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EVEN DIMINUTIVE DEEDS BRING THE REDEMPTION

It is possible that a minor action done by a little child should be the final “blow of the hammer” that will bring about the redemption! * At first glance though, how could we be hopeful that another small addition in Torah and Mitzvos will change anything? The Jewish people have been awaiting the coming of Moshiach for thousands of years, and throughout all the generations they have already done a huge quantity of Torah and Mitzvos!

Translated by Boruch Merkur

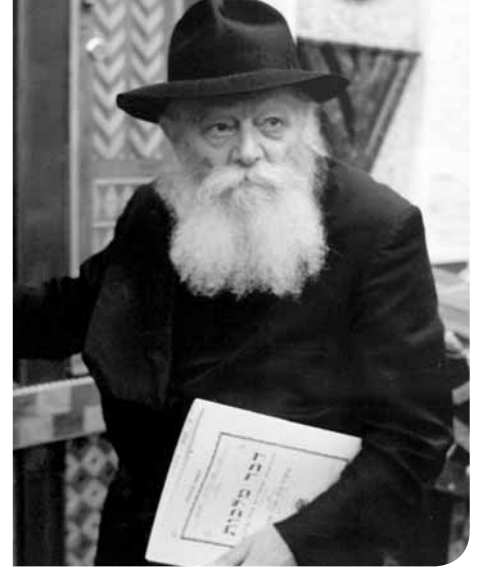
EVEN THE MOST INSIGNIFICANT ACTION, A “HAIRSBREADTH”

Every Jew is the emissary of G-d Alm-ghty, and since “the emissary of a person is like the person himself,” each Jew is a reflection of G-d Himself (as spoken about above at length). Thus, a parallel can be drawn between the manner whereby G-d completed the act of Creation and the way a Jew fulfills his mission in the world:

In order to complete Creation (“And He finished...His labor”), and immediately bring the world into a state of “and He rested on the seventh day,” only a minor action was done (no more than “the lowering of the mallet”). Similarly, it is important for a Jew to know that it is possible that a single good deed, even the most insignificant action, no more than a “hairsbreadth”

in measure, could be the final “blow of the hammer” that completes the mission of the time of exile and brings us immediately (thereafter) to the era that is “entirely Shabbos and tranquility.” At the very least, even diminutive deeds, described as “the lowering of the mallet,” are sure to bring the exile closer to completion. This concept is in line with the ruling of Rambam – that through “a single Mitzva, one tilts his own scale [of judgment] and that of the entire world to the side of favor, bringing to himself and to them [the rest of the world] redemption and salvation.”

From the above we can also derive an explanation as to why we are constantly urging Jews to strive to add another activity, a further addition in Torah and Mitzvos, as well as in disseminating Judaism and the wellsprings outward ... for in



this manner it is possible to bring about the advent of Moshiach Tzidkeinu one moment sooner.

At first glance though, how could we be hopeful that another small addition in Torah and Mitzvos will change anything? The Jewish people have been awaiting the coming of Moshiach for thousands of years, and throughout all the generations they have already done a huge quantity of Torah and Mitzvos!

WHAT'S WITH ALL THE WILD TALK?!

[The following appears in the original draft of this address: Similarly regarding talk about the coming of Moshiach. At first glance, impassioned and fervent talk about Moshiach Tzidkeinu coming literally now is wild, uncouth, for we have already spoken about these matters many times and nothing (apparently) has been accomplished. Where is the sense in continuing to speak about it week after week with such enthusiasm and zeal?! If after all the previous disappointments they still wish to speak about Moshiach Tzidkeinu, at least they shouldn't scream about it... Let them, rather, speak about it calmly and

sedately, concluding with a quiet *niggun*, even clapping hands if necessary. Of course, being that it is Shabbos, the stringent and the scrupulous, etc., should clap with the back of their hands...

[Woe to this kind of clapping! Woe to this final “blow of the hammer”! Woe to this kind of stringency and scrupulousness (and knowledge of Torah law)!]

[The answer to this question, however, is self-evident. Since after so much talk and so many activities, etc., Moshiach Tzidkeinu still has not come, there is no other choice but to behave “wildly,” with spontaneity, but in a manner that is, of course, in accordance with the *Shulchan Aruch*.]

THE SMALL ACT OF A LITTLE CHILD IS GOOD ENOUGH FOR G-D

According to what we have said above, it is understood that since we are talking about the fulfillment and completion of the mission G-d Alm-ghty has given us – to make for Him, may He be blessed, a dwelling place in the lower realms – G-d is not limited by whether this should be a small action or a large one, or by whether it is done by the greatest of the great or the most smallest of the small. Rather, it is possible that a minor action done by a little child should be the

“Woe to this kind of clapping! Woe to this final “blow of the hammer”! Woe to this kind of stringency and scrupulousness (and knowledge of Torah law)! The answer to this question, however, is self-evident. Since after so much talk and so many activities, etc., Moshiach Tzidkeinu still has not come, there is no other choice but to behave “wildly,” with spontaneity, but in a manner, of course, that is in accordance with the *Shulchan Aruch*.

final “blow of the hammer” that will bring about the redemption!

(This message is reminiscent of the well-known teaching of the Baal Shem Tov regarding the ultimate purpose of the descent of the soul into the body – that it could be that a soul descends below and lives seventy, eighty years in order to do a single act of kindness for a Jew. That is to say that although the Jew studies Torah and fulfills Mitzvos, observing both lenient and stringent laws alike, it is possible that the main mission of his soul within the body is in order to do a favor for a Jew [i.e., something incredibly simple].)

The very knowledge of this approach adds to the determination and enthusiasm of every Jew in his service of G-d. Firstly, it strengthens all his activities in fulfilling G-d’s

mission for him in the world – to make a dwelling place in the lower realms through fulfilling Torah and Mitzvos, disseminating Judaism and spreading the wellsprings outward to other Jews, and to Gentiles, the Seven Mitzvos of the Descendants of Noach.

And this is to be done not only in a manner of “And he went out,” himself going out to do this mission, but also “And he sent,” to make others emissaries of the Alm-ghty (or to strengthen those who are already emissaries to be more effective and to fulfill their mission in a more revealed way), to the extent that they have the power of “*malachim mamash* (literally angels),” as spoken about earlier.

(From the address of Shabbos
Parshas VaYishlach, 10 Kislev,
5748, *muga*)

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

THE CHASSID WHO CAMPAIGNED FOR 'ACHMED BEN SARAH'

In an interview with Beis Moshiach, R' Shalom Dovber Lifshitz recounted: When I went to the Rebbe for the first time while still a bachur I had a yechidus that lasted about half an hour. It was all about my work at Yad L'Achim. I could see the enthusiasm on the Rebbe's face for this work. * Klal Yisroel suffered a tremendous loss with the passing of Rabbi Sholom Dovber Lifshitz a"h, legendary founder and chairman of Yad L'Achim.

By Shneur Zalman Berger

ONE GOAL: SAVING LIVES

Saving lives was the principle that guided Rabbi Sholom Dovber Lifshitz a"h from when he was 21 until his final day at age 83. It was what drove him, day in and day out, winter and summer, for over sixty years.

R' Lifshitz, chairman of Yad L'Achim and rav of the Chabad community in Ramat Gan, passed away Erev Shabbos

Parshas Netzavim-VaYeilech after a difficult illness. He led the battle against the Establishment in order to save the immigrants from Yemen and North Africa who made aliya after the War of Independence. He also led the battle throughout the years against forcing secular education on new immigrants from Yemen, Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, Hungary, Georgia, Poland and, later, from the former Soviet

Union. He fought missionaries seeking to steal Jewish souls, and was personally responsible for extricating Jewish women and children from Arab villages.

With the blessings of the g'dolei ha'dor, he led the way despite being a young bachur. Thanks to Yad L'Achim, the organization he founded and directed, many immigrant children got the chance to study



askanim including the Av Beis Din of the Eideh HaChareidis, Rabbi Tuvia Weiss, Chabad rabbis, Litvishe roshei yeshivos such as Rabbi Yitzchok Ezrachi, one of the Mirer roshei yeshivos, the rosh yeshiva of Ponevezh, Rabbi Boruch Dov Povarsky, and numerous other leading Torah figures.

Incredibly, R' Lifshitz never took a penny for his work at Yad L'Achim. He made do with the small salary he received as a rav.

CHINUCH FOR MESIRUS NEFESH

R' Lifshitz was born in the Soviet Union. His father was R' Yisroel Leib Lifshitz, a distinguished Chabad rabbi from whom he learned mesirus nefesh. As he said many years later, the chinuch for mesirus nefesh that had been implanted in him gave him the ability to do the work he did in rescuing Jewish souls in Eretz Yisroel.

As a child, he made aliya with his parents. He attended Achei T'mimim in Tel Aviv where he absorbed a lot from the mashpia, R' Chaim Shaul Brook. From there he went to Yeshivas Ponevezh where he was an outstanding talmid.

At this point, the huge aliya to Eretz Yisroel began. The Jewish Agency in collaboration with the government did its best to strip away any signs of religion from the immigrants. The turning point for R' Lifshitz came in the winter of 5710. He described what happened in detail in an interview with *Beis Moshiach* fourteen years ago:

"It was 5710 and the mass aliya from Yemen, known as 'Magic Carpet,' was at its height. Thousands of pious Jews had arrived in Eretz Yisroel but,

Torah and grew up to establish religious homes. Thousands of people were saved from missionary cults thanks to him. The missionaries spend huge amounts of money in order to ensnare innocent Jews and convert them, and R' Lifshitz fought them.

He had to contend with police interrogations, threats and intimidation tactics. He viewed them as challenges he had to

overcome. He oversaw the details of every operation he carried out, whether this entailed getting down in the trenches, organizing gatherings and demonstrations, questioning those who came back from fighting missionaries or those who penetrated Arab villages.

