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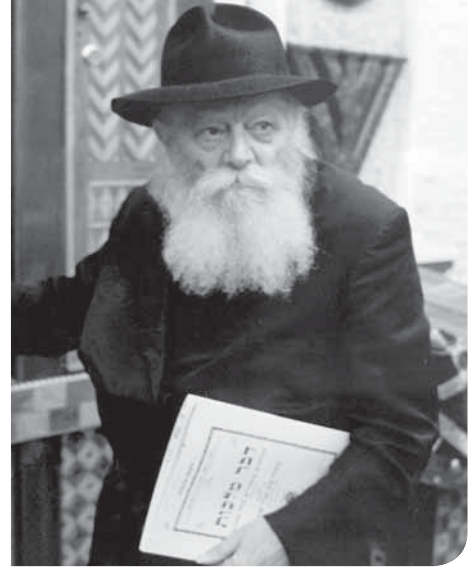
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# WE CAN'T WAIT ANOTHER 1900 YEARS!

The whole time that Moshiach has not arrived, in a way that is apparent in this world, he is stricken with illness, every moment he is tormented with suffering, may G-d have mercy!  
\* Continued from last issue.



Translated by Boruch Merkur

Although when considered on its own it would be possible, at first glance, to interpret the statement, “Every day I await his arrival,” in another way [namely, that Moshiach could come after an extended period of time, G-d forbid], nevertheless, by identifying the primary proof for hoping for Moshiach to come literally today, the [correct] meaning of this statement is clarified, contextualized. That is, it reveals that this statement is to be understood as a supplementary proof, providing an alternate line of reasoning to the main proof, which is based on the words in *davening*, “for we hope for Your salvation all day,” etc., as above.

## PROOF FROM THE ROGATCHOVER GAON

There is, however, addition proof found in the Talmud Yerushalmi ... There it states (Yuma 1:1): “Every generation that did not experience the building (of the Beis HaMikdash) in its days is considered as if it had destroyed it.” The Rogatchover Gaon derives from this Yerushalmi that the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash is an ongoing event;

the whole time that the Beis HaMikdash is not being built, it is as if that generation “had destroyed it”!

Thus, how is it that there are those who have the audacity to say that “every day I await his arrival” means that Moshiach should come not necessarily as early as today but perhaps in a month or a year, or even longer that that – when every moment that passes without Moshiach coming and without the building of the Beis HaMikdash it is as if that generation “had destroyed it”?!

They go on to argue that “every day I await” [i.e., they fulfill **their** part of the deal] but with regard to “his arrival” – that is the business of Moshiach; they leave it for him to come whenever he pleases!

How could this be?! Moshiach wants what every Jew wants – that the redemption should come immediately! Scripture states [regarding Moshiach] that all the while that the redemption has not come: “He bore our illnesses, and carried our pains, etc., he was mortified because of our transgressions, crushed because of our iniquities.” It says in the Gemara that Moshiach “sits

among the poor, those who suffer illnesses,” meaning that the whole time that Moshiach has not arrived, in a way that is apparent in this world, he is stricken with illness, every moment he is tormented with suffering, may G-d have mercy!

That being the case, how do they have the nerve to say that Moshiach and all Jews are able to wait a long time for Moshiach to come? They go on to say that it is not our approach to cry out and demand that Moshiach should come today. They make all these claims, yet it is explicit in the Torah [to the contrary], as above!

How could they possibly say that the coming of Moshiach is to be pushed off for a long time?!

It is well known what is written in Gemara Eruvin (64a; albeit a Tractate that is not studied in yeshivos, it is still a Tractate in Shas) regarding “one who says that this statement is nice and this statement is not nice, etc.,” meaning he doesn’t say that this statement is not to be considered Torah that had been given at Mount Sinai but simply that it is “not nice,” it is not pleasant to speak about it – the Gemara tells us how such a person is to be regarded... [for he loses “the

honor of the Torah and he will eventually forget it" –Rashi].

### **EVEN THE ONE WHO ASKS THE QUESTION KNOWS THAT IT IS NOT TRUE!**

Nevertheless, when these arguments are presented to a Chabadnik, he is confounded and has nothing to answer!

How could it be that you have no answer when the answer is explicit in Tanach, Gemara, and Midrashim, etc.?! This is especially disturbing insofar as even the one who asks the question knows that it is not true!

But we shouldn't talk at length about something that is so exasperating, so shockingly painful. We only speak about Jews in praiseworthy terms – that

“They go on to argue that “every day I await” [i.e., they fulfill their part of the deal] but with regard to “his arrival” – that is the business of Moshiach; they leave it for him to come whenever he pleases!

all these questions and doubts come about because Jews' “[evil] inclinations compelled them,” covering over their inner will. Indeed, in order to confuse him, the Evil Inclination brings proofs from the Torah, in the same sense that Pharaoh argued (as discussed earlier), “Not so; let the men go now [not the children –Rashi] and worship G-d, for that is what you request” (meaning that Pharaoh's argument was that this is actually the will of the Jewish people, as it were, according to Torah!).

Explanations and proofs, however, are not at all necessary. If you ask of a sick person, G-d help us, when he would like to experience salvation and healing – listen to what he answers. With regard to the sickness of exile, affecting the entire Jewish people, it is self-understood and even more readily accepted as fact that “we hope for Your salvation all day” means that the salvation should come literally today.

*(From the address of Shabbos Parshas Eikev 5744, bilti muga)*



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# PERSONAL ENCOUNTERS WITH BABA ELAZAR

To mark the Shloshim of the shocking murder of Rabbi Elazar Abuchatzeira, Beis Moshiach presents recollections of two Chassidim and their encounters with Baba Elazar.

By Nosson Avrohom

**T**he Jewish world was appalled when, shortly after the tragic murder of Leiby Kletzky by a Jew, a Jew murdered Baba Elazar. The kabbalist Baba Elazar, Rabbi Elazar Abuchatzeira, lived in Beer Sheva. He inspired thousands of people with his Torah and Yiras Shamayim and helped countless others with his blessings and advice.

R' Yaakov Ben Ari shared his personal story with the holy mekubal, at a farbrengen that took place in Tzfas.

## ONE OF THE LAST TO BE BLESSED BY THE BABA SALI

In 5743 (1983), after

becoming a baal t'shuva, I went to learn in the yeshiva in Tzfas. A year later, when I returned from a trip to 770, I went to learn in Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in Kfar Chabad. The Chavevu family of Beer Sheva took me under their wing. When I did not have to be in yeshiva for Shabbos, I went to them. They are a warm, loving family who excel when it comes to hospitality. I remember that on Shabbos, the second of Shevat 5744/1984, the rabbi of the Soroka Medical Center was one of their guests.

At the end of the meal, this rabbi announced that he was going back to the hospital to visit Baba Sali, Rabbi Yisroel

Abuchatzeira (1890-1984), who had been hospitalized there for several days. When first becoming religious, I visited Baba Sali in Netivot, and so I jumped at the opportunity to see the tzaddik again. The rabbi was happy to have me join him.

When we arrived at the hospital, I learned that Baba Sali was in the maternity ward on the bottom floor. It was by his request that he had been placed there. We found him lying in bed, with his wife and his personal attendant standing by. First, the rabbi of the hospital went in and received a bracha, and then I went in. The attendant introduced me as a baal t'shuva





Rebbe with older Chassidim surrounding him. This entourage was descending from heaven slowly, like on an escalator made of clouds. They approached me and then turned right. I stood and watched from the side, and at a certain point, I decided to approach the Rebbe to ask for a bracha for a shidduch.

However, all my attempts to approach him failed. My feet seemed to be stuck to the ground. With difficulty, I managed to tap one of the elder Lubavitchers on the shoulder. I pleaded with him to ask the Rebbe for a bracha for me for a good shidduch. This Chassid approached the Rebbe and relayed my request in a whisper. A few moments later, the Chassid came back and said, "The Rebbe said to speak to Rabbi Abuchatzzeira."

I woke up from this dream with mixed emotions. On the one hand, I was happy that the Rebbe came to me in a dream. A Chassid knows that when he dreams about the Rebbe, it is significant. On the other hand, why did the Rebbe not want to bless me himself? I am a Chassid of the Rebbe, so why was he sending me to someone else? These thoughts raced through my mind all day until I decided, with kabbalas ol, that if this was what the Rebbe wished, I would do it. I first called the rosh yeshiva in Tzfas, Rabbi Wilschansky, to consult with him.

Rabbi Wilschansky told me that after the passing of Baba Sali, a few kabbalists from the Abuchatzzeira family had been receiving people "You live in Beer Sheva. So on your next off-Shabbos, go to Baba Elazar. Tell him that you were sent by the Rebbe, and ask for his bracha for a shidduch." It was very strange to me to ask for a bracha from a

who was a mekurav to Chabad.

With the attendant assisting him, Baba Sali made the effort to sit up in bed. He spread out his two hands, as in the priestly blessing, placed them on my head, and blessed me. When he concluded, I kissed his right hand and left.

I was very moved by this encounter. I knew about Baba Sali's close connection with the Rebbe. One could sense that he was a G-dly man.

I returned to my host family. The great joy that accompanied the bracha I had received did not last for long, though. On Sunday, we heard the sad news of the passing of Baba Sali. I was one of

the last to receive his blessing.

### **THE REBBE REFERRED ME TO RABBI ABUCHATZEIRA**

Not long after, although ready for marriage, I was having trouble finding a shidduch. In fact, it was very difficult and there were times that I despaired. All the suggestions that came up were either unsuitable or did not work out. Months went by, and I was approaching thirty. Every time a shidduch fell through, I went felt deeply depressed.

One night, I was sleeping in my dorm room in Kfar Chabad, and I had an incredible dream. In my dream, I saw the

## BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF RABBI ELAZAR ABUCHATZEIRA

R' Elazar Abuchatzzeira was born on 19 Teves, 5708/1948, in Morocco. His father was Rabbi Meir, known as Baba Meir, son of Rabbi Yisroel, known as Baba Sali, and his mother was Rabbanit Simcha who died when he was a boy.

R' Saadia Dahan of Nachalat Har Chabad, learned together with Baba Elazar for a year in Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in Casablanca. Following the shocking murder of Baba Elazar, R' Dahan shared his memories of 47 years ago in the Chabad yeshiva in Morocco.

"I learned in Chabad yeshivos in Morocco ever since my tender years of childhood. I learned in the villages in the Dades region in the Atlas Mountains. The Rebbe's shluchim started schools in thirty-six Moroccan villages, aside from the ones in the big cities, and they saved tens of thousands of Moroccan youth. The Abuchatzzeira family lived in the Tafilalt area, about a hundred kilometers from us.

"In 5723/1963, when I was 19, I learned in Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in Casablanca for nearly a year. That is where I first met R' Elazar Abuchatzzeira. R' Elazar was a grade below me, and his teacher was R' Yitzchok Marciano. I remember R' Elazar well, more so than the other students. This is because the name Abuchatzzeira was sacred in Morocco, and we viewed him as the son of holy people.

"He was a sociable boy who got along well with others. We did not discuss our studies with each other since I was a grade older than he was, but I spoke to

him a lot about various subjects. We often spoke about the Rebbe and Eretz Yisroel. It was already obvious back then that he was special."

Baba Elazar's brothers and relatives also learned in Chabad schools. His brother, the famous kabbalist R' Dovid of Nahariya, also learned in Tomchei T'mimim in Marrakech. He once told R' Saadia's son, Shmulik, that his brother Elazar knew the entire Tanya by heart.

After R' Elazar made aliya with his father, R' Meir, he attended Yeshivat Porat Yosef in Yerushalayim.

From a young age, he was particularly careful about shmiras ha'ainayim (ensuring that he did not see impure sights).

In later years, Baba Sali asked him to receive people. Although Baba Elazar did not wish to do so, he agreed to do this difficult job, listening to people's tzaros, blessing them, and providing counsel.

Thousands of people came to console the Abuchatzzeira family during the Shiva for Baba Elazar, including many Lubavitcher Chassidim. A delegation of Chassidim heard from the brothers and sons about the close connection between the Abuchatzzeira family and Chabad.

R' Dovid Abuchatzzeira said, "Thanks to the Lubavitcher Rebbe, my grandfather, Baba Sali, remained in Eretz Yisroel. He had been determined to leave because of the poor spiritual situation. It was only the Rebbe's instruction to him that made him stay."

person other than the Rebbe, but since this is what the Rebbe said to do, I had to do it.

### I FELT THE REBBE BLESSING ME

When the weekend of my next off-Shabbos arrived, I traveled to Beer Sheva. Before Shabbos, I called Baba Elazar's attendant and told him my story. He gave me an appointment for Sunday.

Arriving at the appointed time, I was ushered into the Rebbe's room. I could only speak with Baba Elazar through his



R' Amram Muell

gabbai. Throughout, the mekubal sat with his head tilted towards the left, so I could not see his face.

I said, "I am here because the Lubavitcher Rebbe sent me, and I request a bracha for a shidduch." The gabbai went over to repeat this to Baba Elazar. I think he said it in Arabic.

Baba Elazar moved slightly and said to me, "*B'karov Mamash* – really soon." I felt relieved when I heard this. I knew this was a phrase the Rebbe often used, and I felt that the Rebbe had blessed me through Baba



## A SH'CHITA KNIFE FROM THE REBBE

A Chabad.info reporter spoke with Baba Elazar's successor, R' Pinchas, about the tragedy and heard about his family's connection with Chabad:

"My father's connection with the Rebbe and with Chabad was very strong. The first yeshiva my father attended was a Chabad yeshiva that was opened by the Rebbe's instruction. My father mentioned this numerous times."

R' Pinchas said emotionally, "My father had a special sh'chita knife that the Rebbe sent my grandfather when he was still in Morocco. My father inherited it, and every Erev Pesach he would take it out of the special place it was kept and would show it to the family while speaking highly of the Rebbe."

## HOLY OF HOLIES!

More of R' Elazar's family members said that his connection with the Rebbe was extraordinary and his admiration for the Rebbe was constantly apparent. "Every time the Rebbe's name was mentioned at the table, R' Elazar would say, 'He is holy of holies,' and would talk about him. When they referred to the Rebbe's shluchim, R' Elazar would praise them."

A number of the mekuravim and family members we spoke to said, "R' Elazar often said that it was only thanks to Chabad that Moroccan Jewry was saved."

A mekurav said, "I don't know if they kept up a correspondence or whether they had a spiritual connection like that of Baba Sali and the Rebbe, but it is clear that Baba Elazar loved the Rebbe from the way he spoke about him."

R' Elazar would have festive meals in honor of various tzaddikim. "I can tell you," said a mekurav, "that on a number of occasions I was invited by R' Elazar to seudos mitzva that he made on special dates in the Chabad calendar like Yud-Tes Kislev. I heard him say that the seuda was being held in honor of the Baal HaTanya."

## PRINTING THE TANYA IN HIS HOUSE

"It's a decree from heaven that we cannot understand. There are no words. 'And Aharon was silent.'" That is what R' Yashar Edery, shliach in Netivot and son-in-law of Baba Sali, said. R' Edery would learn with R' Elazar when he visited Netivot.

"I got married before R' Elazar. I remember that he would come every Friday with his father, R' Meir, to the home of my father-in-law, Baba Sali, in Netivot. It was very special to see the three tzaddikim sitting together and speaking divrei Torah, after they had immersed in the mikva.

"Even in the lifetime of Baba Sali, R' Elazar had students who greatly admired him. He followed in his grandfather's footsteps, emulating the great care he took to protect the purity of his eyes and to devote himself to personal avoda."

A Tanya was printed in R' Elazar's house a few weeks ago, at the initiative of Rabbi Leibel Zajac of Brazil, who is close with the younger brother, R' Dovid Abuchatzera of Nahariya. The printing was done with the encouragement of R' Dovid. He was very moved and kissed the freshly printed pages of the Tanya.

May Baba Elazar be a righteous advocate for Klal Yisroel.

Elazar. I left his room happy and optimistic.

