ago, the Rebbe said that the direct approach to bringing the Geula is by learning inyanei Moshiach and Geula as these subjects are explained in Torah etc. What is so special about learning it in the sources that it can convince people and enable them to "live" with Moshiach?

Simple, wholehearted faith mostly remains as a *makif*, such that it remains intangible, and most of the time, it doesn't obligate you. The Alter Rebbe explains in the introduction to Shaar Ha'Yichud V'Ha'Emuna that meditation arouses the emotions towards the subject and creates a far greater sense of obligation. It turns the *makif* into a *p'nimi*, that which can be apprehended by the rational mind. The subject is no longer merely a slogan but part of our understanding of the world. It permeates all levels of the soul and affects our external behavior.

I am saying things that I hope will affect me a little too. There's no question that when words come from the heart, they enter the heart.

The Rebbe's horaa to learn inyanei Moshiach and Geula is not just to do on our own but to learn with others. Is there a way that you can recommend to convince people to attend a shiur considering the fears we spoke about earlier? What should be written in an advertisement to attract people?

The purpose of the fliers and advertisements need not be pedagogical. You can't convince people with a flier and it's

not right to expect that of the copywriter. The initial purpose of the ad should be to get people to identify with the idea and to arouse curiosity.

One of the most important things in a series of classes is credibility. Your audience wants to know that there is a clear correlation between the ads and the content of the lecture. People attend shiurim in order to find out more about themselves and also to have a nice evening. If they hear things that are not interesting or were not the reason they attended, they won't come back. An ad is important but it is very limited as compared to personal interaction, developing a social circle and a foundation of trust.

There is no short cut when it comes to the implantation of knowledge. We need more shiurim, more advertisements, more original ways of looking at things, more ways of conveying things in writing. The long-short way is always the better one. At the same time, it's important to work on those two aspects that make people nervous — by showing how the subject is practical and worthwhile in a person's daily life and stressing how understanding the subject as the purpose of life and existence, as an essential part of serving Hashem, does not threaten our lives; it actually enhances it.

Is this why we need to study the subject and we can't suffice by distributing attractive brochures?

Fliers are definitely the type of thing that maintain awareness, but that's like keeping something on a low flame. A flier isn't enough. The source for this emuna is a high source in man's soul but because of the loftiness of this emuna over the other soul

powers, it is usually revealed only temporarily, generally based on external influences. In comparison, emuna that grows after exercising one's full intellectual capacities, leads to much greater expression and imbues one with a sense of obligation.

Graphics alone cannot preserve the enthusiasm on a practical level over the long term. It elicits only a momentary enthusiasm that quickly dissipates the moment you hear the first critical comment.

WHAT CAN BE SAID IN FIFTY PAGES CAN BE SAID IN ONE SENTENCE

Today, in the generation of Facebook and Twitter, everything has to be accessible, quick, and brief. People don't bother reading long articles. As a person with teaching experience, do you think that it's possible to teach lofty subjects like Geula with short tweet-like messages?

I'm sure you've heard the joke about how Moshiach will be revealed via the Internet ... Everybody's sitting in front of their computers all day and this is definitely the easiest way to publicize the "secrets of the secrets" of the Torah. We can definitely attribute the advantages the Rebbe noted about the radio, to the Internet. If the radio was invented for the purpose of spreading the wellsprings, then this is surely true for the Internet (though the Internet is also a dangerous place for mitzva-observant people, not only because of immodesty and exposure to content that can lead to avoda zara, but also because of the colossal waste of time).

Someone who gets used to



“ People want to discover themselves as they listen to a talk. They want to learn something that will enable them to draw a practical lesson. The listener always tries to ask: Where do I fit in? ”

brief messages will end up only being receptive to brief messages. Despite that disadvantage, for most people in the western world, someone who is not on the Internet, does not exist.

The Internet has also changed the structure of media impact. It gives more and more power to bloggers over the established media. Today there are bloggers with a bigger readership than daily newspapers. This is a wonderful opportunity for Lubavitcher writers; you just need to encourage people to do it.

One other condition needed for success on the Internet is the ability for people to be involved in the conversation.

We can definitely use a series of short articles that will encourage readers to respond. This enables readers to feel part of the action as opposed to passive recipients.

Getting back to your question, whatever can be said in fifty pages can be said in a sentence. Every message, every idea, can be distilled to its essence and expanded, can be broken down and reconstructed. The technological advances you referred to definitely require us to break ideas down. I saw that Rabbi Ginsburgh, for example, opened a Twitter account. For those who don't know, Twitter limits writers to 140 characters, barely two sentences.

EVERY SHIUR HAS TO FIT THE AUDIENCE AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

Can you give me an example of a topic in inyanei Moshiach that is completely abstract and how it can be explained to people who don't have the background, in a way that enables them to "get" it?

Let's take Geula itself. What is it? Most people expect explanations about a rosy future with all kinds of miracles and wonders. When you tell them that there is a psychological reality of Geula right now in which we try to see a different reality, in which we try to discover the hidden reality, the G-dly reality that is beyond what we see, that makes it easier to connect to the topic. Otherwise, it seems like we are talking about a far-off utopia that doesn't have much to do with what preoccupies us today. This revelation of Geula on a micro level is an encouraging message. It enables a believer to feel the presence of G-d. He is no longer alone.

How do you construct a successful series of shiurim on inyanei Moshiach and Geula? What should be addressed first and what should be left for later? And within the shiur itself, how do you construct it so that it holds the listeners' interest until the end of the

shiur?

Giving a shiur is an acquired skill that improves over time and with experience, and the willingness to learn and develop. Every speaker improves from lecture to lecture and it's important to remember this. The main thing is to always stick to the theme, to the opening question you began with, while being careful not to neglect the relevance of what you're saying to the audience.

There is no one formula for giving a good shiur. If there was one method, everybody would be on to it. You can find speakers who are not articulate, who lack charisma, whose lecture is lacking in logical structure and yet they are popular, and there are eloquent speakers who incorporate stories in their talks and they still don't fill up classes.

Every shiur has to be suited to the listeners, the environment, and the cultural context. The basic principle is that people want to discover themselves as they listen to a talk. They want to learn something that will enable them to draw a practical lesson. The listener always tries to ask: Where do I fit in to what is being said? So the ideas need to be worked through so that the listener can figure out where he stands. This is the only way to make the Torah into a Toras Chaim. From this perspective, there is no topic that

we can't deal with. Every topic can be used in a lecture when the content is presented properly.

What about those people who don't attend lectures – are there other ways to teach them inyanei Moshiach and Geula via the Internet or through e-mails? How effective are these methods?

The musician and artist Gili Shoshan, who is an ardent supporter of Geula ideas, started working on producing a fascinating movie on the subject. The movie will present the topic of Geula in Jewish thought and deal with various views on the subject. I am convinced that this project, which is being done on the highest professional level and with a bit of luck will be broadcast on commercial channels too, can have a significant impact in Eretz Yisroel and the world. Projects such as these are extremely valuable and can reach all audiences.

The Rebbe said that filling your head with inyanei Geula affects your heart and your actions. How can we ensure that the shiurim don't remain solely on the intellectual level but affect our daily lives?

No need to worry. Learning automatically affects the emotions and our behavior.

Dr. Yechiel Harari's blog (in Hebrew) is www.hitbonenut.net

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ABRAHAM PRINCIPLE

*Abraham was a master of insight and rationality. But all the philosophy in the world isn't worth a hill of beans unless you're as ready to walk the walk as much as talk the talk. Abraham understood this, as indeed we all should. * Part 7.*

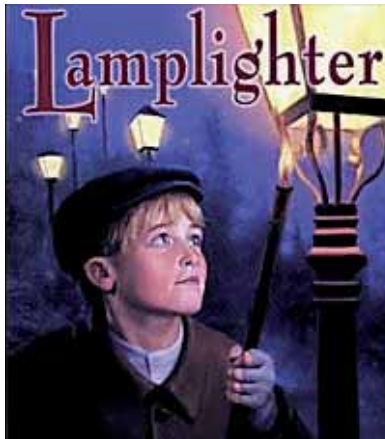
By Aryeh Gotfryd, PhD



LIVING THE MESSAGE

One may not adopt certain truth criteria when it is convenient and then drop them when it is not.