R' Lifshitz was admired by people in every sector as could be seen at his funeral which was attended by rabbanim and

20 Tammuz 5705/1945, on a list of students in Achei T'mimim in Tel Aviv

“I was joined by R' Yitzchok Jacobowitz (today rav in Hertzliya). We received R' Kahaneman's bracha for this dangerous mission. I remember that he said to me, 'If they strike you, don't hit back. Just look to see who hit you.'”

R' Lifshitz and R' Jacobowitz went to the transit camp. In the middle of the night they dug under the fence and took out some boys who wanted to attend yeshiva. Soon after, the police surrounded the yeshiva building and began looking for the “kidnapped” boys. R' Lifshitz related:

in contrast to their innocent expectations, many of them were torn away from religion. This was well-planned by the leaders of the country and it included cutting off the peios of children and adults, forcing Shabbos desecration in the immigrant

“To accomplish their purpose,

“There was an uproar in Eretz Yisroel. We went to the police and declared that we were willing to accompany them to Beit Lid and to prove that the children had not been kidnapped, but had left with their parents’ consent. Having no choice and because of public pressure, the police had to agree.

“The director of the camp stood near the tents and announced over a megaphone, ‘Whoever gave their children to these men is asked to come forward and testify.’ A deathly silence prevailed in the camp and nobody emerged. That was how intimidated they were. Finally, a Yemenite woman called out: ‘I gave my children to these men.’ When the director asked her why, she said proudly, ‘I gave them to the Master of the Universe.’

“That is how six boys were saved from spiritual annihilation. Following the media commotion, the broader public became aware of the attempt taking place under their noses to secularize the immigrants right there in Eretz Yisroel. This was the impetus for the creation of the organization that, till today, saves Jewish children.”

Thanks to the courageous action taken by R’ Lifshitz and his friends, the Jewish Agency met with them to find out what their intentions were. They were ultimately allowed into the Ein Shemer camp in order to take out “just ten boys.”

“We went from tent to tent and met pious Jews who were proud of their Judaism. We spoke to them about the education the children were receiving. The parents complained about the education to throw off the yoke of Torah that their children were receiving, but they didn’t have much choice in the matter. Due



Yad L’Achim activists encouraging immigrants at the transit camp in Ein Shemer

to our visits and discussions, the g’dolim of the time decided to hold a public fast along with a demonstration held near the Ein Shemer camp. Many religious Jews participated in the demonstration and the media reported about the waves of protest. The country was in turmoil.”

After the demonstration, the attitude of the directors of the camp towards R’ Lifshitz and his friends changed for the worse. In response, distinguished rabbis were enlisted in the battle, including the Chief Rabbi of

Israel, R’ Yitzchok Isaac Herzog.

Among the activists in those days was R’ Zushe (the Partisan) Wilmovsky, who worked from the summer of 5711/1951 until the summer of 5712/1952 in what was called “Pe’ilei HaMachane HaTorati.” An excerpt from a letter that he wrote to the Rebbe at this time sheds light on what was happening with Yad L’Achim during its founding period:

“It is a number of months now that I am working for an organization called ‘Chever Pe’ilei Machane HaTorati.’ Most of us are students in yeshivos and

b'nei Torah from various groups who are moved by the terrible spiritual state prevalent in Eretz Yisroel. We were successful, with Hashem's help, for half a year, to absorb about a thousand boys and girls into a kosher educational framework."

Some of the one thousand students were transferred to Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in Lud. As a Lubavitcher Chassid, R' Lifshitz wanted to transfer more and more talmidim to Tomchei T'mimim, but the yeshiva was just starting out and the budget and location did not allow for more students. R' Lifshitz together with R' Yisroel Grossman went to the yeshiva and asked that they take in a large number of students. The director of the yeshiva, R' Efraim Wolf, said he didn't have beds for them. R' Lifshitz and R' Grossman didn't give up. They worked to raise money and bought a large number of beds for the yeshiva so it could take in more immigrant students.

THE REBBE'S ENCOURAGEMENT

The name of the organization evolved and became "Irgun HaPeilim Yad L'Achim," which R' Lifshitz ran. Meetings were held at the home of the rav of B'nei Brak, Rabbi Yaakov Landau z"l, who was the official chairman of the organization.

A year passed and R' Lifshitz was afraid that he was putting too much time into this work at the expense of his Torah learning. He wrote to the Rebbe about this and received a response on 16 Elul 5711 which said:

I was shocked by this question at a time when Hashem granted you success and gave you the opportunity to

save lives, Jewish boys and girls, from heresy, heaven forbid, and to help them remain loyal Jews to Hashem and His Torah. This is something that can be seen even with eyes of flesh, yet your Evil Inclination comes to incite you and say, who knows whether this is worthwhile and it is better to be involved in other things, since then it will be possible to excel in Torah etc.

The p'sak din in the Gemara is known that when a mitzva cannot be done by others, you set aside Torah study for it (Moed Katan 9b). It is also known what the Gemara says in T'mura on the verse, a rich man and poor man meet, Hashem illuminates the eyes of both of them, that when someone rich in Torah helps someone poor in Torah, the eyes of both are illuminated ...

My intention is not just that by setting aside Torah for some time you are doing as the Torah says ... moreover, setting Torah aside is actually its fulfillment because by doing so, your heart and mind become a thousand times more purified, and with a little time spent you will succeed incomparably in your learning. (Igros Kodesh vol. 4, letter #1198).

A month later, he received a short letter from the Rebbe with some unusual phraseology:

I received your pidyon nefesh in its time, and may Hashem fulfill all the requests of your heart for good. With blessings for diligence, industriousness and success in Torah study, both Nigleh and Chassidus. In yiras Shamayim [from here until the end of the letter it is handwritten by the Rebbe] and outstanding success in your holy work to save Jewish lives and bring them to life in Olam Haba as

well as in this world, through the Torah of life and cleaving to the living G-d.

Surely you can arrange your work so that in most cases you can learn a few hours a day.

On 24 Iyar 5712, the Rebbe sent another letter and in the margin were words of encouragement for his work:

In these days of Erev Shavuos, the time of the Giving of Our Torah, as it says in the Midrash Rabba, the guarantors for receiving the Torah, by which Hashem decided to give the Torah to His people Israel, were the children. Therefore, it is obvious that involvement in children's education is that which helps us receive the Torah with simcha and p'nimius.

When the Rebbe told R' Zushe Wilmovsky to establish "Reshet Oholei Yosef Yitzchok," R' Lifshitz helped with his knowledge, experience, and connections.

PRECIOUS YOUNG MAN

The Rebbe constantly encouraged Yad L'Achim and its director, R' Lifshitz, whether with letters or private audiences. The Rebbe urged Mrs. Tziporah Heber to find a suitable shidduch for R' Lifshitz, **"because he is a precious young man."**

"In addition to encouraging and instructive letters, I can say that on a number of occasions when I was held and interrogated by the police, it ended well thanks to the Rebbe's involvement. Likewise with those activities that still cannot be publicized, the Rebbe ensured that all ended well.

"For example, in 5724/1964 we organized a big demonstration against the missionaries in a number of cities. 130 yeshiva

bachurim were arrested and after several hours, the police came to the Yad L'Achim offices to interrogate me. This usually ended with an arrest since there was plenty that I could be charged with under the criminal rubrics of provocation and incitement. Suddenly, in the middle of the interrogation, the interrogators received an order from high up to stop the interrogation and release me. It seems they received a call from abroad that threatened worldwide repercussions if I would be arrested.

"In 5722, when I was still a bachur, I went to the Rebbe for the first time and had a yechidus that lasted about half an hour. It was all about my work at Yad L'Achim. I could see the *koch* (enthusiasm) on the Rebbe's face for this work. He gave me some advice and instructions about what to do and with whom. Through the years, he even sent money to the organization. Over the years I had many other private audiences and each time I could see how the Rebbe was pleased by any good news and by every activity the organization did."

Two years later, in 5724, when R' Lifshitz left the Rebbe's room after yechidus, the Rebbe escorted him until the front door of 770 and continued standing there until R' Lifshitz entered a car and left. This was highly unusual and was never done before for a Chassid, and such a young one at that, a bachur. In 5735 the Rebbe sent R' Lifshitz a check for \$1,000 for the organization.

His great *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe was known to all who knew him, but it became abundantly clear to everyone in 5749 when the Rebbe instructed Israelis to vote Gimmel in the

UNTIL THE FINAL MOMENT

Rabbi Yehuda Dery, rav in Beer Sheva for the past twelve years, had this to say about R' Lifshitz and Yad L'Achim:

The passing of this tzaddik is a terrible loss for the Jewish People. He was a person who gave sixty years of his life to save Jews. He led the battle for the spiritual character of Am Yisroel these past sixty years.

I will give you some examples. The missionaries with their huge budgets have been, for the past many decades, doing all they can to ensnare Jews. The one who courageously faced off against them was R' Lifshitz. It is hard to understand how he managed to carry the burden of Yad L'Achim alone.

When I first started in my position in Beer Sheva in 5758, R' Lifshitz met with me and told me about all the messianic cults in the city, Jewish messianics, and six or seven cults. He was intimately familiar with every cult, knowing what it did, who ran it, etc.

About 5,000 people attended the first gathering that he organized in Beer Sheva after I was elected. Beer Sheva had never seen anything like this before. He made everyone aware of the seriousness of the matter. We were unfamiliar with the phenomenon of missionaries who seemed like Jews, even religious Jews; Jews who invited you to learn Tanach, with some of them wearing tzitzis. It is all done to fool Jews and draw them in, culminating in baptism r'l.

I can tell you today that the public's awareness about missionaries in Beer Sheva, and the fact that messianic cults here have been hamstrung in various legal ways, are all thanks to R' Lifshitz. We did all we could to remove them from the public stage and now they can no longer operate as they once did. Every Jew in Beer Sheva is wary of material he receives in the mail or in the train station, and this is thanks to R' Lifshitz.

Going back in time, to the war against autopsies, big demonstrations were held Tisha B'Av night in Kikar Shabbos. The one leading the battle was R' Lifshitz. I remember his war to amend the law of Mihu Yehudi. Honor, titles, and publicity did not interest him.