I went back to the yeshiva in Kfar Chabad and waited to see how things would develop. Indeed, I met my wife under unusual circumstances. I became sick, and I asked R' Yehoshua Adot, who was living in Kfar Chabad at the time, to make me some rice. At 5:00, I went to his house to eat the food he had prepared for me. We were sitting and talking when there was a knock at the door. His wife's friend had come to visit. That is how Mrs. Adot made the



R' Yaakov Ben Ari

shidduch between her friend and me.

The suggestion had come up before, but for various reasons, we had never met. Now we met, and we liked one another. We became engaged upon receiving the Rebbe's bracha.

Until today, I do not know why the bracha for my shidduch had to come through R' Abuchatzera. Perhaps it was because a few months earlier I had had the z'chus of being one of the last to receive a bracha from Baba Sali. Whatever the reason, one can imagine how



**“Every time the Rebbe’s name was mentioned at the table, R’ Elazar would say, ‘He is holy of holies,’ and would talk about him.”**

shocked I was when I heard of the murder of Baba Elazar.

### **“AMRAM WILL TELL US A D’VAR TORAH”**

The following story was told at the same farbrengen in the Heichal Levi Yitzchok shul in Tzfas. Rabbi Amram Muell, senior lecturer at Ascent, related the story, which took place in 5742/1982:

The Rebbe spoke highly of the Abuchatzera family. He referred to the many miracles that these kabbalists did. We saw how the Rebbe regarded them with great respect.

I did not know this when I first became involved with Chabad. I was a career soldier in the Air Force. I was serving at a base in Tzrifin. That is where I met Tzvika Rochberger, a Lubavitcher Chassid. He would answer all my questions about Judaism, and he took me to Kfar Chabad to meet with mashpiim and elder Chassidim. They answered my questions and cultivated my appreciation for Chassidus, and I became a Chassid.

My grandmother saw me becoming religious. She expressed to me that she wished me to marry a certain girl from her family, but I adamantly refused. I was a Chabad Chassid, and I wanted to marry a Lubavitcher girl. This girl lived in Moshav Avivim. When my family made plans to visit there for a Shabbos, my grandmother begged me to consider checking her out at the very least. Out of respect, I agreed.

Moshav Avivim is on the Lebanese border. The view is beautiful and the air is crisp. The community is warm and friendly, and everybody knows one another. I was told where I would sleep and found out that the rav and mekubal, Baba Elazar, would be staying there too. He was a regular visitor to the moshav. Every so often, he would just pick up and come to visit, and the locals gave him great honor.

I did not know anything about this great man at the time. I could not relate to the honors they gave Baba Elazar. It all seemed excessive to me. I had no idea how to relate to rabbis of groups other than the Rebbe of Chabad.

At the Friday night meal, I brought my own wine and insisted on making my own Kiddush, while the other guests heard Kiddush from Baba Elazar.

The next day, I woke up early and headed for the mikva. I was sure I would be the first, and was quite surprised to see Baba Elazar leaving as I went in. I also noticed how he spent a long time davening. This intrigued me.

After Shacharis, I ended up sitting facing Baba Elazar at the Shabbos meal. Back then, I was a vegetarian who ate only organic food and never drank alcohol.

Baba Elazar looked at me, and in the middle of saying divrei Torah he stopped, quieted everyone, poured me a cup of arak (a clear, unsweetened aniseed-flavored alcoholic drink) and asked me to drink it. Everybody was watching me, and I was in a dilemma. I did not drink alcohol, but how could

I refuse him? I drank it down in one gulp.

A few minutes later, he stopped speaking again, poured me a second cup and told me to drink it. After the first cup, I had already started hearing muted voices in my mind, and just the thought a second cup made my head reel. Nevertheless, I could not refuse.

At this point, I was hearing ringing in my ears, and the rabbi poured a third cup and told me to drink it. “That will do the job,” he said in Arabic. After the third cup, I did not know where I was. I felt myself floating. Then he quieted everyone and said, “Now, Amram will tell us a d’var Torah on the verse, ‘Lecha Dodi Likras Kalla.’”

I was stunned. I sensed that he knew precisely why I had come to the yishuv, because my grandmother had sent me to meet a girl. Although nobody knew about this aside from my grandmother and me, he knew about it through his own spiritual sources.

What further amazed me was that this maamer, “Lecha Dodi,” was the only maamer I knew well. Many of my friends were already married and had repeated this maamer before their weddings, and so I was very familiar with it. I had also learned it myself several times. Therefore, it was not hard for me to review this maamer of the Rebbe for everyone.

When I finished reviewing it, I burst into tears. After crying for a long time, I fell asleep in a corner of the house. I woke up in confusion at 10:00 Motzaei Shabbos. I saw Baba Elazar sitting near the bed and learning Shulchan Aruch. “What about Mincha? I did not daven Mincha!”



“Then, Baba Elazar began telling me everything I had thought about him during the Shabbos, most of which I would not even dare to express. He did not miss a thing. I felt transparent and deeply ashamed.

my outlook. The Rebbe is the Nasi and Rosh, and beneath him are other tzaddikim with hidden powers, people who have worked on themselves to achieve lofty levels. There is a Moshe Rabbeinu, while a spark of his spirit is passed on to the “heads of thousands” and so on. I returned to Kfar Chabad with this insight and resolved not to disparage any Jew every again.

I went to see him, and I gave him the dollar. I told him it was to make amends for the offense given on that Shabbos. He smiled broadly, took the dollar, and blessed me.

# TRANSFORMING CHALLENGES INTO OPPORTUNITIES

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By Rabbi Yaakov Shmuelevitz

Shliach, Beit Shaan

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**T**he Rebbe explains that exile is not merely a preparation for Geula, but the beginning of the Geula. The second Beis HaMikdash was destroyed in order to enable the building of the third, eternal Beis HaMikdash.

Each of us has a personal Beis HaMikdash in our heart. Additionally, there are miniature Battei Mikdash, i.e. the shuls, Chabad houses, and schools. In each of the above, events can transpire that seem like churban and devastation. However, the Rebbe's shluchim know that such an event is not a churban, but the start of construction. Furthermore, with the kocho of the Rebbe, they transform the negative into positive and see far greater success than they had previously.

## CHABAD INCLUDES EVERYONE

A middle-aged man came to a Chabad house in Florida and asked to speak with the shliach, R' Chaim Lipskar. The man sadly told the rabbi that a dear

family member of his had died. He knew that one is supposed to say Kaddish in such a situation, but he was unfamiliar with the practices in a shul and wanted the rabbi to help him.

R' Lipskar expressed his sympathy, but wanted to hear exactly who had died. In some cases, depending on the identity of the deceased, the mitzvah of Kaddish does not apply, such as when there is a closer relative to say Kaddish, or sometimes the deceased in question is not even Jewish. The man tearfully told him that the dear departed was his beloved dog, who had been part of the family for years.

R' Lipskar kept his cool and made no snide remarks, nor did he immediately inform him that Kaddish is not said in this case. It would have been a shame to say goodbye so quickly to someone who sought guidance from him. Who knew if or when the man would ever come back to shul? Since the man had come, he needed to be mekarev him. He

told the man that it was truly tragic and therefore, they had to decide how to memorialize the pet. He then asked for some time to think about it, and requested that the man come back the next day, at which time he would tell him what to do.

The next day, the man returned. R' Lipskar welcomed him and said that after looking into the matter, it turned out that although the man could not say Kaddish in this case, it would be a very good idea if he heard Kaddish many times. It would also be a good idea if he answered "amen" and "amen yehei shmei rabba."

The man was happy to hear this and wanted to know when and where he could hear the Kaddish repeated frequently. The rabbi provided him with the schedule of the three daily t'fillos, and the man showed up for all of them, weekdays and Shabbos. He listened closely and answered "amen" and "amen yehei shmei rabba."

After a few days of this,

he caught on that people do something with a Siddur and that sometimes you sit and sometimes you stand. He asked the rabbi to explain to him what to do at each t'filla. After that, the man began attending shiurim at the Chabad house and the Shabbos meals. He became a regular guest at the shul and a loyal member of the Chabad community.

That is an example of using a less than optimal situation as an opportunity for growth. (Thank you to Efraim Bernstein, who spent a year on shlichus in Florida and told me this story.)

I might add that there are also stories from which we learn what *not* to do. A senior public figure from Eretz Yisroel went abroad on business for a few days. Before he left, he went to the Chabad house in his city in order to arrange a place to eat on Shabbos when he would be away. When the man returned from his trip, he told his shliach that although he was treated hospitably, he had some complaints. He had told his host that his son was in the army, and would soon become an officer. The shliach told him how there was no reason to be in an army that expels Jews from their homes and therefore, there is no reason to take pride in being in such an army.

If a shliach can circumvent the request to say Kaddish for a dog, then a shliach can also avoid wounding a father's pride, even if he does not agree with him. The goal is to draw people close!

## **"DISASTER" FOR CHABAD IN CITY HALL**

R' Sagi Har Shefer, shliach in Nes Tziyona, related the following story. Thanks to a "churban," all the Chabad mosdos in Nes Tziyona were



Celebrating an upsherinish in the Chabad preschool in Nes Tziyona

**“It sometimes happens that someone announces that he is leaving his position. My first thought is how will we manage without him? Then, the recurring miracle repeats itself: each time someone leaves, another person shows up to replace him that same day.**

opened and developed over the years:

About twenty years ago, when I arrived in Nes Tziyona on shlichus, there was already a Chabad preschool in existence. This gan had been started by the veteran shliach in the city, R' Reuven Feigen, who had done tremendous work in Nes Tziyona. However, for some reason, his preschool never had more than a few registrants. Every year, the municipality said they would have to close the gan because there were too few children.

One of the first things I did was to work hard on increasing the registration. We made many house calls and explained to the

parents why they would be very happy sending their children to our school. When they agreed, we sent them to the city office to register their children for the Chabad gan. We also registered our own daughter, Chaya Mushka.

After a few weeks, I got a phone call from the city's preschool coordinator who said, "Now it is official. The Chabad preschool will be closed due to lack of interest."

I asked her, "What do you mean? How many children are registered?"

She said there was a total of ten children and that did not justify opening the gan. I was incredulous, because according



to my knowledge, there were at least twenty-five children whose parents said they were going to register them in our school.

In order to resolve this, I personally went to the city office and asked to see the registration list for the Chabad gan. The clerk showed me a list of only ten children. An idea suddenly came to me. I asked her whether a girl by the name of Chaya Mushka Har Shefer was registered (most of the city employees knew me by my first name, as R' Sagi). She looked at the list and said, "No,

the Chabad preschool network (legally recognized but not certified) and from that point on, everything went smoothly. Thank G-d, today there is a network of Chabad preschools in Nes Tziyona, Torah schools with nine preschool classes. It is all thanks to the city clerks.

There are other examples of seeming disasters that all ended well. Over the years, we have had dozens, if not hundreds, of employees working for the Chabad house or for Chabad mosdos. It sometimes happens

through dangerous villages and roads. The Intifada was at its height, and on nearly every trip, I was pelted with rocks, cement blocks and Molotov cocktails. I considered canceling the shiur, but I knew that on principle, one does not cancel a shiur.

One Sunday, I went from Alon Moreh to Yakir. Despite all the difficulties in my getting there, nobody showed up for the shiur. Even though each of the participants had valid reasons for not coming, I was very disappointed. I resolved to do something so that not only would this not happen again, but from then on, there would be even more shiurim.

I called the organizer of the shiur in the yishuv and told him how many people showed up. I immediately added that I had no doubt that from now on, it would change for the better. I am not sure what exactly he did, but from then on, attendance at the shiurim has greatly improved. In general, we are all making more of an effort, whether in the preparation for the shiurim, in the publicity, or in combining shiurim with each trip.

Now, every Sunday I leave my house in the afternoon and give my first shiur in Itamar. Then I continue to Yakir, and on the way back I stop to give another shiur in R'cheilim. That is three shiurim, instead of the one that used to be held at that time.

In hindsight, I see that the shiurim that got off to an easy start did not have any major impact. It was the shiurim that were hard to start and maintain that produced the best results.

## ILLNESS FOR THE SAKE OF HEALING

On a personal note, I would

**“After looking into the matter it turned out that although the man could not say Kaddish in this case, it would be a very good idea if he heard Kaddish many times. It would also be a good idea if he answered “amen” and “amen yehei shmei rabba.”**

there is no name like that here.”

She continued checking and discovered that the girl was registered for another religious gan! To answer my question, she explained that the parents of Chaya Mushka Har Shefer said they were not interested in a Chabad school.

“What are talking about? I am her father!”

Yes, it turned out that each year, as part of an insidious and underhanded plot, someone deliberately placed the children in other schools. The involved parties would then be informed that not enough children had registered, so the Chabad school would be closing down.

As soon as I realized what was going on, I decided to take matters into my own hands. In order to do so, I had to change the legal status of the gan. It was placed under the aegis of

that someone announces that he is leaving his position. My first thought is how will we manage without him? Then, the recurring miracle repeats itself: each time someone leaves, another person shows up to replace him that same day. Sometimes the new employees are just as good, if not better than the former employees were.

## TORAH UNDER FIRE

R' Yehuda Rubin, shliach in Alon Moreh and the yishuvim in the heart of the Shomron, tells of another sort of churban that led to tremendous growth:

It was many years ago, before we had the array of shiurim we offer today. I remember a weekly shiur that took place every Sunday at the yishuv of Yakir. Getting to this shiur entailed driving for 45 minutes each way. The route took me

like to share with the readers of *Beis Moshiach* a major difficulty that I have been experiencing over the past year. As scary and difficult as it has been, it is still possible to find many elements of consolation within the difficult moment. I have been diagnosed and treated for cancer. Boruch Hashem, I am doing well, thanks to the doctors, surgery and medical treatments, and many t'fillos. It is a long story and I will focus here on only a few situations that I had to face, which were an impetus for avodas Hashem and my shlichus.

When the disease was discovered, I knew I would have to use everything I had learned over the years to strengthen myself and keep my outlook positive. One of these tools was to think about the worst possible outcome in order to see that even that was not intolerable. In my case, the worst possible outcome would be leaving this world (at that time, I did not know there was something worse than that).

I remember that Friday night, when twenty of my progeny sat around the table and I poured mashke for the boys. I picked up a cup and said to my wife, "L'chaim, with Hashem's help, all will be fine. I will soon be healthy." Even though I was diagnosed with a life-threatening illness, I had great hopes for a refua.

## SPIRITUAL REFUA

We did not suffice with tears and saying l'chaim. We used all our connections with the schools in Beit Shaan, asking every principal to check all the mezuzos in his school. My wife organized this campaign. While I was on my way to the operating room, she continued receiving reports from the schools about their

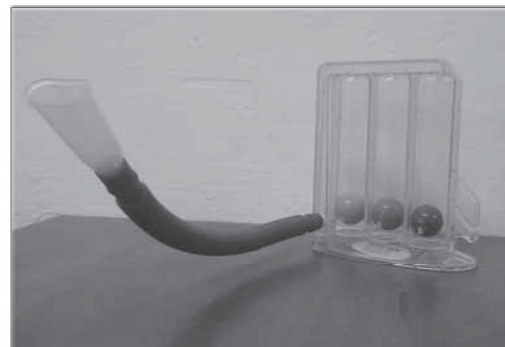
**“One large school gave one hundred mezuzos in to be checked, out of which fifty were kosher. The rest were exchanged for new ones. The other schools acceded to our requests, and within a few days, about 550 mezuzos were checked.”**

mezuzos. One large school gave one hundred mezuzos in to be checked, out of which fifty were kosher. The rest were exchanged for new ones. The other schools acceded to our requests, and within a few days, about 550 mezuzos were checked.

While we waited at the hospital before the operation, my wife and I walked through the entire department and did mitzvaim. I asked the men to put on t'fillin, and my wife wrote to the Rebbe through the Igros Kodesh with the women. There was an older man there who had had some toes amputated. After I put t'fillin on with him, he wanted to buy new t'fillin. I asked him if he would still be in the hospital in another four days and he said, "Yes, definitely. The doctor said it would take at least a week."

Two hours later, I saw him dressed and on his way out. I asked him in surprise, "What's going on?" He said that the doctor had examined his foot and found it to be fine and had released him. The man did not even understand why I was so surprised. "After all, you put t'fillin on with me," he said.