--The Rebbe, Mind Over Matter, pg. 8.



Abraham took inventory, but not in the usual sense.

He reviewed all those hard-won ideas he had come to realize by thinking about nature and whatever is beyond it that makes it tick, viz:

- Things don't make themselves; they work by cause and effect.

- Nature is orderly and intelligible; so its ultimate cause must too contain organization

and intelligence within it.

- Causes are external to their effects and have power over them; the world's cause must be some external, greater power.

- The cause-and-effect process itself depends on some First Cause.

- All bodies are limited. The First Cause, being unlimited, must not be a body or a form.

- Being unlimited, the First Cause must be equally present both beyond and within the world.

- If this Big Being is here and I am too, then He is somehow hiding right here.*

- The BB's presence is hidden so we feel independent.

- This impression of independence grants us free will.

- Free will and the ability to think abstractly enable us to 'discover' the BB.

- This 'BB discoverability' is itself a creation, begging the question of why it exists.

- The BB gave us intelligence, independence, free will and the ability to discover Him so that we would exercise those capacities to do just that.

- Consciously living with the BB is the purpose of mankind.

Wow.

Imagine all humanity contemplating the greatness of G-d together. How would the Creator react to such a scenario? It seems only reasonable to believe that He would say to Him/Her/It-self: "Wow. They did it. I hid and they found me. I guess it's time to come out of hiding and reveal my presence to the whole world while not overwhelming them out of existence."

Until here he got with brain power. From here on in, it's something else. All the philosophy in the world isn't worth a hill of beans unless you're as ready to walk the walk as much as talk the talk. Abraham understood this, as indeed we all should.

To exemplify this, we fast-forward to a story of a sage who was visited by two colleagues who were to stay the night in his home. Upon their arrival, he summoned his son and told him to prepare a *davar Torah* (literally 'word of Torah', a lesson in its teachings) on the subject of honoring guests. The boy took his leave while the men discussed matters and some time later returned to the room.

"What did you prepare?" his father asked. Without a word, the child motioned the men to follow him through the house to guest rooms where beds were freshly made and the customary

washbasins and towels were set up in preparation for their stay.

“What do you think?” the father asked his guests. “Is this not an excellent davar Torah on the subject of welcoming guests?”

In any case, what faced Abraham at this point was a life-defining decision. Do I take this mandate wholeheartedly and dedicate the rest of my life on this world to promoting the knowledge of G-d to each and every person I encounter, or not? It's a tough world out there, a world dominated by idolatry, violence, bluff, and power tripping. Why not just be happy that I found a little truth and meaning for myself and my family? Live and let live. No need to be a fanatic, and go around bursting everyone's bubble,

even if those bubbles are as meaningless as they are hollow.

Abraham was one. The world, millions. What hope did he have of making any impact at all? He wasn't rich or powerful and he had no media contacts or PR agencies working for him. And he wasn't even selling anything that tastes good, looks pretty, or fixes your wagon wheel. Plus there was no resale value. Whatever friends he did have must have all given him the same message. Chill. There's no point burning yourself out trying to save the world. Just take care of number one.

So he did. But he decided to take care of Number One, rather than number one. He figured its up to Number One to take care of number one so that number one could take care of Number One.

In short Abraham chose the first option. Live a purposeful life. Spread the word. Share the wisdom. Bring people together in the knowledge of G-d.

A daunting task to be sure, but Abraham was up to it. And since there was a will, he would surely find a way.

To read previous installments and other Torah and Science related articles, or to comment, or to contact the author, visit www.faithandscience.com.

**Not to be confused with the Big Bang, the Big Being, being the being that banged the Big Bang, assuming for the time being that the Big Bang bung. Note that Big is here not a spatial term, just like First is not temporal. Alas at this level all descriptive language fails.*

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FRAMED, NOW FREED, ELI HECHT SPEAKS

In an emotional exclusive conversation with Beis Moshiach, R' Eliyahu Hecht makes his first comments since leaving Spanish prison to begin a period of house arrest.

By Sholom Dovber Zaltzman

Translated by Michael Leib Dobry

Up until four months ago, R' Eliyahu Hecht of Tzfas was a quiet and unassuming chassid, far from all the hubbub and tumult of media headlines. He works as a fundraiser for “Eshel Binyomin” – the Collel Chabad public soup kitchen in Tzfas, dividing his time between traveling all over the world to raise money and carrying out his charitable activities throughout

Tzfas on behalf of the organization.

As part of his work, he had already become accustomed to lengthy journeys to far-flung and unfamiliar destinations throughout the globe for the purpose of meeting charitable people who would agree to make donations for the needy residents of Tzfas. He never thought that he would waste away for so many months away from his home – and behind prison walls in a remote region of Spain, no less. He never imagined that someone would take advantage of his naïve and innocent nature by unmercifully turning him into an unwitting accessory.

DECEPTION

However, the bitter reality suddenly hit him all at once, when after a routine check at the Madrid airport, it was revealed that some unscrupulous individual had laid a trap for him, when it turned out that the “favor” he had done for this “benefactor” from Central America was not the delivery of a suitcase to a woman from the Madrid Jewish community, but the delivery of a suitcase



R' Eliyahu Hecht immediately after his release, together with Rabbi Benzaquen



The Spanish prison where R' Eliyahu was incarcerated until his release into house arrest

containing dangerous narcotics in its hidden compartments.

When he discovered how he had been deceived, Eliyahu was absolutely beside himself. Customs employees at the airport checkout, who were asked to testify before those investigating the incident, said that Eliyahu's face bore an expression of total shock, and it was clear that he had no idea that this person had concealed a virtual ticking time bomb in his valise.

IMPRISONMENT

Eli was arrested and put in prison, and for a period of several weeks, no one was able to bring kosher food, t'fillin, or holy s'farim into his jail cell. He was forced to live without any normal food, living off only fruits and vegetables – despite the tremendous difficulty. The incarceration began on Erev Chanukah, and it was only by a miracle of Divine Providence that he managed to obtain candles and light them on the first night of Chanukah with a bracha.

Despite the unpleasant situation, Eliyahu would not be broken. He began working on the Rebbe's mitzvah campaigns

“Eliyahu would not be broken by his imprisonment. He promoted the Seven Noachide Laws and strengthened the faith of the few Jews that he met.

within the prison confines, especially influencing all those on the premises with explanations on the Seven Noachide Laws. He strengthened the faith of the few Jews that he met, speaking with them about greater observance of Torah and mitzvos.

THE MIRACLE

On the 4th of Nissan, Erev Shabbos Parshas Metzora, the special action committee established to secure Eliyahu's release succeeded in submitting an appeal against his continued imprisonment until the trial, and by a tremendous miracle, the judge decided to release him under house arrest until the start of legal proceedings. This was after four previous attempts to appeal the decision against his incarceration had all been denied.

After the appeal hearing, Eliyahu's attorney told action committee member Rabbi Benzaquen that in his opinion,

there was no chance that the judge would grant the request. But the miracle took place, and Eliyahu was released into temporary house arrest until the trial begins. Thus, he has been privileged to experience his own personal Exodus from Egypt on the eve of the Pesach holiday.

THE ACTION COMMITTEE AS PER THE INSTRUCTIONS OF THE RABBANIM

Throughout this entire time, the established rescue committee had been working to bring Eliyahu to his complete release, a continuing process that still has a long way to go until the trial and deliberations. The action committee was founded according to the instructions of the rabbanim who have stood in the thick of the matter since the crisis began. Its members are Rabbi **Yitzchak Benzaquen**, the rav of the Spanish Sephardic community, Rabbi **Dovid**



Rabbi Ze'ev Yisroel Crombie

“This was a very moving sight – a bar-mitzvah celebration for an adult Jew behind bars... Now due to my release, this Jew would have to stop putting on t’fillin. I decided to leave him my pair and he promised to put them on every day.

Libersohn, the Rebbe’s shliach in Barcelona, and its chairman, Rabbi **Ze’ev Yisroel Crombie** of Collel Chabad Institutions and director of the Collel Chabad “Eshel Binyomin” public soup kitchen, for which R’ Eliyahu Hecht has worked for the past ten years.