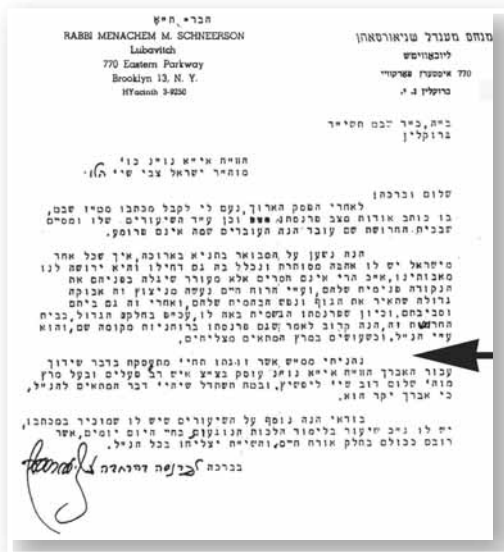
Even in recent years, during his illness, he did not stop working. I met with him several times during this period and I could not tell he was sick although I knew the truth. He fought till the end. He had genuine yiras Shamayim for he feared no one and nothing in this world.



"Suddenly, in the middle of the interrogation, the interrogators received an order from high up to stop the interrogation and release me. It seems they received a call from abroad that threatened worldwide repercussions if I would be arrested."

elections. R' Lifshitz put an ad in the newspaper *Hamodia* in which he asked, as director of Yad L'Achim, that people vote Gimmel. This caused the

Litvishe workers of Yad L'Achim to resign, which ultimately led to the forming of a competing organization.



The Rebbe referring to the bachur R' Lifshitz as "a precious young man."

R' Lifshitz was unfazed by the defection of some of his assistants and workers and the establishment of a competitor. On the day that he was told about the competing organization, he placed an ad with a heading (using the words that Lavan said to Rivka upon her departure with Eliezer), "Our sister, may you come to be thousands upon myriads."

SIXTY YEARS ON THE FRONTLINES

Over the years, a series of institutions for young people was set up and run by Rav Lifshitz. These activities grew into a network of learning programs aimed at strengthening those who were not knowledgeable about Judaism. A wide range of activities brought Torah-true Judaism to far-flung towns under "Yeshivot L'Am" and "Chizuk HaDat."

Rav Lifshitz was always at the forefront when it came to saving souls and he invested major efforts into saving Jews who had been lured by cults and missionaries. He waged a

battle against missionaries who constantly try to ensnare Jews. Demonstrations, protests, house calls, brochures, in ways that we know about and in ways that cannot be publicized yet, Yad L'Achim has been fighting missionaries with great success.

In recent years, the problem of mixed marriages with Jewish girls marrying Arab men has become widespread. R' Lifshitz initiated activities to extricate these Jewish women who are trapped in Arab villages. This is dangerous work because they have to enter Arab enclaves. These operations and the rehabilitation of the women and their children need tremendous funding and so R' Lifshitz started a campaign under the heading, "Achmed ben Sarah." This raised awareness of the terrible problem and about the work needed to rescue the girls in order to enable them and their children to live Jewish lives.

R' Lifshitz personally led many of these dangerous operations as if he were a combination of military man and intelligence expert, and he did so fearlessly as the following story illustrates:

Yad L'Achim received a call about a Jewish woman, mother of five children, whose eight year old son had been kidnapped by his Arab father. The father told her that he was taking the child for a week to Turkey, but he actually flew to Turkey and left the child in a fundamentalist Moslem orphanage. Many obstacles had to be dealt with including a legal order that prohibited the mother from traveling abroad. R' Lifshitz immediately appointed a special team with the task of bringing back the child. After the team examined all the documents, they decided that the social worker

assigned to the mother should appeal directly to the court.

In a well reasoned letter, the mother, guided by Yad L'Achim's social worker, asked the court to consider the special circumstances behind the request to revoke the no travel order, for the sole purpose of returning her eight year old son to his mother and his people. The court agreed to rescind the order.

They were ready for the next step. R' Lifshitz instructed that a ticket for the mother and all the attendant expenses would be paid for by Yad L'Achim since she had no financial support. The mother was prepared by the staff of Yad L'Achim who guided her in how to behave when she presented herself at the orphanage, what to answer to tough questions, and how to handle any hitches to the plan.

Despite all their preparations, the mother was in for a great disappointment. When she introduced herself as the boy's mother, the director of the orphanage shrugged and said, "You can't be the mother since in the paperwork we have he is listed as orphaned of his mother. That is why he is here, because his father registered him with us."

Apparently, in order to hide the child's true identity, the Arab father had said that the boy's Arab mother had died. The woman showed her passport, which showed the boy as her son, but this did not convince the director.

A report was immediately sent to Yad L'Achim who turned to legal help. In the meantime, the mother had to return to Eretz Yisroel. When the Turkish court finally decided to return the child to his Jewish mother, she was again forbidden from leaving

the country. Once again, Yad L'Achim activists appealed to the Israeli court to rescind the no travel order. They bought a ticket and after additional hardships, the mother finally returned to Eretz Yisroel with her son. They were warmly welcomed and helped to adjust to lives as Jews.

FIGHTING THE MOONIES

R' Lifshitz led a battle several years ago against the Binyanei Ha'Am convention center in Yerushalayim for allowing missionary and cult activity on their premises. Many rabbanim joined him in this battle. R' Lifshitz wanted to make a public pronouncement forbidding people from making events there. Many tried to dissuade him since religious Jews often use the convention center for events, but he would not be deterred from the lofty goal of fighting the missionaries. After a ban and boycott by all segments of the religious community, the center's administration had no choice but to sign that it would not allow missionary events or activity on their premises.

Time passed and Yad L'Achim found out that the "Moonie" cult was going to hold a convention at Binyanei Ha'Am. This cult doesn't stop at converting Jews; it also tries to infiltrate cultural and political organizations throughout the world for its own nefarious purposes.

Information was conveyed to R' Lifshitz who reminded the administrators of Binyanei Ha'Am of their agreement. He also showed them documents that showed what the goals of the cult are. The administration had been fooled by the cult who had hidden behind another name and an innocent facade.

R' Lifshitz went even further.



With the mayor of B'nei Brak (right) and director-general of the Welfare Office a few months ago



(Left to right) Rabbi Lifshitz, Rabbi Wosner, and Rabbi Yisroel Lifshitz, his son and successor

He contacted the Minister of the Interior, the Prime Minister, and religious ministers and Knesset members, for the purpose of preventing one of the leaders of the cult from entering the country. He was successful and the man was refused entry into the country.

HE SAVED THOUSANDS OF SOULS

R' Lifshitz oversaw every aspect of the Yad L'Achim's work until his final days. He passed away shortly before Rosh Hashanah. At his funeral, Rabbi

Yaakov Ariel, Chief Rabbi of Ramat Gan, said, "We are sure that upon your ascent to the World of Truth, you are being welcomed by the hundreds of thousands of souls you saved in your lifetime."

He is survived by his wife and his son R' Yisroel, who is assuming his position at Yad L'Achim; his son R' Shmuel, one of the Roshei Yeshiva of Tomchei T'mimim in Migdal HaEmek; his son-in-law Dayan Binyamin Kuperman; his son-in-law R' Shlomo Chaim Feldman, Rosh Yeshiva of Tomchei T'mimim in Cholon; and his daughter.

A black and white photograph of two men standing on a sandy beach. The man on the left is wearing a dark t-shirt, a wide-brimmed hat, and patterned shorts. He is looking down at a small object in his hands. The man on the right is wearing a white button-down shirt and dark pants, looking towards the camera. In the background, the ocean and a pier are visible under a cloudy sky.

AWAKENING SOULS IN PLAYA DEL CARMEN

An extraordinary Jewish revolution is going on in the stunning resort town of Playa del Carmen, Mexico. In just fifteen months, the shluchim, Rabbi and Mrs. Chaim Brod, have already touched the lives of thousands of Jewish businessmen and tourists who have passed through.

By Menachem Savyon

About a two hour flight from Mexico City is a small fishing town, Playa del Carmen. It is located on the coast of the Caribbean Sea. It has some of the best beaches in Mexico, an untamed jungle with beautiful lakes, and its hotels are full of thousands of tourists from around the world.

Global tourism, which has lately turned towards South and Central America, favors this jewel on the ocean. Not surprisingly, five years ago, Playa topped the list of cities in the world catering to tourism. Naturally, among the tens of thousands of visitors are thousands of Jewish businessmen and tourists. This leads to the surrealistic sight of “men in black” circulating among the tourists and suggesting that they put on t’fillin.

The Chabad house, located in the center of it all, can’t be missed. However, unlike the materialistic life outside of the Chabad house, inside you will find authentic Jewish life. If you took a peek inside, you might see a tourist eating a kosher meal alongside a bachur giving a shiur in Chassidus to another tourist. If you happened by on a Wednesday night, you would see Mrs. Brod giving a challa baking class. There is even a program for children.

The terrific outreach work being done in Playa del Carmen is part of the shlichus revolution taking place in Central America in recent years. More than ten new Chabad houses have opened in the area including: Cozumel, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Isla Mujeres, and the brand-new one in S. Cristobal.

The Chabad house in Playa was opened only fifteen months ago, but has already garnered unusual success. The shluchim



R' Chaim Brod (left) learning with a mekurav

“We challenge the kids. For example, we asked them to go to the mall and convince a certain tough guy to put on t’fillin. The kids went to talk to him and he simply couldn’t refuse them.”

are R’ and Mrs. Chaim Brod, with the help of Yaakov Speiter, Yisroel Yakobov, and other T’mimim.

YOU NEED TO JUMP IN

The ones who initiated the shlichus in Playa are the shluchim from nearby Cozumel (see issue #782 of *Beis Moshiaich*) who would on occasion send a pair of bachurim to Playa. During those short visits they saw the need for a permanent Chabad house to service the local Jews and the thousands of tourists. The one who came up with the idea of a permanent Chabad house in Playa was Avrohom Meiri, today a shliach in Guatemala. Meiri started out with a weekly visit to Playa, which included t’fillin, conversations with tourists, and inviting them to Chabad programs on Cozumel.