There was a man in that department lying in a vegetative state. His daughter, who sat with him, explained that he had had an operation the week before. Although he had recovered well from it, he had a stroke afterwards. Since then, he had been unresponsive. I put t'fillin on the man and his wife wrote to



My breathing device

the Rebbe, asking for a bracha in the Igros Kodesh.

Two hours later, his daughter came running over and exclaimed, "Come and see my father! He opened his eyes and is talking!"

Many other relatives showed up, having heard of the astonishing recovery. They all spoke about angels who had resurrected the "vegetable."

Hundreds of people in Beit Shaan and elsewhere rent the heavens with their prayers and good hachlatos. As the weeks and months passed, we heard from more and more people who had prayed for me in shuls, schools, preschools, homes, at the Kosel, and at Miron. New shiurim were started, and the entire T'hillim was divided daily.

## T'HILLIM AND THREE BALLS

After the surgery to remove a malignant tumor is over, the lungs are traumatized and the patient naturally wants to breathe shallowly. In order to accustom the patient to breathe deeply

again, the hospital gives him a clear plastic device (see picture) that has a plastic ball in each compartment, one heavier than the next. A strong breath lifts the lightest ball. An even stronger breath lifts the light ball and the ball that is a little heavier. A very strong breath (that even healthy people cannot always manage) lifts all three balls. I would practice breathing with this device, and every day following the surgery, a nurse came and checked my progress, based on the number of balls that I was

## SUFFERING SIDE EFFECTS

Then came the chemotherapy treatments. The treatments lasted only a few days in each series, but the side effects that followed were sometimes harder and no less frightening than the disease itself.

The Shabbos after the first chemotherapy treatment was horrible. It began on Friday with a peculiar and unpleasant feeling, as though a poison had entered my brain and my entire body. On Friday afternoon, we tried to

not know I had. Sometimes, upon returning to Beit Shaan following a day of chemotherapy, I went to give a shiur. Sometimes, I would teach two or three shiurim on the same night, and only after all of the shiurim would I go home to rest. There were people attending the shiurim who worriedly asked one another why I looked jaundiced, but the shiurim generally went okay, as usual.

The subsequent treatments were relatively easier to bear. I knew what to expect and that all the nasty side effects would last a few days before passing. I also knew that although this was an unpleasant experience, I had to deal with it since it was part of the healing process. I thought about how it was similar to the galus experience that we experience for the sake of Geula and yet, we cry out, "Enough galus! Please Hashem, the time for Geula has arrived!"

**“I put t’fillin on the man and his wife wrote to the Rebbe, asking for a bracha in the Igros Kodesh. Two hours later, his daughter came running over and exclaimed, “Come and see my father! He opened his eyes and is talking!”**

able to raise.

As soon as I was released from the hospital, I visited schools and preschools and showed them the “game” I had been given. “You must have noticed that I wasn’t here for a while,” I said to the children. “I was in the hospital, and I heard that you prayed every day for my recovery. Your prayers helped very much. I had an operation and then I was sent home. I was given this game in the hospital.”

I showed it to them and explained how it worked, and how I had made progress with it thanks to their prayers. I demonstrated how it was used, blew with all my strength, and all three balls flew upwards. The children in all the classes and preschools clapped their hands and I told them, “It was thanks to the t’fillos and chapters of T’hillim that you said for me.”

call various clinics, but nobody answered.

Despite the frightening sensation, I went to shul. In the middle of Mincha, the feeling intensified. By the end of Mincha, I felt I could no longer stand and say a d’var Torah as I do every Shabbos, nor could I sit and say it. I asked someone else to say a d’var Torah. Within a few minutes, I felt I would faint at any moment, so I quietly left the shul and went home.

I was in bed all Shabbos, half-asleep, half in a haze. I was very worried and frightened, not knowing what was happening to me. I heard Kiddush, the z’miros, and Havdala from my bed in a fog. A few hours after Shabbos, after taking some pain relief medication, I felt a little better. With every passing day, I felt somewhat stronger.

I discovered strengths I did

## DON’T LOOK AT APPEARANCES

One of the common side effects of chemotherapy is hair loss. This is not physically painful, but it can be extremely disconcerting for both the patient and those who see him. When I returned to the school where I work as the rabbi, I saw how the children looked frightened. Some of them were brave enough to ask, “What happened to your beard?” Some of them did not know who I was. Most of the children did not dare to say anything. Some looked as though they had seen a ghost, some laughed, and others ran away.

That day there was an assembly in honor of Rosh Chodesh Nissan and the Birkas Ilanos. The principal gently asked me whether I wanted to address the children. I said that



I did, and I took the microphone and said, “Good morning” and “Chodesh tov” in the most cheerful voice I could muster. I said that some children had asked me what happened to my beard. I explained that I was sick and had to be treated, and that one of the side effects was hair loss. The doctor asked me whether I was prepared to take this medicine and I said that if it helped my health, I was willing to take it despite the hair loss. “So you see children, my beard went away on a trip and with Hashem’s help, it will be back soon.” When the children and teachers heard me speaking candidly about my illness, they calmed down.

In conclusion, I made a play on the words of the Mishna, “Don’t look at the container (*kankan*, but instead I said *zekankan*, i.e. tiny beard) but at what it contains.” Some of the children laughed, but I saw that some teachers cried.

### SUPPORT

It was not just the children; even adults react in various ways



Rabbi Shmuelewitz in 770 (center)

to the side effects. Some people thought of my future, while others just crossed to the other side of the street when they saw me. However, Baruch Hashem, I have good and brave friends who called me every few days to ask me how I was feeling. Some were especially helpful, coming to visit, helping me with whatever I asked

and going way beyond that.

\*\*\*

I pray that we do not need any more disasters to transform, but that all the days of sadness and fasting are transformed into days of rejoicing with the coming of Moshiach now!

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# HIJACKED TERMINOLOGY

By Yisroel Harpaz



**I**n all the hype surrounding the recent upheaval in the Middle East, I noticed a shocking level of illiteracy prevalent in the discussion by politicians, experts, and the media. So I thought I would help clear the air by providing a few simple definitions that could get people thinking on the right track, and maybe help everyone see things a little more clearly.

Take the word *peace* for example. The word peace in the context of relations between nations is, “A state of harmony between people.” It follows that it is only reasonable to negotiate a peace agreement with people when their dedication to living in harmony can be reasonably guaranteed. Making peace with people who deny your existence, incite others against you, are members of an international terrorist conspiracy to destroy your way of life, call for your destruction in their official charter, teach their children to hate you and destroy you or die trying, and admit openly that they use the concessions they receive through peace negotiations as

a strategic asset in their quest to destroy you, is not peace. It is a game of extortion and capitulation. We shouldn’t even be speaking about peace, since a prerequisite for peace is the rehabilitation of Arab society into a culture that wishes to live in harmony with us. Until that time comes, the word peace is completely irrelevant, and instead we should focus on achieving calm by subjugating the enemy — a.k.a., winning the war.

Let’s also take the word *refugee*, which is defined as “a person forced to leave their country to escape war, persecution or natural disaster.” Children of refugees are not considered refugees. Hundreds of thousands of Arabs and Jews were forced to leave their homes when the State of Israel was founded — almost an equal number actually. The Jewish refugees resettled in Israel and other places. The Arab refugees were forced to live in squalor in refugee camps, and never accepted as citizens by their host nations, in order to leverage their suffering against

Israel. And unlike any other people in the world, their refugee status is inherited by their descendants through a perverse UN mechanism that perpetuates their suffering and enables their continued exploitation. According to this formula, I would be called an Egyptian refugee. My mother’s family left Egypt in the early 1950’s, forced out by a suddenly hostile government that confiscated all their property and their rights. I should be living in a refugee camp in Gaza, demanding the right to return to my familial villa in Alexandria, and receive restitution for all the assets stolen from my grandfather. And I should also be blowing up the pyramids unless the Egyptians accede to my demands. Refugee status is meant as a mechanism to address injustice, but a distorted refugee regime is being applied, to the detriment of the refugees it is supposed to protect, as a weapon against Israel.

What about the word *withdrawal*? In military terms, a withdrawal means to “retreat forces back while maintaining contact with the enemy. A withdrawal may be undertaken as part of a general retreat, to consolidate forces, to occupy ground that is more easily defended, or to lead the enemy into an ambush.” So what is the talk of Israel withdrawing all about? The territory Israel captured and settled was for defensive purposes. With this

**“I should be living in a refugee camp in Gaza, demanding the right to return to my familial villa in Alexandria, and receive restitution for all the assets stolen from my grandfather. And I should also be blowing up the pyramids unless the Egyptians accede to my demands.”**

territory, Israel can defend itself. Without it, Israel is vulnerable to attack and destruction. End of story.

And while we're on the topic, let's talk about *occupation*, which "occurs when the control and authority over a territory passes to a hostile army." The assumption is that the occupied nation had control and authority of the territory beforehand. Tell me, who was in control of Gaza and the West Bank before 1967? Egypt and Jordan, respectively. Who was in control of Palestine before 1948? The British. And before that the Ottomans. And before that the Romans. And the Assyrians. And the Babylonians. And the Israelites. And the Canaanites. So whose land is Israel occupying exactly? What nation ever claimed sovereignty there in recent history, or ever ran a functional society there? I'm not denying that Arabs lived here, or that there suffering is real. But, like I said, my family lived in Egypt, and we are not going back. Their real enemy and the true cause of their suffering is their own brothers and leaders who co-opted their heats and



Jewish refugee from Iraq

minds and concocted their twisted reality in order to fight Israel.

What should be clear from all of this is that the current discourse is not meant to arrive at a just solution, but at a modern, more gentrified version of the final solution. We should stand strong and have faith that truth

and justice will prevail, insist on accurate representation of terms and facts, and not cede an inch to radical misrepresentations that hijack the terminology and mechanisms of justice and democracy to facilitate oppression, empower terror and foment genocide.

(From Exodus Magazine)

## Continued from page 21

that occurs when dealing with things outside of our everyday experience—and the resulting necessity to replace some of our old assumptions with new ones—applies to everything in the world. Frequently, we see something as “down” when it is really “up.” We see something as bad when in truth it is good. We cannot believe our eyes! Chassidus teaches us how to deal with this tendency – Tracht Gut. We ought to think of everything

as good, i.e. we should replace our assumptions that told us that it is bad with new assumptions that tell us that it is good. We say, “Gam Zu L’tova –This is also good.”

Need we say that this applies also to our ability to see the new world order of the Geula both in the world at large and in our personal lives? Thus, in this week’s parsha, R’ei (which means to see), in 5751, the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach gave the following clear instruction,

emphasized in italic print in the sicha (Dvar Malchus):

“To announce and publicize everywhere—with words that come from the heart—that Hashem says (through His servants the prophets) to each and every Jew, ‘See that I put before you today a blessing,’ so much so, that literally today we see with our physical eyes the blessing of the true and complete Geula.”

May Hashem grant that our eyes see it now!

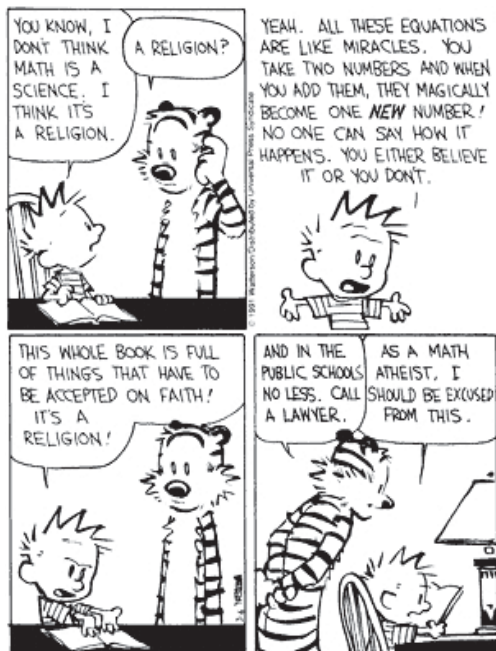


# SEEING IS NOT BELIEVING



By Prof. Shimon Silman, RYAL Institute and Touro College

Let's start with a joke. My son Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Silman, a shliach in South Africa, sent me the cartoon below. The author claims that math is not a science because no one really knows how two numbers combine to form a new number. You have to accept it on faith and "you either believe it or you don't." The reason this is funny is because everyone knows how to add and everyone knows how those two numbers, when added, become a new number.



However, maybe it is not that funny. In 1971, I was a student at the Technion, the Israel Institute of Technology in Haifa. It has a very intense program—they call it the "MIT of Israel"—and everyone had his own methods of survival and success. One student from England had a very simple way of dealing with difficult theorems (mathematical statements that have a proof). "If I understand the proof," he said, "that's fine. If I don't understand it, then I just take the theorem as an axiom."

Axioms are the basic assumptions upon which a logical argument is based. Many people think that an axiom is an unquestionable fact, an unquestionable truth, as in the expression "it's axiomatic." However, nothing could be further from the truth! An axiom is not something you assume because it is obviously true. Rather it is something you assume because there is no proof that it is true and so you have no choice but to assume it is so. Thus, the student from England was saying that if he could not understand the proof—if he had no proof for it—he would just take it as an assumption. This, in effect,

is in line with the philosophy of modern science where a statement that no one has any proof for but which people believe to be true is taken as an axiom. Therefore, it is really the weakest link in the chain of logic because the statement is accepted on faith.

However, what if someone does not want to accept that statement on faith? Then—according to modern science—he does not have to. He is free to reject it or replace it with a different assumption. Or, as the student in our cartoon says, "you either believe it or you don't."

This is the point of view of modern science, and it applies to all areas of math and science. Science—according to science itself—does not claim to declare the truth. All it claims to say is "If you accept these assumptions and these methods of reasoning, then this and that will follow." (For more on all this, see my book *Scientific Thought in Messianic Times*, "Introduction" and the section "Wisdom From Below—Elements of Modern Science.")

## ABSTRACT LOGIC

In the Igros Kodesh of Rabbi

Levi Yitzchok Schneerson, the Baal Ha'hilula of Chaf Menachem Av, there is a letter which he sent to his two sons, the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach and Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib, on the occasion of the Hilula of the Alter Rebbe, 24 Teves, 5692 (1932). In it, he discusses many Kabbalistic concepts in his usual fashion, but he also talks about logic and axioms, which he also explains on the Kabbalistic level. He writes:

"In mathematics, as well as in every intellectual matter, there must be two things: 1) Elementary concepts and axioms, for example, that the whole is greater than any of its parts. 2) On this [foundation] all the mathematical ideas and theories are built.

"These two aspects are chochma and bina. Chochma is the basic concepts and bina is the ideas that are built on the basic concepts."

We see what a good axiom should be like from Rabbi Levi Yitzchok's example of an axiom: "The whole is greater than any of its parts." It is intuitive enough to believe but not complex enough to require proof from more basic concepts.

In contrast, take one of Euclid's axioms of geometry, the famous "parallel postulate." This postulate, which states that if you have a line, you can only draw one line parallel to it through any given point, was challenged from the beginning. Many scholars held that it was not intuitive enough to be accepted without proof. Many tried to prove it from Euclid's other axioms or from newer, simpler axioms, but they all failed. The issue perplexed mathematicians for 2,000 years until they realized that "you either believe it or you don't,"

as our student in the cartoon would have said. This happened in the 1800's when the Zohar's prediction that in the year 1840 new "wisdom from below" would come into the world to pave the way for Moshiach.

Mathematicians began to introduce new non-Euclidean systems of geometry where the parallel postulate was replaced by other axioms. One of these geometric systems, called "Riemannian Geometry," provided Einstein with the tools he needed to develop his theory of General Relativity.

The Rebbe MH"M uses these examples of the various geometries and the tentative nature of axioms and conclusions based on them to make the point that one can never challenge something in the Torah—which is absolute truth—based on something in science.

The advancement of science itself depends on this awareness as well. Einstein was once asked how he came up with his theory of Relativity. He replied, "By challenging an axiom."