In a conversation with committee chairman Rabbi Ze’ev Yisroel Crombie after the recent judicial decision, he sounded cautiously optimistic about what lay ahead in the legal process. “Naturally, this is a great joy for Eli, who first and foremost is my close friend. While we didn’t believe that there would be a chance, nevertheless, we tried for a fifth time to secure his release, disregarding all nature and

logic out of a sense of true and genuine concern for his welfare. We couldn’t even consider the possibility that Eliyahu would be unable to recline at the Seder table as a free man like any other Jew.

“Yet,” said Rabbi Crombie, “one must remember that a long journey still awaits us to prove Eliyahu’s innocence in this case, which is clear beyond all reasonable doubt. As someone who knows Eliyahu up close and recognizes the infinite goodness within his heart, I can say today without question that if Eliyahu would be asked again to take someone’s suitcase, he would agree to do so...”

THE UNITY WARMED HIS HEART BEHIND PRISON WALLS

On the Sunday before Yud-Alef Nissan, after spending his first Shabbos in four months as a free man, we spoke with him in a moving and exclusive interview for “Beis Moshiah” readers. It was quite obvious that he was deeply moved and he spoke with the enthusiasm of a person who has been privileged to see unnatural miracles with his own eyes.

R’ Eliyahu began by expressing his heartfelt thanks to all those who worked and contributed towards his rescue, foremost among them Collel

Chabad chairman Rabbi **Sholom HaLevi Duchman**, who toiled day and night on behalf of Eliyahu’s release, working with tremendous devotion, true Ahavas Yisroel, and genuine concern for a chassid in distress. In addition, there was the “Beis Moshiah” Magazine.

“I fulfilled the Rebbe’s shlichus with the cards on Seven Noachide Laws, and wherever I was, all the prisoners kept these cards with the Rebbe’s picture. I explained to them about the importance of fulfilling the Seven Noachide Laws, and people everywhere listened – and it seemed that they understood the message.

“I read the ‘Beis Moshiah’ Magazine every day with great joy. It was the only thing that connected me with life in the outside world. I was especially encouraged to read about the unity campaign organized in commemoration of Chaf-Zayin Adar Rishon, and even behind the prison walls, I could feel the intensity of the unity among Chabad chassidim by the nachas it gave to the Rebbe. For me, the ‘Beis Moshiah’ magazine was literally like water for a tired and thirsty soul.”

However, the most important thing for Rabbi Hecht was to give over a clear message: “Don’t fall prey and be tempted in such a situation, and don’t take packages for someone whom you don’t know. It makes no difference how unpleasant it may be to refuse, for it’s better to refuse than to go through what I did,” says R’ Eliyahu, adding he too thought that “It won’t happen to me.” However, when that “donor” approached him, he felt that he simply couldn’t say ‘No’, and he made the worst mistake of his life.



Mivtza T'fillin



R' Eliyahu Hecht engaged in his charitable activities in Tzfas

He now asks anyone who reads his words not to make the same mistake he did, and not to take any packages under any circumstances, even if they appear totally innocent and even if we're talking about fulfilling the "great mitzvah" of providing assistance to another Jew.

A BAR MITZVAH IN A REMOTE PRISON IN SPAIN

R' Eliyahu is a dynamic chassid with every fiber of his body, and he constantly strives to fulfill the Rebbe's mitzvaim at every possible opportunity. Even during his imprisonment, Eliyahu did not forget his shlichus and he looked for Jews everywhere to give them strength and put on t'fillin with them.

"In the last place where I was incarcerated, I found one other Jew, after I asked the jailers to try and see if there was another Jewish prisoner there. I asked the guards if they could arrange for me to meet with him, and when we did, he was extremely moved by the very fact that he was

meeting another Jew and that someone was thinking about him. It turned out that this inmate also developed a strong connection, and in the merit of his efforts, they arranged for me to move to the same prison ward where he was.

"This prisoner was a Jew who knew virtually nothing about his Judaism, growing up his entire life among Gentiles. I began to teach him Jewish concepts, and over the period of five weeks that we were together in the same ward, I put on t'fillin on with him each day. On the first occasion that he put on t'fillin, we celebrated his bar-mitzvah, since he had no prior knowledge of what t'fillin were... This was a very moving sight — a bar-mitzvah celebration for an adult Jew behind bars.

"When we received word of my release and I was informed that I would be leaving that prison ward, I felt in my heart a sense of lost opportunity, as now due to my release, this Jew would stop putting on t'fillin. I decided

to leave him the t'fillin, and he promised that he would continue to put them on every day, just as he learned to do with me. I saw the gradual development of his connection to Yiddishkait, down in the depths of prison. During the final days of my imprisonment there, I no longer needed to put the t'fillin on him, rather he would come to me each day, take the t'fillin, and put them on himself. I simply couldn't leave him without t'fillin. There can be no doubt that his 'Krias Shma' reaches the very heights of Heaven."

THE GENTILES UNDERSTOOD THAT THERE IS A G-D

Even on the holiday of Purim, Eliyahu conducted mitzvah campaign activities behind prison walls, and he read from the Megilla that he had received from Rabbi Benzaquen for three other Jews who were in the prison with him. Rabbi Benzaquen had found this Megilla in the

apartment of a recently deceased assimilated Jew. The Megilla has been inscribed with the words “*HaMegilla Shel Aba*” (Father’s Megilla). He decided that it would be appropriate to give it to Eliyahu in order to read it for his fellow Jewish prisoners, for whom this might be the first time in their lives that they would be celebrating the Purim holiday.

Everywhere that Eliyahu came, they heard about the Chabadnik who would not be broken, and people within the prison derived strength and encouragement from his appearance. Eliyahu himself was constantly encouraged by the letters of support that he received from dozens of his friends and acquaintances, and he wants to express his thanks for their help and support.

During the time that Eliyahu was imprisoned, he became particularly acquainted with many Gentiles, instilling faith in

the One G-d within all of them. “Many prisoners ridiculed me by saying, ‘What’s the point of praying the whole day if you’re behind bars, despite the fact that you didn’t do anything?’ Many people tried to break my spirit, when they saw my faith and my prayers. I asked G-d to show them that there is Divine Providence and salvation in the world. I prayed for a miracle as a means of sanctifying G-d’s Name. Every day when I recited the Rebbe’s chapter of T’hillim, and I came to verses 25-27, I thought about the words of Dovid HaMelech, *‘And I became a disgrace to them; they see me and shake their heads. Help me, Hashem, my G-d; deliver me according to Your kindness. Let them know that this is Your hand, that You, Hashem, have done it.’* I felt that those Gentiles must see that there is Divine Providence in the world.

“I now feel that the miracle

that happened to me with the court’s decision to accept my appeal and release me on the eve of the Pesach holiday was all in order to sanctify the Name of G-d.”

*

The action committee now makes an appeal to the worldwide Chabad community with a request to fulfill the mitzvah of *pidyon shvuyim* and rescue a fellow Chabad chassid who has fallen upon very difficult times. Rabbi Crombie has asked to note that the legal struggle still remains before us, requiring considerable monetary funds to help sustain the battle.

Contributions to assist in covering the heavy legal expenses can be forwarded via direct bank deposit into Israel Postal Bank Account No. 3238598, by calling 972-4-682-1090, or at the following website: www.ebz.org.il.

[Continued from page 5]

the complaint that we still cannot get out of exile for he is still not worthy of redemption, and someone else is also not worthy, and G-d wants the Jewish people to further remain in exile, presenting all the supportive arguments for his claim, we answer this person, as follows.

Those who take this position are the boors who are holding up the redemption, causing harm to themselves, along with other Jews and along with all the Jewish people at large, In fact, because of these people, “the Divine Presence is in exile,” along with the entire natural

order of existence (*Seider Hishtalshlus*) – in exile, may G-d have mercy upon us!

Who has the audacity to come forward and say that he knows the will of G-d, and that His will is that the Jewish people as well as the Divine Presence Itself and the entire natural order should remain in exile?!