Upon returning to Eretz

Yisroel, Meiri met with R’ Chaim Brod and told him about the tremendous potential in Playa. R’ Brod and his wife rose to the challenge and the rest is history.

What made you decide to go on shlichus to Playa del Carmen?

We were married two years and wanted to go on shlichus. We had some interesting offers but did not receive the Rebbe’s bracha. Then I met with Avremi Meiri who told me about Playa del Carmen and about the urgent need for a Chabad house there. I wrote to the Rebbe and opened to a striking letter in the *Igros Kodesh*. It was a letter to bachurim who were involved in strengthening Jewish communities in South America. That’s when I realized that the Rebbe wants us in Playa. Things moved in a miraculous way from there.



R' Chaim Brod lighting a public menorah



Reading the Megilla on Purim

A young couple in this tourist spot on the beach. Where do you begin?

After a talk with Dudi Caplin, who is on shlichus in Cozumel, we decided that the best approach would be to start with the local Jews. We arrived in Playa in Elul 5770 and we called all the Jews in Playa who were in touch with the Chabad house in Cozumel and invited them to a meeting. This was right before Shabbos Slichos and we announced the opening of a Chabad house in

Playa. We invited them all to a Shabbos meal to take place on Shabbos Slichos.

We brought kosher food from Cozumel and about forty people came for the first Shabbos meal! It was a very uplifting Shabbos and when it was over, I sat down to write a letter to the Rebbe in which I reported about our first activity. The answer I opened to in the Igros Kodesh was to someone who was afraid of making contact with people and the Rebbe told her that just as you have to jump into the water to be a swimmer and you cannot

Tishrei. People loved it and came in droves. Two days before Rosh HaShana I realized that the place was too small for the number of people who would be coming. I began thinking about something bigger. We rented a restaurant for the t'fillos and Yom Tov meals. We brought sixty chairs and set up the meal on the roof of the restaurant. One hundred people showed up and we were crowded.

I saw that the potential was far greater than we thought and for Yom Kippur I began looking for something big and air conditioned. The bachurim, who came to help me and did Mivtza T'fillin, met a wealthy Jew who, upon hearing of the need for a place for Yom Kippur, promised to help. I met him in his office and he reserved a spacious elegant hall for us. When we spoke about the number of chairs, I asked him to order 100. He laughed and said we should hope for 50 people to show up. 150 people showed up for Kol Nidrei and we had over 200 people for N'ila!

The hall where we held the t'fillos is located on grounds that contain two halls. Unfortunately, as we began Kol Nidrei, a wedding with earsplitting music began in the other hall. I spoke to the manager and explained that this is our holiest day of the year and the worshipers' feelings should be taken into account. I was told that lowering the volume was impossible. Despite their respect for religious sentiments, there was nothing they could do since a number of distinguished guests had arrived for the other event.

In the middle of the davening, an older couple walked in and joined us. At the end of the davening, they said they had come for the other event but

train on the shore, so too – she had “to jump into the water.” Then the difficulties would fade away.

I took this instruction seriously and decided to jump into the water. It wasn't easy and we are still feeling the jump, but I can tell you that many significant changes have resulted.

The Chabad house started out in the home of a local Jew who left for Yom Tov and donated his house for our work over

being Jews, they had decided to join us for a few minutes in honor of the holy day.

About two weeks later, I received an emotional email from a woman in Yerushalayim who said that the older couple who had dropped in on us were her parents. That is when I realized that the aggravation we had had with the noise level was only for the purpose of getting that couple to join us. Their daughter wrote that many of the guests invited to the wedding were Jews. Although they were not religious, it was impossible to know what impact the Kol Nidrei next door had on them.

On Motzaei Yom Kippur we had an opportunity to experience the power of a Jewish neshama. A week and a half earlier, on Erev Rosh HaShana, we met two Jewish brothers who have been living in Mexico for several years. They came to the nighttime Yom Tov meal and were so impressed that they decided to stay with us for the rest of Yom Tov. During the Aseres Yemei T'shuva they came a few times and wanted to know about the significance of the Yomim Nora'im. They wanted to join us for all the t'fillos on Yom Kippur, but since they live far from the hall, they stayed in a nearby hotel so as to avoid desecrating the holy day.

Yom Kippur night I looked out for the brothers but they did not show up. They did not come the next day either. I couldn't imagine what had happened to them and was very upset. When Yom Kippur was over, we went to the Chabad house for the post-fast meal. The brothers walked in as we were eating. It turned out that one of them returned late from work and figured it was no big deal not to celebrate the holiday when he hadn't done



R' Chaim Brod and a tourist

so for years. He decided that he would start the following year.

The younger brother waited for a phone call from him and when it turned dark, he decided to walk to his brother's house, a two hour walk! When he arrived, all tired out, his older brother wondered why he had exerted himself. The younger brother explained, "I decided that after re-discovering our Judaism, we couldn't possibly forgo observing Yom Kippur, so I came to you so we can observe it together."

Without kippas, without machzorim, but with a lot of Jewish faith, the brothers observed Yom Kippur and fasted. They waited until the fast was over and when three stars appeared in the sky they went to the Chabad house.

REACHING JEWS ON CHANUKA

Last Chanuka, the shluchim lit large public menorahs where thousands of people pass by. Their greatest accomplishment

was the lighting of a huge menorah on the main street. Hundreds of people participated, had their picture taken, and were tremendously moved. In addition, there were menorah lightings in large stores owned by Jews.

In the middle of Chanuka one of the Israelis called R' Brod and asked, "How did you manage to light a menorah on the main street? Slow down; you just arrived! Wait a while until people get to know you. You just show up and turn the place over?!"

R' Brod tells us about the Chanuka parties:

In the course of our work in the malls, we met an Israeli woman who comes to Playa a few times a year to sell cosmetics. We tried convincing her to come to our programs but she kept her distance from us. One night of Chanuka we had a party for all the Israeli employees of a company that produces Dead Sea products. At the end of their workday they all showed up, including that woman. During



Kiddush Levana

the party she saw the beauty in Judaism and realized that these “blacks” weren’t as bad as she thought. Since then, she regularly comes for Friday night meals.

EXPANSION

Erev Simchas Torah, one of the Chabad house visitors approached R’ Brod and asked how he could be of help. R’ Brod told him that the Chabad house was in urgent need of a larger place and the man promised to help. A short while later he called and said he had found a place.

The location of the building was excellent as it was a few blocks from the beach, but it needed renovations. Before Chanuka they completed renovations inside and they moved to the new building. Work is still being done on the outside.

The morning of 13 Shevat, the shluchim woke up to the acrid smell of smoke from a fire, resulting from an electrical short. The roof of the building is made of Mexican straw which is highly flammable. If alert passersby hadn’t noticed the fire and called the fire department the entire building would have gone up in

flames. The big miracle was that the bachurim who slept inside managed to get out and were only slightly affected by smoke inhalation.

That same day, as soon as the fire was extinguished, workers were called to clean up. In accordance with the saying, “wealth follows a fire,” they decided to increase “spiritual wealth” and intensify their shlichus work, trusting they would also gain material wealth.

Within a short time a kosher restaurant was opened, the first of its kind in Playa del Carmen. The menu includes a variety of Israeli food from light breakfasts to satisfying suppers. Tourists enjoy good service and reasonably priced kosher food.

“Local food is considered cheap,” says R’ Brod. “In order to make kosher food accessible, we try to keep prices down so they are comparable with the local restaurants.”

THREE BRISSIN ON EREV PESACH

One day, an odd “Mexican” family walked into the Chabad

house. The father looked Mexican in every respect but the mother looked European. In a conversation with them it turned out that the woman was a Jew from the Ukraine and so her two children were Jewish too. R’ Brod asked the mother what her children’s birthdays are and after checking a secular calendar, he discovered that the older boy’s bar mitzva was the following day.

R’ Brod was thrilled by the hashgacha pratis and suggested that the bar mitzva be celebrated at the Chabad house. The mother had no idea what he was talking about. He explained what a bar mitzva is and the next day, the boy and his family came to celebrate. After that, the two children began attending the Sunday school.

Before Pesach, R’ Barak Chetzroni of Montreal arrived to make a Seder on Isla Mujeres, which is an island near Cancun. Since Barak is a mohel, this was an opportunity to circumcise the two Jewish boys. A few days earlier, R’ Brod found out about a Jewish boy, a year and a half old, who had not been circumcised. And so, three brissin were performed before Pesach, bringing three children under the wings of the Sh’china.

Erev Pesach, R’ Brod asked the Rebbe for a bracha to be able to cover his large Pesach expenses. The answer he opened to in the Igros Kodesh, volume 19, p. 263 was addressed to Chaim HaLevi Binyamini which is similar to R’ Brod’s name – Chaim Binyamin HaLevi. It began with the words, “I was pleased to receive your letter of Erev Pesach the time of our freedom ...”

The Rebbe writes not to be disturbed by those who interfere with his work, and in conclusion,

the Rebbe writes that the work should be done “with true freedom from all matters that disturb avodas Hashem, with joy and gladness of heart.”

Although it was merely two hours before Yom Tov, R’ Brod saw the fulfillment of the Rebbe’s bracha when he miraculously obtained the money he needed.

Since Pesach night is considered a cultural event, the municipality provided them with a spacious hall. As always, the response was greater than expected. The 150 chairs that had been prepared were not enough for the nearly 300 Jews who had come to celebrate Pesach with Chabad. The shluchim rushed to the Chabad house and in a human chain, took out all the benches and chairs and brought them to the hall.

“When we reached the part, ‘Pour Out Your Wrath,’ I asked everyone to rise and said that this was an auspicious time and they could make a personal request of Eliyahu HaNavi, especially for the coming of Moshiach. This was followed by everyone singing ‘Yechi’ and ‘Ani Maamin.’ There was electricity in the air as hundreds of Jews sang and danced in anticipation of the Geula.

