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RUNNING TO FULFILL G-D'S WILL

Tz'lafchad's daughters were extremely accomplished in the service of G-d. It is, therefore, certain that their conduct was in accordance with Torah. * What insight then did the daughters of Tz'lafchad have that compelled them to give precedence to their desire to have an inheritance in the land (expressed by their approaching the court, presenting their claims, and speculating on the appropriate judgment, etc.) over the concept of "All the honor of a princess is within"?!

Translated by Boruch Merkur

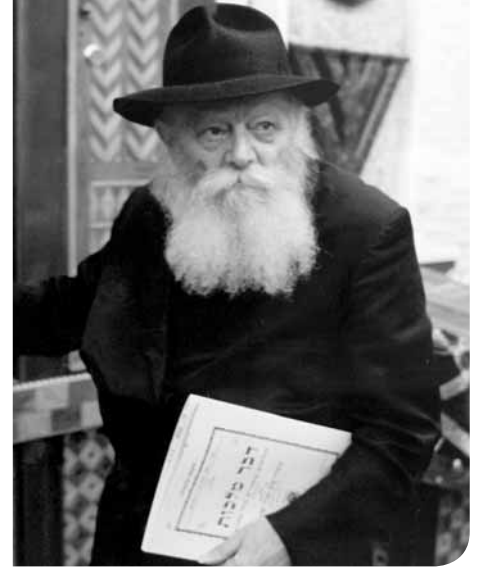
FOR THE LOVE OF THE LAND

It is said of Tz'lafchad's daughters that they cherished the Holy Land even more than the men. The men knew with certainty that they would be receiving a portion of the land – as related in the beginning of this section, "To these shall you apportion the land as an inheritance, etc." – yet, there was a serious doubt as to whether Tz'lafchad's daughters would be receiving a portion of the land. But their love of the land far surpassed that of the men notwithstanding the fact that they were inclined to believe that they would not secure an inheritance, for which reason they requested and beseeched that they should be granted a portion, bringing rationales and proofs, etc.: "If we are granted the legal status of a son (thus mitigating the need for our mother to marry one of her deceased husband's brothers,

as per the laws of Yivum) give us an inheritance as a son. If not, let our mother marry one of her husband's brothers," and the like. And they were indeed convincing, for after hearing all their arguments and reasoning, Moshe was unable to respond, compelling Moshe to have to consult G-d Himself on the matter: "And Moshe brought the case before G-d."

In fact, their love of the land was so intense that it found expression in unusual conduct on their part, going out to present their case before the *beis din*, entreating the court with profound desperation, "Give us a portion, etc." – the opposite of the normal conduct of a Jewish woman, regarding whom it is said, "All the honor of a princess is [when they are] within [indoors, not appearing publically]."

Now, Tz'lafchad's daughters were extremely accomplished



in the service of G-d. So much so that this section of the Torah was added in their merit. It is, therefore, certain that Tz'lafchad's daughters' conduct did not actually contradict the precept, "All the honor of a princess is within," and their conduct has to be considered as being in accordance with Torah.

True, the verse, "All the honor of a princess is within," was taught at a later date [so it seems that this standard is anyway not one that is applicable to them], but all concepts in Torah were given to Moshe at Mount Sinai [and therefore it is a legitimate moral standard even prior to it being formally revealed in a historical context]. This is especially true with regard to modesty, for even prior to the Giving of the Torah, when they were still in the land of Egypt, "The nakedness of the earth," having suffered through a lengthy exile, etc., the conduct of Jewish women was of the utmost modesty, as the Torah testifies: "There was only one [exception to the rule of uncompromised modesty and purity among the Jewish women in Egypt], and Scripture singles her out as such" (VaYikra Rabba 32:5). If this was so regarding all Jewish women, how much more can it be said of the [notably pious

and righteous] daughters of Tz'lafchad that their behavior was fully permeated with modesty, with "All the honor of a princess is within."

NO CALCULATIONS - EVEN HOLY CONSIDERATIONS!

There is, of course, no commandment in the Torah that required them to strive to secure for themselves an inheritance in the land. In fact, this portion of the Torah was innovated in virtue of their initiative, a new commandment in the Torah [regarding the inheritance of the land of a deceased who left no sons only daughters] which had not existed prior to them coming forth (as was the case with Pesach Sheini, and the like). Thus, the question arises: What insight did the daughters of Tz'lafchad have that compelled them to give precedence to their desire to have an inheritance in the land (expressed by their approaching the court, presenting their claims, and speculating on the appropriate judgment, etc.) over the concept of "All the honor of a princess is within"?!

The answer to this is that their love of the land was so great that they strove with all their capabilities to receive a portion of the land, without making any calculations, etc. This approach entailed the Divine service of self-sacrifice, serving G-d beyond all calculation, including holy considerations.

The daughters of Tz'lafchad paved a spiritual path for the entire Jewish people, who are collectively likened to a woman, insofar as the relationship of the Jewish people to G-d Alm-ghty resembles that of a wife to her husband, the metaphor that is

“The daughters of Tz'lafchad loved the “land,” teaching us that fulfilling the “will” of one’s Maker must be something precious and beloved, something that is also expressed with zeal and alacrity – “ratza,” meaning “running.”

the basis of the Song of Songs. In a higher sense, the Jewish people are called “daughter” (the daughters of Tz'lafchad), which suggests an even more profound love, as our Sages say, “There is a parable of a king who had an only daughter. The king loved her to the utmost extent and called her ‘my daughter,’” as explained at length in the teachings of Chassidus.

THE LAND OF ISRAEL: RUNNING TO DO G-D’S WILL

Tz'lafchad’s daughters’ love for Eretz Yisroel, the Land of Israel, is translated in spiritual terms, as follows. The Holy Land is called Eretz Yisroel in accordance with the following teaching: “Why is its name called ‘*eretz*’? Because it ‘wanted,’ ‘*ratzta*,’ to fulfill the will of its Master.” Here “*eretz*” is associated with the word “*rotzeh*,” “will” or “want/desire.” “*Eretz*” is also associated with the word “*ritza*,” “running,” meaning that the desire to fulfill G-d’s will should lead to eagerness and alacrity, to the extent of literally running [to fulfill G-d’s will].

Now, the origin of the name “Yisroel” is from the verse in the Torah, “for you have struggled (*sarisa*) with angels (*elokim*) and men,” meaning that a Jew’s service in fulfilling his Master’s will (*eretz*) is maintained even in the face of difficulties, struggles,

etc. In his service of G-d, a Jew must embody the notion of “you have struggled with *elokim* and men [overcoming spiritual as well as material obstacles]” to the extent that it transcends all calculations, etc., total self-sacrifice.

From here, a lesson is derived in man’s service of G-d:

Since “I was created to serve my Maker,” since one’s entire purpose and existence is expressed by his service of G-d, what is the nuance in the phrase “serving G-d”? There is no innovation here!

The lesson is, however, that “serving my Maker” must be done with all one’s vitality and strength, with utter devotion (thus surpassing regular exertion), following the example of the daughters of Tz'lafchad. The daughters of Tz'lafchad loved the “land,” teaching us that fulfilling the “will” of one’s Maker must be something precious and beloved, something that is also expressed with zeal and alacrity – “*ratza*,” meaning “running.” Indeed, this inspiration and enthusiasm should bring a person’s service to the point of self-sacrifice, resembling Tz'lafchad’s daughters’ love of the land, which was without any calculation, etc., in manner of self-sacrifice, as explained above at length.

(From the address of 15 Tammuz 5746, bilti muga)

AWE-INSPIRING SHLICHUS UNDER UNBEARABLE CONDITIONS

The stories of shluchim and their shlichus are often fascinating accounts of difficult beginnings and the overcoming of challenges in the face of overwhelming odds. The shlichus of R' Motti and Libby Gromach to Hampi, India stands out for the utter primitiveness of their living conditions. Read and be amazed by this couple's devotion to their mission, to the Rebbe, and to bringing the Geula.

By Nosson Avrohom

India is remote, and the village of Hampi, in the jungle of southern India, is even more remote. It is a fifteen-hour drive from Bombay. Entrance to the village is by a type of round boat that crosses a murky river. A narrow path weaves through green rice paddies, some of them flooded by water and others dry and dangerous – beware of cobras! The village homes are nothing but mud huts with thatched roofs. Their windows are holes with no glass to keep out the cool night air. Mice, rats, geckos, and poisonous spiders roam freely in the homes.

The two unique aspects of the pastoral village are its ancient temples and its bizarre landscape of vast stretches of boulder-strewn hills. These boulders are round and smooth as though someone carved them. They are laid one atop another in odd positions such as a large stone atop a small stone, leaving the observer wondering how it got there and remains that way.

A river runs between the temples and boulders, separating the two halves of the village. Rice fields and banana groves add color to the scenery. It is so

quaint yet so magnificent that many tourists inevitably remain longer than they originally had planned.

“India itself is divided into two,” says Rabbi Motti Gromach, the shliach who has been working in the village for the past three years. “There’s the north and the south. When it is cold and it snows in the north, the tourists come down south. Delhi is in the south, no more than a one-day stopover. The next destination is Goa and then Hampi. No backpacker passes up the chance to see the sights of Hampi, and



they come here in droves. Our estimate is that in this little village of about fifty local families, several thousand Israelis visit every season.”

The size of the village is no more than a kilometer and a half wide, yet it embraces many guesthouses, restaurants and Internet cafes lining its pathways. In the summer, the temperature rises to 104 degrees, and the village empties out until the winter when tourists come to relax and enjoy the stunning scenery.

This is not a place that offers

much in the way of spirituality – Jewish or not – like in other cities in India. “This is why it is so much easier to interact with the tourists who visit here,” explains R’ Gromach.

SHLICHUS OPPORTUNITIES

R’ Gromach became familiar with shlichus in India long before he married. “When I finished my year on K’vutza in 5766, Rabbi Shmuel Scharf called me. He said the shluchim in Delhi needed help at the Chabad house. Arele Kupchik was working there at

the time. He had gotten engaged to my sister and had to leave. It was unthinkable that the Chabad House would be forced to close at the height of the season for lack of an extra pair of hands, and so my friend Levi Elias and I went there. I quickly fell into the routine.

“I grew up on shlichus, but had never experienced anything like India. While back in Eretz Yisroel it is hard to get into a meaningful conversation with passersby. In India however, people are willing to listen. Back home, people are on the run,



Rabbi Motti Gromach lighting a public menorah in Hampi, India

“He told us, ‘You are going to start with shidduchim very soon. Before you meet someone who is suggested for you, it is expected that you will check things out with Dor Yesharim. You should know there is a Chassidishe “Dor Yesharim” in which you check to see whether the suggested girl wants to go on shlichus . . . If she is willing, the shidduch is something to look into...”’

while in India they are taking it easy and are relaxed and open. Here in India you will rarely hear someone say things like, ‘Why don’t orthodox Jews go to the army,’ or ‘Why aren’t you working?’

“For a long time I worked in Delhi and other parts of India, and I dreamed of returning here after I married. What got me to turn that vision into a reality was a farbrengen for shluchim in India. It took place at the Chabad house in Delhi with the shliach of Poona, Rabbi Betzalel Kupchik. There were a number of bachurim gathered there, and he told us, ‘You are going to start with shidduchim very soon. Before you meet someone who is suggested for you, it is

expected that you will check things out with Dor Yesharim. Without it, the shidduch does not move forward. You should know there is a Chassidishe “Dor Yesharim” in which you check to see whether the suggested girl wants to go on shlichus to India. If she is willing, the shidduch is something to look into ...’

“What he said really affected me, so when I returned to Eretz Yisroel after another successful season of outreach in Delhi, when shidduchim suggestions came up I said that the prospective girl had to be willing to go on shlichus to India. My future wife agreed, and four months after our wedding, we set out for Dramsala, a city without a shliach at the time, but had the

infrastructure of a Chabad house already in place. We knew this was temporary, so we continued to search for a place to set up our own Chabad house. We finally settled on Hampi.”

THE DIFFICULTIES OF EVERYDAY LIFE

With the tourist season was well under way, the Gromachs asked for the Rebbe’s bracha. The young couple decided to stay in Crown Heights to fundraise.

R’ Gromach says he had no knowledge of how to fundraise. Nevertheless, armed with the Rebbe’s bracha, he headed out filled with faith.

“I’ll tell you the truth. None of the difficulties of shlichus in a distant village – a place full of snakes and scorpions, without meat, without milk, without running water, without electricity – can compare to the difficulties of fundraising. I had never dealt with it before, and when I started out, it was very hard.

“I went to Crown Heights in the winter of 5769, after the attack on Bombay. In the wake of those events, our extended family asked me to consider canceling the trip or going on shlichus somewhere else, but we were determined to pursue our plans. In Crown Heights, we felt the Rebbe was with us as we tried to raise funds.

“When we had finished raising the money we needed, we flew to Bombay and from there to Poona where we bought all the utensils and food products we were able to. We figured that in Hampi we would hardly be able to buy anything. We did not actually know much about the place to where we were going. That night we loaded nearly a



Israelis wearing t'fillin in Hampi. R' Gromach is on the right

ton of equipment onto a truck and left for Hampi, a 16-hour drive. The roads are awful, and sometimes, the irresponsible Indian driver fell asleep at the wheel and we nearly tumbled into the abyss.

“Our driver did not know the way, and in every village we were forced to search for someone who spoke English to ask for directions on the next leg of the trip. Even though the driver was Indian, he did not know the dialect of the area we were in, for in India there are numerous dialects. After an exhausting and nerve-wracking trip, we finally reached Hampi and walked into the first guesthouse we saw. We unloaded our stuff into one room and went to rest in another room. In the evening we walked around the village.”