The Mishna, therefore, teaches that part of a Jew’s service of G-d (“in order that He shall make your will as His will”) entails effectively establishing the Supernal will – “Make His will as your will” – to immediately bring the true and complete redemption.

May it be G-d’s will that by

means of Jews crying out and demanding, while still in exile, that the redemption should finally arrive, this will have an impact on G-d, and immediately, while still in exile, these Jews will bring the Alef of *Aluf Shel Olam* (Master of the Universe) into *galus*, exile, and immediately bring about the *geula*, the redemption.

And our righteous Moshiach shall come immediately, as discussed above that Moshiach comes immediately on Shabbos Parshas Massei 5744 in this Beis Midrash, while everyone davens Mincha together on this Shabbos in the “Sanctuary of G-d, the establishment of Your hands,” in but an instant!

TRANSCENDING OUR NATURE

By Rabbi Heschel Greenberg

Founder and Director of the Jewish Discovery Center of Buffalo, NY



GLEANINGS

In this week's parsha the Torah discusses the Jewish Holidays in great detail. It is therefore surprising to find this discussion of the Holidays interrupted with mention of two agricultural Mitzvot that seemingly have nothing to do with the Holidays. These two Mitzvot are: the giving of Peia (leaving a corner of the field for the poor) and Leket (leaving stalks of grain that have fallen during the harvest). Why, our Sages ask, did the Torah find it necessary to mention these seemingly unrelated obligations in the context of the Holidays?

Rashi, quoting the Talmudic Sage, Rabbi Avridimus the son of Rabbi Yossi, explains that the reason these commandments were inserted into the discussion of the Holidays is to underscore the importance of these contributions: "One who gives Leket, Shikcha (the stalks of grain that one has forgotten to remove from the field) and Peia to the poor in the proper manner is considered as if he had built the Holy Temple and offered sacrifices within it."

We must still understand why the Torah singles out these agricultural contributions from all other forms of tz'daka (charitable giving). Shouldn't every effort to sacrifice some of our own resources qualify as the

equivalent of offering a sacrifice in the Temple? Second, why does Rashi compare these agricultural forms of charity to the building of the Temple as well?

TWO FORMS OF TZ'DAKA

The Rebbe (Likkutei Sichos volume 17, p. 255 ff) explains that the distinction of these agricultural charitable contributions as compared to the classic Mitzvah of Tz'daka is twofold:

First, when one gives of his money to the poor, that contribution does not necessarily involve much effort. One could inherit a fortune, find a large sum of money that no one would claim, win the lottery or even earn a lucrative salary as remuneration for a line of work that doesn't demand much effort. And while, that act of giving is highly regarded, nonetheless—because one could have used that money to purchase his life's basic needs, and it is therefore considered as if he gave his entire being—it still cannot match the degree of sacrifice involved in the foregoing agricultural forms of charity. Under normal circumstances the gleanings from one's produce is obtained through hard work and persistent toil. The Torah supports this contention in the familiar verse, "with the sweat of your brow you shall eat bread."

Second, one who wishes to

give tz'daka has the full right to decide which poor person or needy cause will be the recipient of his or her largesse. By contrast, the Torah does not allow the farmer to choose who will be the beneficiary of his or her produce. Moreover, the owner of the produce cannot even be involved in the act of giving it to the poor; he must leave these gleanings in the field and allow the poor to take it on their own without the owner's intervention. The normal sense of satisfaction that accompanies the act of giving is denied the one who fulfills the Mitzvah of leaving his or her gleanings for the poor.

These altruistic contributions are thus unique because they go against the grain of our egos. The owner of the produce, the one who fulfills the Mitzvah is totally out of the picture. It is not about him or her; even to the extent of having the satisfaction of choosing the recipient and assisting in the process of giving.

In short, these gleanings involve the greatest sacrifice and the least amount of stroking of one's ego.

Thus, our Sages compare this particular form of giving not just to the act of offering a sacrifice but also to the arduous **construction** of the Temple. It underscores the effort that is involved in these Mitzvot, which compare with the actual

construction of the Temple. In addition, when one was involved in the building of the Temple they were doing it to serve the needs of the **entire** Jewish nation, not just simply the parochial needs of the one who offered a sacrifice.

GOING BEYOND OUR SPIRITUAL SENSIBILITIES

Moreover, the Rebbe asserts, there is a third feature that is unique to these agricultural forms of charity. Not only do we have to go against our natural, egotistical tendencies and give unconditionally, the observance of these Mitzvot require of us to go against the grain of our spiritual sensibilities as well. Generally speaking, when we give tz'daka, the people who are closest to us ought to be the first to receive our support. The Talmud states that if we have a choice between giving to poor members of our own community or the poor of another community, the local needs take precedence. That rule, however, does not apply to the abovementioned agricultural gleanings of Leket, Shikcha and Peia. We must leave the gleanings in the field, free for anyone—even a foreigner—to take.

This, the Rebbe explains, exemplifies the innovative thrust of Chassidic thought. Not only are we to endeavor to change our natural characteristics, we must also change the nature of our positive characteristics. It does not suffice to alter those natural tendencies that are wanting, such as our inflated egos, anger, lust, etc. We must also strive to modify the good traits that we possess. We don't want our positive traits to stagnate. For example, if our natural trait of kindness dictates that we should be charitable up to a point, we must continually

strive to go beyond our comfort zone.

PRELUDE TO MOSHIACH

In the final paragraph of his lengthy scholarly discourse that was encapsulated above, the Rebbe states that by altering our nature—in the spirit of the Mitzvot of Leket, Shikcha and Peia, we will move from the **virtual** building of the Temple to the actual construction of the Third Temple with the imminent coming of Moshiach.

These concluding words of the Rebbe's convey a powerful message to us: The Messianic Age is connected with altering our nature.

Why? What is it about our nature that keeps us in exile?

To answer this question we must dwell on the way we view the creation of the world, both the macro world and the micro world.

One would have imagined—as did the ancient Greeks—that G-d's creation is perfect, leaving no room for us to improve on nature. If anything, we can help to actualize nature's potential. But to change nature sounds blasphemous. Indeed, the Midrash records a debate between a Heathen and a rabbi about circumcision. "If G-d created a man with that part of the body intact how dare we remove it, insinuating that G-d's handiwork is imperfect," was the argument of the Heathen. He could not fathom how the same G-d of nature would command us to destroy His own handiwork. Indeed, in the period that led to Chanukah, the Syrian Greeks—in one of the first things they did in their crackdown against Judaism—banned circumcision. They could not tolerate the

mutilation of the body and the destruction of nature.

Judaism takes strong exception to that view and considers that glorification of nature to be a form of idolatry. The Torah teaches us that, on the contrary, G-d created a world that may seem perfect—and indeed it is from the perspective of the laws of nature—but His intention was for us to refine, perfect and even transcend nature in certain defined ways. This is based on a verse in the very beginning of Genesis that states (according to Rashi's rendition): "All that G-d created to **perfect**." G-d created the world so that we perfect it!

TWO HANDED APPROACH

To be sure, this is not a license for the wanton destruction of nature, the performance of reckless acts, flirting with disaster in the guise of transcending nature. Only the Torah, which is G-d's direct communication to us, can order us to go against (read: transcend) the natural order. Without Divine sanction, going against nature is a sin.

On the one hand, Judaism is keen on the preservation of all the gifts of nature G-d gave us. Every part of nature must be used in the most efficient way. This is not only true because it is not ours to destroy, as the Torah states unequivocally. There is also a spiritual reason for the preservation of nature. Nature contains within it Divine energy, and that energy is released only when we use it for its intended purpose. To destroy even our own property denies us the opportunity to use it in a positive and constructive fashion. The Torah provides us with the guidelines as to when and how we may dispose of certain things.

On the other hand, when G-d tells us to go against nature it is because G-d wants us to rise above that aspect of the Divine creative power that is vested in nature and achieve a dimension of G-dliness that is not limited to the natural order.

In the pre-Redemption period, we are bound, to a certain degree, to the constraints of nature, symbolized by the Divine name *Elokim*, which has the numerical value of the word *ha'teva*-nature.