“Afterwards, one of the local Jews came over to me and said that he was living there for thirteen years and throughout that time he had not eaten matza on Pesach. That night was the first time in thirteen years that he had the z’chus of fulfilling this mitzva.”

BESURAS HA’GEULA IN PLAYA DEL CARMEN

The Besuras Ha’Geula and the Goel are an integral part of the shlichus in Playa. Since the



“R’ Brod was excited by the divine providence and he suggested that she make her son’s bar mitzva tat the Chabad house.”

“The bachurim who came to help me met a wealthy Jew who, upon hearing of the need for a place for Yom Kippur, promised to help. I met him in his office and he reserved a spacious elegant hall for us. When we spoke about the number of chairs, I asked him to order 100. He laughed and said we should hope for 50 people to show up. 150 people showed up for Kol Nidrei and we had over 200 people for N’ila!

Rebbe told the shluchim in 5752 that Geula and Moshiach are the gateway to all of shlichus, they connect everything they do with the anticipation of the Geula.

When I asked R’ Brod how people react to the Besuras Ha’Geula, he said, “The same way they accept putting on t’fillin or lighting Shabbos candles. Before they came to the Chabad house they did not know about Moshiach, just as they were ignorant of other aspects of Jewish faith and mitzvos.

“The tourists at the Chabad house absorb the excitement about Moshiach and when we proclaim ‘Yechi’ at the end of davening, they all respond

enthusiastically. Every visitor to Playa identifies the Chabad house by the Moshiach flag. In the entranceway there is a picture of the Rebbe which says ‘Yechi,’ and everybody knows who is really in charge here.

“One of the local guys always looked to debate us. Now, he himself explains to people why the Rebbe is Moshiach.”

SMALL CHANGES BRING BIG SUCCESS

R’ Brod sees the big successes in the little details, in the small spiritual changes that people make:

I was sitting and talking to an



Shneur Bitton on mitzvaim at the mall

irreligious guy who came to us five Shabbas in a row. I didn't have time on Shabbos to talk with him privately but last week, he came in the middle of the day and we could talk a bit. He left having resolved to say "Modeh Ani" every morning.

Twice a week we are visited by two Israelis who live in Playa. I have a nice relationship with them but they refused to put on t'fillin. I resolved not to give up on them and I always ended our conversations by asking them whether they wanted to put on t'fillin. One morning, to my surprise, one of them came to the Chabad house and said, "I feel I have to put on t'fillin." The other guy also ended up putting on t'fillin.

I recently heard a touching story from them. Their grandfather was a Chassidic Yid who lived in communist Russia. In the 70's he was able to get a visa for himself but not for his family. He went to his friends in New York who took him to a farbrengen of the Rebbe. During the farbrengen, the grandfather went over to the Rebbe and said he had two options, to return to Russia and try to get his family out to New York, or to remain in

New York and try and bring his family out. The Rebbe told him to work on the second option but apparently the grandfather was afraid and returned to Russia. He was unable to leave Russia again and his grandchildren were born there and remained uncircumcised.

"The Rebbe knew what he was talking about but my grandfather wasn't enough of a Chassid," said the grandson. "Now, we would like to make up for what we missed out on. We are planning a trip to Eretz Yisroel where we will be circumcised at Bris Yosef Yitzchok."

BUSY FRIDAYS

The most work is done on Friday and it includes mitzvaim and a large Friday night meal, one of the biggest Chabad house Friday night meals in the world. Every Friday they distribute fresh challos and Shabbos candles. These are given to local Jews who won't be able to attend the meal. On the long list are included young Israelis who work the pushcarts selling Dead Sea products and who usually make a Shabbos meal in their apartment for all the employees.

After Mincha and the singing of "Yedid Nefesh," the Chabad house begins a rousing Kabbalas Shabbos. This is what breaks the ice among the many guests. The dancing lasts a long time and it's hard to stop it and continue with the davening.

As soon as the davening is over tables are opened the length of the Chabad house so there is enough room for the two hundred participants.

When the meal is over, people remain until the wee hours of the morning to farbreng. There is a lot of l'chaim, dozens

of niggunim, and numerous hachlatos (mitzva resolutions). Someone who happens by would be astonished by the sight. It's hard to believe this takes place in Playa del Carmen.

In the morning at the Torah reading you would be astonished once again. Those who are called up to the Torah have a *mi sh'Beirach* said with the suggested donation being to commit to a mitzva. This is how, week in and week out, those who have an aliya commit to increased mitzva observance.

STRENGTHENING THE SOUL

What kind of people frequent the Chabad house?

You can divide the Israeli tourists abroad into two groups, those who go to the Far East and those who go to South America. Generally speaking, those who go to the Far East are seeking more spirituality and those who go to South America are looking for fun.

The number of annual visitors is going up. Usually, someone who tours South America visits Mexico too and many of them visit Playa del Carmen. There are guys here who came for a week and ended up staying a month.

Aside from the Israelis, there are other Jewish tourists. During your winter, it's summer here and we get many tourists from Brazil and Argentina. We recently hosted a large number of families of Jewish tourists from all across America.

People come here looking for beaches and partying. There are also those who come to relax, but for the most part, it's all about physical and material indulgence. It is our job to awaken them to the need to provide for the soul.

How do you manage to

take a tourist whose purpose in being in Playa is to have fun and get him involved in spiritual activities?

Most of the visitors come for Shabbos meals which is their only connection with Judaism. In places like these, it's hard to find people who are seeking spirituality. Nevertheless, you can find some who are looking for some depth and meaning, who come to learn or farbreng. These are generally married couples with whom you can discuss kashrus, family purity, and chinuch of children. They are more receptive here than in Eretz Yisroel.

There is an advantage in reaching out to young people who finished their army service and come here to unwind. Sometimes, it's the people who come without any specific goals who are willing to change their plans and visit the Chabad house for a day or two.

We have a weekly farbrengen that attracts many Israelis. There is also the Wednesday challa baking class which is attended by many women. They do the mitzva of *hafroschas challa* and after braiding the challa they sit down for a Chassidishe farbrengen that generates many hachlatos.

We recently started a course on Kabbala in English that is given once a week which is followed by a farbrengen. We started it with the bachurim who came to help us create educational programming with chavrusas and an array of shiurim.

Although we've accomplished a lot, the work in Playa isn't easy. As I said earlier, we work on the small details and don't always see big changes. Still, we have seen results. We recently sent someone to learn in Tomchei T'mimim. He



Shneur Bitton and Aharon Meir Kaye with tourists at the Chabad house

“Our attitude is, the greater the opposition, the more we do. Whenever I ask for the Rebbe's bracha I open to answers that say not to be impressed by the opposition and not to be ashamed by those who mock. Every step taken against us ends up turning around and being to our benefit.”

got started at the Chabad house in Cozumel and then stayed with us for a long time. The week that he returned to Eretz Yisroel he started learning at the yeshiva in Ramat Aviv.

What relationship do you have with the local community?

We run a Sunday school to teach Jewish subjects which is attended by many children from the community. In the summer we had a camp for over fifteen local children. For a place like this, this is serious rescue work.

We challenge the kids. For example, we asked them to go to the mall and convince a certain tough guy to put on t'fillin. The kids went to talk to him and he simply couldn't refuse them.

Other assignments include giving out Sheva Mitzvos cards to gentiles and identifying kosher products in local stores.

There is an Israeli couple living in Playa who, up until recently, stayed away from anything Jewish. I convinced them to send their daughter to our Chabad camp. At first, they refused. However, after a lot of conversations with lots of smiles the ice melted and they agreed to send their two children to camp. When they walked into the Chabad house, they stood there in amazement when they saw me in tallis and t'fillin. This was the first time in their lives they had seen such a thing. Afterward, they asked me about the black object I was wearing.

Much has changed since then in the lives of that family. The mother asked when we would be opening a daycare center for her younger daughter. The father called and asked me to stop by to put up mezuzos in his office. I sent their daughter together with her friends from camp to put up mezuzos in her father's office.

A local fellow whom we met when we first came here told me, "Rabbi Chaim, I admire and appreciate what you do very much but with all due respect, don't change me. This is the way I am and that's that."

I kept in touch with him, believing that he would change eventually. One day, he told me he was moving to a new

apartment and he needed six mezuzos. As I stood there, surprised by this change in him, he said something that was even more surprising.

"Rabbi Chaim, you see this money? I designated it for a new television but I said to myself: The mezuzos are more important and the television can wait another few months."

Things don't always go smoothly and there are those who are trying to undermine our work. Our attitude is, the greater the opposition, the more we do. Whenever I ask for the Rebbe's bracha I open to answers that say not to be impressed by the opposition and not to be ashamed by those who mock. Every step

taken against us ends up turning around and being to our benefit.

What are your plans for the future?

We just completed a year of "jumping into the water." We must get a bigger building to contain all our Shabbos guests. We are looking into a big area in the center of town. There is enormous potential here for a restaurant, a store that sells kosher products and provides catering for hotels frequented by traditional Jews, and a learning center for men and for women. We urgently need a mikva and a preschool. Those who are interested in helping out can contact us at chabadplaya@gmail.com.



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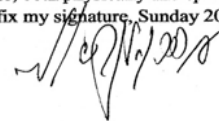
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יחי אדוננו מורנו ורבינו מלך המשיח לעולם ועד

THE ONLY WAY

By Rabbi Akiva Wagner



R' Pesach Molostovsker was one of the prominent Chassidim of the Alter Rebbe. He was known to have a deep understanding of Chassidus and was a very big *oved*. He also was a great *baal menagen* who composed various chassidishe niggunim.

His intense Avodas Hashem is illustrated in the following story. It is related that he once complained to the Alter Rebbe that he had taivos. There was an apple on the table, and the Alter Rebbe said to him, "Declare now that you don't like the apple."

But he replied, "I do like the apple." This was repeated two or three times, until he finally said, "Indeed, I don't like the apple." From then on, for the remainder of his life, he was repulsed and nauseated at the sight of an apple.