R' Gromach says it was hardest on his wife to whom life in India seemed so foreign.

“We wanted to take a shower

after hours of driving in the sun, but there was no hot water. When we asked for hot water, one of the workers went out to the yard to heat up a pail of water over a fire. When the water was warm the electricity went off for an hour and that was in addition to the six hours a day and six hours at night when there is never electricity. If that was not enough, there are no faucets in this backwards village. We lit some candles and waited for the lights to come back on.”

That welcome the Gromachs received thrust them immediately into harsh village life. After eating a light supper with the chapattis they had brought from Poona, Mrs. Gromach wrote a letter, asking the Rebbe for a bracha for their shlichus and that the living conditions and moving process should improve.

“The answer in the Igros amazed and encouraged us very much. The Rebbe told us, ‘I was happy to hear about the trip of

mesirus nefesh. May Hashem [enable] that from now on your spreading of the wellsprings outward should be easier and that the difficulties that you have already experienced should suffice.”

The following morning they began to scout out a place for a Chabad house. This was their first opportunity to meet with the many tourists and to announce their arrival.

“As we deliberated over the locations suggested to us, the Rebbe’s answer was *‘zeh Keili v’anveihu’*, and thus we chose the nicest place we found.

“In the meantime, everybody in the little village quickly found out about the strange couple who planned on living with them for the next half a year. On Thursday we signed a contract and Erev Shabbos we moved all our things to the new place. Then we had to start cooking for Shabbos. The Chabad house had

“THEY HAVE EYES BUT DO NOT SEE”

“Each time we return to India, we land in Bombay, board a bus that takes us to a city near Hampi. From there we take a rickshaw to the river, which we cross in a boat that takes us directly to the Chabad house. One time, we brought a Seifer Torah with us that we got in Poona. It was especially heavy. Since the bus was half-empty, we put the Torah on an empty seat. To our dismay, five hours later the bus stopped to take on additional passengers who filled the bus. We worried about the Torah, which would not be easy to hold for ten hours.

“When the last man boarded the bus, the conductor told him that there was one seat left, but the passenger walked in, looked around, and announced there were not available seats. The man in charge checked, and he informed his boss that there was no seat left. The boss boarded the bus to check for himself, but he too agreed that the bus was full. Nobody noticed that the Torah took up a seat.”

no faucets. The contract we had signed stated that the landlord was obligated to supply us with as much water as we wanted. This was delivered to us in pails that they would bring from the village’s central well. Word spread quickly among the Israelis that we had moved in, and many of them came to help us prepare for Shabbos.

“Dozens of guests sat on mats in the light of the candles. One of the women surprised us all when she said, ‘Chabad is Geula.’ We thought she was referring to the final Geula, but she spoke about the Geula from Egypt. It was a surreal scene – sitting on mats and eating boxed matzos that we had brought along since we knew we would not have time to bake challa. We drank wine as swarms of frogs came from the rice paddies, attracted to the light of the candles.

PROVIDING MATERIAL ASSISTANCE

R’ Gromach’s guiding principle is that the Chabad house is not just the address for everything Jewish but the address for *everything*.

“You are the backpacker’s father and mother. The Rebbe says that a Chabad house is also for material aid, such as Avrohom Avinu provided. The goal is to help materially, even if you do not see an immediate spiritual return on your investment. The Chabad house is located at the entrance to the village, and it has a big sign in Hebrew that says, ‘Is it heavy? Come to the Chabad house.’ Backpackers leave their stuff here until they find a place to stay. In the meantime, we offer them a cup of coffee and some cake, and they can relax.

“The Indians sell small bottles of water for a lot of money and big bottles for very little money. A tourist who comes to Hampi for a few days does not need a big bottle and so, as a service to the tourists, we buy large bottles that they can use to fill their small bottles at a low cost.

“There was a girl who opposed religion – and that’s an understatement – who refused to enter the Chabad house for any activities and would only come to fill her water bottle. We did not pressure her. In the end, her friends pressured her. They told her she was just being

obstinate, until she finally gave in and joined a discussion. We sat and talked about Judaism and Chassidus. I will never forget how surprised she was to hear how Judaism also teaches philosophy, and not only that, but it is the source of all philosophy. She said that she had been going through a deep spiritual process over the past year in Indian ashrams, and it never occurred to her that Judaism had any depth. She thought that Judaism is what they showed her on Israeli television.

“Another thing we provide is a gasoline gemach. Israelis rent motorcycles for a day, pay for a full tank, return it with half a tank, but then they do not get credit for it. We bought a pump and anyone can come and empty the rest of their gas. They can give the extra gas to a friend or use it on another day. We also have a medication gemach. The gemach has especially helped to cure many stomach aches, which are prevalent for those who eat out of utensils that were washed in the river.”

NONSTOP ACTIVITY

There are lectures for girls on the topic of relationships based on Chassidus that Mrs. Gromach delivers regularly.

“There are six lectures in the series that she has developed, and the girls and women are amazed by it. We had a woman visiting here, about sixty years old, and she could not get over it. She said she didn’t know that Judaism had so much to say on this subject.”

After this course, there is a shiur on the structure of the soul given by R’ Gromach. At eight in the evening, a communal supper lasts for hours. In the morning and afternoon one-on-one learning is available.

The hardest time is Fridays. All the cooking has to be done before the electricity goes off for six hours.

“Pesach night we bought a generator so we would have electricity at the Chabad house. I did not realize that the refrigerator uses so much electricity, and when I started with Kadeish, the generator stopped working and it was dark. We continued by candlelight, but it was hard. We were thrilled when the electricity came back on for Maggid. Supposedly, someone decided to put the electricity back on earlier than usual that night.

“That is also why an urn is really an impossibility on Shabbos, so my mother bought us a big thermos for hot water. The hot water along with the jachnun (Yemenite bread or pastry) that my wife prepares brings many tourists to the Chabad house on Shabbos morning, whom we can then draw in to learn and daven. There is usually at least one tourist with a religious or traditional background who can show the others where we are holding in the davening, while I serve as the chazan. However, sometimes the minyan is comprised entirely of young people who are opening a Siddur for the first time in their lives.

“We do the usual holiday programs. On Chanuka there are doughnuts and on Purim there are hamantashen. My wife worked for days making the doughnuts. The tourists do not usually refuse our request to light the Menorah, but one time, one did refuse. All we could do was offer him a doughnut and a smile. The next night we went to the busy restaurant where we were planning on lighting and saw that



Preparing rolls for the Shabbos meal

“She said that she had been going through a deep spiritual process over the past year in Indian ashrams, and it never occurred to her that Judaism had any depth. She thought that Judaism is what they showed her on Israeli television.”

he was the center of attention. We did not even consider asking him again to light, because we were afraid that if he refused in public, nobody would light. How surprised and pleased we were when he got up and asked to be the one to light. His surprised friends, who knew him to be anti-religious, took pictures of him by the menorah. So you see what a doughnut and a smile can accomplish!”

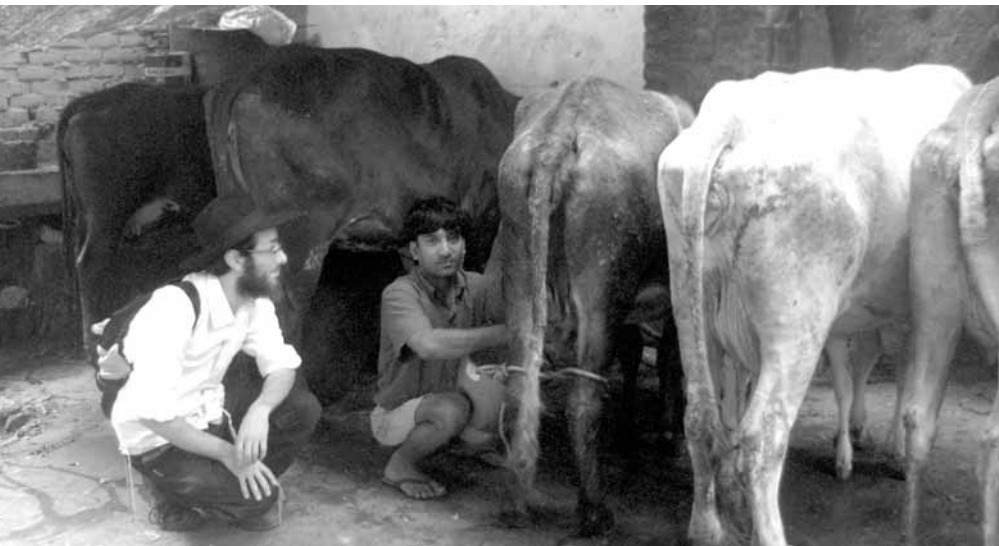
BATTLES WITH THE SITRA ACHRA

“Our job in Hampi is to light people’s souls, and along with the disappointments – and there are plenty of those – there are also lots of success stories. We see how the Rebbe is guiding us and helping us. We had a girl who was very interested in Jewish life, and she began studying Tanya regularly. When she left Hampi,

we gave her the Rebbe Rayatz’s Memoirs.

“When we went back to Eretz Yisroel, we called her to find out how she was doing and to suggest that instead of continuing to vacillate over her direction in life, she ought to make a commitment to Yiddishkait, once and for all. When she answered our call, she expressed her joy in hearing from us and said that as soon as she arrived in Eretz Yisroel she found a good job in Tel Aviv. Her plans to start learning were canceled.

“That’s how the sitra achra operates. When it sees that a Jew is inspired, it immediately does all that it can to interfere. However, Hashem helps, and one day, as she organized her boss’ office, she found a Tanya, the book she had liked so much. She asked her boss why he had it, but he did not know how it got there. All he could tell her was



In order to get chalav Yisroel milk, you have to visit a farm.

that the book had been there for many years, but that he had no idea who brought it to the office. She excitedly told him, 'It's from Heaven.' She is still working, but she has a consistent Tanya shiur over the phone.

"One day, four middle-aged European looking men came into the Chabad house and said they were looking for a place to eat. That happens a lot, and we told them we are not a restaurant. 'There's no falafel here?' asked one of them. I told them there was a local Indian who made falafel, and then I casually asked one of the men whether he was Jewish, although I did not think he was. To my great surprise, he said he was. He was from England. I asked him if he had ever put on t'fillin, and he said no, but he definitely knew what that was.

"He told me that when he turned 13 years-old he had a Reform bar mitzva with an aliya, although without t'fillin. We immediately took out t'fillin and candies. He was happy to don the t'fillin, while his three gentile friends looked on, and we made a bar mitzva celebration right then

and there. At the age of 51, he was no longer a *karkafta*.

"In the village there is a church belonging to a Christian cult. In their services, they randomly open their New Testament and then discuss the topic on whatever page they opened. One morning, a girl came into the Chabad house, all agitated, and she asked for a Tanach. When we gave her one, she hurried out. She came back in the afternoon. What had happened was, she had gone to this church and they chose her to open the book. She refused to open the New Testament and asked instead for a Tanach (what they call the Old Testament), but they did not have one. She came to us to find one and then went back to them with the Tanach. She opened it at random to the verse in D'varim, 'And you shall know and take it to heart that Hashem is Elokim in the heavens above and on the earth below; there is no other.' Since the one who opens the book does the interpretation, she began to explain it according to her understanding, that there is only one G-d and there is nothing

besides Him, no partner and no other ideas.

"I advised her not return to that group. Of course, we couldn't help but be amazed by the clear message Hashem was sending her."

RISIBLE SUPERSTITIONS

It would seem that nowhere in the world are idols and klipa as prevalent and powerful as in India. Sometimes, though, the superstitious mindset of fellow villagers can provide a good laugh.

"One day, we bought many new utensils, and we went to the river to immerse them. When our rickshaw driver saw all the utensils we were taking down to the river, he shouted, 'What?! You are going to sacrifice all that to him?' He was sure we were going to sacrifice the utensils to the river.

"After Yom Tov, one of the people in the village asked us when we would be celebrating the holiday in which we threw all our utensils into the river again, because he wanted to be able to go and collect some of them.

"We have an aluminum tray on which we place the Shabbos candles. In a house made entirely of wood, all it would take is one spark to turn the place into an uncontrollable conflagration. On Motzaei Shabbos, we take down the tray and put it on the floor under one of the tables. One day, the Indian cleaner came in frantic and said, 'Your god is on the floor.' I thought she might have seen the t'fillin or a mezuzah, but then she pointed at the tray. I asked her what the problem was, and then I realized that she thought the tray was our god because we lit many candles on it every week."



Israeli backpackers listening to the Torah reading during Shacharis

NOTHING CAN BE TAKEN FOR GRANTED

The tourist season in Hampi generally ends before Pesach, because by then the heat is unbearable. The tourists and even the local residents leave for northern India where a pleasant summer begins after a snowy winter. Nevertheless, the Gromachs decided to stay for the few remaining tourists last Pesach.

“We decided to be the last Jews to leave the place. One day, we got a phone call from a group that was staying in another city that wanted to spend Pesach with us. Of course, we welcomed them graciously, and threw ourselves into Pesach preparations.

“The preparations for Pesach in Hampi are not the same as those made in Kfar Chabad or Crown Heights. The search for a toaster oven that we could use to make kugels took a whole day. The Indians did not understand what I wanted. I finally found the toaster I was looking for in a store on a side street. The Indian storekeeper who heard I was looking for this appliance was happy to inform me that he found what I needed. There was

“One day, we bought many new utensils, and went to the river to immerse them. When our rickshaw driver saw all the utensils we were taking down to the river, he shouted, ‘What?! You are going to sacrifice all that to him?’ He was sure we were going to sacrifice the utensils to the river. After Yom Tov, one of the people in the village asked us when we would be celebrating the holiday in which we threw all our utensils into the river again, because he wanted to be able to go and collect them.”

just one problem. It had been used once before, ‘just one time,’ he promised. The great delight I felt upon finding it was just as great as my disappointment upon hearing this second bit of information.