Every now and then we can access the other Divine name (the Tetragrammaton, referred to as *Havaye*). This name—which is a composite of the three tenses of past, present and future—connotes an aspect of the Divine that transcends the parameters of time and space. But even when it is revealed in the present period of galut/exile it is not revealed in its entirety.

Nonetheless, with every attempt at doing precisely that,

rising above our own nature—albeit within the constraints of exile—we hasten the coming of Moshiach. Thus, by giving tz'daka—particularly the forms of tz'daka like these gleanings, which maximize our effort even as they keep our egos in check—we begin the Redemptive process of breaking out of the parameters of nature as it has been defined in the period of exile.

[Continued from page 37]

“genuine simcha.” “I surfed the Internet and found their website and went to their Purim seminar. It was my happiest Purim and I am 51. There are people there who can draw you into genuine simcha. When Ami smiles you can see it's real, not like many people for whom a smile is a way of crinkling their face. I felt that these seminars are a return to the simplicity and truth of childhood where simcha is simcha, and a smile is a smile.”

What kind of people did you meet at the seminar?

“All of Am Yisroel, people from all over who have made careers in all sorts of fields. You meet people who are open and speak with sincerity.”

“I felt that the seminar is a very important thing,” said actor Gili Shoshan who appeared at the seminar. “Congratulations to the people who run it. As for feedback, people said they felt uplifted, as did I, even though I wasn't there for the entire seminar from beginning to end and I didn't create a lasting bond with people.”

Rabbi Yitzchok Arad says, “I

was very favorably impressed. I was especially impressed by the style in which things are done, by the warmth. I really enjoyed the atmosphere. I am sure they will be successful when they have such a positive impact on people.”

It's a special generation, one in which people are ready to accept that it's good for them to relinquish control. It used to be that people wanted to be independent and they were afraid of what could be interpreted as brainwashing. Today, when the world is so given to powerful trends which sweep everyone along, there are hardly any people, without Torah and mitzvos, who are not caught up in some aspect of mass culture, whether consciously or otherwise.

Perhaps, that is why there exists the understanding, which in turn leads to the unprecedented readiness for people to invest themselves totally, that it's vital to make certain that they are hooked up to the “right” trend; knowing how important it is to be part of something larger, even to knowingly go through a “brainwashing” process.

Sadly, there are many people who make the mistake of seeing what is “right” in all the wrong places, and invest themselves totally, at least for now. Today, if someone wants a change, he knows he has to get up and do something, and yet people put themselves at the mercy of all sorts of peculiar programs.

In this period before the hisgalus of the Rebbe MH”M, when galus influences are at a peak, these seminars are a boon.

FROM MEKURAV TO ENTHUSIASTIC CHASSID

The Hitkashrut seminars are a Chassidic experience. Sometimes, it's just what a person needs to get them to take the next step. For every shliach it's a treasure which can accomplish what many hours at the Chabad house cannot accomplish.

In addition to seminars, Hitkashrut offers couples who are not on the same page, leaving one of them behind, frustrated and wanting out, professional workshops with Lubavitcher psychologists. They teach the couple how to live together even with different viewpoints, with shalom bayis the supreme goal.

HITKASHRUT SEMINARS - CONNECTING JEWS WITH G-D

R' Ami Baram, a baal t'shuva, founded the Hitkashrut seminar. * Unlike other places that are not associated with Chabad, that people attend in order to get proofs and explanations about the existence of G-d, Hitkashrut works with the assumption that we all know G-d exists. * Our rule of thumb is that the less we mix in, in terms of "telling people what to do," the better the results for us and our guests.

By A. Chavosha

There are more than ten Chassidic seminars operating in Eretz Yisroel and they are in ever growing demand. Apparently, the spiritual emptiness has grown in this generation that will welcome Moshiach and materialism is being seen for what it is, merely a facade. People have become disgusted with what the world has to offer and they are running away from it. Libertarianism and Hedonism are spiritually bankrupt.

There are so many questions and people will turn to anyone who claims to have answers. They try to maintain their skepticism, asking questions before they accept what is presented to them, and can even be belligerent about it.

Shulamit, a woman who

quickly got involved in Torah and mitzvos, went to a *Hitkashrut* seminar after spending a long time looking for a suitable program. She refused to talk about herself and avoided any attempt to talk to her about anything that did not pertain to general topics. After a while she said that her husband, a renowned doctor, was not at all ready for her Jewish involvement and would wage battle over any little move she made in the direction of religious observance. At the end of a year, after much pleading on her part, he agreed to join her for a weekend at a seminar in a hotel though he was only willing to make an appearance at mealtimes.

At the end of one of the meals, as he got up to leave, the doctor met Ami Baram, founder

of Hitkashrut near the coffee bar, who got into a conversation with him that went on and on and on ... R' Bolton, who farbrenged that Friday night, was sitting all that time and waiting for the coffee that Ami promised to bring him. When Ami returned to the table he was accompanied by his friend the doctor and had a cup of coffee that was room temperature.

The doctor, who had been so antagonistic before Shabbos and except for the times that his wife left him alone was perpetually annoyed, was swept up into the farbrengen. Farbrengens have a way of accomplishing wonders and one day that week he called Ami Baram to consult with him about resolving the differences with his wife



That is just one story; there are many more. Like the one about two young people with colorful pasts who regularly attended Hitkashrut seminars. Mrs. Avital Baram, Ami's wife, thought they made a good couple. They attended a Shabbos seminar for the purpose of looking into the shidduch. They liked one another and Rabbi Rottenstein, who had attended that Shabbaton, advised them. Two weeks later the two of them decided to get engaged and two months after that they got married to the strains of the "Dalet Bavos" and the reading of the Rebbe's letter.

The Hitkashrut seminars are a success story, starting from Simchas Torah 5766/2005 when the first one took place in Mitzpeh Rimon. It had twenty participants. Recently, they got over a hundred people and on

Purim, over 150 mekuravim, a very eclectic bunch.

Aside from the growing spiritual need, along with people's readiness to listen and learn, what has caused your seminars to grow?

"Improvements in our image and presentation. We constantly see the need for improvement in the quality of the lodgings, which has led us to upgrade the hotels where the seminars take place, thus enabling entire families to take part in a special Jewish experience. Likewise, we work on providing the highest level presentations that are given by top mashpiim who are known for their ability to hold an audience," explained Ami Baram who together with R' Tzvi Slonim came up with the idea of Hitkashrut.



Ami Baram (right) with a participant of the Hitkashrut seminar

“We try not only to keep up a constant flow of Chassidic messages, not only to give over what we have to offer, but to give people the space to work things through on their own.”

“Every month there is a Hitkashrut seminar, each time at different locations, for three or four days over a weekend.”

How do your seminars differ from others?

“There are two main differences aside from the fact that every organization develops its own ‘personality.’ The first difference is in content. Unlike other places that are not associated with Chabad, that people attend in order to get proofs and explanations about the existence of G-d, we work with the assumption that we all know G-d exists.”

Is that a prerequisite for attendance?

(Laughing): No. Definitely not. Not everybody who attends our seminars believes in the existence of G-d, but we operate with the knowledge that this lack of agreement or doubt is external and imaginary, and we believe it’s best not to get involved in this. We follow the Rebbe’s approach, which is to increase the light. It gives us another advantage – that people don’t feel that there is any religious coercion. We don’t demand anything of anybody and we have no expectations. We are not trying to make baalei t’shuva per se. We are giving people that which is good and true and they can do with it as they see fit. This is also the approach today with chinuch.

The guest is present. He observes Chassidic behavior and is exposed to authentic ideas. It’s like a plant in the earth – we

provide the proper conditions for growth without getting involved in the actual growing process. The plant, which is the G-dly soul, will flourish on its own.

In the same way, we believe in not digging into sensitive areas, in refraining from debates unless there is absolute obstinacy or a specific reason for it. Involvement with the “makif” also leads to results. Our rule of thumb is that the less we mix in, in terms of “telling people what to do,” the better the results for us and the guests.”