## CHALLENGING OUR AXIOMS—WHICH WAY IS UP?

We see with our eyes. However, what do we see with our eyes? Of course, our eyes send impulses to our brains, which interprets what we see. What has recently been discovered, however (as reported to me by Reb Meir Schmuckler), is that when we see something, ten times as many impulses are sent from the brain to the eyes as those that come from the eyes to the brain. This means that the brain is not only interpreting what we see, but much more than that, it is telling us what to see.

In terms of what we have been saying, this means that the assumptions that we make about how the world should be like—our axioms—actually determine what we see the world to be.

Of course, we need our brains to function in this manner in order to be able deal with the world properly. For example, if we come to a stairway going up and a stairway going down, our perspective of the physical world, based on our experiences and the resulting assumption we make about the stairways, enables us to decide which one goes up and which one goes down. However, as in all areas of logic, when you push them to their limits they break down, as we will see by considering the following famous optical illusion.

Optical illusions are now studied extensively by mathematicians, engineers, neuroscientists and psychologists as well as by artists and magicians. Every year the magazine Scientific American sponsors a contest for the best new optical illusions. The illusion that won this year appears to demonstrate antigravity. Some balls are placed on an incline and they appear to roll up the incline, but they are really rolling down. It is just that because of the way the brain tells the eyes to see, we see it as up. From a different perspective, however, it is clearly down. (See Scientific American, July 2011. The article also contains instructions on how to construct the apparatus for this illusion. For a video demonstration of a simpler version of the illusion, see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vmkaVoLoFEU&NR=1>.)

This breakdown of logic

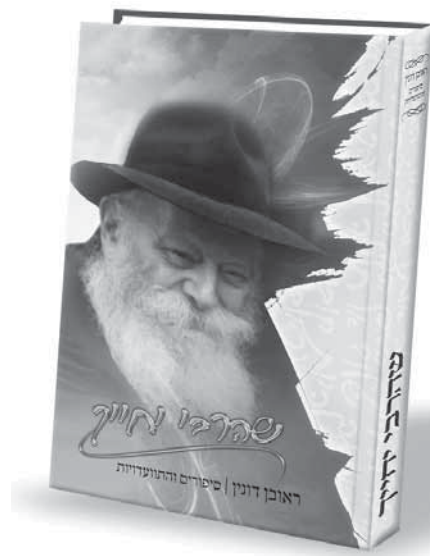
Continued on page 19

# REUVEN DUNIN ON T'FILLA

Beis Moshiach is pleased to bring this third excerpt from the seifer “So That The Rebbe Should Smile,” containing more than five hundred brief stories and recollections of the illustrious chassid, R’ Reuven Dunin of Haifa.

Collected and Arranged by Chanoch HaLevi Shachar

Translated by Michael Leib Dobry



## DAVENING WITHOUT ‘BLITUS’

With regard to davening, Reuven was in a constant quandary. On the one hand, Reuven wanted – at least on Shabbos – to spend more time praying. On the other hand, however, concerned as he was about external appearances, he was very careful to do whatever possible to keep people from knowing about it. One Shabbos, I went up to Reuven as he was sitting in a remote corner of the shul and singing with the congregation, giving us reason to believe that he was davening together with the chazzan. Yet, I noticed that he was still before “Baruch She’Amar,” while we were already finishing Musaf. When I took another step towards him, he gave me a stern look.

During the Shabbos meal, there always came a point (generally around three or four o’clock in the afternoon during the summer months) when Reuven would say, “Fine, now we’ll take a break,” and would then go to his room. We thought

that this was his way of saying, “I’m going to take a nap.” However, it turned out that he was simply taking a break from our farbrengen to finish his lengthy davening. There were those who said that the fiery look in his eyes when he came out for Mincha at around six o’clock, which seemed to be due to lack of sleep, was actually due to something else quite different.

(Chanoch HaLevi Shachar)

## WHY ARE YOU SHUCKLING?

Reuven was repelled by any form of superficial behavior, as Chassidus teaches us to serve G-d *b’p’nimius*. Thus, it once happened during davening in Ramat Aviv that he noticed a bachur shuckling a bit too much for his taste. During the farbrengen that took place later, Reuven asked, “Why were you shuckling? Do you see the tall building across the street? If you were to stand on the high ledge, would you shuckle there? You would be afraid to move, yet how tall is it after all? When you stand during davening at such

awesome heights, how can you not be afraid?”

(Dan Ellstein)

## DID YOU RECEIVE PERMISSION?

I was standing in shul once during davening and chatting. Reuven passed by and asked, “Did you receive permission to talk?”

I looked at him and asked, “From whom do I have to ask permission?”

Reuven replied, “From the t’fillin,” and continued on his way.

(Yosef Shechter)

## FOR REAL

Reuven said that when he studied in Lud, there was a bachur who davened at great length and swayed a lot when he davened. He and his friends decided to test him to find out whether he was authentic or just a fraud. They took a towel that had been a few days in the mikveh and had a pungent smell, intending to throw the towel on the head of this bachur. Just as they were about to throw it, R’



Shlomo Chaim [Kesselman] a”h passed by and said, “Leave him alone, *he’s davening for real.*”

(Chanoch HaLevi Shachar)

## A TZADDIK KNOWS HIS SOUL

A bachur who came as a guest from one of the yeshivos came up to Reuven on an Erev Shabbos in the middle of davening. Reuven gave a little growl in his direction, and the bachur went away. After davening, Reuven said to him, “Why did you come to disturb me in the middle of davening? I have enough improper thoughts of my own. I do not need yours as well.”

(Chanoch HaLevi Shachar)

## “K’GAVNA”

One Erev Shabbos, a young man wearing a knitted kippa approached Reuven after davening and told him that whenever he reaches “*K’gavna*” at the end of Kabbalas Shabbos, he heart fills with a sense of pure joy stemming from the extra holiness of Shabbos. Reuven replied, “Isn’t *‘Lchu N’ranena*’ good enough for you? That’s right at the start!”

(Chanoch HaLevi Shachar)

## THE CHASSIDIC MEANING OF “CHAZZAN”

One year around Rosh Hashanah time, Reuven prepared the groundwork for the t’fillos of the High Holidays. “There’s a well-known saying that the word

*Chazan* (cantor) is an acronym for ‘*Chazanim zainen narahnim*’ (chazanim are fools). While the phrase has many interpretations, the chassidic interpretation is that the chamber of melody is located near the chamber of t’shuva, and the chazzan who has already reached the chamber of melody merely has to jump to the other side to enter the chamber of t’shuva. But he is stuck in the chamber of melody with his chazanus and he can’t get out.” Obviously, no one wanted to daven for the amud that Rosh Hashanah.

(Chanoch HaLevi Shachar)

## “AND THE COWS SANG”

One Shabbos, we went to a shul at the other end of the

chosen, and he started to sing for us like a cantor. When we returned for the Shabbos meal, Reuven said: “I always asked myself, ‘What did the prophet mean in the pasuk, ‘*VaYisharna Haparos*’ (the literal meaning is ‘and the cows went straight’, but can also mean, ‘and the cows sang’)? What exactly did they sing? Today, I understood after I was privileged to hear it for myself.”

(Chanoch HaLevi Shachar)

## DAVENING AT LENGTH

One of Reuven’s mekuravim asked him if he could daven at great length. Reuven replied, “Yes. When you are with the minyan, act as if you are davening with them. Afterwards, go home



“The chassidic interpretation is that the chamber of melody is located near the chamber of t’shuva, and the chazzan who has already reached the chamber of melody merely has to jump to the other side to enter the chamber of t’shuva.”

Ramat Remez neighborhood and started the usual efforts to convince someone to lead the davening. No one wanted to take the amud, whether due to a sense – true or false – of humility or the fear of being reprimanded by Reuven. Eventually, Reuven made a fervent appeal to one of the bachurim that he should lead the davening. This bachur was actually pleased to have been

and daven at length.”

On another occasion, one of the yungerlait asked Reuven, “How does one really daven *b’arichus*?”

Reuven replied, “You have to remember that the words appearing in the siddur are to be interpreted literally, and similarly, you have to say them truthfully.”

(Rabbi Lior Rosenbaum)

ADD IN ACTS OF GOODNESS & KINDNESS  
**TO BRING MOSHIACH NOW!**

# SOUL POWER

By Rabbi Tuvia Bolton,

Mashpia In Yeshiva Ohr T'mimim Of Kfar Chabad



This week in Parshas R'ei, we again read the laws concerning a false prophet and other charlatans who lead Jews astray.

"If there appears a prophet or dreamer...And he makes miracles or signs...And then says 'Let us worship other gods'... That prophet should be killed." (D'varim 13: 2-6)

What is this idea of 'other gods'? Is there really such a thing? Isn't G-d defined as One?

Even were to take this concept of existing gods other than our G-d at face value, what is wrong with worshipping them? It does not harm anyone! In fact, such a practice seems to benefit the worshiper.

Any worship of a spiritual force or being other than or in addition to the Creator is idolatry. In this light, it is obvious that billions of people are idolaters in one form or another. If G-d abhors idolatry, then why is it so popular and successful?

Here is a frightening story that will answer the question.

It was a dark cold night in Russia some two hundred and fifty years ago. The great Tzaddik Rabbi Yehoshua Heschel of Apta was sitting in his study learning Torah when he heard a knock at his door.

It was three in the morning. It was very unusual that anyone would knock at this hour unless it truly was an emergency.

The door was opened for an obviously distraught man, and in moments, he was standing before

the Rebbe. His wrinkled clothes were in terrible disarray, as though he had not slept in days, and he looked almost insane with anxiety.

"Rebbe!" he pleaded with wide eyes red from weeping and exhaustion, "My wife has been in labor for the last three days, but the baby won't come. The doctors say they will have to operate, but they are worried. Please Rebbe, do something! Tell me what to do!"

The Rebbe folded his hands on the table before him and then lowered his head on his hands, as though in deep contemplation or prayer.

He remained that way for several minutes while the poor man stood there bewildered not knowing what to do. Should he leave? Should he say something?

The Rebbe finally lifted his head and said solemnly "You can go home. You have a new son. Your wife just gave birth to a boy. Mazal Tov"

The visitor could not believe his ears. He was overcome with great relief! However, why was the Rebbe so serious? He grabbed the Rebbe's hand between his and shook it repeatedly, saying, "Thank you Rebbe, thank you!" He backed out of the room almost falling over his own feet and ran home as fast as possible.

As soon as he opened the door he heard the thin cries of his baby, and there was his wife,

exhausted but alive and even faintly smiling! He burst into tears of grateful joy. It was a miracle!

The next day he returned to the Rebbe to apologize for barging in the previous night and to thank him again. However, the Rebbe's Chassidim intercepted him before he entered to convince him to ask the Rebbe why he had to put his head down in such a fashion.

At first, the fellow would have no part of it. Finally, though, he agreed. As he was about to leave the Rebbe's room he humbly requested an explanation for his son's miraculous birth. The Rebbe replied with the utmost seriousness:

"Of course I will explain. You see, the soul of your son is a very high soul. It did not want to leave the pure spiritual truth of heaven to enter this deceptive world full of tribulations and difficulties.

"However, I explained to it that when it descends to the world it will be given special powers that are not available to it even in the highest spiritual realms. These special powers will enable it to serve G-d above all limitations.

"And it worked! The soul agreed to come into the world, and your wife gave birth."

When the Chassidim heard this explanation, they took great

interest in this child, for they were waiting in great anticipation to see what a great person he would grow to become!

A year after he was born his mother passed away. Then seven years later, his father also departed this world, leaving the boy an orphan of both his parents.

He moved from one relative to another. While the Chassidim did what they could to provide support for the young boy, there was not much that could be done in those terrible days of persecution and poverty under the Czar Nicholas (of cursed memory).


The Czar, an avid Russian Orthodox, decided that forcefully inducting Jewish children into the army was the best way to convert them. Many young boys were forcibly pulled from their homes in the name of this terrible edict. When this special boy was only ten years old, he was kidnapped and brought to the army along with another boy. From then on, the only connection the Chassidim had with him was by mail. They would write to him once a week and the boy would answer when he could.

His rare letters were full of bitter complaints about how they were torturing and punishing him and his friends for not eating pork and for trying to keep the Shabbat, but that he had resolved that he would never be separated from the G-d of Israel.

Then the letters stopped.

Half a year later, the Chassidim received a letter from the boy's friend relating that the boy had died from a beating he received for refusing to convert. (Beis Moshiah Magazine #470 pg. 23, see Likkutei Sippurim, Perlov pg. 270)

These were the special powers

 **“You see, the soul of your son is a very high soul. It did not want to leave the pure spiritual truth of heaven to enter this deceptive world full of tribulations and difficulties. However, I explained to it that when it descends to the world it will be given special powers that are not available to it even in the highest spiritual realms.”**

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that the Rebbe promised the soul. This soul received the gift of self-sacrifice, and it is what has been keeping Judaism strong against all odds for four thousand years since the time of Abraham. A Jew cannot bear to be separated from the Creator of the Universe.

They know and feel that G-d creates all beings. He is infinitely far (creating even the spiritual) and infinitely close (creating each of us constantly) and His Torah is the *only* means through which He has conveyed His desires to all humanity.

Thus, the Jewish people intuitively understand that denial of this, or belief in any other form of a higher power, even a spiritual one, is idolatry.

This certainty, that special power, is revealed in the Jewish soul only when there is a challenge. That is why G-d lets idolatry succeed, so that this special energy of self-sacrifice will have the opportunity to shine.

However, this is only the negative view of the picture.

We can understand the positive aspect of this self-sacrifice from a story I heard from the lecturer Rabbi Yosef Y Jacobson.

A man once came before the Lubavitcher Rebbe with a unique proposition. He proposed that at every Passover Seder there should be an empty chair at the

Seder table.

An empty chair would serve as a reminder of the six million Jews that are missing, that were murdered in the Holocaust and will never attend a Seder. If the Rebbe would endorse or even agree with this innovation, it would certainly be of tremendous benefit to outreach campaigns that seek to inspire the unaffiliated Jews. Why, if they would promote such an idea, it would be so moving and poignant that many more Jews would surely agree to be involved in a Passover Seder that year, feeling connected to a history all their own and the responsibility that it demands of them!

The Rebbe listened, and when the man finished he replied that he agreed with the idea! Adding a chair to the Seder table would certainly have a good and positive effect.

However, he did not agree that the chair should be empty! An empty chair would only dull the joy of the holiday, which is a clear prohibition in the Torah.

The best way to remember the Holocaust, suggested the Rebbe, would be by adding a *full* chair. Every family should be sure to add someone, bring another Jew in from the street to join their festive meal!

**Continued on page 28**



# THE TRIPLE HEADER

By Rabbi Heschel Greenberg  
 Founder and Director of the Jewish Discovery Center of Buffalo, NY



## WHY THREE PROHIBITIONS?

This week's parsha R'ei cites the commandment not to eat a mixture of milk and meat. This Mitzvah was mentioned in two earlier sections. It is mentioned first in the parsha called Mishpatim that deals primarily with civil law as well as in the parsha called Ki Tisa that contains the story of the golden calf, and now a third time in this week's parsha, which states "do not cook a kid in the milk of its mother."

Rashi, citing a Talmudic source, comments that the three identical prohibitions actually represent three separate prohibitions: one may not cook milk and meat; one may not eat a mixture of milk and meat, and one may not derive any benefit from that mixture, such as selling it or feeding it to one's animal.

We can gain insight into understanding why the Torah chose to divide this prohibition into three parts and why were they placed specifically in these three Torah portions by way of introduction.

## REFLECT ON THREE THINGS

In Avos (Ethics of the Fathers), the Talmudic tract that deals with Jewish ethics, the Sages state: "Reflect upon three things... know from where you came..."

The Rebbe asked why the need for the introduction of "Reflect on three things?" It could have just stated: "Reflect on where you came from etc." Moreover, why did he have to stress the number three?

The Rebbe answered that this teaching highlights the existence of **three** pivotal entities in our lives. It is not just referring to us and to G-d. We must reflect on a third entity as well—the world around us. It does not suffice to have a relationship with G-d; one must also take that relationship and apply it to the world.