“Erev Yom Tov, as I put away all the chametz in separate closets, my wife who was working in the kitchen cut her finger. Her finger was bleeding heavily, and we did not know what to do or whom to call. There are no clinics here. With amazing Hashgacha Pratis, at that moment a former IDF army medic walked in and he stopped the blood flow.

“Another task we had to do was make wine for the four cups. The all-important ingredient that we were missing was sugar. Where could we get sugar that was kosher for Pesach when the Indians used the same scoop in the sacks of flour as they did for sugar?

“We asked Rabbi Landau, and he paskened that if we could get a closed sack of sugar, that would be reliable enough. For an entire day, we searched for an unopened sack of sugar. I finally went to a store and found a closed fifty-kilo sack. When I went to pay for it, the man

opened the sack and nearly put the scoop in. I yelled and he recoiled, not understanding what I wanted. How could I explain to him that for kashrus reasons he could not do that? Fortunately, in India the people have tremendous respect for spiritual things. In Europe, they would laugh; over here, they understand.

"We made it to the Seder in a state of exhaustion. We had forgotten the *z'roa* outside, and by the time we went to get it, monkeys in the yard had eaten it.

"R' Betzalel Kupchik's sons from Poona brought us five kilos of matza. At first, we thought that would be more than enough for us, but on the last day before Pesach no fewer than sixty tourists registered. They had heard about the Seder in Hampi and came to the village. I ended up buying a scale and weighing thirty grams for each of them so they would each fulfill the mitzvah.

"It was rough. We did everything from scratch. It was also our first time ever making Pesach on shlichus, but the results were gratifying and definitely gave the Rebbe much nachas."

These are moments of elation following days and weeks of very hard work. Does R' Gromach ever experience moments of

despair in such an isolated spot, so different from the Kfar Chabad where he was raised? R' Gromach does not remember very many.

"You get used to it, and the difficulties diminish. It was extremely hard this past season for my wife, though. Her grandmother died, and she felt she had not properly parted from her. However, we in touch with our families on a daily basis. At the Chabad house we have a phone with an Israeli number, so it is not hard to maintain contact overseas. When a shliach is immersed in his daily work, there isn't much time to think about how hard it is.

"Last Shabbos, over two years since we married, we had our first Shabbos meal alone, without tourists, without guests. In the quiet and absence of pressure, we suddenly felt how much effort a normal Shabbos requires ...

"At the Chabad house, one thing follows another and you don't always realize that you have no time for yourself. In Eretz Yisroel, when you want breakfast you go down to the grocery store and buy what you want. Over here, you make it yourself.

"But most importantly, when you think about the privilege of being the Rebbe's shluchim, the difficulties recede. I always

tell my friends that we are not to be pitied. Do you know how satisfying it is when you teach a kibbutznik backpacker, a *tinok sh'nishba*, what a Rebbe is, what a G-dly soul is?"

R' Gromach has not let satisfaction with his current efforts last for long. "We plan on building a mikva. The nearest mikva to Hampi is in Bombay, a trip which can last anywhere between 15 to 24 hours. We also want to open a meat restaurant. In addition to teaching Mivtza Kashrus, a restaurant will prevent many Israelis from going to treif restaurants. It will also attract more Jews here and open them to the influence of the Chabad house."

Besuras HaGeula? R' Gromach is not fazed. "Those who say that the topic of Moshiach turns people off apparently have not done mivtzaim. Maybe in the past one might have thought so, but today everyone, even nonobservant backpackers who come with prior misconceptions, accepts it. To the irreligious backpackers who know nothing about Judaism, Moshiach is like *negel vasser* in the morning. Any backpacker who hears a thorough explanation about Moshiach will understand that this is a serious topic, deeper than slogans and cheers.

"Backpackers accept it matter-of-factly and truly believe that Moshiach is about to come. Even those who do not come from a traditional background believe it will happen, but there are fears associated with it. Some associate Moshiach with the war of Gog and Magog and other calamities, and so sometimes all it takes is a calm approach, explaining that when Moshiach comes it will only be good for the Jewish people."



"Those who say that the topic of Moshiach turns people off apparently have not done mivtzaim.

Maybe in the past one might have thought so, but today everyone, even nonobservant backpackers who come with prior misconceptions, accepts it. Any backpacker who hears a thorough explanation about Moshiach will understand that this is a serious topic, deeper than slogans and cheers."

THE FOUR EXILES

By Rabbi Heschel Greenberg

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



THE END!

This week's parsha, in one way, represents the end of the entire Torah. In the last talk that we were privileged to hear from the Rebbe, he explained how the Torah essentially ends with the Book of Numbers. Deuteronomy is actually a restatement of the other books of the Torah.

It is therefore no coincidence that the last parsha of this "last" book of the Torah reviews all the travels of the Jewish people from Egypt until their entry into the Promised Land. The Baal Shem Tov taught that the forty-two journeys listed in this parsha reflect all of the journeys of each individual Jew as well.

The Chida (Rabbi Chaim Yosef Dovid Azulai, one of the great Sephardic Sages of the eighteenth century) writes in his work *Nachal Kedumim* that the opening four words of this parsha, "*Eileh massei b'nei Yisroel* — these are the journeys of the Children of Israel" allude to the four periods of exile that the Jewish people have endured. These four periods are named after the dominant empire that banished them from their land and subjected them to the suffering of exile. They are—in chronological order—*Bavel*-Babylonia, *Madai*-Media (Persia), *Yavan*-Greece, and *Edom*-Rome. The initials of the first four words of our parsha are (1) an *Aleph*, which stands for *Edom*; (2) *Mem*, which stands for *Madai*; (3) *Beis*, which stands

for *Bavel* and (4) *Yud*, which stands for *Yavan*.

THE GREEK EXILE

We will begin our analysis of these four exiles and their relationship to the first four words of this parsha with the final word in that phrase — *Yisroel/Israel* —, which corresponds to the Greek exile.

The Greeks did not try to annihilate the Jews. They were not opposed to the Jewish people living in their own land. They were not even opposed to the Jewish people studying Torah and observing the commandments. As long as one viewed the Jewish people as a nation like any other nation, the Greeks could tolerate Jewish nationhood. As long as the Jews would view the Torah merely as a beautiful piece of literature, they were not opposed to its study. As long as the Jews observed the Mitzvot because they were logical or because they possessed some utilitarian value, it was acceptable to the Greeks.

The Greeks worshipped logic and nature and were in love with aesthetic beauty. They also glorified the human body. What they could not countenance, however, was a belief in the transcendent quality of nature. They could not tolerate an observance that defied logic. Most of all, they were horrified by any gesture that—in their eyes—denigrated the human body.

They were therefore opposed

to the Jewish approach to Torah, namely that it is G-d's wisdom and therefore transcends the human mind.

The Greeks were therefore also opposed to the Mitzvot that are not based on rational foundations.

Thus, their tyrannical rule began by banning circumcision. Why did they specifically choose circumcision?

Circumcision alters the natural state of the body, the body that they deemed perfect in its natural unaltered state. In addition, circumcision is performed on the eighth day to indicate that it is all about transcending the order of creation, which is divided into cycles of seven. This clearly was the very antithesis of the Greek belief system. Circumcision also singles out the Jew and sets him apart from other nations. Again, this was diametrically opposite to their conception of all nations being equal and that only the level of one's physical, intellectual and artistic attainments can distinguish one man from another.

Their goal was therefore to eradicate: a) the belief in a G-d that transcended nature; b) a Torah that professed Divine knowledge; c) an observance that altered the body and promoted a supra-rational attitude towards the Mitzvot, and d) the notion of the distinctiveness of the Jewish people.

The designation of the Jewish

people as Israel was based on their transcendence of nature. The name Israel was given to the Patriarch Jacob because he “fought with G-d’s angel (also a metaphor for the forces of nature) and people (other nations) and prevailed.” The name Israel denotes all that was anathema to the Greeks for it underscores the distinctive role of the Jewish people and their ability to conquer nature and transcend it.

Thus, the word Yisroel and its ideal represent the power that we possess to counter the element of exile that is represented by *Yavan*-Greece.

THE BABYLONIAN EXILE

The third opening word of this parsha is *b’nei*, meaning the “children of.” As stated above, this word—that begins with the letter *beis*—alludes to *Galus Bavel*, the Babylonian exile.

The word *b’nei* numerically adds up to 62. The Babylonian Empire, beginning from the day it exiled the King Yehoyachin in the eighth year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar (Melachim II 24:12) until it was conquered by Persia, lasted 62 years.

In addition, there is a connection between the word *b’nei* and the Babylonian exile. When G-d sends His children into exile and provides them with all their spiritual and material needs, this Divine care represents an indication that He treats the Jewish people as His children. When a loving parent disciplines

and punishes his or her child by distancing them, the parent makes sure that the child will not suffer needlessly and that they will be able to eventually extricate themselves from their exile.

This phenomenon was most clearly demonstrated by the Babylonian exile in which the elite of the Jewish people were the first to be exiled. This enabled them to cultivate the Babylonian landscape with centers of Torah and to pave the way for their fellow Jews to continue to thrive in a spiritual sense. In addition, the Babylonian King appointed these Jewish leaders to be his advisors, which assisted the Jewish people in their exile in a material way as well.

To describe the way we are able to survive and endure the exile we focus on the word “*b’nei*”. We must constantly remind ourselves that we are G-d’s children and that He will never abandon us, even as we live in these last terrible moments of exile.

THE MEDIAN-PERSIAN EXILE

The second word *massei*, which means journeys, alludes to the Median or Persian exile, as noted above.

One connection between the word *massei* and the Persian exile relates to its numerical value. The numerical value of *Massei* is 180. When we read the Book of Esther, we discover the number 180 prominently featured at the very beginning. The Persian

monarch Achashverosh threw a party that lasted 180 days. The objective of this party, our Sages tell us, was to demonstrate his consolidation of power. It was, in his mind, the celebration of his triumph over the Jewish people. The Jews were still his subjects and were precluded from building their Holy Temple in Jerusalem, despite the fact that the seventy years that had been predicted for the exile to last had already passed, at least according to his (erroneous) calculations. In effect, what highlighted and came to symbolize the Median/Persian exile was the number 180.

There is also a connection between these 180 days and the idea of “journeys”, the translation of the word *massei*.

The reason the feast lasted for 180 days, as some commentators explain, was to afford every citizen of his vast empire the opportunity to travel to Shushan and participate in that party. Achashverosh wanted to demonstrate his consolidation of power by having members of all his provinces attend. According to the Talmudic Sages, sailors—who travel back and forth from the most remote places—would stay away from home for periods of a half a year at a time, the equivalent of 180 days. The number 180 therefore can symbolize the extraordinary lengths some will go in journeying to participate in an orgiastic experience of witnessing the Jews’ exile, the feast of a monarch who gloats over the state of exile in which the Jewish people find themselves.

It follows that the way to counter these shameful trips into exile is by the journeys we make to join other Jews in their celebrations of Jewish Holidays or to be in the presence of Torah

“The name Yisroel/Israel denotes all that was anathema to the Greeks for it underscores the distinctive role of the Jewish people and their ability to conquer nature and transcend it.

teachers in general and our Rebbe in particular. Likewise, the figurative journeys we make to grow in our Judaism are the way to counter the negative journeys that are associated with the Persian exile.

THE EDMITE EXILE: NO END IN SIGHT?

And finally, the word *Eileh* — ‘these are’ — represents the exile of Edom, identified as the Roman Empire and its successors who destroyed the Second Temple and who subsequently sent us into the longest and most difficult of all our exiles.

Why is this exile represented by the word *Eileh*-these are?

The Midrash states that whenever the Torah uses this word—as opposed to the word *v'eilah*: “**And** these are,”—it is intended to negate that which came before. It is an indication that that which follows is totally beyond that which preceded it.

The Edomite exile is so harsh that it negates and eclipses all preceding exiles. As the Talmud (Yoma 9b) states: “The earlier

ones (i.e., the Jews who lived at the time of the destruction of the First Temple by the Babylonians), whose sins were revealed, had their end revealed. The later ones (i.e., the Jews who lived at the time of the destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans), whose sins were not revealed, their end was not revealed.”

This cryptic statement is understood by Rashi and other commentators to mean that the reason our exile is so long and arduous in comparison to earlier exiles is because the sins that precipitated this exile involved *hidden* evil. The hatred people harbored for one another was concealed. Therefore, the end of this exile is also hidden from us; for centuries, there has been no end in sight.

Thus, the word *Eileh*, which negates all that comes before, is an allusion to the present exile, referred to as the Edomite exile, because it is qualitatively much more difficult than all the other exiles.

How do we get out of this exile?

Among the various

approaches that the Rebbe has emphasized to hastening the Geula— such as praying and demanding Redemption, learning Torah concerning Moshiach and Redemption, opening our eyes to see the G-dly energy and good in everything, accepting the authority of Moshiach, increasing our acts of goodness and kindness, and more—he also repeatedly called for reversing the senseless hatred syndrome that precipitated the exile in the first place. This suggests that instead of senseless hatred, we should be cultivating “senseless love,” i.e., unconditional love for our fellow Jew.