The approach of religious seminars out of Chabad is completely different. They have a clear goal although it is packaged as the desire to provide objective answers. They want to be mekarev people to Torah and mitzvos using proofs (thank G-d the approach of frightening people barely exists anymore). Underneath it all, it’s all about closing the deal and making the sale. In an attempt to study the field of religious seminars, we got hold of a list of instructions for a lecturer at one of these seminars, which included phrases he had to use in order to “make the sale.” It was a chart with notes in the margins that had a list of “things you can’t say,” a list of “if you don’t know what to answer say this,” and lots of tips about how not to get flustered, not to get dragged into a debate, not to insult anyone “even if the question is superficial and silly.” The ideas on the form are ideas used as tools for anyone in sales.

By the very process of objectifying your audience, you have built in a schism between “us” and “them.” So, even though the intention to sell Torah and mitzvos is received to a certain degree with acceptance – it is still alienating and for good reason.

The Rebbe educated every Chassid to be a mashpia, to reach out to people with the desire to help another Jew wherever he is at and in the manner that he requires, and not with the desire to “sell” anything. If there is genuine love and you don’t look at other Jews as separate entities, then this love will inevitably be expressed in a connection to Torah. The truth of Chabad doesn’t require its mashpiim to take advanced sales workshops.

Guy, a regular participant at Chabad seminars, also attended other seminars and in his opinion, “They also have what to offer. They are totally sincere and earnest despite the very different approaches. They put a lot into it and the results are real.”

Where do you see the big differences in approach?

Guy: In those places not connected with Chabad, the approach can be described as digging a huge pit and the entire time they are constantly trying to get you in. There are those that need this sort of thing, and for them it is perfectly suitable. At Chabad seminars they are constantly hugging you. It’s a big difference.

Ami Baram: That’s the other advantage of our seminars. We are targeting a very specific audience who we think are not getting a proper response as of yet. When a baal t’shuva suddenly decides to become a Lubavitcher, that’s okay, but when these decisions are made within a family setting, it gets

complicated. Even when both the husband and wife take an interest, it is rare that both of them are up to precisely the same stage because t'shuva is a personal process in which there is a certain need to "stand back" for a while, and this is not always possible.

So we try not only to keep up a constant flow of Chassidic messages, not only to give over what we have to offer, but to give people the space to work things through on their own, though we provide assistance on the most personal level between couples and families that take part in the seminars.

We look at the seminars not as a monthly or bi-monthly event, but as a process that is far more inclusive and ongoing.

FROM BOTH SIDES OF THE BARRICADE

When R' Ami talks about couples who are not progressing at the same rate, he knows what he's talking about because he himself experienced this with his wife Avital. While he was taking giant steps, his wife held back, checking things out again and again, and the chasm widened.

In an interview that she once gave, Avital said she did not oppose Judaism but mitzva observance seemed "far out" to her.

"I always felt Jewish. I fasted on Yom Kippur from the age of 13, I believed in G-d, but to keep mitzvos? That's an entirely different world. Today there are many people who feel Jewish to some extent or another and even go to shul occasionally, but don't find it necessary to 'be extreme.' The world of mitzva observance seems black to people who are not observant and I had no



Dancing after a lecture

“Dorit says that the first time her husband experienced a Shabbos at the seminar, he suddenly realized that Shabbos is enjoyable.”

intentions of going there.”

Ami was on the other side of the divide, and he wasn't having an easy time of it either. He had seen the light and wanted to pursue it. He wanted to progress in his religious observance but was unable to. Each time, he had to look back, at his home.

"I was angry at him and was unwilling to see that it's okay to make a move," says Avital. "Ami went very fast. From the moment he kept Shabbos until the moment that he took on the appearance he has today (beard, big black yarmulke) not much time elapsed." Ami and Avital continued in this way for quite a few years.

The road to Gan Eden was paved with difficulties and challenges and even with good intentions. As they tried to resolve their conflicts they consulted with many people and rabbanim. "One of the problems," said

Avital, "is that rabbis don't always understand the world you are coming from and consequently, they don't know how to give good advice.

"They referred us to a rav who was very annoyed with me. I left him in tears. He gave me an ultimatum, 'Either get divorced or get with the program.' Black and white, with no understanding of the complexities of the situation. I think that was the turning point because meeting with someone so out of touch made us search for the person who *would* understand us and be able to help us."

The seminars that Ami and Avital run today are precisely the answer for couples such as they were, when one is far ahead of the other and the one lagging behind is still checking things out.

Dorit (a pseudonym) became a baalas t'shuva 14 years ago. "I



Becher [ed. featured in issue 779] who performed at a Shavuot seminar with his *A Groise Metzia* band. “We also try to present Judaism in a way that people who are still not committed can relate to, as something accessible, approachable, that you would want to identify with. We do this with audiences for whom this might be their only connection with Judaism, beyond considerations of influencing them. One of the main goals of Hitkashrut is to help couples who are not yet on the same page and the seminars are geared towards that. We can relate to this. ‘Groise’ is comprised of not yet religiously observant and religious people who work together.”

“When Ami smiles you can see it’s real, not like many people for whom a smile is a way of crinkling their face.”

began getting into learning, and when I gave birth to my son I became aware of Family Purity and kept going from there. My husband is still finding his way.”

Dorit explained why she went to Ami and Avital’s seminars. “It’s a place that enables my husband and me to be together with others on a holiday. It’s not pleasant for us to be on our own because we don’t have a holiday atmosphere. I can’t invite relatives because we don’t want them to desecrate Yom Tov for us, and we can’t go to them.”

Dorit made her way to religious observance alone. Dor, her husband, was not at all interested and at first, he was opposed.

“If he met you thirteen years ago, he wouldn’t talk to you at all, but now it’s another story.

The Hitkashrut seminars have given my husband the ability to get involved in a nice way on his terms. He can hear things that he wouldn’t be exposed to elsewhere, or he can opt not to listen if he doesn’t feel like it. As for me, they enable me to observe the holidays in a beautiful way and I can even go to shul which I can’t do at home.”

Dorit says that the first time her husband experienced a Shabbos at the seminar, he suddenly realized that Shabbos is enjoyable and was not only about the burdensome rules of forbidden-permissible.

AN ENRICHING EXPERIENCE

“There is a common denominator between Hitkashrut and us,” said the musician Nadav

Some of the rabbanim who have come to farbreng and give talks for Hitkashrut are: Rabbi Yossi Ginsburgh, Rabbi Yitzchok Arad, Rabbi Liraz Benishti, Rabbi Tzvi Tzirkis, Rabbi Zalman Notik, Rabbi Amram Muell, Rabbi Omer HaLevi, Rabbi Tuvia Bolton and musicians like Michael Veigel, the *Madreigot* band, and many others.

Do you have a specialized approach or do you teach textual material of the Rebbe based on the premise that the world is ready to hear the truth?

Ami: There isn’t a definitive answer to that. We believe in what we’re doing and that is the basis of our work. We also try to create presentations that are familiar to baalei t’shuva and use them to convey the truth. We say the truth but it’s important that it be heard and even more important, that it be understood and absorbed. Each seminar contains at least one element that is familiar to people, whether it’s the type of language that is used, the style, the lecturers, the concepts, and

lots of artistic touches because art is a terrific bridge. There are also New Age ideas and approaches. When people hear things that are familiar to them, they relax. They can feel comfortable and be themselves.

“Many of the performers we host are baalei t’shuva themselves and they can convey messages in a positive way without it negatively affecting the quality of the performances. You can see this in the structure of a seminar. Each seminar has three or four rabbis with one main rabbi per Shabbos and the learning is more experiential than learning at a table, though we have that too. We have various workshops including dance, movement and music.”

The actor Tomer Roithous (Raz) described his feelings after being involved with a Hitkashrut seminar:

“All kinds of people come, from all walks of life, and they join together here in a very intimate, absorbing, enriching atmosphere. Someone who regularly attends the seminars told me that each time he comes, he feels like he is being hosted in Ami and Avital’s kitchen in their home. This is really special.”

HELP FOR COUPLES

Ami (38) grew up in a religiously unobservant family in the center of the country. He did the usual – high school, army, traveling routine. His travels included South America and the Far East and concluded with America. The trip lasted three years until his visa to America expired and he returned home.