We were placed here not just to use the world and its resources as a means to cement our own relationship with G-d. The world around us rates as an equal partner in the scheme of creation. Our mission is to effect a change in the world. In the words of the Midrash: "G-d desired a dwelling

place in the lowest of domains." We make that happen by bringing G-dly light into the world.

We can now understand why the Torah emphasizes the prohibition of mixing milk and meat thrice, and specifically in the aforementioned Torah portions. Each mention of this prohibition is geared to underscore one of the three aspects of existence upon which we must reflect on as well as how compliance with this proscription helps us realize each of these three aspects.

## THE FIRST LINK: THE SOCIAL ASPECT

The first time the commandment appears is in the context of the rational and social commandments called Mishpatim such as not stealing, lying etc.

That parsha—which follows immediately after the revelation of G-d on Mount Sinai to give us the Torah—focuses on the Torah's objective of making the world a G-dly place. It does not suffice to be in a spiritual relationship with G-d while ignoring the rest of existence. In this context, the prohibition against mixtures of milk and meat also possesses a social character.

According to some commentators, one must distance oneself from engaging in

**“Moshiach is also the one who achieves the third and ultimate goal through emphasizing the uniqueness of the Jewish nation.**

an activity that can be construed as a lack of sensitivity to G-d's creatures. As some commentators state, cooking a kid in the milk of its mother is the epitome of cruelty. Thus, the Torah wishes to sensitize us by enjoining us from engaging in such an act.

In addition, as the Chinuch and others explain, this prohibition is directed against the notion that we may unreservedly manipulate the world of nature. Meat and milk represent diverse forces with which one may not tamper. We may not take the liberty to mix them and thereby undermine G-d's system of nature.

This explanation, too, relates to the idea of Mishpatim. Mishpatim are the laws that govern society and ensure a stable and harmonious world. Anything we do to disrupt that harmony and balance will prove detrimental to our own personal stability and balance as well as negatively affect the world around us. Mishpatim were the first set of commandments given at Sinai—subsequent to the initial Ten Commandments (see Rashi and Mechilta on the beginning of the parsha). The reason for the juxtaposition of the Mishpatim to the Sinai experience is to underscore that the Torah's main objective is to transform the world into a G-dly domain. This we accomplish by specifically observing the Mishpatim that help us make the world into a peaceful and harmonious place.

To be sure, this Torah portion also contains the more spiritual types of Mitzvos. However, in the context of this parsha, they are also geared to making the world around us into a more spiritual and G-dly place. The focus remains the same: Do not ignore the third link in this Divine chain.

## THE SECOND LINK: THE DIVINE ASPECT

The second time we read this commandment is in the context of the golden calf. After having degenerated into idolatry so soon after we heard G-d's voice telling us "Do not have any other gods in My presence," we were ordered to desist from mixtures of milk and meat, which, as the Rambam suggests (see Kli Yakar), was a staple at pagan rituals. Desist from eating this culinary dish so that you distance yourself from any form of idol worship.

While the prohibition in Mishpatim focuses on the way this Mitzvah influences the world,



**As Rashi explains, the reason we may not mutilate our bodies is because we are G-d's children. Even our bodies must be reflective of our identity as His children.**

the second prohibition in the parsha of Ki Tisa focuses on the way it affects our understanding and awareness of G-d. The very first two commandments given at Sinai—and thus the foundation of all the others—were: "I am G-d your G-d" and "Do not have any other gods in My presence." The single most important declaration of the Jew is the Shma, in which we affirm our belief in the absolute unity of G-d. Partaking of the mixture of milk and meat desensitizes us to that awareness.

We see then that the focus of the second reference to the prohibition of milk and meat is on our level of awareness of G-d. This is reflected in a second major theme of this parsha, the construction of the Mishkan, G-d's Sanctuary. It is through this Sanctuary that we are able

to realize the highest and most acute form of G-dly awareness.

Indeed, the very name of that parsha—[Ki] Tisa—connotes the idea of rising to greater heights. Eating a forbidden mixture of milk and meat, thereby emulating pagan ways, is antithetical to the person's ability to experience a true awareness of the one G-d.

## THE THIRD LINK: THE PEOPLE ASPECT

The third time we read of this prohibition is in this week's parsha, R'ei, which deals with how we must distinguish ourselves as a nation because **we** are G-d's children. Here the

focus is not on the world around us, not even on the awareness of G-d—although these objectives are in the background and facilitate the third objective—but on the way we distinguish **ourselves** as a unique and holy people. To earn the title "G-d's children" we must live and act in a princely and G-dly way.

Thus, the section dealing with the dietary laws is introduced with the words: "You are children of G-d. Do not gash yourselves." As Rashi explains, the reason we may not mutilate our bodies is because we are G-d's children. Even our bodies must be reflective of our identity as His children. From this warning against defacing our bodies, the Torah continues with the Jewish dietary laws, which have as their goal the sanctification of the body. To achieve this goal we

have to regulate our diet so that it conforms to G-d's precepts for our diet, one that nurtures our G-dly nature and that which distinguishes us from all other nations, as the Torah explicitly states.

After detailing all of the forbidden species of animals that we are forbidden to partake of, the Torah concludes with the prohibition of milk and meat. As a holy nation we may not have any association with this mixture in any way, shape, or form. Anything that detracts from our sensitivity to G-d's world or to our awareness of G-d, obstructs our identities as members of a holy nation and our status as G-d's children.

This is also reflected in the name of this week's parsha, R'ei, which exhorts us to "see"—not just hear—the blessings that G-d promises us for complying with His commandments. When we live a Torah oriented life that exemplifies our role as G-d's children, we can then actually see the blessings. We do not have to wait for some future date to appreciate the good we have accomplished; we see

the results immediately. A Jew whose behavior elicits responses of admiration and reverence—because he or she is overtly a proud and holy Jew—realizes and enjoys the blessing immediately.

## MOSHIACH'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS

All of the three focuses—the world, G-d, and us—find their fulfillment in the Messianic Age which is ushered in by Moshiach, who himself embodies these three elements in their most ideal and harmonious way.

Moshiach's main focus is to change the world and bring to fruition G-d's objective of making the world a dwelling place for Him. Moshiach is not a spiritual hermit hiding in a cave. He is intimately aware of the world's problems and through his inspiration, wise counsel, and initiative gets others—as a true leader—to help transform the world into a perfect place through the teachings of Torah and the implementation of its commandments, including influencing non-Jews to follow their "Seven Noachide

Commandments." This parallels the first objective—represented by the prohibition of mixing milk and meat in Mishpatim—of making the world a perfect place.

Moshiach is also the one whose knowledge of the mystical teachings of Torah—which he will share with all of the Jewish people—gives him the ability to have an unparalleled understanding and awareness of G-d. Thus, Moshiach will build the Third Temple, the structure that will be the medium through which an unadulterated vision of G-d will become a reality.

Moshiach is also the one who achieves the third and ultimate goal through emphasizing the uniqueness of the Jewish nation. Moshiach focuses on, and cultivates, the awareness of the Jewish people's Divine role as a "nation of priests and a holy people." Hence Moshiach will be able to gather all of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel and unify them because when the elements that obscure our identities as G-d's children are removed we will then all feel that we are brothers and sisters—children of the one G-d.

### Continued from page 25

The man replied disappointedly that what the Rebbe was suggesting would be very difficult – too difficult. It is impossible to expect from every Jewish person to pull a fellow Jew off the street.

To this, the Rebbe gave two answers. First, although his suggestion was hard to implement, it would add to the joy of the holiday. Second, it would not be as difficult as it seemed; Hashem gives special powers and the bigger the obstacle becomes the greater the

powers that are revealed within us.

Thus, this is why Hashem makes false prophets, false religions and false ideologies and gives them power and success.

It is because *truth*, the Special Jewish Power, can only be revealed with the challenge of falsehood. As is well known, the Jews are compared to olives whose oil is only revealed when they are crushed.

The greater the falsehood we have to overcome and the greater the obstacles, the greater will be the truth revealed.

However, this truth will not only defy the darkness – it will *transform* it.

As we say thrice daily in the 'Aleinu' prayer, "All idolatry will cease and all mankind, even the evil people, will turn, every knee will bend, every tongue will swear *only* to the Creator."

All we have to do is follow the directions of the Lubavitcher Rebbe to reveal our 'Special Positive Powers', and soon the entire world will be filled with blessing, peace, health, meaning and joy, with....

Moshiach NOW!



# BACK ON LINE

The Rebbe looked at her intently for a moment and said, “You were just here!” Chana was astonished that the Rebbe remembered her out of the thousands of people he had just seen.

Chana Daniel’s connection with Chabad began in 1972, when her family moved to Israel from the Soviet Union. Among those who came to greet them at Ben Gurion Airport in Tel Aviv were the Ladaevs, family friends from Russia. They were Chabad Chassidim, and right there in the airport they managed to convince Chana’s parents to send her and her brother to study in Kfar Chabad, where they would receive a solid Jewish education.

Chana and her brother spent the next eight months in Kfar Chabad, she in Beth Rivka and he in Ohr Simcha. When the Yom Kippur War broke out, their parents panicked and told their children that they could not bear to have them studying so far from home. They transferred the children to a different school close to their home in Ashdod.

However, the positive experiences they had had in the Chabad schools stayed with the children. Although they did not identify with the Chabad Chassidic community, they always had warm feelings for Chabad.

Years passed. Chana grew up, married and started her own family. She and her husband had two children, but after that, Chana was unable to conceive again, despite her strong desire to have more children. Chana

experienced four miscarriages, each of which was a traumatic experience for her. They consulted doctors, but none of them could give a definitive diagnosis or offer a medical solution.

In 1986, Chana and her husband flew to New York to visit family. They took advantage of the opportunity to visit the Lubavitcher Rebbe and request his blessing. Chana had heard much about the Rebbe’s greatness during her time in Kfar Chabad, and now looked forward to the opportunity to receive his blessing in person.

It was Sunday, the day the Rebbe usually received visitors and distributed dollars for charity. Jews from all walks of life waited their turn in a long line that snaked outside along the sidewalk of Eastern Parkway. When Chana’s turn came, after many long hours of waiting, she found herself face to face with the Rebbe, unable to utter a word. She felt a surge of strong emotion such as she had never before experienced. She wanted to ask the Rebbe for a blessing for more children, but could not form the words. Instead, she asked the Rebbe for a blessing for the children she already had. The Rebbe gave her an additional dollar and blessed her, “Blessings and success.”

The impression of those

few seconds with the Rebbe was powerful. Impulsively, Chana decided that she had to experience them again. She rejoined the line, intending this time to ask for a blessing for her parents.

When she stood in front of the Rebbe a second time, she began to ask for a blessing for her parents. The Rebbe looked at her intently for a moment and said, “You were just here!” Chana was astonished that the Rebbe remembered her out of the thousands of people he had just seen. At the same time, though, she worried that the Rebbe was angry with her for rejoining the line and taking an extra dollar.

After she returned home to Israel, Chana wrote a letter to the Rebbe apologizing for what she had done. The Rebbe, despite her audacity, had given her two additional dollars, and Chana wanted to return them. In that letter, she also expressed all the pain and frustration that she and her husband felt throughout their efforts to expand their family. She concluded her letter by mentioning the warm feelings she had for Kfar Chabad because of her wonderful childhood experiences, and asked the Rebbe if it would be a good idea for her to move there.

Several weeks later, Chana received a letter from the Rebbe in response. The Rebbe gave her a blessing for an easy pregnancy and encouraged her to move to Kfar Chabad.

The family moved there as the Rebbe advised, and within a year, they had a third child, whom they named Gavriel.

(From Chabadworld.net)

# My Escape from Russia

## with Rebbetzin Chana

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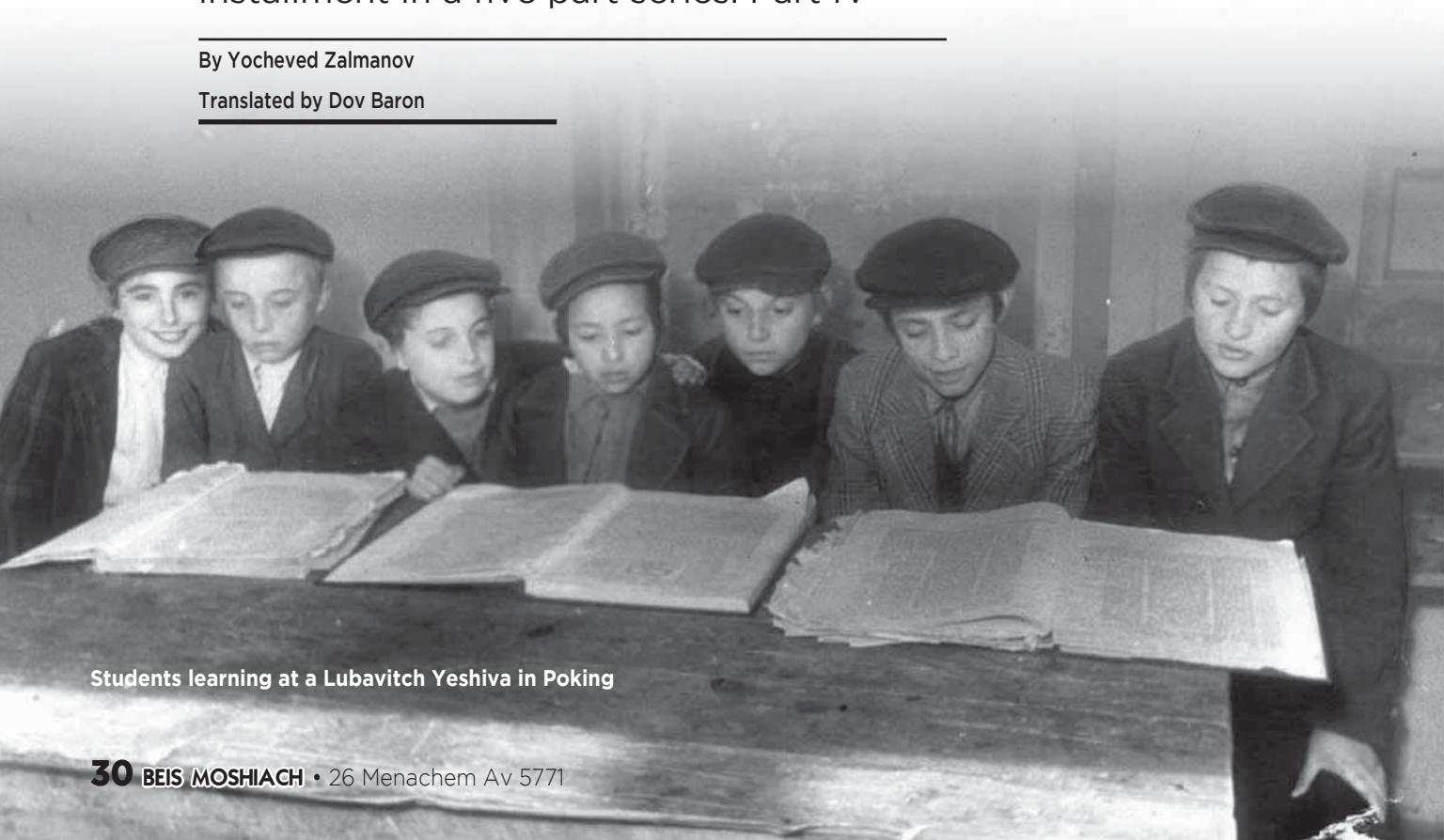
The following is a translation of Mrs. Yocheved Zalmanov's (a"h) memoirs in which she recounts her escape from Russia together with the Rebbe's mother, Rebbetzin Chana. This is the fourth installment in a five part series. Part IV

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By Yocheved Zalmanov

Translated by Dov Baron

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Students learning at a Lubavitch Yeshiva in Peking

## CHAPTER X

### - MY SISTER HADASSAH

My dear sister Hadassah (Mrs. Perman, of blessed memory) was also beloved by the Rebbetzin. Their friendship began from our first meeting in Lemberg, as we departed from Russia, and continued as she assisted the Rebbetzin throughout the journey and in Poking.