It is also related about him that over the course of the year, he would have various questions in Chassidus that he planned to ask the Rebbe when he would have a yechidus. However, when the time came that he visited the Rebbe, as soon as he walked through the door, all of his questions were cleared. This was explained, because all questions stem from klipa, and upon entering the room of the Rebbe, the klipa, and hence the questions, disappeared.

The following story about him is related in Reshimos D'varim (Chitrik): R' Pesach was a tall and well-built man, and was physically strong. Once,

he noticed some goyim who were chasing after some Jewish girls. R' Pesach immediately confronted them and chased them away. Knowing that they would return shortly with their cohorts and that he was no match for a group of thugs, R' Pesach himself then ran off, and hid in a courtyard between some barrels.

Sure enough, shortly thereafter the thugs returned with their friends, and began searching for the insolent Jew. They searched amongst the barrels, banging on them with their swords. They did not find R' Pesach, but in the course of their search, one of them smashed the barrel under which R' Pesach was hiding, severely injuring him.

When R' Pesach subsequently visited the Alter Rebbe at yechidus, he complained of terrible head pains that had resulted from his injuries. The Alter Rebbe held the head of R' Pesach in his holy hands, and the pains disappeared immediately. Years later, after the histalkus of the Alter Rebbe, the pain returned, and it was so excruciating that Reb Pesach began crying out in agony. He went into the Mittlerer Rebbe for yechidus, and the Mittlerer Rebbe took his head in his hands, and the pain once again departed.

After the histalkus of the Mittlerer Rebbe, the pain returned again. R' Pesach went to the Tzemach Tzedek, who also grasped Reb Pesach's head, and once again the pain immediately subsided.

[I vaguely recall hearing or reading a similar story – but am not certain about the details – about a Chassid, possibly the Rashbatz, who went to the Tzemach Tzedek complaining about head pains. The Tzemach Tzedek instructed him to wash his head in hot water, after which the pain departed. After the histalkus of the Tzemach Tzedek it returned, and he went to the Rebbe Maharash, who instructed him to wash his head with cold water, which again cured him of the pain. After the histalkus of the Rebbe Maharash the pain again returned. The Chassid went to the Rebbe Rashab, told him the whole story, and asked him what to do. "If that is the case," replied the Rebbe, "then you should mix hot water with cold water." The Chassid did that and was once again cured. – Further details would be appreciated.]

• • •

Rashi, in this week's parsha, tells an interesting but perplexing story:

When Eisav was on the way to Yaakov, he encountered groups of Malachim, who began to hit Eisav. "Leave him alone," Eisav's men said to them, "he's a son of Yitzchok."

But the Malachim instructed each other: "Keep on beating him!"

"Wait, let him be," they cried out, "he's a grandson of Avrohom." But this, too, did not provide him with relief.

"Stop it," they exclaimed,

“He’s a brother of Yaakov.”

“If so,” responded the Malachim, “then he’s one of ours!” and they let him be.

True, the objective of the angels was to instill in Eisav a fear of starting up specifically with Yaakov. Yet, it must be assumed that, being Malachim, their charade must have been inherently true. Which raises the question: What’s wrong with being a son of Yitzchok and a grandson of Avrohom? Why weren’t these great tzaddikim impressive enough yichus to subdue the Malachim? Why, in actual fact, does only Eisav’s relation to Yaakov give him the status of “one of ours,” despite his being a direct descendent of the Avos Ha’olam?

The answer is elementary; as great as Avrohom was, as important as Yitzchok was, once the generation of Yaakov had begun, once Yaakov had assumed the mantle of Rebbe, of Nasi (Roshei Taivos Nitzutzo shel Yaakov Avinu), the only path to be “one of ours” is through being connected with Yaakov. One can find inspiration and guidance in the teachings of Avrohom, and one can be following the spiritual path initiated by Yitzchok, but if he is not connected with the current Nasi, then he has nothing.

The Alter Rebbe’s bracha certainly had the power to cure R’ Pesach Molostovsker until the end of his days; unquestionably the words of the Alter Rebbe endure until the end of time. But, once there is a new Rebbe, the Chassid must receive his bracha, his hashpaa in all areas, from that Rebbe.

• • •

We can understand that if someone will come today and say, “I’m a chassid of the Alter Rebbe.

I learn so much from the writings and teachings of the Alter Rebbe, and through them I maintain my connection with the Oibershter,” he is on the wrong track! Not only is he missing obvious details – everything that was added and taught by the Rebbeim who were the successors of the Alter Rebbe – but he is missing everything!

For while in the generation of the Alter Rebbe, all that was needed in order to be a proper Chassid – a proper Jew – was to be connected to the Alter Rebbe, in the subsequent generations, if someone is not mekushar, not connected with the current Rebbe, then he is not connected with the Alter Rebbe either.

Chazal tell us: “*Dor Dor V’Dorshov*,” in every generation the Oibershter places a tzaddik through whom all of the *hashpaos* for the generation must come. The only way for any ruchnius or gashmius to have validity is through its connection to the Nasi HaDor.

During the nesius of the Mittler Rebbe, when questions in Halacha were sent to him, he would give them to the Tzemach Tzedek to answer them. The Tzemach Tzedek would write a T’shuva, and then bring it to the Mittler Rebbe for approval. After the Mittler Rebbe gave his approval, the t’shuva would then be sent out. However, the Mittler Rebbe never took issue with any of the T’shuvos of the Tzemach Tzedek.

Once, an urgent query arrived, and the Mittler Rebbe was not available. The Tzemach Tzedek decided that, in light of the fact that the Mittler Rebbe always approved of his T’shuvos, and considering that an immediate response was required, just this once he would send out the T’shuva before

showing it to the Mittler Rebbe. When he later told the Mittler Rebbe about it, he asked the Tzemach Tzedek what he had answered in the T’shuva, and then showed him that it was contrary to an explicit Tosafos.

The Tzemach Tzedek was very upset about this, so the Mittler Rebbe said to him, “Don’t feel bad; in the meantime you are not a Rebbe!”

Even the Torah learning of the Tzemach Tzedek, with all of his phenomenal genius, had to be connected to the Mittler Rebbe, who was then the Rebbe.

The same is true in each individual generation as well. Someone may say, “I relate very well with the teachings of the Rebbe from the Yud’s and Chof’s (1950’s/1960’s), I *Koch zich* in the sichos and maamarim of those years, and demand from myself all of their horaos. When it comes to the later years, I just don’t know how to digest it.”

[In the early years of the Rebbe’s nesius there was a prominent member of Agudas Chabad of Eretz Yisroel who came to see the Rebbe in yechidus. This person struggled with many of the Rebbe’s directives (especially in the area of hafatza), which seemed to him to be so different from the style that he was accustomed to with the Frierdike Rebbe etc.

During the course of the yechidus, the Rebbe said to him, “*Ir farshteit nisht? Ich farshteit oich nisht, ober azoi azoi iz der inyan!*” (You don’t understand? I don’t either understand, but this is the way it has to be!)]

However, this too is unacceptable. In order to be a Chassid of the Rebbe, we need to be a Chassid of the Rebbe today, to *Koch zich in*, and dedicate ourselves to the current

directives.

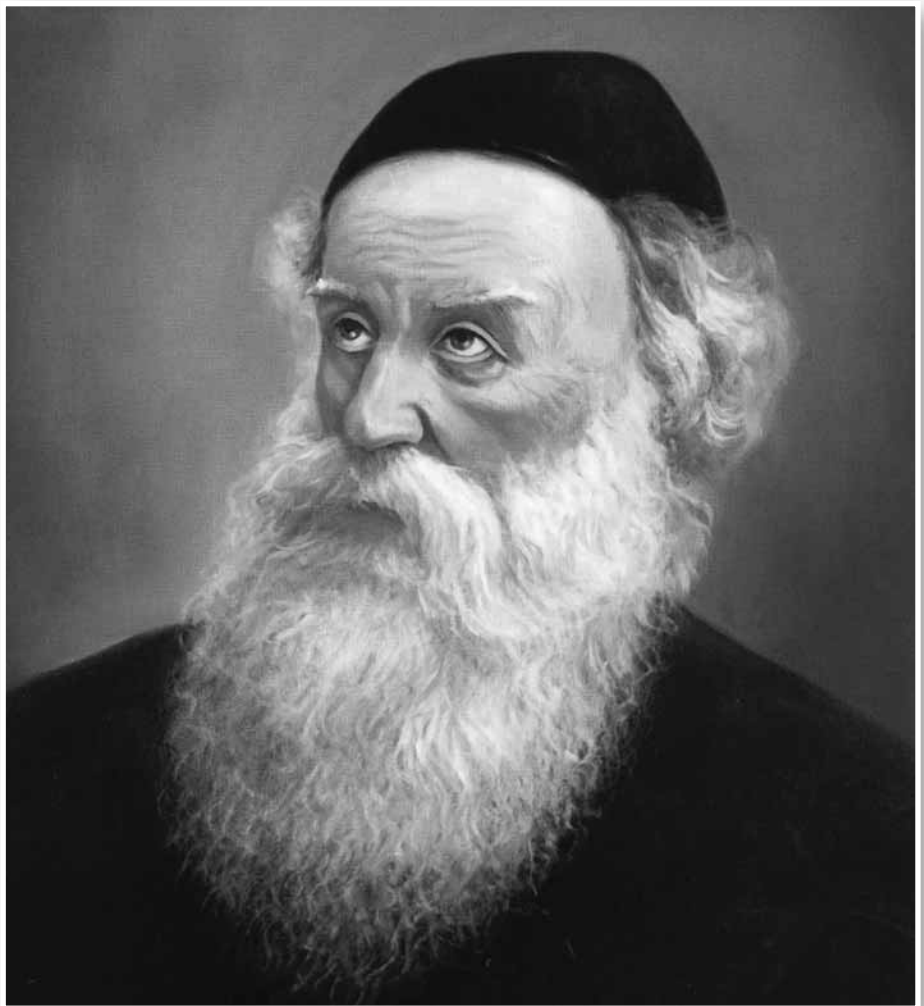
More than anything else, what the Rebbe demands from us now is an “extremist” involvement in Inyanei Moshiach. Everything that we do, all of our lives have to revolve around this point.