“They threw me out of the US and I arrived in Eretz Yisroel with only one day’s warning. I didn’t want to be here and I traveled to



Heart to heart talks during a seminar

the Sinai. My brother, who was a land surveyor, registered me for a land assessor course.”

Ami is also a musicologist. Returning to Eretz Yisroel did not stop him from continuing his search and one day, he discovered the classes of Yemima Avital a”h. He went to the classes with a friend. Both became baalei t’shuva, Ami to Chabad and his friend to Breslov.

He started out with the Chabad house in Givatayim. He worked in real estate and after starting a soup kitchen at the Chabad house in Givatayim while learning at the yeshiva in Ramat Aviv for half a day, he eventually became the director of activities at the Chabad house for seven years. Upon the instruction of his mashpia, Rabbi Reuven Dunin a”h, he left his career entirely for shlichus.

Ami: “It’s easy for baalei t’shuva to get pulled back into the secular world through any number of avenues. If you come from there, you have the ability to return and it doesn’t frighten you; on the contrary, you have faith and confidence that you can make an impact there, by

using your unique strengths. It’s not about following scripts and ideas that, although correct, are just not you. For me, this was a critical point in establishing a deep foundation as far as my personal sense of where I belong.”

As a baal t’shuva it was easy for him to pinpoint that which was lacking. He saw that he and his wife did not have a place, as a couple, which took into account the intricacies of their lives as baalei t’shuva. “I wanted to create a place that would enable every individual to feel that his or her specific needs were being addressed.

“Today, at Hitkashrut, it exists, for couples as well as for someone who is not ready to attend yeshiva; for someone who is interested in a general kind of way without having put his finger on anything yet; for people from the ‘knitted kippot’ community – in short, for anyone in a unique situation who needs a home.”

Uri is from a religious background and he is observant. He attended a Purim seminar because he was looking for

[Continued on page 31]

MOSHIACH NOW: MAKING IT REAL

Part 4 – Mivtza “Neshek”

Rabbi Gershon Avtzon, Dean of the Lubavitcher Yeshiva in Cincinnati

Dear Reader sh'yichyeh:

Mivtza Neshe”k, which stands for the words **Neiros Shabbos Kodesh**, was instituted to encourage woman and girls to light Shabbos and Yom Tov candles. In the summer of 1974, on 24 Elul, the Rebbe introduced this special Mivtza for all Jewish woman and girls. The Rebbe also revitalized the custom that when a Jewish girl reaches the age of education and understanding (3 years), she should light her own candle.

Many people were shocked by this Mivtza, because for most people it was not the custom that young Jewish girls should light candles before their wedding. The Rebbe responded with two different answers:

1) There has never been so much darkness in the world as there is in our present times. The world is in need of as much “Mitzva-light” as possible to combat this increasing darkness. The Rebbe stressed that the word “Neshek” – the acronym for **Neiros Shabbos Kodesh** – is also the Hebrew word for ammunition. The

light of the candles that are lit by Jewish women and girls is our ammunition with which we battle against the dark forces of impurity.

The following story illustrates this point clearly. A person wrote to the Rebbe that it was against his family tradition for his young daughters to light candles. The Rebbe responded (Likkutei Sichos Vol. 21 pg. 382) forcefully, “Was it your family custom to read newspapers, wear make-up and learn secular studies?”

2) This mivtza prepares us for the light of the Geula. The Rebbe also showed how our Matriarchs lit candles from the age of three. Rashi teaches (on B'Reishis 24:67) that when Rivka Imeinu was brought to Yitzchak, at the age of three, she lit Shabbos candles.

This custom is also taught in the Seifer Aruch HaShulcan, whose author was not a Chassid, that it was the custom in his time that every Jewish girl lit candles in her mother's home.

There are a number of special segulos that come to us as a result

of lighting Shabbos candles.

1) The Zohar (B'Reishis 48b) writes: “A woman who lights Shabbos candles brings peace into her home and will merit to have sons who will light up the world with Torah, thereby adding peace to the entire world.”

2) The Talmud (Shabbos 23b) writes: “Whoever lights candles will merit having sons and sons-in-laws (Rashi) who are Torah scholars”.

On this point the Rebbe (Likkutei Sichos Vol. 17 pg. 146) commented that in today's generation, this segula is also a merit for marrying a husband who is a Talmid Chacham.

3) “Whoever brings pleasure to the Shabbos by lighting Shabbos candles, which brings honor and pleasure to Shabbos, Hashem forgives all his sins.” (Shulchan Aruch – Alter Rebbe – Section 242)

4) The Talmud tells us: “On Friday night, a person is escorted home from synagogue by two angels, one good and one evil. When he comes home and finds the candles burning, the table set, and the beds made, the good angel declares ‘May it be G-d's will that the next Shabbat be the same,’ and the evil angel reluctantly answers ‘Amen.’ If [the home is] not [prepared for Shabbat], the evil angel proclaims ‘May it be G-d's will that the next Shabbat be the same,’ and the good angel must answer ‘Amen’



“A person wrote to the Rebbe that it was against his family tradition for his young daughters to light candles. The Rebbe responded (Likkutei Sichos Vol. 21 pg. 382) forcefully, “Was it your family custom to read newspapers, wear make-up and learn secular studies?”

As with each mitvza, when bringing Mivtza Neshek to other Yidden, certain details must be included. When designing a brochure about lighting Shabbos candles, the brochure should include a picture of a small candle. Also, it must be made clear that the candles are to be lit before Shkia. In addition, it is important to keep in mind that the first time a girl under Bas Mitzva lights candles, she should make a SheHechyanu. The best way to accomplish this is by buying the girl a new dress or making sure that this first lighting happens on Yom Tov. (Sicha 25 Iyar 5750 and footnote 38). A great resource for information such as these details mentioned here and for materials in connection to Mivtza Neshek is the website www.fridaylight.com.

“While I was learning in Kollel in Crown Heights, my wife once left her purse in a taxi. We were certain that the purse and the money inside were lost for good. We were surprised to get a call from a store-owner in NYC who had found the purse and was happy to return it.

My wife went to his store, and when she realized that he was Jewish, she seized the opportunity and asked him if his wife lit Shabbos candles every week. He said that unfortunately his wife has passed away, but that he had a daughter learning in university. My wife left him a candle with our name and address with it before she returned home. She

A year later, we received a letter from this girl, explaining to us in great detail, that in the merit of starting to light Shabbos candles, she had changed her entire life and was currently keeping Torah and Mitzvos. When I gave this letter to the Rebbe, he told me that it is “*Mitzva Lefarsem*”, indicating that I should publicize the contents of the letter (without the name of course), as it would encourage others to become involved with Mitzva Neshek.

Chazal say (Yalkut Shimoni Parshas B'Haalos'cha): **"If you watch – keep the Mitzva of – the Shabbos candles, I will show you the lights of 'Tziyon' (the rebuilt Yerushalayim in the times of Moshiach)."**

Every mitzvah adds light to the world. This light will be revealed in the times of Moshiach. This is especially true for the Mitzvah of lighting Shabbos and Yom Tov candles, through which we can see the light and brightness even in the time of exile. Let us continue sharing the light!

*Rabbi Avtzon's audio classes
on Moshiach and Geula can be
accessed at www.ylcrecording.com*

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MIND RULING THE HEART ON SHLICHUS

Shlichus offers many challenges in which the shliach/shlucha has to suppress his/her emotions, or encourage a mekurav to do the same, by calling upon the power of “mind over heart.” The following stories are a small sampling of such instances, and the results.

By Rabbi Yaakov Shmuelevitz

Shliach, Beit Shaan

A high school girl called me and asked for an appointment to discuss something that was on her mind. In her class they played a game called “the dwarf and the giant.” The rules of the game are that each girl is given the name of another girl in the class and she has to bring surprises to the designated girl. It works out so that each girl gets a small gift every day in her schoolbag.

The problem was that this girl calling me received no surprises in her bag. She asked the organizer of the game about it, who knew who was paired up with whom, and the organizer found out that since the girl hates her, she wasn’t interested in giving her any nice surprises. The girl was emotionally crushed. “I’m such a good friend of hers! I always walk her home and I make her laugh and we’re good friends, so why does she hate me and not give me surprise gifts? I know that I shouldn’t be making a big deal out of this but I’m so hurt!”