One day, we received the news that another train with Jewish refugees had arrived in Poland. However, their condition was very bad. The Frierdike Rebbe requested that the Chassidim in Poking send some young shluchim to help this group of people.

The spiritual committee of Poking Lubavitch, with the confirmation and blessing of the Frierdike Rebbe, chose two bachurim from the yeshiva, Reb Sholom Mendel Kalmanson and Reb Moshke Morosow, and my sister Hadassah Garelik. She was a heroic girl with outstanding talents in all areas.

We worried about our sister and missed her terribly. Our father gave us faith by repeating the holy Rebbe's blessing and impressing upon us the urgency of the mission. He told us about those years when he worked as a shliach of the Rebbe in the Crimean Peninsula in the dark times of Stalin's inferno. He had accomplished his important work under the threat of persecution and jail. Although he was often consumed by pain and fear, his complete devotion to his shlichus throughout the years never wavered.

The righteous Rebbetzin Chana expressed much appreciation for Hadassah's efforts in her mission. She

cheered me up with her wisdom and understanding. She blessed the shluchim with a safe return and with success in their efforts on behalf of the arriving survivors.

The self-sacrifice and strength that Hadassah and the bachurim displayed was indescribable. Further details about their tremendous efforts are described in the history book entitled "Toldos Chabad B'Russia HaSovietis." See years 5678-5710, page 405.

I wonder at Hadassah's



**I wonder at Hadassah's modesty and humility. She hardly ever spoke about the unbelievable self-sacrifice she had in the dangerous activities of her mission.**

modesty and humility. She hardly ever spoke about the unbelievable self-sacrifice she had in the dangerous activities of her mission.

Her devotion to every one of those refugees, with sacrifice for every individual at every opportunity, had no measure or limit. Until today, people speak affectionately about the respect and care that she had for others. They speak about her unlimited goodness and her Jewish heroism that saved so many Jewish lives. They talk about her dedication, her refined way of speaking, and her unique talents.

The following handful of examples illustrate Hadassah's efforts on behalf of her fellow Jews. In Prague, she established a Chabad elementary school called Beis Sarah. In Paris, France, she once again established a Chabad elementary school, this time with

the name "Beis Rivka," according to the wishes of the Frierdike Rebbe. For many years, she was the head of N'shei Chabad. In Kfar Chabad, she influenced children in the streets, at the request of the Frierdike Rebbe in a letter he wrote to her.

## CHAPTER XI

### - A GREAT REVELATION

One sunny Shabbos morning, I returned to my barrack in a good mood after visiting the Rebbetzin. I was still in awe of the

Rebbetzin's genuine friendliness, cheerfulness, heartiness and her holy Shabbos mood. My heart rejoiced, and it seemed as if the whole world shined like her. The sunshine warmed my spirits with its purity and light.

Returning to our block, all was silent with Shabbos calm. Not wanting to disturb anyone, I quietly made my way toward our room. Suddenly, a young attractive woman strode toward me. Her attractive appearance had always aroused in me a feeling of respect. This time, she came at me with determination as if to pierce me with the bitterness of her heart. She said, "Do you think I don't know where you are coming from? Do you think I do not know that you want to buy yourself favor in the eyes of the Rebbetzin? She has friends that are better and that came before you!" It was as if I had stolen a



**“To which Rebbetzin and what greatness are you referring?” I asked in wonder. “You make yourself as if you don’t know?” she snapped. “I mean the Rebbetzin that you are coming from, the mother of the Rebbe’s son-in-law!” “What?” I repeated in shock and wonder, “The mother of the Rebbe’s son-in-law?”**

treasure from her.

“To which Rebbetzin and what greatness are you referring?” I asked in wonder.

“You make yourself as if you don’t know?” she snapped. “I mean the Rebbetzin that you are coming from, the mother of the Rebbe’s son-in-law!”

“What?” I repeated in shock and wonder, “The mother of the Rebbe’s son-in-law?” I suddenly felt hot and then cold all over. My head spun, and I almost fell. I barely made it to my room. I was hardly able to calm myself from the astonishment, distress and pain of my own smallness, nothingness, and foolish naivety. How could I have not known what was going on before my very eyes? I was so foolish not to have figured out and known who the woman was. Especially, seeing the great respect the other travelers showed her, I should have understood that she had a special status. Even in Lvov, they had told us that the whole train was waiting for her. So why did I not use my head to think beyond my simple devotion and friendship for my fellow traveler, the lonely noble woman?

I lectured myself in this fashion and remained in personal agony, not able to find rest. I was ashamed of myself for being so naïve and foolish.

My confusion led me to misunderstand the accusation leveled against me. From my

viewpoint, I had always observed how people respected the Rebbetzin and were interested in her well-being. However, it was only I who did not know the truth that these people were long-devoted Chassidim who knew her great holy roots and lineage. In their eyes, I was just a newcomer.

I was intolerably broken. I thought they were right in their reasoning. After several days of contemplation and calming myself, I came to the conclusion that it was not right for me to disturb anyone, and certainly not to, G-d forbid, be angry with any of the fellow Chassidim. They were justified. The whole story was a misunderstanding.

\* \* \*

In Poking, there were no learning institutions for women and girls. However, one girl, Rivka Liss, taught a group of us informally. Before the war, she had lived in Poland and had grown up and learned in Polish Chabad-Lubavitch surroundings. Her father, of blessed memory, was the Rosh Yeshiva of the Lubavitch Yeshiva in Otwock, Poland. In Poking, Rivka would teach a few Torah concepts. We had so many questions for her!

I, especially, would exhaust Rivka with my continuous questioning, but despite this, we were best of friends. One time, she could not hold herself back and said, “When you want to eat, you have to first put the food in

your mouth, then chew, and then swallow. Only in this way will you be satisfied.”

That was the best answer I could have received. From this I understood, that when we want to gain knowledge, we must use our own efforts and study.

On warm, summer Shabbos afternoons, while out for a stroll, we discovered that the camp had opened a religious Jewish learning institution for girls. It was under the leadership of Rabbi Halberstam, located in Furstenzell, which was not too far from Poking.

Inside, I understood that my limited knowledge of Torah and Chassidus was far from ideal. I decided in my heart that I would attend this school.

My father was very happy with my decision to study in the seminary.

In respect for the Rebbetzin, I could not allow myself to leave without telling her about it. When I visited her, we both greatly enjoyed the meeting – as always! Since I had not visited in a while, the Rebbetzin told me, “I beg of you, don’t forget me. Friendship is the brightness in life.” These heartfelt words penetrated my soul.

I told the Rebbetzin about my hope to travel and learn in a Jewish seminary for girls. Her intelligent eyes shined, as always, with understanding and warmth. “My child,” she said lovingly, “I will miss you like a daughter. However, what doesn’t a mother do for a daughter? A mother wants a daughter to be happy and satisfied. So, I am happy for you.”

Together with nine other Lubavitcher girls, I left to attend the seminary. I traveled with her holy blessings and appreciation.

## CHAPTER XII - AT THE SEMINARY IN FURSTENZELL

Furstenzell was the first institute of study that I attended after leaving Russia. In addition, if I am not mistaken, it was the first religious seminary that opened in Germany after the Holocaust.

The name of the place speaks for itself. The word Furstenzell means a palace of rulers. The grounds were in a palace that had been built for squires, located deep the forest, and separated from the world. It had a big farm area for domestic animals, horses and birds. Everything was spotlessly clean. It seemed that the palace had been rented or bought by the Jewish community under the leadership of Rabbi Halberstam.

For us Russians, everything was unfamiliar. There was only one teacher. She was a good-natured, serious, educated, teenage girl from Hungary. The students were homeless orphans from Auschwitz, Treblinka and other concentration camps and us ten Lubavitchers! Yet despite our differences, our Jewish hearts and Jewish language united us.

Our teacher was wonderful. She was responsible for the learning, the dormitory, and all our needs. She acted like a devoted mother.

The young students were the orphans of rabbis and rebbes from Czechoslovakia, Austria, Hungary, Poland and other countries. Their knowledge in how to run a home was amazing. They cooked, baked, and kept everything perfectly clean. They helped the teacher in every way. The tremendous warmth and respect that they showed each other was indescribable.

The loving family atmosphere that they created included us Russians.

They were very vigilant in keeping to their study schedules, davened a lot, and carefully made the blessings together before eating and after eating. They kept Shabbos with great dedication, in the same way they kept all the halachos. They acted as their parents had, with pride in their holy lineage.

One time, late on a stormy winter night, we were preparing for an exam. The whole group sat together in a large heated room, engrossed in study. Suddenly, a girl ran over to me happily, saying, "Go quickly to the teacher's private room. There is a telephone call for you."

I ran quickly, anxious and afraid. What happened at home? How did they know there was a telephone here? I did not even know there was a telephone. In those years, it was a rare luxury. Telephone conversations were usually only held at a post office.

When I came to the teacher, she still held the telephone in her hand. She said, "The phone conversation just ended. This is a message from your mother – the holy Rebbetzin – to give over to her daughter – she called you by name – that she is departing for Paris at six o'clock in the morning. She requested that you come to say good bye and travel with her until Frankfort!"

For a while, I was in shock. I said to myself, "Six o'clock in the morning! It is now twelve o'clock midnight. I am sure the Rebbetzin knows that it is twelve midnight." I thought, "If the Rebbetzin called me now, she must know that I could get there on time!"

As if reading my thoughts, the teacher asked, "This must be



The father, R. Chaim Meir a"h and the brother, R. Gershon Mendel Gorelik sh'y

the great Rebbetzin of Lubavitch that you speak of from the family of the Lubavitcher Rebbe – the one about whom you always say 'there is only one Rebbe in the world, the only leader of the generation,' like your father taught you. And your father's word is very precious to you."

"Yes," I repeated, "the Rebbe is the leader of the Jewish world. And this is the righteous Rebbetzin of us all – an example of incredible mentchlichkait, of friendship and devotion, of wisdom and holiness!"

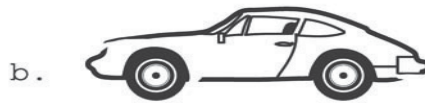
"There is a way!" the teacher said enthusiastically. "At three o'clock in the morning there is a train from here to Munich that makes a stop at the station in Poking! From there you will have to go by foot, but you should be able to make it there on time."

Not waiting for my answer, the teacher immediately called to the caretaker and told him to run quickly and hitch the big wagon to two horses because we had to get to the train station before three o'clock. Running

out, she instructed the girls, "In ten minutes, we will all travel and escort our dear friend Yevah Garelik to the train station. She must travel to Poking right away to be there by six o'clock in the morning!"

We traveled together through the deep forest, crammed into the wagon in the frosty night. There was singing, joy, and laughter. We arrived on time to the train. My teacher was to accompany me on the journey.

## QUIZ



Which of these is your greatest asset? —

Which of these is currently uninsured? —

Your ability to earn an income is by far your greatest asset.

If that income stream is interrupted...even for a brief period...what would happen to the rest of your lifestyle? Even if you are young and careful, the odds of becoming too sick or injured to work are greater than you might think. Research shows that men have a 43% chance of becoming seriously disabled during their working years, while women have a 54% chance<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> "Why Disability" booklet, published by National Underwriter.

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# THE SEVENTH YEAR OF NEITHER FORGIVING NOR FORGETTING

Six years after the expulsion from Gush Katif, we must make a painful self-examination. Have we really not forgotten? Has the next expulsion been removed from the public agenda or are there people speaking openly about a return to those horrific pictures from the Gaza eviction?

By Sholom Ber Crombie

Translated by Michael Leib Dobry

## 1.

Six years ago, we were all standing there – at Neve Dekalim, Sa-Nur, the Kisufim Passage, and at demonstrations throughout the country. At every location where we saw the frightful scenes of families being dragged out of their homes towards the buses, we swore that we would never forget. We promised ourselves that we would not erase those indelible images from our minds: thousands of soldiers dressed in black entering the Jewish settlements, removing the families from their homes, clearing out the thousands of young people immersed in fervent prayer from the synagogues. We saw the settlements turned into signs of empty desolation and utter destruction. We promised that we would neither forgive nor forget.

This was not a promise of revenge. This was a promise to remember the truth and to make a firm and determined

commitment that this shall never happen again. We must make certain that no one will ever again consider expelling Jews, discarding their settlements, and handing them over to terrorists. We have promised that next time we will do everything to stop the destruction before it is too late.

## 2.

Now, six years later, it seems that no one recalls those images. The memories that seared the public's conscience barely lasted five years. We have quickly forgotten about that summer, those cries and screams, that terrible disaster. We have forgotten how the bloodthirsty terrorists riddled the synagogues with bullets and then burned them to the ground. We forgot the sounds of four years of incessant rocket fire, as missiles threatened the entire southern region of Eretz Yisroel, once the Gaza Strip had been transformed into 'Hamastan'.



The settlements of Gush Katif

We forgot this all too quickly. Six years later, no official ceremony or protest was held to commemorate the anniversary of this tragedy. The entire country was involved with the young people protesting in Tel Aviv, standing up for their rights to have a cup of coffee every morning on Sheinkin Street. Everyone talks about the housing crisis, as if we have solved all other problems and there is no prevailing threat to our very existence.

I am acquainted with someone who has been connected with the ceremonies commemorating the expulsion in recent years. I asked him: "What happened that you organized no events for this year?" He replied: "People wouldn't come." After that summer, we forgot that the protests must continue. We simply ignored the fact that if we will not cry out against the failures of the expulsion, we will be forced to meet again in the

**“The entire country was involved with the protests in Tel Aviv, standing up for the rights to have a cup of coffee every morning on Sheinkin Street. Everyone talks about the housing crisis, as if we have solved all other problems and there is no prevailing threat to our very existence.**

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struggle for Kfar Tapuach and Ofra.

### 3.

After the years when Kadima, the party that carried out the expulsion, headed the government, we cried out for a change of leadership. But when the Likud Party returned to power two and a half years ago, we discovered that Bibi Netanyahu was just the same old Bibi. This politician, who had prided himself in his support for the expulsion policy, immediately began to work on his own policy initiative. He made Ehud Barak into a senior government partner and has announced his support for the establishment of a Palestinian state *r”l*.

Now that the left-wing is attacking Bibi over the tent-city protests, the right-wing has suddenly come back to life in order to protect the Likud prime minister. “They’re attacking Bibi because they’re leftists”, “This is a protest for replacing the government”, many right-wing politicians have said. None of them considers what will happen on the day after the tent protests, the day when Bibi will no longer have to deal with the social agenda and can continue to press forward with his dangerous proposals.

Netanyahu is ready to give the ‘Palestinians’ more than what Ehud Barak was prepared

to give at Camp David eleven years ago when he was prime minister. While he has been confrontational with President Obama regarding details of the latter’s Middle East policies, he appears to be planning a withdrawal from almost all of Yehuda and Shomron, including concessions on Yerushalayim. Recent reports have revealed that Barak told then-President Clinton at Camp David that there would never be another Israeli leader who will be able to make territorial compromises on the eternal city of the Jewish People. But Netanyahu is not afraid to speak about “creative solutions in Yerushalayim,” which means that he is willing to give away parts of the old city and the Har HaBayis.

### 4.

The Likud government has done nothing to correct the injustice this policy has caused. It has not discussed the possibility of a military return to Gush Katif. The current government is comprised of numerous ministers who supported the ‘disengagement’ plan, including the prime minister himself. Since this government took office, it has issued no clear statement admitting that the ‘disengagement’ plan was a grievous error and reserving the right to repair the tragic damage it caused at a time the government deems appropriate.

It would seem that in order to demonstrate how detached the government is from reality, Bibi went to the trouble to scatter a few vague statements about “isolated settlements” and how “we are prepared to be very generous in relation to the Palestinian state that will be established”. He made no effort to explain to us what he meant, but we remember that Sharon had also started the expulsion process by talking about “painful concessions”. Shortly afterwards, we found ourselves facing thousands of soldiers, spreading out all over the settlements and evicting the Jewish residents.