This message, too, can be found in the word *Eileh*. *Eileh*, which translates as “these are,” is an expression that denotes clarity and openness. Whatever we are discussing is in front of us. We can point to it. This clarity is the opposite of the hidden evil the Talmud cited above, mentioned as the cause of the length and uncertainty of the present exile. We need to counter this uncertainty with clear and demonstrable love.

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THE CHASSIDIC SMUGGLING RING

For nearly thirty years, Ezras Achim in New York has worked on behalf of Soviet Jewry. In numerous clever ways, they were able to send huge quantities of s'farim, Jewish religious items, kosher food, and monetary aid to those in need of it. • Rabbi Moshe Levertov tells us how the organization began and how the emissaries who dared to take items into Russia passed through customs.

By Menachem Ziegelboim and Avrohom Jacobson



She took a nap only when her work was done.

Scenes like this were repeated often. It turns out that this cellar was the base for all the secret activities that were done over twenty years for the Jews of Russia under the auspices of the Lishkas Ezras Achim organization. Emissaries going to Russia were located, and they took hundreds of parcels containing Jewish items, Jewish books and kosher food. .

Getting these things across the Russian border, where all belongings were examined, required complicated procedures. This was done in the basement of Rabbi Moshe Levertov, a Russian Chassid who, together with his friends in Ezras Achim, personally helped hundreds of Anash and mekuravim back in Russia. Their deliveries were a great source of encouragement to the recipients.

R' Moshe was born in Moscow to an old Chassidic family, and he was raised in an atmosphere of mesirus nefesh. "Of course we did not go to public school. A melamed came to our house. He was an old man from Smargon who lived in Moscow and ate with us on Shabbos. He taught my brother and me."

Living in Moscow helped the Levertov children, since the officials in charge of registering children for public school did not visit their house except on two occasions, and even then, all turned out well. The sheer size and hubbub of Moscow covered the children's absence from school.

Their father and his sons davened on Shabbos in the Chabad shul, Marina Rocha, since they lived nearby. There

in the shul, they could enjoy a Chabad Chassidic atmosphere. "Many Chassidic figures gathered in this shul, and they participated in farbrengens on Shabbos and special days in the calendar."

Could you tell us who these Chassidic figures were?

"R' Nissan Nemanov would occasionally farbreng. Other pillars of Anash at that time were R' Mendel Futerfas (who lived about a hundred kilometers from Moscow), R' Abba Pliskin, R' Bentzion Shemtov, Rabbi Medalia, R' Yitzchok Michoel Alperowitz, R' Yona Cohen, and R' Mendel Leib Abramson. At the farbrengens with these outstanding Chassidim, they spoke a lot about the Rebbe, and about how we needed to see him again. The latter (R' Abramson) was an interesting *tziyur* (Chassidic personality). I remember the Motzaei Shabbos that he was arrested. We heard that they took him from his home. He never returned. I am reminded of another Chassid by the name of R' Shmuel Krislaver, who was also a *tziyur*. When he wanted to leave Russia after the war, he went to Lvov like many others, and waited for an opportunity to get out. During the war, all these Chassidim tried to leave Moscow, but some did not succeed."

"Despite the great fear of being caught while meeting with one another, some of the Chassidim met on Shmini Atzeres in order to eat in a sukka and farbreng. This sukka was built on a porch with the s'chach placed on the railing, so the sukka was very low. In order to get in, you had to bend over and eat in a partially reclining position. It was particularly frightening, because only two buildings away from there were the offices of the

In a basement on Sterling Street in Crown Heights sat a woman late at night. To anyone observing what she was doing, her actions seemed very peculiar. She would take, for example, a cup of coffee and pour it over s'farim. She would pour a little coffee in between some pages, turn some pages and pour some more, and so on.

The time passed quickly and at dawn, the pile of s'farim was packed in a large suitcase. Next to it was a large box with many cans and boxes of kosher food.

NKVD “

“The Shmini Atzeres of 5707/1946 they farbrenge for a long time. When it began pouring, they continued the farbrenge indoors. I remember that R’ Shmuel Krislaver said, ‘L’chaim, to see the Rebbe again,’ and my father said, ‘If the Rebbe wants us to be busy here, then this is the *kavana*.’”

“In the end, neither of them was able to get out. My father had to return to Moscow. His sister called to say that they were looking for him in the shul, and he had to return before they suspected him. After he returned he disappeared, and since then we never saw him again. As for R’ Shmuel, he missed the last train out.”

“While in Lvov, they made great efforts to sustain a Chassidic lifestyle. R’ Yona Cohen sent messengers to the bachurim that were in the group trying to leave, to inform them that R’ Shmuel Krislaver would give a shiur. This is how the yeshiva began. Once it was established, R’ Shlomo Chaim Kesselman, R’ Yisroel Noach Blinitzky, and R’ Yosef Goldberg were in charge of keeping it running.”

R’ Moshe Levertov was finally able to leave Russia on those trains, posing as a Polish repatriate. He left Russia on Yud-Tes Kislev, 5707, in a compartment full of Anash and their families.

R’ Moshe described the atmosphere in the compartment as they approached the border:

“We traveled for hours until we reached the border, where the train was stopped for border inspection. Obviously, hardly any of the Chassidim posing as Poles knew Polish, and we were terrified. It was R’ Leibel

Mochkin and R’ Mendel Futerfas who ran things earlier on. The soldiers took all the passengers outside, into the freezing cold where they stood for two hours in fear and bone-chilling cold. However, in the end, they all passed the inspection and were able to continue on to Poland. Even in Poland the danger was not completely over, and every so often inspections were conducted. Once, one of the Polish soldiers said wonderingly, ‘How is it that Poles don’t know Polish and only speak Russian?’”

Then they arrived in Krakow, where they were brought to one of the famous shuls. After Shabbos they were transferred from one side of Poland to the other. They continued on to Prague and from there to Austria, and finally they arrived in the Halein DP camp.

A year and a half later, the refugees arrived in Brunoy, France, where the Joint helped them open a Chassidic yeshiva, which still exists today. At first, R’ Shlomo Chaim Kesselman was the mashpia and menahel, and R’ Nachum Labkowski and R’ Yosef Goldberg were the roshei yeshiva. After a while, R’ Nissan Nemanov arrived from Peking together with other talmidim, and he became the menahel and mashpia of the yeshiva together with R’ S Z. Dworkin.

R’ Moshe learned in Brunoy for three years. In 5710, R’ Nissan sent a list of ten bachurim to the Rebbe Rayatz, asking for permission to send them to learn in 770. The list of bachurim, which included R’ Moshe Levertov was approved. However, by the time all of them had arranged their papers, visas, and tickets, the Rebbe Rayatz had passed away. R’ Nissan sent another letter, this time to the

new Nasi, asking whether the bachurim should still go, and the reply directed that they should continue making plans for their trip.

In 5711, they all arrived in the United States. R’ Moshe continued learning in 770 for another two years. Then he was sent to serve as a mashgiach in a new yeshiva in Pittsburgh. Six years later, he returned to Crown Heights to be a teacher. It seemed as though life would continue as it had until then, but then another shlichus awaited him.

In 5724/1963, R’ Mendel Futerfas left Russia and immediately went to 770 to be with the Rebbe. Naturally, his friends from Russia were eager to see him again, but R’ Mendel, true to his character, did not allow them or himself to take it easy. He complained to R’ Leibel Mochkin and R’ Moshe Morosov: why weren’t they helping the Jews left behind in Russia? He asked, “Why are you silent? In Russia there are many Lubavitchers who simply do not have what to eat. Among them are some who received permission to leave Russia, but they don’t have the money for tickets and other expenses.”

It was not pleasant hearing criticism, but R’ Futerfas was right, and the Chassidim rose to the task. “When we were in Russia,” said R’ Moshe Levertov, “we hoped for help from the outside. I remember that after the war, when the Polish Jews received packages from abroad, we envied them because they were allowed to receive packages as Polish citizens, but it was dangerous for Russian citizens to receive packages from abroad.”

R’ Leibel Mochkin and R’ Moshe Morosov got involved,

and they included R' Futerfas along with R' Gedalya Korf. Together they decided to start an organization that would help Russian Jews. At first, it was not an official organization; they just decided to collect money and to use it to prepare packages. They raised the money in shuls, and Anash opened their hearts to their brethren. R' Yisroel Duchman, R' Tzvi Elimelech Spalter, and R' Yehoshua Pinson joined them as well.

When the organization began to get on its feet, they started thinking of a name for it. At first they thought of calling it "Ezra" or something similar, but then they found out that an organization by that name already existed. That is when they decided on the name "Ezras Achim."

R' Moshe explains: "Some time later, I found in a letter that the Rebbe Rayatz had also started an organization to help Soviet Jews after he left Russia, and he also called it Ezras Achim. We perpetuated that organization and its purpose."

What kind of packages did you send?

"We couldn't send money, so we bought items that could be sold on the black market, like cameras, tape recorders, clothing, etc., and Anash sold them and used the money. We sent the packages via official mail. As time went on, we learned what else Anash needed, and we tried to add these things to the parcels. We eventually received some feedback about how these packages made life easier for them. On more than one occasion, we saved Lubavitcher families from starvation."

"We often sent kosher food, which we put in sealed food cans. I had a special canning machine



R' Moshe Levertov

this was despite the scrutiny and the high customs rates."

"The work of Ezras Achim expanded when things opened a bit on the part of the Russian government, which allowed tourists to visit. Before that, very few visas were approved. This narrow crack in the Iron Curtain was used by Ezras Achim for even more 'dangerous' parcels."

"All kinds of people made tourist visas to the Soviet Union, including delegations of American rabbanim who went to visit Jewish communities, as well as businessmen and entertainers."

“We had Reform Jews come to us and say that Ezras Achim asked them to take items for Russian Jewry. We even had people from Hollywood who came to Russia to make a movie, and they said they were called by Ezras Achim and were asked to take something for the children.”

at home that sealed such cans. This was also an original way to smuggle things in."

"As time went on, we came up with other creative ways of sending assistance. There was a period when some Lubavitchers were able to leave Russia. We sent them a message that we would give them an American dollar

for every four rubles they left behind for Jewish communal matters, such as building or fixing mikvaos."

How did you know to whom to send the packages?

"R' Mendel gave us a list of addresses. Later on, R' Simcha Gorodetzky and R' Dovid Okunov got out, and they too brought lists of updated addresses of Anash. Nearly all the packages reached their destinations, and

"I remember when Rabbi Hollander, who was a young rabbi at the time, went to Russia. We sent material with him, and we also sent packages with someone named Himmelman, the son-in-law of the famous singer, Bob Dylan. We once sent packages with some people from Hollywood who went to make a movie in Russia."

"Occasionally strangers called us and said they were going to Russia and could take a package. There were religious Jews who wanted the names of religious Jews in Russia by whom they could eat and whom they could help."

"Ezras Achim then began sending "tourists." The first ones to go under the guise of tourists were Rabbi Tzvi Fogelman and

FROM ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE

R' Alexander Loketzky and his wife spoke appreciatively about the help they received from R' Moshe Levertov on many occasions:

"The money to build the mikva came from the United States. For a long period, they sent us electronics, mainly cameras and tape recorders, and we would sell them on the black market and use the money for the mikva. The cameras were brought by various emissaries. (Laughing): In order to renovate Marina Rocha (three floors), we needed to sell six or seven cameras."

The Loketzkys have many stories about the emissaries in Moscow. They were often greatly moved by the devotion of the shluchim to the Jews of Russia.

Genia Loketzky: "We felt that the Jews of Russia were on the Rebbe's mind and he worried about us. Not a week went by without strangers calling us and saying, 'We are friends and we came to Russia and want to meet...' Each time a tourist went to Russia, they sent various items with him like electronics to finance our work and kosher food like frankfurters, hard cheese and even candy. (Emotional): The Rebbe always made sure that they brought something for the holiday for the women and even gifts for the children. The emissaries also asked what we wanted to convey in the United States, and we all knew what that meant ..."

Alexander: "What's interesting is that they even used people who were not religious, even Reform. We had Reform Jews come to us and say that Ezras Achim asked them to take items for Russian Jewry. We even had people from Hollywood who came to Russia to make a movie, and they said they were called by Ezras Achim and were asked to take something for the children. I must mention that the one in charge of all this was R' Moshe Levertov who called us very often and always asked what we needed."

How did the people contact you?

"They would usually call and introduce themselves as 'friends.' Then we would agree to meet at a certain location. Sometimes it was a train station, although many preferred coming to our home. Many of them were given exact instructions on how to find us, so they wouldn't have to ask strangers"

his wife Sh'yichyu, the shluchim in Worcester, Massachusetts. Many precious items were sent with them."

Did the packages pass through customs without any trouble?

"No. The inspections were always difficult, and they often managed to get their hands on suspicious items. Sending a package always entailed quite a bit of cleverness on the part of the shliach. For example, when Rabbi Fogelman went to Russia, we gave him four pairs of t'fillin.

There were inspectors who knew that Jews put on two pairs of t'fillin, Rashi and Rabbeinu Tam. Some people only used Rashi t'fillin, but we sent another pair with them and asked them to say it was Rabbeinu Tam t'fillin. The inspector stopped Rabbi Fogelman and asked him, 'Why four pairs?' He answered, 'Two for me and two for my wife.'"

"On other occasions, things did not work out well due to a lack of savvy on the part of the travelers. One time, a family went to Russia and we sent four

kilograms of matza with them. When they arrived at the border, they were asked, 'What's this? You can't bring this in.' They were told that when they left Russia they could take the matza back with them. They weren't clever enough or they were afraid, so when they left, they took the matza back with them even though they could have said that they would eat the matza during their stay in Russia."