I gave her some advice about how to deal with the problem.

I explained what the concept “mind ruling the heart” means but at the same time I asked myself, how have I reacted in certain situations when my “dwarfs” didn’t bring me the surprises I was waiting for even though I tried to be their good friend? How do I react to the people who daven at my Chabad house, to whom I devote my life and strength, when they barely show up on time to davening and shiurim (these are meant as theoretical examples). Do I love every Jew including the couple with whom I spent dozens of evening hours helping them with shalom bayis, who subsequently filed with the municipality their opposition to the building plans of the Chabad house? Does my mind rule my heart?

The Alter Rebbe says that we have a natural ability for our mind to rule our heart and we need to use this ability for avoda. Although this is true for everyone, not necessarily shluchim, I think that life on shlichus provides us with numerous opportunities to use this natural ability in our work.

THE SHOOTING DIDN’T STOP THE TANYA CLASS

When Rabbi Avrohom Sossonkin, veteran shliach in Taanach was told by phone about his son being critically wounded by a terrorist shooting at the van of bachurim accompanying the Rebbe to the hospital, he decided not to cancel the Tanya shiur he was about to give in half an hour at a nearby kibbutz.

As soon as the parents were informed of their son’s condition, some shluchim in the north convened at his house and began arranging plane tickets as they urged Rabbi Sossonkin to prepare to leave. R’ Sossonkin looked at the clock and said, “I have a Tanya class at 8:00 at Kibbutz Beit HaShita and there is no reason to cancel it.” His friends asked, how can you give a shiur under these circumstances? He said, “How will it help if I remain here at home and sigh over the situation? Sighing won’t help, but if I go and give a shiur, that can help.”

The people attending the shiur





man's head and heart. His heart told him to marry her but as an only child he didn't want to end his family's line.

He finally left her and found a Jewish woman and established a fine Jewish home in Russia.

THE MIND RULING OVER "OTHER FIELDS"

Somewhere up north there is a young shlucha who while being an active shlucha on her yishuv, was still forming her Chassidic outlook. One day, she visited Tzfas and got two interesting Breslover booklets. She read them and told her friend, a shlucha, about how inspiring they were. Her friend the shlucha just gently commented, "The books are not the derech of Chabad," while she didn't really understand what could be the problem with these nice books when she felt so uplifted with every line she read.

Amazingly, when she went home, she found a gift from another shlucha, the book *Kovetz Hiskashrus* which is a collection of answers and letters from the Rebbe. She opened it at random (to page 66) and read a sharp message from the Rebbe about other views in Judaism:

"Surprisingly, despite considering himself a mekushar and a Chassid ... why are you searching in other fields? ... When the path of your Rebbe is a certain way, you surely do not have what to seek in other fields. You first need to preserve "my vineyard." For a Jew there is no *shituf* (deistic plurality). As Chazal put it, we have only one G-d, one High Priest."

She read this again and again and understood what the Rebbe meant. With the Rebbe's derech we have everything we need. She took the two books together

could not imagine in their wildest dreams that the one giving the shiur was about to fly to see his critically injured son whose doctors were very pessimistic about his prognosis. And here, the father was sitting calmly and explaining line after line of Tanya. "Mind ruling the heart" indeed. And a medical miracle did occur and his son recovered (albeit not 100% fully) and went on to marry.

STRONG RESOLVE

Rabbi Yitzchok Cohen, shliach in Karnei Shomron, has done some of his work under fire. There in the Shomron there are occasional terrorist attacks and warnings about terrorists on the roads shooting in all directions, but this doesn't stop R' Cohen from carrying out his shlichus. His students and mekuravim have caught the shlichus spirit too.

One day, R' Cohen was looking for a tenth man for the Shacharis minyan. The Chabad house is located in the center of a few yishuvim but due to the

tense security situation there weren't many passersby and it seemed doubtful that someone would come along to complete the minyan before it would be too late. It suddenly occurred to him that opposite the Chabad house is a health club where he might find a Jew. He went across and found a Russian Jew lifting weights.

"Could you come and complete our minyan?" asked the rav. "If you come, instead of lifting weights we will give you the honor of lifting the Torah." The man was convinced and easily raised the Torah in all directions. When he heard that he could do *hagba* at every t'filla in which the Torah is read, he started attending all the t'fillos and began attending shiurim, meals and farbrengens. He became a solid member of the k'hilla.

One day, the man told R' Cohen that he had a gentile girlfriend whom he planned on marrying. R' Cohen explained that if he married her, his children would not be Jewish. This started an internal war between the

“Could you come and complete our minyan?” asked the rav. “If you come, instead of lifting weights we will give you the honor of lifting the Torah.” The man was convinced... He became a solid member of the k’hilla.

with some other books that were not in the spirit of Chabad, and put them aside. We have but one Rebbe.

CALUMNY VERSUS AHAVAS YISROEL

Another example of “mind ruling the heart” is told by Rabbi Sagi Har Shefer, shliach in Nes Tziyona. About two and a half years ago, a family became interested in Chabad and spent countless hours with R’ Sagi who devoted himself to guiding them in the path of Torah and Chassidus. Their daughter attended Chabad schools and eventually married a Lubavitcher from the north.

Sadly, and not the fault of the young wife, the couple divorced. Her unhappy father turned on R’ Sagi, saying, “It’s your fault,” and he turned all his resentment into a campaign. He wrote anonymous signs all over the city which said, “Beware of Chabad,” “Chabad Brainwashes Your Children.” After hundreds of hours of meals together in the Har Shefer’s home and sukka, what thanks did they get? An article in the local paper that said Chabad entices young people in order to get money out of them.

This led to a war between the mind and heart – how should R’ Har Shefer react to this person? His heart told him to fight back and respond appropriately to the ingrate and let the public decide, but his mind said he needed to

love every Jew. His mind had to control his heart and come up with an idea of how to renew ties with the hurt father.

He initiated a conversation with the father by asking to consult with him in the man’s area of expertise. This made the man forget his anger and renew the friendship. Additional conversations followed, including heart-to-heart talks that lasted for hours in which the father poured out his heart to him. Till this day, R’ Sagi continues to support the family as though there were never any anonymous hate placards and nasty article. After all, the mind has to rule the heart.

WHY WORRY?

Rabbi Shimshon Tal, shliach in Hod HaSharon learned a lesson from one of his mekuravim. It was Erev Purim several years ago and finances were a problem after he had spent a lot of money on mishloach manos and now had to buy a lot of food for the Purim seuda.

He was walking down the street wondering what to do about this when he met a regular visitor to his Chabad house.

“Why are you so worried?” he asked R’ Tal.

“Because I need to buy food for the seuda and there’s no money.”

“How much do you need?”

“1500 shekel.”

The man put his hand in his pocket and took out 1500 shekels

and gave it to him. R’ Tal took himself to task for worrying when he had seen dozens of times how salvation always came at the right moment. He just needed some control over his heart.

MIND RULING ... THE SHUL

A few years ago I got a call from a young shliach who told me about a serious problem he was having in the shul where he was unofficially the rav. He had been working in the shul for a number of years, giving shiurim, leading the davening, giving bar mitzva lessons, and they all loved him and respected him.

A new gabbai had been appointed, a nervous person who undermined the rabbi. He yelled at the rabbi’s children telling them not to daven loudly, he made rude comments in the middle of the Tanya shiur the rav gave in the shul, and he disparaged Chabad at every opportunity. He brought such an ugly atmosphere into the shul that the rav was debating whether to continue working there.

I spoke to him for a long time and concluded the situation was not lost. Fortunately, throughout this difficult time, the shliach hadn’t responded in kind to the unpleasant gabbai. It turned out that the gabbai had personal problems that made him irritable and he hadn’t gotten a Chassidic chinuch so he didn’t know how to behave in a shul. Rather than be annoyed with him, the man needed compassion. When we got to this point in our analysis, the shliach concluded that although he didn’t feel like staying on at the shul, his mind told him that things could be changed. I gave him some ideas of how to go about changing the atmosphere. Thank G-d, it all worked out well!