Only a government that disassociates itself from the sin of the expulsion, declaring that the Israeli government understands that the ‘disengagement’ was a mistake, can talk about correcting the error and restoring security to the residents of Eretz HaKodesh. As a result, there is a need for a prime minister with courage and vision, who will not be ashamed to speak openly about the return to all those areas that we abandoned and from where missiles are fired today on the residents of southern Eretz Yisroel.

### 5.

As someone who was in Neve Dekalim during the days leading up to the expulsion, I recall one thought that was constantly gnawing away at me: In another couple of weeks, the very lanes where we were walking, and the houses where whole Jewish families lived, would be crawling with terrorists and murderers with Jewish blood on their hands.

Six years later, after we have all seen the shameful results of the expulsion, the very least we can demand is for a return to an

Israeli presence to Gush Katif. There doesn't seem to be any reason for this not to happen. Everyone acknowledges that terrorist attacks have not stopped since the Gaza withdrawal and the security situation has only gotten worse. They also admit that missile fire upon the people of southern Eretz Yisroel can only be stopped with the Israel Defense Forces on patrol in Gaza. We can justify our return to Gush Katif before the eyes of the world community as a clearly unavoidable step: We tried, we uprooted, we tore down everything, but the other side just continued to blow us up. Why shouldn't we go back and protect our citizens by providing security in the area where they are firing rockets at us?

It seems that we have already suffered more than enough during these past six years due to the Gush Katif expulsion, and the time has now come to correct this injustice.

## 6.

In general, all those who value and respect the People of Israel should make a personal accounting in light of the situation. However, as Chabad Chassidim, we also need to conduct our own specific self-examination. We have a



**“We can justify our return to Gush Katif before the eyes of the world community as a clearly unavoidable step: We tried, we uprooted, we tore down everything, but the other side just continued to blow us up.”**

legitimate obligation to make the public aware of the fact that another withdrawal is simply out of the question.

We have heard the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach; cry out from the depths of his heart against territorial compromise. The Rebbe pleaded that we must do everything possible and protest in every way we can against any talks on giving away

parts of Eretz HaKodesh to terrorists. The Rebbe urged us to make a public uproar to prevent the abandonment of the security of millions of Jews. As we have quoted in the past, the Rebbe asked us to publicize those tragic events that occurred as a result of making decisions in a manner of surrender and capitulation. It is our responsibility to make certain that the shock over the expulsion will never wear off.



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# ELUL

Compiled by Rabbi Levi Stolik

Translated by Yaakov Paley

## INTRODUCTION

Elul is a time of unique closeness between Hashem and the Jewish people. This is reflected in the acronym of “Elul” – which stands for Ani L’Dodi V’dodi Li, אני לדודי ודודי לי, “I [the Jewish people] am to my Beloved [Hashem] and my Beloved is to me” – Shir HaShirim 6:3).<sup>1</sup>

The Alter Rebbe (Likkutei Torah, D’varim 32a) presents the following parable to explain the divine service of Elul. As the king approaches his capital, the city’s inhabitants leave their homes and enter the fields beyond the city limits in order to greet the king and escort him into the city. While he is yet in the field, all who wish are given the ability to personally greet the king. He in turn, greets them in a friendly manner and shows a smiling countenance to all.

It is likewise, concludes the Alter Rebbe, when we go forth during Elul to greet the light of Hashem’s countenance in the ‘field’...<sup>2</sup>

Now, the detailed manner in which we are expected to perform our service during Elul was not clearly spelled out in the Written and Oral Torah. But rather, each of us has been tasked with contemplating (according to the guidance of Torah) how we might deepen our personal connection

with Hashem. We will certainly achieve this goal by following the instructions that were issued by the Torah authorities of previous generations.<sup>3</sup>

## REVIEW AND COMPLETE THE PAST YEAR

- Elul, beginning with the first day of Rosh Chodesh,<sup>4</sup> is a month dedicated for self-evaluation and penitence. At this time, we should take stock of our divine

3) Parshas Shoftim 5748; Hisvaaduyos p. 235.

### 4) On which day of Rosh Chodesh does Elul really begin?

“The actual days of the month of Elul [i.e., the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> of Elul] begin from the *second* day of Rosh Chodesh Elul [since the *first* day of Rosh Chodesh belong to the outgoing month of Av, being its last day (the 30<sup>th</sup>)].

Nevertheless, our divine service of Elul *does* in fact commence on the first day of Rosh Chodesh – *despite* it being the last day of Menachem-Av.” (Parshas Shoftim 5749, footnote 1; Hisvaaduyos p. 236)

### Each day in Elul affects days of the past year

“There is a distinct divine service that is required on each day of Elul individually – “each day has its own service.” It is important that we perform the service unique to each day, since every day in Elul parallels that same day of the month throughout the year that passed; we can retroactively affect those days during Elul [e.g., on the 5<sup>th</sup> of Elul we are able to correct or perfect the 5<sup>th</sup> Av, the 5<sup>th</sup> of Tammuz etc.].

### Like Yemei T’shuva

[“Similar to the seven days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur which encompass the seven days of the weekly cycle; each one of those seven days retroactively affects the same day of the week throughout the entire past year” – *ibid*, footnote 6.]

### Each day influences our coming year too

In fact, the days of Elul influence both the past year and the *coming* year. So, on the 1<sup>st</sup> of Elul we perform the divine service for 1<sup>st</sup> of every month of the future year too, and likewise concerning the rest of the days of the month of Elul – until the 29<sup>th</sup> of Elul, when we perform the service that relates to the 29<sup>th</sup> day (as well as the 30<sup>th</sup>) of every month in the year.” (*ibid* p. 236)

service over the past year with the intention of rectifying and completing all that is lacking.<sup>5</sup>

## PLAN FOR THE COMING YEAR

- Most importantly, we should do so as a preparation for the service of the *coming* year, thus ensuring a far loftier and even a perfect future service.<sup>6</sup>

## TAKING STOCK OF PROGRESS IN ALL AREAS OF SERVICE

- We should promote all of the spiritual tasks connected with the month of Elul (i.e., performing a spiritual accounting, rectifying

### 5) Three stages in Cheshbon Ha’nefesh

“A fundamental point that must be present in our Elul stock-taking is that a true accounting of our entire past year’s divine service should include the following three aspects:

#### Elevating ourselves and the physical world

1) How was my service of Ani L’Dodi [“I am to my Beloved” – the “I” referring to the Jewish people and the “Beloved” meaning Hashem; see Intro.] – the service from “below to above”? How much personal effort did we invest in this service? Generally speaking, “below to above” means taking stock of our efforts to refine our corporeal bodies and our “portion” in the physical world around us [refining the “below” and elevating it].

#### Eliciting G-dliness

2) Additionally, it is insufficient to simply make an accounting of our regular, gradual-ascent in divine service; we should also make a calculation regarding the service of V’dodi Li (“My Beloved is to me”) – the service from “above to below.” This entails a complete and *perfect* service such as that of Shabbos, which each Jew is able and *should* demand from himself based on the fact that they contains a soul that Hashem Himself, the “Living and Eternal King,” placed within them – and moreover replaces it afresh every single morning! [The expression “above to below” means starting out with perfection by harnessing the powers of our divine soul.]

#### Merging physical and spiritual

3) Furthermore, the previous two concepts should be fused together, so that even when we have attained perfection in divine service, we should nevertheless connect it with the aspect of Li (“me”), i.e., ourselves, as we exist in this physical world whereby our souls are housed in corporeal bodies. In fact, it is specifically via the service of “I am to my Beloved,” that the concept of “my Beloved is to me” is revealed.” (Parshas Eikev 5751; Hisvaaduyos p. 167-168) See there at length.

6) Parshas R’ei 5748; Hisvaaduyos p. 198.

1) Pri Eitz Chaim (Shaar Rosh Hashanah), Avudraham (Seder Rosh Hashanah) and others.

2) Parshas R’ei 5748; Hisvaaduyos p. 200.



and completing the current year's service and preparing for the coming year) concerning all branches of spiritual service hinted to by the five acronyms of the word "Elul". These are Torah-study, prayer, acts of kindness, penitence and Redemption.<sup>7</sup>

## GOOD COULD ALWAYS BE BETTER

- Obviously, our self-reckoning and T'shuva should not be limited to negative aspects, G-d Forbid. Rather, even one who has never sinned should likewise examine his service – he will undoubtedly notice numerous aspects within his service that are still lacking, where he could have accomplished many times more than he actually accomplished.<sup>8</sup>

## ALL MUST ADD IN PRAYER

- The Shulchan Aruch

7) Parshas R'ei 5748; Hisvaaduyos p. 208. For full details, see ibid p. 198, footnote 7 and Parshas R'ei 5746.

### T'shuva encompasses them all

"T'shuva includes literally all of Torah and Mitzvahs. Therefore, the verse concerning T'shuva in which the acronym of Elul is found, "Hashem your G-d will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring," likewise includes all the other acronyms of Elul, namely, the three pillars of Torah, prayer, and charitable deeds, the Mitzvah of T'shuva (as an individual Mitzvah) and Geula. (Eve and night following 18<sup>th</sup> of Elul 5749; Hisvaaduyos p. 330)

### All are included in Geula

"Similarly concerning the acronym of Geula: in addition to its particular theme [of redemption], it also encompasses the entire Torah – and therefore also the remaining acronyms of Elul." (sub-note, ibid)

### Five soul-levels

"In Kabbalistic and Chassidic terminology, the service of Elul exists on five levels which correspond to the five names (tiers) of the soul: Nefesh, Ruach, Neshama, Chaya and Yechida." (Parshas R'ei 5748; Hisvaaduyos p. 198, footnote 8) For a lengthy insight into the theme of redemption during the month of Elul, see Parshas R'ei 5748; Hisvaaduyos p. 198 and onward.

### 8) Who can't improve?

"As it is written (Koheles 7:20), **כִּי אָדָם אֵין צַדִּיק, בְּאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה טוֹב וְלֹא יִחַטָּא**, "There is no righteous man on earth who does good without sinning (Yechetah)." Now, the root of the word Yechetah also means "lacking," as in the verse (Melachim-Alef 1:22 – see Rashi), **וְהָיִיתִי אֲנִי וּבְנֵי שְׁלֹמֹה חֲסֵאִים**, "I and your son Shlomo will be left lacking (Chatoim)." (Parshas R'ei 5748; Hisvaaduyos p. 198, footnote 4)

states that Elul is a fitting time to increase in prayer and supplication.<sup>9</sup> This is of such great significance to all Jewish people, that even Torah scholars should decrease from their regular times of study to devote more time to prayer.<sup>10</sup>

## ACHIEVING CLOSENESS WITH THE KING - INCREASE TORAH STUDY

- There is the well-known expression that encapsulates the theme of Elul: the King is in the field. In other words, in order that we may draw close to Him, Hashem "lowers" Himself from the "palace" to the "field" to meet us at our level.

We achieve this closeness mainly through studying Torah, the Wisdom of Hashem, in which He lovingly "lowered" Himself to the physical level by providing us with laws that permeate our mundane world with spirituality; when we study these laws, we unite with the King.<sup>11</sup>

Furthermore, the most complete T'shuva-related service of Elul, T'shuva Ilaa,<sup>12</sup> comes about through the study of Torah.<sup>13</sup> We should therefore place particular emphasis on increasing our Torah study.

## MAKE YOUR TORAH STUDIES PRAYER-LIKE

Prayer is the form of divine service dedicated to cleaving to Hashem; the general study of Torah shares this theme to an

9) Parshas Ki Savo 5749; Hisvaaduyos p. 315.

10) Roshei D'varim Chai Elul 5751.

11) For a complete explanation into Hashem's loving "descent" to our level and the union achieved with the 'King' by studying Torah, see Tanya, Ch. 46 (and 5). See also reference in footnote 13.

12) T'shuva Ilaa, the highest form of T'shuva, is explained in Tanya, Igeres HaT'shuva, Chapters 9 and 10.

13) Parshas Shoftim 5750; Hisvaaduyos p. 203.

extent, for we unite with Hashem by studying Torah. During the month of Elul however – when we increase our study – we should *specifically embrace* the aspect of prayer, i.e., the emphasis on the cleaving to Hashem, which occurs when studying Torah<sup>14</sup>.

## CHASSIDUS - INNER BOND WITH HASHEM

- We should be particular in doing so when studying the inner and mystical dimensions of Torah – for it is through learning the Torah's inner dimensions that the inner dimension of our own soul is connected to the Inner Dimension of Hashem.<sup>14</sup>

## FIVE ACRONYMS OF ELUL

The five verses for which the name "Elul" (אֱלֹול) is an acronym represents another aspect of divine service that we should emphasize throughout this month:<sup>15</sup>

1) **אֲנִי לִידּוֹ וּשְׁמִתִּי לָךְ** – "[Hashem] caused it to come to his hand, and I will provide for you [a place to which he shall flee]" (Shmos 21:13) – this corresponds to Torah study.

2) **אֲנִי לְדוּדִי וְדוּדִי לִי** – "I am to my Beloved [Hashem] and my Beloved is to me" (Shir HaShirim 6:3) – this corresponds to Avoda, the service of Prayer.

3) **אִישׁ לְרֵעֵהוּ וּמִתְּנוֹת לְאֶבְיוֹנִים** – "[Sending delicacies] each to the other and gifts to the poor" (Esther 9:22) – this corresponds to charitable deeds, Tz'daka.

4) **אֶת לִבְךָ וְאֶת לֵבבְךָ לַיהוָה** – "[Hashem, your G-d, will circumcise] your heart and the heart of your offspring [to love Hashem, your G-d, with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may

14) Parshas Ki Savo 5750; Hisvaaduyos p. 255.

15) Parshas R'ei 5748; Hisvaaduyos p. 208. See also there, p. 198, footnote 7.

live]” (D’varim 30:6) – this corresponds to T’shuva.

5) וַיֹּאמְרוּ לֵאמֹר אֲשִׁירָהּ לֵה – “[Then Moshe and the Children of Israel sang this song to Hashem] and they declared saying: I will sing to Hashem” (Shmos 15:1) – this corresponds to Geula.

### FIVE TASKS OF ELUL

- We should publicize<sup>16</sup> and promote the spiritual tasks of Elul that are alluded to by its five acronyms: Torah-study, prayer, acts of kindness, penitence and Redemption.<sup>17</sup>

### FOCUSED ON GEULA

We should put special emphasis on the Redemption – whose acronym of Elul is found in the verse, “I will sing to Hashem; and they declared saying”<sup>18</sup> – in a manner that results in Redemption permeating *every* aspect of our divine service.<sup>17</sup>

### THE TIME IS NOW

- In our present generation and time, the honest evaluation of our service should specifically encompass the fact that we currently stand at the threshold of Redemption. Every Jew contains the great ability to come to the full realization that it is high time for the Redemption – and we should influence others

16) See also Parshas Shoftim 5750; Hisvaaduyos p. 203.

17) Living with Moshiach constantly

“...Through completely filling ourselves with the theme of the coming redemption – and especially through studying those areas of Torah that discuss redemption, Moshiach and the Beis HaMikdash – amidst expectant yearning and an absolute certainty that we will literally and immediately see with our corporeal eyes that “Behold! The King Moshiach comes!”” (Parshas R’ei 5751; Hisvaaduyos p. 188) See also Parshas Shoftim 5750; Hisvaaduyos p. 203.

18) From the opening verses of Az Yashir (the Song of the Sea) that was sung by Moshe and the Jewish people as they passed through the split Red Sea.

to reach this realization too. Most importantly, we should ‘persuade’ even Hashem Himself, as it were, that by all accounts (as recorded in His very own Torah) He should have brought the Redemption long ago!<sup>19</sup>

### UNLIMITED JOY OF ELUL

- The joy that we experience in the month of Elul because of the fact that “The King is in the Field”<sup>20</sup> and that the

#### 19) Moshiach will be here this year

“According to all of the calculations that Hashem has shown us in His Torah and indicated with all of the miracles that He has performed in the world ... especially this year – according to all of the calculations and signs this is ‘the year in which the King Moshiach will be revealed.’” (Parshas Eikev 5751; Hisvaaduyos p. 170)

#### 20) The King has come to visit – why weren’t we told to rejoice?

“This point requires clarification: being that during the month of Elul, “the King is in the field,” and Hashem is found together with each and every Jew – along with our involvement in even mundane affairs – then we should certainly be experiencing the greatest possible joy!