"Aside from the smarts required of the shluchim, the members of Ezras Achim tried to prepare the packages in such a way that wouldn't arouse suspicion, especially those that contained Jewish religious items. For example, a tallis was sent without fringes, packed to look like a tablecloth. Tzitzis were sent without black stripes. Now and then, black ink was sent to use on t'fillin."

How did you disguise t'fillin ink?

"Very simple. We bought liquid shoe polish, poured it out and filled the bottle with ink. We also sent animal sinews so they could sew *battim* for the t'fillin. The sinews were made to look like ordinary thread. Before Pesach we sent packages of matza and before Sukkos, lulavim and esrogim that arrived from Italy."

"It was another era ... I must mention that although all the members of Ezras Achim were involved with these packages, my wife and R' Gedalya Korf's wife did a significant part of the work."

Did Jewish books pass inspection?

"All the s'farim we sent were always thoroughly examined. We usually bought new books, but new books always aroused suspicion. My wife would

spill coffee on them to make them appear old and used and were just being carried by the passengers for their personal reading. The s'farim we sent were mainly books for beginners and siddurim, sifrei Chassidus and s'farim published by Shamir."

"There were tough years when it was hard to pass inspection, and they often discovered that these were religious works. They refused to allow them despite all assertions that these were books intended for personal use and would be taken back out. We sometimes sent medicine for circumcisions that they needed there, and did so as first aid equipment."

"Successes mixed with disappointments were the lot of the Ezras Achim members in New York, who anxiously followed the course of the packages they sent, and prayed that they would arrive at their destinations intact."

"Customs at the Leningrad airport were known to be especially tough. R' Mordechai Scharfstein's wife was a travel agent, and she arranged package tours to Scandinavian countries. At some point, she decided to go there herself and from there, to try and enter Leningrad and visit relatives there. Before she left, she came to us and offered to take a package for Jews in need. We gave her some Jewish books for beginners and I think a pair of t'fillin too."

"She went from Finland to Leningrad overland and at customs in Leningrad they examined her books. The agent asked her, 'You don't know how to read Russian, so why did you bring these books?' They were suspicious of her and brought her to a building that looked like a KGB building, where they interrogated her for three hours,



R' Leibel Mochkin

and put it back in his suitcase and was able to smuggle it out."

Did the KGB ever arrest any of the shluchim?

"It was no simple matter to arrest a tourist who held a foreign passport, but there were a few instances in which the KGB dared to arrest shluchim. R' Leibel Shapiro and his wife once went to Odessa where they were constantly under surveillance and at a certain point were called to the KGB for questioning. I remember that R' Yitzchok Block who went to Charkov was also called down to the KGB and they yelled at him for making contact

"We usually bought new books, but new books always aroused suspicion. My wife would spill coffee on them to make them appear old and used and were just being carried by the passengers for their personal reading."

intending to frighten her. She was finally released and they warned her not to engage in propaganda."

"When Meir Rhodes was in the Soviet Union, he got a booklet of Chassidus from R' Grisha Rosenstein to smuggle out of the country. When he got to customs they looked in his suitcase and the agent asked him about the booklet. He said it was an old book that he brought with him from America. Many hours went by until he finally convinced them that he was telling the "truth". A similar incident took place when someone else, I think it was Dovid Weitman of Brazil, took many old books from Russia to bring them to the Rebbe. At customs they took the books, put them on the table, and said, 'this cannot be taken out'. At a certain point, when they weren't paying attention, he grabbed a *bichel*

with Russian citizens. They scared R' Yona Pruss when they told him they would not allow him to leave Russia. They went pretty far when R' Meir Gutnick and R' Dovid Wichnin traveled to Russia and were arrested. They spent an entire night in the KGB building but they released them the following morning. Of course these incidents were very frightening for the shluchim."

Did they stop their involvement in hafatza afterward?

"There were years when the situation was very tense and it was so frightening that people were afraid to talk or give shiurim. In sensitive situations, if a shliach felt that he was being followed, for example, the shluchim would ask the local Anash whether to continue. If they said they wanted to continue, they did

so. The shluchim themselves were protected because of their American passports. They were afraid for the welfare of the Russian Jews.”

“They had to be extremely careful within the Soviet Union when it came to contact with the locals. If the shliach would be caught while talking with one of Anash, he would be taken immediately for questioning. Who could know how that would end?”

“This is why a shliach never had a list of Anash on him, and of course, no addresses. The shliach



R' Moshe Morosov

“Back then, the Rebbe did not send anyone to Russia except perhaps for Binyamin Katz from New Haven, Connecticut, who went on shlichus to the Scandinavian countries. When he was there, he asked whether to continue on to Russia and got the green light. He went and was very successful. He has a photographic memory, and he remembered all the names and addresses; it was amazing.”

had to memorize the addresses or write them down in code.”

“When the Chassid to whom the shliach was sent lived in a big city like Moscow or Leningrad, and we had to write down his address, we used various codes like exchanged letters, secondary letters or letter substitutions. Sometimes, the shliach was given a negative which he would develop at a certain time and read the address on it.”

“Every Chassid who left the Soviet Union and arrived in America was asked for addresses of Anash. We were told how to get there, and we gave this information to the shliach. Sometimes, the shluchim would

call that Chassid or his relative and ask to be picked up at a public park.”

Over the years, the Ezras Achim activists were able to make contacts with official organizations like the branch of the State Department that dealt with political refugees and through them, to the American embassy in Moscow.

“There was a religious woman there who called us and said that it was possible to send s’farim and Jewish religious items via diplomatic mail. For a long time, we prepared large packages and sent them via American diplomatic mail. On their end, Grisha Rosenstein sent the right

people to the embassy who entered under various pretexts, and at great personal risk they took out the packages that we sent.”

“Another method was with the international book fair that took place in Moscow through which they got many Jewish books. There were also contacts with members of the Israeli Liaison Bureau, but nothing came of that.”

“I should mention that at certain times there were Jews who lived in various places that had just started learning about Judaism and the Hebrew letters, and they were already teaching others what they knew. They also brought s’farim from city to city with great mesirus nefesh. Ella Klein (Gisser) would travel with suitcases full of s’farim from city to city.”

This undercover work, which went on for over twenty years, required great discretion. Lishkas Ezras Achim never operated as an official Chabad organization for various reasons. The activities were not done at the Rebbe’s behest, although everything that was done was reported to him beforehand.

“The Rebbe’s reactions were interesting. We knew how much effort the Rebbe invested in making the lot of Russian Jewry easier and getting them out, and yet, the Rebbe’s reactions to the reports were guarded.”

“For example, at some Shabbos farbrengens people would take bottles of mashke for the places they were going to. If someone was going to Russia, the Rebbe said not to announce it. Once, R’ Leibel Mochkin wrote to the Rebbe that they wanted to send a few shluchim to Russia, and the Rebbe wrote something

to the effect that ‘Everybody knows that I don’t send shluchim to Russia.’ It was obvious that the Rebbe was extremely careful that there should be no apparent connection between him and the activities in Russia.”

“Back then, the Rebbe did not send anyone to Russia except perhaps for Binyamin Katz from New Haven, Connecticut who went on shlichus to the Scandinavian countries. When he was there, he asked whether to continue on to Russia and got the green light. He went and was very successful. He has a photographic memory, and he remembered all the names and addresses; it was amazing.”

So you wrote about everything you did to the Rebbe?

“Of course. Most of the time, the answers were brief like, “I will mention at the gravesite,” but sometimes the Rebbe responded to timely matters. Every time a shliach returned from the Soviet Union, he wrote a full report about everything that happened on his trip. He reported about the people he met, their material and spiritual state, and usually included ways of fixing certain things.”

“The Rebbe would also give a certain amount of money as shlichus-mitzva money, and as a token of his participation in the trip and the activities that would be done there. R’ Nachum Tamrin called us at the end of the 80’s and offered to buy a house in the village of Lubavitch for the Rebbe. We asked the Rebbe and he agreed and even added that he would give a third of the sum. This house cost \$2500.”

“The Rebbe took a great interest in what went on and kept tabs on those who worked there. Much of the information



R' Gedalya Korf

other things. We felt we should help them, even though directly or indirectly it detracted from our Chabad activities. I am sorry to say that some people who became enemies of Lubavitch when they left Russia got money from us. But that was the Rebbe’s way, to help every Jew without looking to see what group he belonged to.”

Even after R’ Moshe Levertov tells about all the exciting activities done behind the scenes, or to be more precise – in the basement of his house, it is obvious that his main source of pride is the pioneering work

“I am sorry to say that some people who became enemies of Lubavitch when they left Russia got money from us. But that was the Rebbe’s way, to help every Jew without looking to see what group he belonged to.”

was conveyed by us, some was conveyed by Anash who came out of there and had yechidus, and some came via other routes.”

“There were times that the Rebbe did react directly. I remember that when Rabbi Nosson Gurary asked the Rebbe about printing a Tanya in Russian, the Rebbe was very pleased about this. R’ Alexander (Sasha) Loketzky, an outstanding activists in Russia (see box), printed it. Another time, we started a yeshiva in Moscow, and they asked the Rebbe whether they could call it Tomchei T’mimim. The Rebbe agreed, but when they started the yeshiva in Kiev, the Rebbe said they should ask the hanhala of the yeshiva.”

Did you also send aid for non-Chabad activities?

“Yes, we sent them money and

Ezras Achim did for Russian Jewry when the gates opened wide. Hundreds of Lubavitchers all over the world got involved, traveling to cities throughout the former Soviet Union and breathing new life and Jewish pride into the Jews there.

“Today, boruch Hashem, there are shluchim operating there who are funded by Ohr Avner and Kollel Chabad and others. The first ones were Ezras Achim, headed by R’ Moshe Slonim a”h. It was he who acted l’chat’chilla aribber in this matter so close to his heart.”

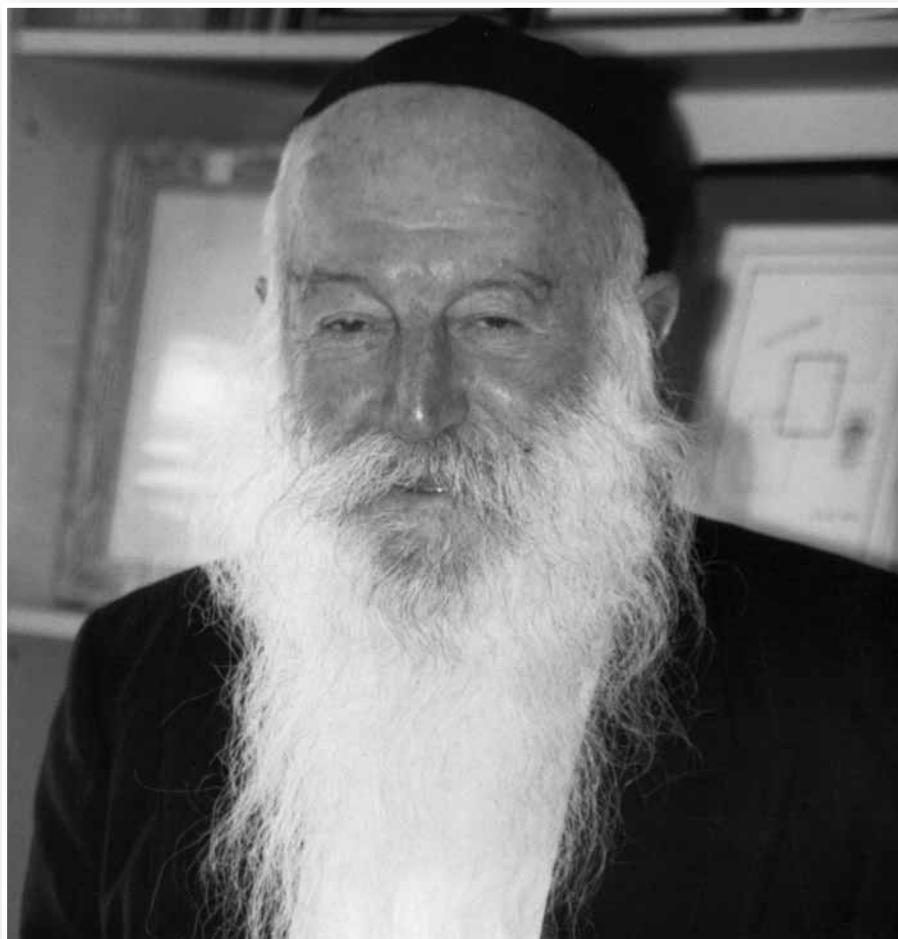
The clandestine work has ceased and has been replaced by the revival of Jewish communities under the guidance of the shluchim. “The Iron Curtain is no more,” says R’ Moshe Levertov with a smile of satisfaction.

A TRUE OHEV YISROEL

THE CHASSID REB MOSHE GOLDSCHMIDT A"H

In Tashkent, Reb Moshe obtained the release of many Chassidim from the army. In Eretz Yisroel, he opened a textile factory that was a source of parnasa for many Chassidim. He devoted himself to Mivtza T'fillin for forty years! His older brother—the famous mashpia Reb Nachum Goldschmidt—said about him, “If you want to know what Ahavas Yisroel is, learn from my brother Moshe.”

By Shneur Zalman Berger



SEPARATED FROM HIS PARENTS

R' Moshe Goldschmidt was born on the ninth of Kislev 5687/1926 in Dnipropetrovsk. His parents, Rabbi Yitzchok and Mrs. Dina Goldschmidt, were close to the family of Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Schneersohn—the Rebbe's father and the Rav of the city at that time. R' Moshe's father was R' Levi Yitzchok's shochet. R' Moshe himself davened with R' Levi Yitzchok, and he never forgot it. He especially remembers the Shabbasos with R' Levi Yitzchok. He once described the Rav's Haftora:

“R' Levik recited the Haftora loudly, in a fiery manner that greatly inspired all present, so that they all cried. My mother said that in the women's section too, there wasn't a dry eye.”