Someone can say, “I’ll work on my avoda, on my haskala, on my lomdus; those are all important and vital aspects of a Chassid’s life. So I’m missing this one detail of Moshiach, I’m not perfect. At least let me focus on those other areas.”

But that is wrong! That is like saying “I’m a grandson of Avrohom; I’m a son of Yitzchok. So I’m missing the one detail of being affiliated with Yaakov. But as great as Yaakov may be, Avrohom and Yitzchok must count for something as well, right?” Wrong! The only way to be *MiShelanu*, the only way to be a “one of ours,” is to be connected to Yaakov, to be involved with the things that the Rebbe identified as the particular missions of our time. Only then does our connection with Avrohom and Yitzchok have value.

On Yud Tes Kislev, the Rosh HaShana for Chassidus, it is a time for us to renew and refresh our chassidishkait by strengthening our commitment to limud HaChassidus V’Darkei HaChassidus and by strengthening our connection to the Rebbe. It is a time for us to reveal that we are “one of ours” – that we belong to Yaakov.

It is high time, as well, for the Oibershter to send the Malachim to give Eisav a proper beating. Let Eisav – the gashmiusdike Olam HaZeh and the Nefesh Ha’bahamis – recognize that there can be no existence in the world on its own; everything must be subservient to Yaakov.



“The only way to be *MiShelanu*, the only way to be “one of ours,” is to be connected to Yaakov, to be involved with the things that the Rebbe identified as the particular missions of our time. Only then does our connection with Avrohom and Yitzchok have value.

And this recognition will be the fitting preparation for “V’Alu Moshi’im B’Har Tziyon Lishpot Es Har Eisav,” when the entire world will recognize and acknowledge the “V’hayso L’ Havaya HaMelucha!”

L’chaim! L’SHANA TOVA
B’LIMUD HA’CHASSIDUS
U’B’DARKEI HA’CHASSIDUS
TIKOSEIVU V’SEICHASEIMU,
U’I’Mismach Geula L’Geula,

may this Chag HaGeula be the harbinger of Geula Pratis for each and every one of us B’chol HaMetztarech B’Gashmius U’B’ruchnius, and of the Geula Klalis, Geula HaAmitis V’Hashleima with the hisgalus of Moshiach Tzidkeinu Teikef U’miyad Mamash!!!

From a written farbrengen directed to Alumni of Yeshivas Lubavitch Toronto

THREE SINISTER QUESTIONS & THREE RADICAL ANSWERS

By Rabbi Heschel Greenberg

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



DEALING WITH THE THREAT OF ESAU

Jacob was now returning home from Charan and discovers that his brother Esau was coming towards him with 400 armed men. Esau was still angry at Jacob for having “appropriated” the blessings of their father, Isaac. In response to this ominous threat, Jacob develops a strategy that included sending his brother an elaborate gift to help assuage his hostility.

Every detail of Torah is instructive. Esau symbolizes the obstacles to our Jewish lives and every aspect of Jacob’s attempt at rapprochement is to be seen as a lesson for us in removing these obstacles and even converting them into opportunities that will enable us to realize our goal. This goal is the coming of Moshiach and the Final Redemption at which time, our Sages tell us, Esau will be rehabilitated.

Bearing this in mind we must find meaning in the details of Jacob’s instructions to his

servants as to what they should say to Esau:

THE THREE QUESTIONS

“When my brother Esau encounters you and questions you saying, ‘Whose are you? Where are you going? And to whom belong all of these things before you?’ you should say, ‘We belong to your servant Jacob. This is a gift (*mincha*) sent to our master, to Esau, and behold, he himself is behind us.’”

One of the Chassidic Masters explains that these three questions parallel the three questions mentioned in Avos (Ethics of the Fathers) that are intended to keep us from sin, “Reflect on three things, and you will not come to the handle of sin: From where to you come? Where are you going? And before whom are you going to give a judgment and accounting?”

Isn’t it strange that Esau, who symbolizes the evil impulse within us, should ask the same

questions that are designed to steer us away from sin?

Chiddushei HaRim clarifies that when Esau asked these questions they were meant not to inspire us to be more conscientious Jews, but, on the contrary, they were intended to demoralize us and get us to become depressed. Chiddushei HaRim, however, does not explain what these questions are about when they come from Esau.

Upon some reflection we may suggest the following three arguments the internal Esau poses to us to keep us from realizing our goal.

Our goal is a grandiose one of changing the world and of preparing it for the coming of Moshiach and the final Redemption. We accomplish this by staying focused on this goal. Actions such as performing Mitzvos, learning Torah, specifically the parts of Torah that prepare us for the higher spiritual dimension of the Messianic Age, and praying for and demanding the Redemption, lead us to our destination.

Esau, however, is displeased that we are even thinking in terms of that goal and poses three challenges to us.

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

The first question/challenge,

“That a Jew growing up in the assimilated, affluent Western world eschews materialism for Judaism, shuns wealth for Torah knowledge, and resists the alluring temptations of the secular world for the observance of Mitzvos is no less heroic than the Jews who risked their lives in the former Soviet Union to preserve Judaism.”

“Whose are you,” corresponds to the question “where do you come from” in Ethics of the Fathers. It is meant to prevent us from even starting our journey—or derailing us if we have already begun the journey by pointing to our humble origins. “Who do you think you are that you are considering a life of spiritual achievement that would result in changing the world?” The evil impulse chastises us: “You have but humble beginnings. You are not the scion of some illustrious family. You are a nobody. Give up your pipe dreams. Think small!”

ELUSIVE GOAL

The second question, “Where are you going?” is intended to get us off track when we fail to heed the Esau thought within us, with its demoralizing advice to think small. When he sees that we have taken off with gusto and are on the way to reaching our destination he quickly sends us a second message intended to derail us, “Where do you think you’re going? You’ll never get there. It is so far and your objective is so elusive? Slow down, or better still, go back, forget about your grandiose ideals.”

FUTURE EMBARRASSMENT?

The third question is posed by the internal Esau when he sees that we ignored his second admonition and that we continue to stubbornly trek ahead even when it gets tough, and, as the saying goes, “when the going gets tough, the tough get going.” The evil impulse pulls out his last arrow from his quiver:

“Look at the future. No matter how good you are, when you arrive at your destination, the Messianic Age, in a world of

“The evil impulse chastises us: “You have but humble beginnings. You are not the scion of some illustrious family. You are a nobody. Give up your pipe dreams. Think small!”

perfection when the righteous of the past will be brought back to life, of what value will be all of your accomplishments? You will look foolish relative to the standards that will be the norm in the future. You will be insignificant in the presence of these towering personalities. Why waste your time trying to get to a place that will only bring you shame and dejection. Here in the less than perfect world you can be someone special. Why clamor for the time when you will be reduced to the status of a virtual nobody?”

These are the three challenges that prevent us from realizing any positive goal, especially the goal of bringing the Redemption.

How should we respond to these challenges?

NO JEW WITHOUT A BACKGROUND

Jacob already gave us the answer in his instructions to his servants:

The answer to the first challenge as to “who do we think we are, considering our humble beginnings” is that “we belong to your servant Jacob.” Every Jew has an illustrious background. Every Jew is a descendent of Jacob (who embodied and transmitted the collective energies of Isaac and Abraham). There is no such thing as a Jew with no background! We were all empowered to change the world because of the traits that we inherited from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

THE POOR MAN'S OFFERING

The response to the second challenge of Esau, that the goal is elusive, is contained in Jacob's continuing instruction to his servants, “This is a gift (mincha) sent to my master, to Esau.” A mincha is a modest offering. In the days of the Temple, only the poorest people would bring a mincha that consisted of flour and oil in place of the more elaborate animal sacrifice. Yet it is the small gesture of a poor man that G-d cherishes because, as our Sages state, “He is actually bringing his own soul.” A poor person instills his heart and soul in the offering. Our small efforts are not any less meaningful than the major achievements of the spiritually affluent.

Moreover, the mincha is being offered to Esau. This is a way of saying to Esau, “Thank you for your efforts to ensnare us and deter us. This is what makes our offering so much more meaningful. We owe you, Esau, a debt of gratitude, because, ironically, you are what makes our paltry mincha possess the power that it possesses.”

THE GIANT AND THE DWARF: WHO DWARFS WHOM?

The refutation of the final Esau-inspired challenge that we will be “nobodies” in the future is contained in the words, “behold, he himself is behind us.” This can mean that contrary

to the argument that we will lose our identities because our achievements pale compared to those of our forbears, the response is that, on the contrary, "Jacob will be **behind** us."

There is a dual meaning to that phrase. First, it means that we have the power to get us over the top because we are the proverbial dwarf who stands on the shoulders of the giant and therefore can see farther. We will get the credit for bringing the Redemption because, as our Sages declare, "A Mitzvah is credited to the one who completes it." We are the ones who will finish the job, so notwithstanding our status as dwarves compared to our ancestors, we will not be "nobodies." Even among the illustrious leaders of yesteryear we will be prominent. Jacob and all the other greats will point to us and declare, "You were the ones who made all of our work bear fruit. You completed and validated all of what we've begun."

But there is a second and more powerful meaning to that expression that "Jacob is behind us." Not only are we the ones to complete the job and deserve to get the credit for it, but we have a distinction even in comparison to all of the spiritual titans of the past. Our generation's self sacrifice in times of spiritual darkness makes us unique.

That a Jew growing up in the assimilated, affluent Western world eschews materialism for Judaism, shuns wealth for Torah knowledge, and resists the alluring temptations of the secular world for the observance of Mitzvos is no less heroic than the Jews who risked their lives in the former Soviet Union to preserve Judaism. The combined sacrifices of the modern day Jew who has resisted the twin pressures of persecution and assimilation puts our generation on a pedestal no earlier generation can rival!