This should especially be the case considering the emphasis on the love and closeness between Hashem and the Jewish people that is born out in the very name of this month – in the acronym, “I am to my Beloved and my Beloved is to me.” And as the Bach expounds this verse, “His heart is close to his Beloved in penitence and then his Beloved is close by to receive the penitence with love.” For as mentioned previously [see Intro.], “the King is in the field” and “He displays a smiling (Sochakos) face to them all”; Sechok is a form of great joy.

All of this ought to bring Jewry to a state of utmost rejoicing, “as water reflects the image shown to it” [likewise Hashem’s display of love and closeness should evoke joyful dedication from Jewry].

#### Why isn’t Elul a month-long Yom Tov?

However, there is *no* obligation to experience pleasure or to rejoice during the month of Elul. Furthermore, the very parable which mentions that the King “displays a smiling countenance,” was taught by the Alter Rebbe in order to explain why Elul is *not* a Yom Tov – apparently *negating* the obligation to rejoice in the month of Elul!” (Parshas Shoftim 5748; Hisvaaduyos p. 230)

#### Why is rejoicing not mentioned at all?

“There is *no command* to rejoice in the month of Elul, and not only is there no command in the Torah or Halachic authorities, but it is not even mentioned in the writings of the later Rabbis or in the explanations of Chassidus! This is in spite of the fact that there could not possibly be a greater source of joy than Hashem accepting every Jewish person with ‘a benevolent countenance and displaying a smiling face to them all’!

#### Overjoyed – beyond a command

[Rather, the explanation is that] the joy of the month of Elul is *beyond* any command or even a custom that can be ‘constrained’ to the extent of

Jews are connected to the Essence of Hashem is a joy that exceeds all measure and limitation.<sup>21</sup> Consequently, being joyful in Elul does not take the form of a Biblical command or even rabbinical obligation – for even these would fail as a

being recorded in legal works!

[Generally speaking, a command is issued to one who would not have performed that particular act had he not received the command to do so; a king who sits on his palace throne is a supreme ‘commander’, whereas a king who chooses to enter the worker’s fields and lovingly engage his subjects in their place and on their level, clearly does not approach them as a ‘commander’ – he rather reveals to them something deeper: his personality as a fellow man (albeit a king).

#### G-d’s Will commands – but we have His Essence

Likewise regarding “the King in the field” during Elul: as opposed to Rosh Hashanah when we approach Hashem in His palace and accept His Kingship, during Elul, Hashem comes to our ‘field’ and reveals his very Essence, as it were. The love that Hashem then shows us stems from His Essence – beyond His being our ‘King’ and ‘Commander’. Similarly, the reciprocating love for Hashem that is aroused in our hearts during Elul pours forth from the essence of our very being. For that reason we do not require a command (or even an officially recorded custom) regarding this love – why, any command would be entirely out of place in face of the essential bond between us and Hashem that is now manifest.]

The joy that a Jew derives from the fact that “I am to my Beloved [Hashem] and my Beloved is to me,” and from the fact that his existence is bound with the Essence of Hashem – which is beyond even the description of ‘King’, stands far beyond the limitative definition of a command!” (ibid p. 234)

#### Natural, self-understood and logical

“The same applies to rejoicing during Elul – it is not clearly explained and defined in Torah because it is so very self-obvious. In fact, the joy that is caused by the revelation of “the King in the field” is in a way *far loftier* than the experience in the royal capital or even the palace. Further, since this joy is a Jew’s *natural* response – and certainly the *logical* response – it should be utilized to further our divine service [i.e., we should obviously perform our service during Elul with intense joy].” (ibid p. 239)

#### 21) Beyond Purim

“The joy of Purim is described as Ad Delo Yada [“One is obliged to drink on Purim until one cannot discern (Ad Delo Yada) between ‘Baruch Mordechai’ and ‘Arur Haman’”], i.e., it is a joy that defies all constraint of reason and comprehension and is due to the immense revelation on Purim that reaches us from beyond Seder Hishtalshelus [the entire physical and spiritual cosmos]. Nevertheless, since there is at least a *written command* to rejoice on Purim (“One is *obliged* to drink...”), that itself is an indication that the joy is yet limited to a particular ‘form’ – and it is simply that its ‘form’ is beyond our comprehension. Elul, however, is totally different. (Note: This matter requires further examination.)” (ibid. 5748, p. 234, footnote 93)

sufficient vessel for expression of our boundless joy.<sup>22</sup>

### FARBRENGENS OF JOY

- We should make many joyous gatherings [farbrengens] in connection with the month of Elul.<sup>23</sup>

### BLESS EVERY JEW

Each of us should endeavor to bless other (and all) Jews and to be blessed by them in return. Men should bless other men; women should bless other women, boys to their friends and girls to theirs.<sup>24</sup>

### K'SIVA VA'CHASIMA TOVA

We should wish each individual Jew and all Jews as one, K'siva Va'chasima Tova, L'shana Tova U'mesuka – “May you be inscribed and sealed for a good and sweet year!”<sup>24</sup>

### USE ANY METHOD

- We should bless one another through any available method – face to face, by word of mouth or in writing.<sup>24</sup>

#### 22) The difference between a Yom Tov and Elul

“Moreover, the very parable (“the King in the field”) explains why Elul is *not* a Yom Tov ... The joy of a Yom Tov is caused by a revelation of G-dly light that shines forth during that festival; the joy is therefore limited to that particular revelation and is also the reason why it is able to be ‘contained’ in the form of an obligation. The joy of Elul on the other hand, stems from the fact that the King Himself [and not merely His radiance] is “in the field,” and that the Jewish people are bound to the Essence of Hashem – now that is something which is beyond *any* constraining boundaries. There is therefore *no* command to rejoice.” (Parshas Shoftim 5748; Hisvaaduyos p. 234)

23) Roshei D'varim Parshas Ki Seitzei 5751.

#### 24) We bless, Heaven bestows

“It is brought in the writings of the later Rabbis, “It is our custom for one who writes a letter to a fellow Jew between Rosh Chodesh Elul and Yom Kippur, that he hints in his writing that he is praying for him to be found meritorious on the approaching Day of Judgment and that he be written and sealed in the Book of Good Life.”

The blessings of a Jew – especially when given in an auspicious time such as the month of Mercy [Elul], when “the King is in the field” and when He “displays a smiling countenance to them all” and “fulfills their requests” – serves to increase



**Being joyful in Elul does not take the form of a Biblical command or even rabbinical obligation – for even these would fail as a sufficient vessel for expression of our boundless joy.**

### BLESS AGAIN FOR GREATER RESULTS

- Even if we have already blessed a particular individual, we should nevertheless continue to bless them repeatedly throughout Elul. Our additional blessings can amplify the revealed goodness that has already been designated by Hashem for each Jew and for all Jewry by an incomparably greater extent.<sup>25</sup>

### CHILDREN MAY BLESS ADULTS

- It is customary that even children under the age of Bar and Bas Mitzvah wish this blessing to everyone, including adults. This is so despite that fact that it is generally considered improper for a child to bless an adult.<sup>26</sup>

Hashem's blessings in fulfillment of each person's request – for all their physically and spiritual needs, and as the two are fused together.” (Parshas R'ei 5748; Hisvaaduyos p. 209)

#### 25) Crescendo of blessings

“It is customary to bless each other with a K'siva Va'chasima Tova from Rosh Chodesh Elul onward. Understandably, we should constantly amplify this custom as the month of Elul progresses – from one day to the next, and certainly on special days like the 18<sup>th</sup> of Elul [the birthday of the Baal Shem Tov and the Alter Rebbe] – and yet further on the Shabbos before the beginning of the Slichos recitation (which are begun on Motzaei Menucha, “the night following [Shabbos,] the Day of Rest.” We begin reciting Slichos after most of Elul – which we spent together with “the King, in the field” – has already passed. Then, on each new day of Slichos we should yet further augment our blessing each other ..

For on those auspicious days there is a manifold and even incomparably loftier power to bless; we should therefore grab the opportunity to bless each other again and again...” (22<sup>nd</sup> of Elul 5748; Hisvaaduyos p. 332-333)

#### 26) Kids have the power too

“The fact that there is a custom for even *youngsters* to bless everyone – including adults – is itself an indication that they too have been granted the power to elicit Hashem's blessing. Indeed, there are *numerous* instances where youngsters have equal powers to adults ...

### CHECK T'FILLIN AND MEZUZOS

- The Shulchan Aruch states that “The scrupulous are accustomed to having their T'fillin and Mezuzos checked during Elul, as well as seeing to the repair of all other aspects that concern the performance of Mitzvahs. This is a fine custom.” Indeed, this increases the blessings we receive from Hashem, especially the blessing to be “inscribed and sealed for a good, sweet year.”<sup>27</sup>

### PUBLICIZE THIS CUSTOM

- It is worthwhile and highly appropriate that besides having our own T'fillin and Mezuzos checked, we also make an effort to publicize this practice wherever and to whomever we can.<sup>28</sup>

### MISSED SHOFAR OF SHACHARIS, HEAR BY MINCHA

- If, for whatever reason, one is involved in a matter of Torah or Mitzvos that cannot be delayed and therefore failed to sound the Shofar at the end of the morning prayers, the correct custom would then be to blow the Shofar directly following the

#### Turn Chutzpa to Bracha

True, the proper procedure would be for children to request a blessing *from* the adults; nevertheless, since in our times children do not act in a respectful manner towards their elders to begin with, it would only be correct to channel this behavior towards positive matters such as blessings – all the more so during these auspicious days.” (24<sup>th</sup> of Elul 5748; Hisvaaduyos p. 339)

27) Parshas R'ei 5748; Hisvaaduyos p. 209. See Matteh Efraim, Orech Chaim 581:10.

28) Parshas R'ei 5748; Hisvaaduyos p. 209.

**“We should give priority to these efforts even if the involvement with others will cause us temporarily to forego advancing our personal affairs. Ultimately, such activities will not cause us any form of loss whatsoever.”**

afternoon prayers.<sup>29</sup>

#### PUT OTHERS FIRST

- During the month of Elul, we should accentuate our efforts on behalf of the community and outreach activities. We should give priority to these efforts even if the involvement with others will cause us temporarily to forego advancing our personal affairs. Ultimately, such activities will not cause us any form of loss whatsoever.<sup>30</sup>

#### TZ'DAKA "GIFTS"

- The verse that alludes to giving Tz'daka for which Elul

is an acronym is found in the verse (Esther 9:22), “[Sending portions,] each man to his friend, and *gifts to the poor*.” The Tz'daka that we distribute during Elul should assume the quality of “gifts (i.e., something of worth) to the poor.” Both the amount and the quality of that which is given should be something that both the donor and the recipient consider of value.<sup>31</sup>

#### 31) Why not “charity” to the poor?

“Shabbos Mevarchim Chodesh Elul [the Shabbos prior to the new month, when we bless the coming month of Elul] has passed. It is therefore appropriate to mention one of the fundamental matters of Elul, which is also alluded to in one of the famous acronyms of ‘Elul’: **לַעֲדוּת מַתָּנוֹת** [לְאִיּוֹנִים], “[Sending delicacies] each to the other and gifts to the poor” (Esther 9:22), which refers to Tz'daka.

There is precision in the wording of the verse, “*gifts to the poor*”: when people say “a gift,” there normally mean a bestowal of something of worth – certainly not a mere penny or two. The reason for this wording here can be understood in light of our Sages’ teaching that, “One gives a gift to a person from whom he has received some sort of benefit.” In other words, the recipient had previously caused *pleasure* to the benefactor. From this it is understood that the gift ought to be something of *value* to the benefactor; if the benefactor is an important person, he should give a more valuable gift in direct proportion with the recipient’s status. Why, when the recipient recounts how he received a gift “from so-and-so” or when someone witnesses the gift being given, it should be clearly discernable that a valuable ‘gift’ has been given. After all, that is the way things are amongst family members on various gift-giving occasions – “Here’s a present from so-and-so!” obviously means a gift of value...

#### A gift is a gift

From all the above we have a clear lesson and instruction regarding the giving of Tz'daka during the month of Elul ... What we give should be a “gift” that is worthy to be given to one who has “caused pleasure to the benefactor.” Obviously, the gift should *itself* indicate how much the recipient is worth in the eyes of the benefactor and how worthy he is to receive the gift – there is *no place*, obviously, for a bestowal that is *disrespectful* and the like...” (26<sup>th</sup> of Menachem-Av 5749; Hisvaaduyos p. 209)

#### PREPARE THE NEEDY FOR UPCOMING FESTIVALS

- It is during Elul that we prepare for Rosh Hashanah and all the other festivals of the month of Tishrei.<sup>32</sup> It is only correct that we should now provide all who are needy with whatever is necessary for all of the coming festivals, beginning with their Rosh Hashanah needs<sup>33</sup> and then their Erev Yom Kippur, Motzaei Yom Kippur etc. requirements.<sup>34</sup>

#### THIRTY DAYS IN ADVANCE

- We should publicize everywhere – this includes those who go to speak at other congregations<sup>35</sup> – that the appeal to provide Sukkos requirements for all who are in need of them should begin thirty days before Sukkos.<sup>36</sup>

#### FOR ROSH HASHANAH TOO

- Moreover, we should begin an appeal for Rosh Hashanah thirty days in advance as well, since we find that the prophet Nechemia instructed the Jewish people on Rosh Hashanah, “Go, eat rich foods and drink sweet beverages and send portions to those who have nothing prepared, for today is sacred to Hashem!” (Nechemia 8:10).<sup>37</sup>

#### 29) Mincha’s fine too

“...If, for whatever reason (even a good reason such as one who was occupied in a Mitzvah Shehazeman Geramah (a ‘time-bound’ Mitzvah) ... they should then blow the Shofar directly following *afternoon* prayers – as has been stated numerous times; there are also hints to this practice in numerous places.” (24<sup>th</sup> of Elul 5751, at an address to Chabad women and girls; Hisvaaduyos p. 314, footnote 81, and in Roshei D’varim)

#### 30) Aid fellow Jews

“In fact, working with others causes one’s heart and mind become refined a thousand-fold.

Not only should we increase all aspects of our personal divine service during Elul, but we should also step up our community efforts – for both the welfare of all Jewry as well as each individual Jew. This includes helping each Jew to augment *their* divine service surrounding Elul.

#### Shofar, T’hillim and more

Generally speaking, we should take stock of our past year’s divine service and prepare for the coming year. Our preparation should include the fulfillment of the unique customs of the month of Elul – such as blowing the Shofar daily and reciting Ledavid Hashem Ori Veyishi (“Hashem is my light and salvation” – T’hillim 27) throughout Elul and until after Hoshana Rabba; the custom to recite three chapters of T’hillim daily (from the second day of Rosh Chodesh Elul until Yom Kippur, and 36 chapters on Yom Kippur itself, all of these chapters being in addition to the regular daily chapters of T’hillim), and many more practices that differ according to location and the like.” (Parshas Shoftim 5749; Hisvaaduyos p. 243)

32) “Starting from Rosh Chodesh Elul, which is thirty days before Rosh Hashanah, and certainly from the 15<sup>th</sup> of Elul, which is two weeks before Rosh Hashanah and thirty days before Sukkos.”

33) “When there is an obligation to “eat rich foods and drink sweet beverages and send portions to those who have nothing prepared” (Nechemia 8:10).”

34) “...And following that, Sukkos, Shmini Atzeres and Simchas Torah.” (Parshas Ki Seitzei 5750; Hisvaaduyos p. 230-231)

35) Roshei D’varim, Parshas Ki Seitzei, 5751.

36) “In order that they will be able to prepare for Sukkos, “the time of our rejoicing,” amidst tranquility, joy and goodness of heart.” (Parshas Ki Seitzei 5751; Hisvaaduyos p. 241)

37) Parshas Ki Seitzei 5751; Hisvaaduyos p. 241.