R' Moshe was only thirteen in the summer of 1941, when the Germans invaded the Soviet

Union. They progressed quickly towards the Ukraine, and anti-Semitism increased in their wake. Ukrainians instigated fights Jews and let them know that when the Germans came, they would take care of the Jews. Jews began leaving the city on overcrowded trains. Many Chassidim also fled, including the Goldschmidt parents and their children, Moshe, the oldest, and the two girls Malka and Rochel.

The overcrowded trains were stifling, and R' Yitzchok was ill. He knew he must get off the train with his wife at one of the stations to breathe some fresh air. As they stood on the station platform, the train suddenly began moving away with their three children on it! While their parents remained in the forsaken town, the children traveled on to another village, where a local Jew took them into his home. There they stayed without knowing how to locate their parents.

Meanwhile, the Goldschmidts began searching for their children. They questioned every visiting Jew in the town, but weeks passed without any new information. Half a year later, the parents met a Jew who told them that based on their description, it seemed that their children were living in a certain small town, which he named. R' Yitzchok and his wife hurried to that town and were happily reunited with their children.

After much traveling, they arrived in Samarkand, penniless and without shelter. Since his father was not well, Moshe had to go to work in a textile factory to support his family. Despite the hard labor, every day after work he went to the underground Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim to learn Nigleh and Chassidus.



On Mivtza T'fillin in the Sinai Peninsula, Chanuka 5733



At the Golgotex factory founded at the Rebbe's express instructions

OPEN HEART AND OPEN HOUSE

R' Moshe married Chaya Sirota, daughter of the Chassid R' Mordechai of Tashkent, an outstanding host whose home was open to war refugees. He lived in Samarkand, where

he worked in a small factory started by a number Lubavitcher Chassidim for their fellow Anash so they could keep Shabbos.

A few years later, he moved to Tashkent where he managed his own textile factory and did all he could to ensure that all the workers would be Shomrei

Shabbos. With the profits from the factory, he helped families of Anash, especially in providing loans or monetary aid to Chassidim preparing to marry off their children. Chassidim knew that R' Moshe was someone who would help them.

R' Dovid Gurewitz, who also lived in Tashkent in those days, said that in situations when Jews were imprisoned for no reason, R' Moshe would bribe officials to free them.

Exemptions from the army were a story on their own. R' Moshe developed strong ties with senior officials in the draft office. When a Chassid would be drafted, R' Moshe would go down and dispense bribes to the right people, speak to his connections, and the exemption was issued. This entailed great danger, for if the authorities would catch him, his end would be a bitter one.

Thus, daily life was fraught with mesirus nefesh, whether it was Shabbos observance, educating his daughters, or simply living in the ways of Chassidus. Despite the danger, R' Moshe continued to host a Chabad minyan for many Lubavitchers every Shabbos. After the davening there was always a farbrengen.

They were under constant surveillance, as his daughter Chana relates:

"Sometimes people would

come to us uninvited on Friday night. That posed a problem. They would see the lit candles on the table and suspect us of forbidden religious activities. However, my father would not get flustered. He would tell these uninvited guests that his elderly mother had strange ideas, and now she had lit candles.

"There was also someone who made sure to see when we built a sukka, and my father would pay a hefty bribe to postpone carrying out the order to dismantle the sukka by a few days, i.e. until after Yom Tov. We baked matza for Pesach in the yard we shared with my relatives Rabbi Levi and Malka Pressman a'h, until the persecution intensified and the baking ceased. Then we would get packages of matza by mail, but the wicked people at the post office made sure to hold on to the package till very close to Pesach, causing us endless and needless anxiety."

LEAVING THE SOVIET UNION

R' Moshe's daughter Rochel Alperowitz describes some moments of nachas:

"One of the pictures etched in my mind is seeing my father with his ear glued to the big radio as he listened every night. He was not listening to the news but to the famous Tanya shiur given by his brother Nachum who was already in Eretz Yisroel. Nachum taught

the shiur on the Kol Tziyon L' Gola radio station, broadcast on shortwave radio. My father didn't miss a shiur; every week he would listen closely and learn Tanya from his older brother."

Growing a beard for a young person in those days in the Soviet Union was out of the question. Whoever tried it was persecuted and risked severe punishment. He had no choice but to remove his beard, but during S'firas HaOmer he kept the beard. The family says that when he would go to work at that time of the year, his wife was very nervous lest he fall into the hands of the government.

When he received permission to emigrate in 5728/1968, he immediately began growing a beard. R' Moshe was very emotional as he described to his children what awaited them in the Holy Land:

"We will live in Kfar Chabad, and we can grow a beard and wear our tzitzis out ..."

His joy was tinged with sadness though, since many relatives remained behind. He could not know if they would ever see one another again.

R' Moshe's oldest daughter, Chana Malka, describes the moving reception that awaited them when they landed in the airport in Lud:

"I will never forget those amazing moments when the plane's door opened, and within minutes a group of Chassidim entered the plane. The Lehenherz brothers, who were dear friends of my father, led them, and they began to dance on the plane. That is how we were escorted out, as they continued dancing to express their great joy at meeting their friend, who had finally left the Russian prison."

R' Moshe brought with him

"When he received permission to emigrate in 5728/1968, he immediately began growing a beard. R' Moshe was very emotional as he described to his children what awaited them in the Holy Land. . . We will live in Kfar Chabad, and we can grow a beard and wear our tzitzis out..."

the Torah scroll that had been used in the minyan in his house. In Eretz Yisroel, he found out that it was old and worth a lot of money, but as usual, he did not think about money. He asked the Rebbe's secretary R' Leibel Groner what to do with the Torah and was told to give it to the Rebbe. When he went to see the Rebbe for the first time in Tishrei 5730/1970, he had yechidus and gave the Rebbe the Torah. The Rebbe took it, left the room and went down to the big zal where he placed it in the Aron Kodesh.

CHESED FACTORY

R' Moshe's dream to live in Kfar Chabad came true, but did not endure for long. About a year later, R' Efraim Wolf, Menahel of the Central Yeshivos Tomchei T'mimim, told him that the Rebbe had asked that a textile factory be founded in Kiryat Malachi which would support the residents of Nachalat Har Chabad. R' Efraim knew that R' Moshe had successfully run a textile factory in Tashkent, and so he asked him to take responsibility for establishing and running the operation.

On that first trip to the Crown Heights, R' Moshe presented his plans to the Rebbe, who responded positively and gave a bracha. The factory was opened in the industrial section of Kiryat Malachi, and was called "Golgotex" for the partners R' Mordechai Gorodetzky, chairman of the board of Nachalat Har Chabad, R' Zalman Lebenhertz a"h, his brother Yona, and R' Moshe Goldschmidt.

With the Rebbe's encouragement, R' Moshe moved to Nachala where he devoted his energy to opening the factory together with his friends and partners. In order to get big



At Kos shel Bracha

“The factory was not just a source of income for the Chassidim. Beyond that, R' Moshe managed it with a Chassidic spirit. When late-night broadcasts from 770 lasted for hours, employees were invariably late for work the next day, but the managers overlooked this. . . When R' Moshe would pass by the Rebbe for Kos shel bracha, the Rebbe would give him a bottle of mashke for the factory.

orders, they had to make bids for contracts with government officials. This factory, which supported many residents of Nachalat Har Chabad, was very important to the Rebbe, who told his secretary R' Binyamin Klein several times to make inquiries about the bids.

The factory was not just a source of income for the Chassidim. Beyond that, R' Moshe managed it with a Chassidic spirit. When late-night broadcasts from 770 lasted for hours, employees were invariably late for work the next day, but

the managers overlooked this. The Rebbe was supportive of the factory, and every time R' Moshe passed by the Rebbe for Kos shel bracha, the Rebbe gave him a bottle of mashke for the factory.

The factory did not always earn big profits, and there were even times when the directors thought they should close it to avoid eventual bankruptcy, but the Rebbe made sure they kept it open. On occasion, the Rebbe even told them to buy newer machinery and to expand the factory.

CHASSID AND BAAL CHESED

R' Moshe's main occupation was his responsibilities at the factory, but the residents of Nachalat Har Chabad knew him as a modest Chassid who never spoke ill of anyone. He followed the ways of Chassidus and Halacha scrupulously. His day began at 5:30. After immersing in the mikva, he would learn Chassidus, daven, and end his morning avoda with a shiur in Tanach. In the evening too, after a long day of work, he would join a Gemara shiur.

On Fridays, he went regularly to Ashdod on Mivtza T'fillin. For forty years, he was the one responsible to organize a group of Chassidim and drive them in his car. When they arrived in Ashdod, he would leave the others at the t'fillin stand while he went from store to store. He was committed to this mivtza, even when he had small children at home and even when he was over eighty. His son R' Sholom related, "Over time, most of the store owners bought t'fillin through my father and put them on every day."

R' Moshe was an Ohev Yisroel. He helped others wherever he went, whether in the bleak days in Tashkent or the brighter times in Kiryat Malachi. It was all the same to him. Many people received loans from him, and he would often say that he did not ask for the money to be returned on a specific date, only when it was feasible. These loans, as well as the other acts of chesed he did, were between him and G-d. He did his mitzvos in complete privacy. He never took credit for himself. His brother Nachum, the mashpia, said, "If you want to learn what Ahavas Yisroel is, look at my brother Moshe."

R' Moshe was very particular about everything associated with Pesach, and he had special minhagim in which he was extra careful. Not only did he not use commercially prepared products on Pesach, he would personally pick vegetables for Yom Tov! His son Yitzchok related, "My father would go the day before Pesach to yishuvim in the area and pick lettuce, horseradish, potatoes, carrots, etc."

HIS FINAL DAYS

Last year he became sick, and despite his suffering, he tried to maintain his daily routine. He got up early to learn Chassidus, davened and then drove his car to the factory. However, despite his desire to continue as usual, the pain eventually prevailed.

He was hospitalized on Pesach. On Beis Iyar, in a semi-conscious state, he asked to count the Omer. Before his family could say anything, he placed his hand over his eyes, said the Shma, and lost consciousness.

R' Moshe was born on the ninth of Kislev, the birthday and yahrtzeit of the Mitteler Rebbe. He passed away at the age of 84 on Erev Shabbos, 2 Iyar, Tiferes of Tiferes, on the birthday of the Rebbe Maharash.

His wife Chaya and his daughters Chana Malka Goldschmidt, Rochel Alperowitz, Feiga Prus, and Malka Segal survive him. His daughters live in Crown Heights, Nachalat Har Chabad, Lud, and Kfar Chabad, respectively. His sons Yitzchok Goldschmidt and Sholom live in Kfar Chabad and B'nei Brak, respectively.

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FORMER LITVISHE BACHUR TEACHES INYANEI GEULA THROUGH SONG

R' Rafael Becher is an elementary school teacher in Beer Sheva. He has come up with some creative ways of instilling Chassidishe messages, including inyanei Moshiach and Geula, in his students. * Profile of a Litvishe bachur, who became a Lubavitcher and instills belief in Moshiach through song.

By Nosson Avrohom



Oftentimes, our children surprise us by their enthusiasm for the topics of Moshiach and Geula. A veteran teacher once told me that while the adults are snoozing, today's kids and teens are living with the Rebbe and Moshiach as though all the sichos of 5751-5752 were just said yesterday.

This positive change did not happen in a vacuum. Over the years, teachers have designed many Chassidische curricula for teaching Geula and Moshiach in ways to which children can relate.

SEEKING TRUTH

One of the most impressive curricula on the topic of Moshiach and Geula for children was designed by Rabbi Rafael Becher, a teacher in the Chabad elementary school in Beer Sheva, formerly a teacher in the Chabad School in Arad. He also has published a series of booklets on Moshiach and Geula geared specifically for the younger generation.

However, his greatest accomplishment is a set of CD's with songs he composed about our Rebbeim, which contain messages about Yemos HaMoshiach.


I spoke with R' Becher on a Friday, a few hours before Shabbos. In the afternoon, he was busy operating a t'fillin stand that he has run for years. When I expressed my amazement that despite his work in chinuch he is still involved in mitzvaim, he shrugged as though he did not understand my surprise. During the week, he also gives shiurim in Chassidus.

Before we delved into his chinuch work, I asked him to explain how he became a Lubavitcher.

"I grew up in B'nei Brak and attended a Chinuch Atzmai school. Some of the teachers were Chassidim from various groups, but the atmosphere was Litvish. Back then, the approach to Chabad in the area where I grew up and learned was very negative. Nevertheless, my mother respected Chassidus. I remember that she spoke well of the Rebbe's mitzvaim and his caring for every Jew. She admired the truth that the Rebbe radiated. Unfortunately, these attitudes only sank in much later as I began looking into the

dismissive comment, and I left without his signature and without his approval. The opinion of this rav provoked the bachurim and added fuel to the fire of hatred for Chabad.

"Then I began to realize that I was seeking another truth that was deeper and more real than the one I currently lived, untainted by political or sectarian considerations; a truth that represented the Torah, a truth that is both unified and unites. When I discussed my thoughts with my Georgian friend, he felt the time had come for him

 "Then I began to realize that I was seeking another truth that was deeper and more real than the one I currently lived, untainted by political or sectarian considerations; a truth that represented the Torah..."

teachings of Chassidus.

"When I finished elementary school, I went to a good Litvishe high school in Yerushalayim. One of my roommates was a Georgian boy. The group with which he was affiliated has a strong connection to Chabad. It was from him that I first heard more significant insights about Chabad. I remember that his descriptions of Chabad really spoke to me, despite the talk in yeshiva against the Rebbe and Chabad. That year, in the beginning of the 80's, there was the 'million signature petition' to amend the law of Mihu Yehudi, that a Jew is only someone who converted according to Halacha. Lubavitch was behind the petition. I spoke to one of the Litvishe g'dolim, asked him to sign, and requested that he allow the talmidim of the yeshiva to sign. He made a

to suggest that I join him at a farbrengen that night at the Chabad shul on Rechov Baal HaTanya in Mea Sh'arim. I happily accompanied him, and for the first time I saw what a Chassidische farbrengen is. Rabbi Yosef Segal, the Rosh Kollel Tzemach Tzedek, farbrenged that night. I did not understand much of what he said, but the approach and the atmosphere appealed to me. One week after the farbrengen I had already joined the bachurim from Toras Emes at the t'fillin stand at the Central Bus Station. For three years, until 5745/1985, I joined these bachurim and helped people put on t'fillin, while my friends back at the yeshiva napped or visited their homes.

"I learned in Yerushalayim for three years, during which I listened to musar talks and

put my energy into learning Gemara, while simultaneously wholeheartedly joining the Chabad outreach work. At a certain point, some of us set up our own t'fillin stand in order to increase the number of stands. I remember that one time one of the *iluyim* (geniuses) of the yeshiva got off the bus and saw us standing there surrounded by many soldiers putting on t'fillin. He came over to me and quietly said, 'Kol ha'kavod to you and to the soldiers. I don't know whether I would be able to get off the bus after such a long trip and put on t'fillin ...'

"The hanhala of the yeshiva knew what I was up to, but turned a blind eye. The rosh yeshiva, Rabbi Schwartzman, is from a Chabad background, and perhaps that worked in my favor. He once told me that the Rebbe had written to him to put sifrei Chassidus in the yeshiva, but he responded to the Rebbe that this would allow other inappropriate hashkafa works to be brought into the yeshiva and therefore he refused."

CATCHING ON FIRE

"I had been to 770 for the first time in Tishrei of 5745. Rabbi Binyanim Zilberstrom was very supportive and encouraged me to go. In Crown Heights, I underwent a series of *bitushim* (Chassidic term for ego-reducing experiences) for which I was not prepared. I did not have a proper place to stay, and I wandered between a number of places. Because of all these distractions, I did not absorb what I needed to on that trip. Nevertheless, when I returned home, R' Zilberstrom convinced me to continue in Chabad.

"My transformation did not happen overnight. After

the Pesach break that year, I contacted the yeshiva in Tzfas. I spoke with the rosh yeshiva, R' Y. Y. Wilschansky. I told him my story, and he was willing to accept me.

On the second of Iyar 5745, Rafael Becher switched to a Chabad yeshiva, choosing Beis Levi Yitzchok in Tzfas, which was then a relatively new Yeshiva.

"The next day, I showed up at the yeshiva, and I learned there for two years. The yeshiva in Tzfas made me into a Chassid. I remember the good feeling I had in yeshiva, as though something I had looked forward to for so long was finally happening before my eyes. There were fewer bachurim back then, and there was a tremendous sense of unity and closeness among us that I did not see anywhere else. The atmosphere was fantastic, the farbrengens, the messages conveyed by the rabbanim. . . I felt it was a real privilege to be in a Chabad yeshiva.

"In 5747, the year of Didan Natzach, I went on K'vutza. Afterwards I returned to Eretz Yisroel to go on shlichus to the yeshiva in Tzfas, and then went on to Beer Sheva, where I worked with others to found the Chabad School. Since then I have been working in chinuch. For a while, I worked hard establishing a Chabad school in Arad, and after that, I returned to Beer Sheva. I quickly learned that the talent for chinuch and being mekarev people to Torah is something that is in my blood.

"In 5750 I had a special experience. The Rebbe spoke a lot about Mivtza Torah, about starting shiurim, and he asked that we send reports regarding our efforts in this area. However, the Rebbe said he would not respond to them. I was working

at the time in the Chabad preschool in Beer Sheva. I took the names of parents who were not Lubavitch and set up shiurim with them. Of course, I wrote about this to the Rebbe, but I did not expect a response since he said he would not respond. How surprised I was when the Rebbe *did* respond to me with the words: *the flame should go up of its own accord like in the golden menorah; I will mention it at the gravesite.*"

MAKING ANTICIPATION TANGIBLE

For many children, R' Becher is famous for the CDs he produced together with Chassidic violinist, R' Mordechai Brodsky. The CDs for children are called *Rak Becha Ani Rotzeh* (All I Want Is You), inspired by the famous quote of the Alter Rebbe. Each CD has ten tracks of Chabad niggunim with lyrics about the prophecy of Geula and teach Chassidic values to children.

Even before this project, R' Becher was a pioneer in preparing and teaching Geula material through educational projects that children enjoy, which were tested on his students in Arad and Beer Sheva.

The children in Beer Sheva are presently learning p'sukim connected to Geula and Moshiach through a project called *Psok Li Psukecha*. Every day, the students glue a new pasuk that they learn into a beautiful booklet. R' Becher compiled sichos and maamarim about Geula and turned them into easily grasped sound bites.

"I have about eighty lessons that are suitable for grades five, six and seven. These lessons are divided by topic. Now we are focusing on the personality of Moshiach. Before that, we

studied T'chiyas HaMeisim and Kibbutz Galuyos. I teach every inyan according to the simple p'shat and mefarshim.

"Over the years, I began writing songs on these topics and on stories of the Rebbeim. I saw how the ideas go straight to their souls if you just know how to word them in a way that is suitable for children. Within a short time, I had collected a hundred songs. The first song I composed was called "Dwarf on Giant's Shoulders," the way the Rebbe described our generation of Geula. This song gives a mashal and explains the nimshal. I taught the boys this song, and they understood it so well. When the decision was made to produce a CD, it was put on the first one."

The expressions that the Torah and Chazal use to refer to our children, such as "our guarantors", and the concept that when one gazes at a child he sees "My anointed ones" are hard to understand in certain ways. Is not *yeridas ha'doros*, the spiritual descent of the generations, a reality that all educators must face? R' Becher explained how he deals with that challenge, and reconciles the two apparently opposing dimensions.

"The question is not whether it's possible; the reality is that it's happening. If the teacher conveys the right message in complete sincerity and truth, the child absorbs it. It all depends on us, the educators. A child needs to feel that we are one with the message we convey; that we believe in it. When the child goes home and repeats what he learned in school with childlike sincerity, it is heartwarming. Even in Lubavitcher homes, when a child comes home and innocently talks about Moshiach



Rafael Becher with his students at the Kosel

“In 5750/1990 the Rebbe spoke a lot about Mivtza Torah, about starting shiurim, and he asked that we send reports regarding our efforts in this area. However, the Rebbe said he would not respond. . . I took the names of parents who were not Lubavitch and set up shiurim with them. I then wrote about this to the Rebbe. How surprised I was when the Rebbe did respond to me with the words: the flame should go up of its own accord like in the golden menorah...”

and Geula, it is uplifting. If the parents are weak on the subject, their child can inspire them.

"We need the talmidim to feel that the talk about Geula is not merely a cliché, G-d forbid, but expresses real, meaningful ideas and generates the appropriate atmosphere. With this conviction, the child returns home determined to carry out the Rebbe's horaos on the subject, and this chayus has an impact on the entire household. We

have to present things to them wholeheartedly and teach them to realize that this is emes. This is our goal, not only during class time when studying these subjects, but during recess and in all other lessons as well. It all has to revolve around Moshiach."

R' Becher's motivation is sincere. However, in actuality, how does he achieve that goal of engraving these inyanim in the hearts of his students in a p'nimius'dike way and from

there, to the realm of action?

“Our children learn the first 26 words of chapter 37 of Tanya by heart,” R’ Becher explains. “The Alter Rebbe states there in Tanya that the giluyim of the Future are connected with our avoda during galus. From this, a child clearly understands that Geula is beautiful gift, but we have to work on it. The Rebbe’s sichos are replete with ideas that we can take upon ourselves to hasten the Geula. In one sicha, the Rebbe says that reciting Kaddish in the merit of a loved one’s soul pales before the privilege of teaching Torah to children. If that is so regarding the instruction of Nigleh, then how much greater our privilege must be to teach children P’nimius HaTorah, and what a great thing is must be that we are teaching Moshiach and Geula.

“How does a teacher know if he has reached the child? The moment you see his behavior and way of talking changing, he knows that he has begun accomplishing his goal. There was a time that I emphasized to the children that if someone asks, ‘*Ma nishma*’ (what is happening, what is new) or ‘*Ma shlomcha*’ (how are you) that they should respond with ‘*Rotzim Moshiach*’ (we want Moshiach), ‘*Mechakim L’ Moshiach*’ (we are waiting for Moshiach).

“Once, one of my students heard me talking to his father and when his father asked me, ‘*Ma nishma*,’ I responded with,

‘*Boruch Hashem.*’ The child exclaimed, ‘Teacher, you taught us to say we are waiting for the Geula!’

“There is a saying of the Rebbe Rashab, ‘The leaders of Chabad feel a tremendous Ahavas Yisroel for every Jew of our nation in a unique manner.’ I taught these words as a song in honor of 20 Cheshvan, set to the tune of a niggun by the Rebbe Rashab. A few months later, around Shavuos time, I asked the children to write about Ahavas Yisroel. One of the children, who did not do well socially in class, decided to recite this song and did so word by word, by heart, with a lot of feeling. This surprised me and showed me how affected he was by the song.”

THE SECRET - BE A ROLE MODEL

R’ Becher makes it very clear that not only does he see a change in his students at school, but that this invariably spills over into their homes. “When a child lives with and understands the concept of Moshiach, he talks the language, not only in school or with his friends, but also at home. In the lower grades, I give out work sheets that they take home. Usually, their parents or older brothers help them, and so the household gets to talk about Moshiach too. In the higher grades, homework is not merely review, but its purpose is to reach

the students on a more personal level. Even though he is only a child, the student has enormous satisfaction when, from his perspective, he discovers things that will happen in the Geula. It makes him happy. Children love the process of discovering the yet unknown.

“But it entails work, just as with adult education. One cannot expect to achieve it all at once; it is a process. For example, when speaking about the person who is Moshiach, our series begins with who is greatest, Moshe or Moshiach. The children learn that in prophecy, Moshe is greater, and Moshiach is greater in leadership. Children enjoy this kind of information; they really get into it.

“I sometimes hear points learned in class that the children pass along, whether in conversations in school or with parents and other family members. In order to ensure that the subject of Moshiach is on the front burner and that it reaches a child’s heart, we have to get the child to ‘live’ with the subject on a consistent basis. Each time, we examine it from a different angle. When you talk about something all the time, you believe it!

“Last year, close to Chaf Cheshvan, I told the boys the famous story about the Rebbe Rashab who cried because he wanted a revelation of G-dliness like Avrohom Avinu. On Motzaei Shabbos I received a phone call from a mother, who said her son burst into tears that lasted twenty minutes. He wanted to know why he does not merit revelations like tzaddikim. It ends up affecting the parents too. A parent has a basic instinct to invest in their child and to be involved in his education; the parent is ready to accept things from the child.

“It all depends on us, the educators. A child needs to feel that we are one with the message we convey; that we believe in it. . . This is our goal, not only during class time when studying these subjects, but during recess and in all other lessons as well.”



R' Becher's two CD's and a workbook on the laws of the Beis HaMikdash

If a child comes with ideas that he learned in school, the father wants to hear it. I have heard of children influencing parents to make good resolutions. When the child is happy, the parent doesn't remain aloof."

So what is the secret? We see that some children "live" with Moshiach and others do not. It is a question on everyone's mind: how do you ensure that the inspiration will reach the child?

R' Becher is realistic and honest. "There are no magical words to say." However, there is lots of encouragement, and there is a secret tool. "You have to talk in a way that conveys the fact that this means the world to you, and then your students will likely feel the same way. I remember attending the big gatherings after Gimmel Tammuz, each one a fiery display of emuna in the coming of Moshiach. In Arad, parents and teachers would say that when Rafael Becher comes back from those Kinusim, everyone could see it in the kids. When a child comes back with a certain spiritual cargo, this is immediately apparent in everything he does and says. The secret is to be a role model, and then the talmidim will internalize it.

"Another point – don't wait for a certain calendar date to

bring up the topic; talk about it all the time. Just like a Chassid can open to a daf Gemara and learn it – he may not remember every topic he learned in his youth, but he still remembers how to learn – so too with Moshiach. Even if a talmid does not remember every detail of what he learned, the general atmosphere for him at school ought to be one of Moshiach. It will flow in his veins. The worst thing is to get into a routine. We teachers have to work constantly on thinking and planning outside the box, to tackle the subject of Moshiach from every possible angle, with stories, crafts and Midrashim.

"I am currently preparing a practicum, and I will be doing a model lesson at a religious-public school. I decided to devote this lesson to the topic of Moshiach. At the end of the lesson, I will be expected to describe what difficulties I had in teaching the subject and what were the pluses. I already know the answer to that second question: the plus is that the subject of Moshiach rests on a foundation of emuna within every Jew, even in a young child. Children have a developed imagination, and we have to work with it. When we do, it will be the most interesting lesson for them."

THE POWER OF EDUCATION THROUGH SONG

When the number of requests from teachers and principals for his material and songs grew, R' Becher decided to produce his first CD of songs. It was successful, and so he produced a second CD, *Od Maaseh Tov Echad*.

"Both of the CDs have stories about the Rebbeim, along with bits of narration. Each CD has songs of all the Rebbeim starting with the Baal Shem Tov. We worked with R' Brodsky's choir.

"In my work with children as a teacher, I always found it important to instill Chassidische values through song. Over the years, whenever I taught songs, with lyrics set to Chabad niggunim, I saw what a tremendous impact they have on children." The intensive labor and creative energy can be felt in each song.

R' Becher's musical talent is innate and exceptional. "It comes from a longing to be creative, as well as my goal to introduce improvements in chinuch. We have no choice. The challenges of this generation are great, and they force us face a reality in which we need quality tools to deal with them.

"What I've done is combine

two things. I took a holy Chassidishe niggun and put meaningful words to it. The work on the CDs came after a long period during which I wrote many songs. When I learned a certain idea or read a special story and wanted to convey it to the children so it would make an impact, I did it through song. I am aware of my musical talent, and so I composed song after song and taught them to the children. One of the teachers, who later taught one of my classes of students and heard them reciting the lyrics, pushed me to go public with it.”

Why is R’ Becher so sure that songs in particular have such a powerful effect on the student? “The power that a song has is incomparable to anything else. Song gives a person the opportunity to convey the deepest message in the most acceptable way. A child can hum the songs outside the classroom while he plays, on his way home, or wherever he might be. If the song is imprinted in his mind, he will remember it for years to come. I see talmidim that I once taught in the younger grades, who hum these songs. On Shabbos I met a bachur learning in Tzfas, who began singing for me the songs we sang in elementary school. It’s an amazing tool to convey messages of Chassidus and Geula.”

R’ Becher feels the Rebbe is with him all the way:

“I thought about producing CDs for a long time before I actually acted on those thoughts. The feedback from parents and teachers was tremendous, but there were many obstacles. When my youngest son was born, I received the necessary funds to begin the project, and I began

to work. I felt the hand of G-d guiding me. After the success of the first CD, we wrote to the Rebbe and opened to this amazing answer on the topic of chinuch in Igros, Volume 9, p. 138:

I was pleased to receive regards from you through... R’ Michoel Lipsker, which also explains that you are trying with great effort to draw the hearts of Jewish children close to our Father in Heaven. Certainly, it is superfluous to point out that one who sustains one Jewish soul is considered as having sustained an entire world. If this is true in this world, then all the more so one who sustains the souls of many Jews and brings them to life in the eternal World to Come through drawing their hearts close to the One G-d; great is his work, and his reward is beyond explication. The awareness itself that one is fulfilling the holy mission of Hashem adds strength and power in the fulfillment of this holy task. The existence of the strength itself minimizes the opposition of the “other side.” Of course, as it is also explained in the holy Tanya of the Alter Rebbe the Baal HaTanya (Posek in Nistar of Torah) and the Shulchan Aruch (Posek in Nigleh of Torah) at the end of chapter 29, the attribute of Hashem is measure for measure but several times over, for additional genuine nachas from all your children.

With blessings for success in your work in chinuch al taharas ha’kodesh.

NOT JUST THEORY

R’ Becher stresses that the element of music in the song is important, but only as powerful as the content it expresses. “The main theme of all the songs I produce is actual avoda. The

songs are not all miracle stories, but all of them express a message of involvement in avoda with oneself and with others. For example, one song is about the Baal Shem Tov escorting children to school, and another is about Chabad leaders sitting in jail for the crime of spreading Chassidus. There is a song about the Rebbe that tells how right after he was born, his parents received instructions from the Rebbe Rashab about how to raise him. I am constantly receiving phone calls from parents who say that because of the songs, their children made good resolutions.”

I prepare myself to leave R’ Becher, but not before I hear the inside scoop on his future plans and dreams. “I would like to see Moshiach Tzidkeinu with the Geula immediately! I have many projects that are yet in the developmental stage. I want these projects to be completed and available to the public, not just to the children of Beer Sheva. I have material for more CDs, including stories and songs about Geula and Moshiach. I hope that the next CD will be exclusively on the topic of Moshiach and Geula.

Speaking with R’ Becher is truly a privilege. When I talk to him, I cannot help but be caught up in his contagious joy. He puts in a tremendous amount of work and does not stop for a minute. One can easily see that despite the exhausting work, he enjoys every minute of it. One can hear the caring, his sense of mission, and the desire to reach every child.

Every year he thinks of new effective methods of reaching his students so that they don’t just get good marks, but internalize what he’s teaching and “live” what he teaches so they become “candles that illuminate” others.



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



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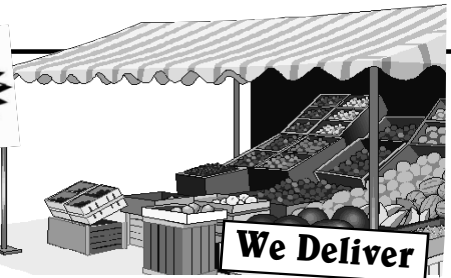
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A SOLUTION TO THE HOUSING CRISIS IN ERETZ YISROEL

In the Rebbe's sichos on Shleimus HaAretz he frequently emphasized that Israeli politicians must take an unambiguous stance with regard to the legal status of the territories liberated in the Six Day War. The Rebbe explained that the Israeli Government's current flaky position on the status of Yesha prevented them from making a genuine effort to settle the area.

By Sholom Ber Crombie

Translated by Michael Leib Dobry

The residents of Eretz Yisroel woke up last week to a morning of strong public dissent. On the street corners of Tel Aviv and under the green trees of Beersheva, young couples left the comfort of their homes to live in tents, in protest against the housing crisis in Eretz Yisroel.

The organizers are adept at leading a protest. As they carry out their plans, they are also prepared to pay a personal price. They brought young couples out into the streets to prove that they were not just empty talk.

However, there is something that the housing protesters do

not know, or perhaps are not interested in knowing. They ignore the fact that this whole crisis could have been avoided very easily. The solution can be found right around the corner – beyond the Green Line. In these areas, it would be quite simple to establish several neighborhoods at low real estate prices, thus providing an answer to thousands of newly married couples. Most of Yehuda and Shomron is unpopulated. The state could annex countless square miles of land and transform them into flourishing residential properties for these young people.

These regions beyond the Green Line are also ideal

locations. Instead of offering solutions in the faraway Galilee or south of Beersheva where young couples are generally afraid to settle, proposals should be made for taking up residence in these areas that are just thirty minutes outside of Tel Aviv. They can remain close to sources of gainful employment, colleges and universities, and the shopping and cultural centers of the Gush Dan region, all while enjoying exceptionally pleasant weather conditions, a fully developed transportation system, and a quiet and relaxed atmosphere.

Naturally, there is no need to frighten these young couples about possible entanglements with hostile Arab villages, as none of them want to live near Sh'chem or Jenin. There are sizable areas beyond the Green Line that are closer to Kfar Saba and Rosh HaAyin than to Ramallah. These regions have never been considered dangerous targets and are located within a most tranquil section of Eretz Yisroel.

Yet, the Government of Israel does not find see the plausibility of settling these areas or to allow for the expansion of those settlements already existing. Successive governments have stuck the label of "occupied

territories” onto these regions, thereby leaving the development of these residential areas marked with a constant question mark. They preferred to place considerable emphasis on the high prices of property in the Gush Dan area, opting to ignore the option of investigating the territories as a possible location where new residential areas might be established.

THE FIRST STEP: ANNEXATION

These regions could provide an answer to the housing crisis in the years to come. However, the sanctions placed upon these areas by successive Israeli governments, classifying them with second-class status and the label of “territories beyond the Green Line,” must first be removed. The time has come for the residents of Eretz Yisroel to stop applying one set of rules for the territories liberated in the 1948 War of Independence and another for those liberated during the Six Day War. What difference is there between them? We believe that our presence in the Land is based on historic right and the G-dly promise given to Avraham Avinu – “For all the land that you see I will give to you and to your seed for eternity”.


In the Rebbe’s discussions on shleimus ha’aretz, he frequently touched upon the manner in which Israeli policymakers have related to the territories liberated in the Six Day War. He often said that they had decided to give away everything and treat our presence there as merely temporary. The Rebbe explained that this very fact has prevented successive governments of Israel from building in these areas and making a genuine effort

to settle them, since everything is seemingly done without any sense of permanence.

We can safely assume that the Rebbe did not just mention this point in passing, time after time, without reason. The truth of the matter is that construction in Yehuda and Shomron is constantly under severe restrictions. A limited number of building permits are periodically issued throughout the region, only as a means of calming the nationalist camp. There has never been a serious effort to settle all of Yehuda and Shomron, despite the deepening housing crisis. From the beginning of the settlement in Yehuda and Shomron the residents have been deprived of

stepchild. This very fact is what enables the leftists to assault this law with such abandon, a law that simply requests that the state refrain from giving support to boycotters. There is no logical explanation for conducting a campaign of incitement against a factory situated in the Barkan industrial zone – twenty minutes away from Raanana – just because it is located beyond the Green Line. However, such straightforward thinking does not to occur to left-wingers, while the right-wing that has known these truths all along has never utilized its strength to change the situation.

The time has come to put a stop to Yehuda and Shomrons’

 **Vice Premier Silvan Shalom, should be enforcing the law upon the Arab residents of Umm al-Fahm, and prevent them from their illegal construction projects. But apparently he is much too busy to implement the mandate of his ministry. Instead, he is heavily involved in passing a “critical” law that would institute Sunday as an official day of rest . . .**

basic living rights. The region has remained underdeveloped in relation to other areas, and the Israeli Government continues to be indecisive over whether or not these territories should be openly declared as an integral and indivisible part of Eretz HaKodesh.

Therefore, when the Knesset passes a law designed to prevent the boycott of factories and businesses in Yehuda and Shomron, the left-wing begins to lose its bearings. Successive Israeli governments have continued to relate officially to Yehuda and Shomron like a

second-class status. It is simply inconceivable that the people living in this region have no choice but to fight over every caravan, and that if someone dares to talk about building a new neighborhood, this automatically labels him as a dangerous right-wing extremist. A fierce struggle is taking place in the Gush Dan region over the housing crisis, yet no one has found a solution to this problem. If Israeli prime ministers would be genuinely interested in making more state land available for construction, they should do so in Yehuda and Shomron. The

only thing required now is an end to the politicization and a demonstration of genuine concern for the needs of the residents of Eretz HaKodesh.

JUST THE FACTS

In recent days, the nationalist Knesset Members have been advancing an initiative to institute Israeli law throughout Yehuda and Shomron. This is the only initiative that has been offered as a solution to counter the threatened declaration of a Palestinian state later this summer. Despite the media blackout on this initiative, and its lack of support within the world community, similar to the lack of support for extreme left-wing initiatives, it now appears that this is the only initiative capable of restoring sanity to the region.

For those who may not be aware of them, here are a few facts regarding Yehuda and Shomron:

Even under the British Mandate, these regions were included in the territory designated for the establishment of a national home for the Jewish People. Since the end of the Mandate, and as a result of the failure of the UN partition plan, these territories did not receive recognized legal status. Jordan occupied them in 1948. This occupation was not accepted by international law. In the Six Day War (1967), the Israel Defense Forces liberated Yehuda and

Shomron, and they were returned to the Jewish People.

Yehuda and Shomron represent the heart of Eretz Yisroel. Amongst the hills of Yehuda and Shomron, there are dozens of Jewish holy sites, and many of them have not yet been explored. These territories were under Jordanian control and occupation for only nineteen years. In practical terms, they have now been under Israeli sovereignty for more than forty years. As a result, there is nothing preventing their actual annexation into the official national boundaries of the State of Israel.

DON'T FORGET THE NEGEV AND THE GALILEE

Of course, along with our obligation to develop Yehuda and Shomron and enforce Israeli law in these areas, we would be terribly remiss in forgetting that those regions have long since been subject to this law, although it is not being applied there.

In Wadi Ara, Natzrat (the Arab city), and East Yerushalayim, Arab construction continues with full force with no one to stop it. The Arabs are establishing a presence in the Land, occupying hills and valleys throughout Eretz Yisroel. They don't wait for the official permission of the Planning and Construction Committee or for Barack Obama or for anyone at all. As far as they

are concerned, they do not need to ask permission from anyone to build in their own villages, where the construction is illegal anyway.

Even the Bedouins in the Negev have taken control of state land without anyone seeming to care. When the army dares to raze one of their houses, the media goes into convulsions, and Hamas screams about "destroying family homes." Yet, this same duplicitous media declares that the law must be obeyed at all times when Jewish homes in Yehuda and Shomron are being demolished.

The situation in the Negev and the Galilee has been far from ideal for quite some time. The governments of Shimon Peres and Ehud Olmert proclaimed the Judaization of the Negev and the Galilee, but nothing has actually been done about it.

The Minister for the Development of the Negev and Galilee, Vice Premier Silvan Shalom, should enforce the law upon the Arab residents of Umm al-Fahm, and prevent them from their illegal construction projects. But apparently he is much too busy to implement the mandate of his ministry. Instead, he is heavily involved in passing a law that would institute Sunday as an official day of rest . . .

WHERE ARE TERRORISTS APPREHENDED

It is most ironic that Sheikh Raed Salah (may his name be erased) was arrested a few weeks ago in London, of all places. This murderous inciter of violence travels all over Eretz Yisroel, free as a bird, and no one ever bothers to apprehend him. Yet when he leaves the country, he is arrested for his terrorist activities in Eretz Yisroel...



When the army dares to raze one of their houses, the media goes into convulsions. . . Yet, this same duplicitous media declares that the law must be obeyed at all times when Jewish homes in Yehuda and Shomron are being demolished.