This last point—while sounding somewhat exaggerated and pretentious—was actually made by the Alter Rebbe, Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, the founder of the Chabad Chassidic movement and the author of the Chassidic classic, the Tanya, whose day of liberation from Czarist imprisonment we will be observing this coming week on the 19th day of Kislev.

The Alter Rebbe refers to the Torah's vaunted praise of Moses as the most humble man on the face of the earth. The question is asked, how could Moses be so humble when he was well aware of his towering greatness? The answer provided by the Alter Rebbe was that, according to the Talmud and Midrash, Moses was given a preview of all future generations of Jews. When he saw the final generation before

the coming of Moshiach and their self-sacrifice for Torah and Mitzvos he was humbled."

We do not have to worry about our position in the future and how we will be judged. The mere fact that despite our current tenebrous exile conditions, we ask for—nay, demand—Moshiach and do everything within our power to hasten his coming, that itself places us in the category of people whom Moses, Jacob, and all of our forebears will look up to. They will marvel at our faith, perseverance, and self-sacrifice in the face of unprecedented darkness.

In a similar vein, the Rebbe turned a person's Jewish life around when that person informed the Rebbe that he was about to embark on the spiritually destructive path of intermarriage. Rather than castigating him for his plan the Rebbe told him "I envy you. I do not have your challenge. And meeting it makes you unique." These were the powerful words which the Rebbe told this Jew who was standing precariously on the precipice and about to fall into the abyss. And it was to this Jew, and to all of our generation who have similar challenges in one form or another, that the Patriarchs, Moses and Moshiach will say to us: "We envy you!"

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MY HOMETOWN, **KROLEVETS**



Heishke managed to still see wagon drivers, water carriers, and l'havdil, wild "shkatzim." • However, when it came to Jewish life, aside from the one shul which was closed down in his childhood, Heishke only heard about a Jewish school and kosher sh'chita that had once been.* Nevertheless, there was one aspect of Jewish life that nothing could change or affect, and that was Jewish heroism at its best!

By Rabbi Yehoshua Dubrawski a"h

A TOWN IN THE CHERNIGOV DISTRICT

Towns like Krolevets abound in Russia. There was nothing that set Krolevets apart from the hundreds of other Russian towns, and yet, it was different as far as all matters pertaining to Jews and Judaism during my childhood years, the dark years of the 1930's under the dictatorship of Josef Stalin, may his name be erased. I would like to briefly mention some salient points that express this difference.

During those terrible years, the town had a few yeshiva boys learning in the only secret yeshiva of Lubavitch in Russia. In the town were three religious children

who had peios, learned Torah, and did not go to public school. Also, there were a relatively large number of shomer Shabbos Jews in contrast to other Jewish towns at the time.

As far as I can recall, the Jewish population numbered about 3,000 people. The total number of people was about 13,000.

Under the Soviet system, the town belonged to a certain district and the district belonged to an even larger province. The capital city of the district was Sumi, and the capital city of the entire province was Chernigov.

Of my childhood days in Krolevets I remember quite a few names of Jews from the town and

I remember their appearances too. There were several Jewish storekeepers, blacksmiths and other laborers. There were also some Jewish doctors and nurses.

THE WAGON DRIVER'S OATH

Astrov, the only Jewish photographer, held a distinguished position in town. Perhaps he was famous because he had permission to use a motorcycle, the only one in town. No doubt, he was important because of his craft as a photographer. A good family picture was no small thing in Krolevets in those days. When Astrov went somewhere to take a picture, the entire town knew about it because of the noisy motorcycle.

There were two wagon drivers in town. I remember the name of the more "famous" one, Meir Vinetzky. He was also known as "Meir Chametz" because whenever he spoke he would swear, "if so, may I end up with a piece of chametz." People who had to take the train would use his services to get to the train station. He would often complain that he had more nachas from his old horse than from his young children. He once told me a "secret" (I didn't know whether he was kidding or he



These pictures were taken two years ago in Krolevets. They show the town frozen in time.

was serious), that his horse was almost completely blind. So how did he transport people? Nu, go figure. I don't recall the name of the other wagon driver.

If the two wagon drivers were amongst the most indigent mendicants in town, there was a third wagon driver who was an even greater pauper, Arshansky was his name. He never graduated to transporting passengers and their luggage to the train station. It seems he couldn't compete with them and he became a water carrier. We didn't even dream of a central water supply. We had wells from which water was drawn and brought to people's homes. Those who had the financial capabilities or were old, weak or located far from the well, used water carriers. The water carriers brought pails of water for a few coins. Arshansky was able to compete with these fellows. He had a wooden barrel on his wagon which he filled with water from the well. He made deliveries to certain homes and received a few coins for every pail.

The town elders said that before the communist revolution,

“What I remember is my mother smothering her sobs in her handkerchief and someone else crying loudly (I don't remember who). I choked down my tears while my sisters looked at my mother and cried.

Krolevets was a market town. Once upon a time, many wagons with all sorts of produce and merchandise gathered, and there were shops and makeshift booths. At the fair you could buy many items. They said you could buy a cow or calf and even horses. In my time already there were no more fairs, just small markets. We children listened to our parents and grandparents open-mouthed and with hungry eyes as they told us tales of the wonderful past, i.e. the years before the revolution. This “past” wasn't that long ago, just a few decades earlier, but to us children, 10-12 years of age, it sounded so unusual that at times it was like a dream.

THE SECRET OF THE POND

They also told us about a yeshiva for little boys, about a mikva and a Jewish bathhouse,

and about a kosher butcher store. I found it particularly interesting to hear about the melamed with his strap, *kantchik*, who learned all day with children. I pictured his assistant, the *ba'helfer*, and I may have dreamed about him. Nothing remained of all this in my childhood. The brutal Red oppressors had erased all traces.

The words “butcher shop” were strange to me. They would take an animal and slaughter it? Throughout my childhood, until I went to Moscow the year I was bar mitzva, I never saw a piece of kosher meat. There was R' Hillel the shochet who secretly shechted the occasional chicken for Shabbos. He was afraid to even hear about shechting an animal. Religious activity such as kosher slaughter bordered on counter-revolutionary activity.

Of the mikva that Krolevetz once housed, all that remained

were some odd, even mysterious remnants. The short block that we lived on, Patchava Street, at the edge of town, ended in a fairly steep hill. During the winter, when everything was covered with snow and ice, the children would slide down the incline on sleds. At the bottom of the hill was a pond and when the pond froze, the gentiles would skate on the thick ice while wearing ice skates. They made a racket and were so wild that we children didn't dare get close.

During the summer wild geese swam in the pond. They were often followed by goslings in a row. In order to protect the goslings, the mother geese would furiously attack anyone who dared to approach. They would stretch their long necks, ready to attack with their beaks and hissing like snakes (so they said; I never heard a snake hiss).

There, in the middle of the pond, some wooden poles stuck up into the air. I considered it a peculiar sight. They aroused wonder in my childish mind; the fact of their existence, year after year, despite the rot. It's as though it wasn't fazed by the cold of winter and the heat of summer and not even by the ducks and other creatures that pecked at the poles. I heard from my parents that those poles were what remained from the mikva building and the Jewish bathhouse. I never managed to find out how a pond came to be in that location, but I guessed a bit of the secret as to why the remaining poles weren't removed.

Afterwards, I considered them a symbol of the incredible staying power of Jews and Judaism in that country despite the nonstop persecution (obviously, in those days, I was unfamiliar with the concept of a symbol but I

understood something of its meaning even as a child).

SHULS THAT VANISHED

In the good days, there were three shuls in our town: the Old Shul, the Market Shul, and the New Shul. Until my ninth year, I davened only in the Old Shul. The Soviet wreckers destroyed the other two shuls in my early, forgotten childhood. What I remember well is when the Reds took over the Old Shul on the first day of Shavuot. Apparently, they deliberately chose the Yom Tov of the "Giving of Our Torah."

Engraved in my memory is the pain of the experience of going from one emotion to the extreme opposite; from a wonderful feeling of joy to an abyss of deep pain. That Shavuot morning, I davened in shul with my father and grandfather in a festive mood, with nary an inkling of the impending tragedy. It was a gorgeous spring day. Life was good, especially for us children. As limited as our family income was, the dairy foods of Shavuot were delectable. It was a meal we looked forward to from year to year.

However, in the middle of the dairy meal, R' Betzalel the "T'hillim zugger" ran in, pale, winded, and in a half cry he blurted out these unforgettable words, "Oy Rebbe (Zeide R' Mendel Dubrawski was the town rav), a calamity! The last shul has been closed and barred. What do we do Rebbe, what do we do?"

I don't remember the conclusion of the dairy meal. As for the meat meal? What I remember is my mother smothering her sobs in her handkerchief and someone else crying loudly (I don't remember who). I choked down my tears and my sisters looked at my

mother and cried.

A few other people showed up from the families that were more observant, in order to consult with Zeide about what to do. Everybody knew there was nothing to do; however, they consulted with him about whether to do something to save the Sifrei Torah in the shul. They all knew it was dangerous to open a door sealed by the NKVD, but still ...

I don't recall all the back and forth, but I gathered that they decided to take the risk and do something and devised plans about how to go about it. In the 1930's five or six yeshiva bachurim were in Krolevets, learning in the underground Tomchei T'mimim. Although they tried their utmost not to stand out with their beards and peios, they undertook to do what needed to be done. It entailed endangering their lives and it was crowned with miraculous success.

The following midnight, the bachurim – and I think some balabatim too – hid in various corners of the street. One of them approached the shul windows to see whether there remained an open window. Hashem helped and after testing a few windows, one window opened and one yeshiva bachur jumped into the shul. One by one, the rest of the chevra ran over to the window, took a Torah scroll, and headed off in a different direction. That is what my father told me afterward. I don't remember whether they rescued all the Sifrei Torah or just some of them. The Torah scrolls were kept in the homes of religious Jews, including some homes where secret minyanim were later held.

What did the cursed government do with the stolen

Old Shul? I did not manage to see or find out. For the most part, I refrained from passing the shul, which was not far from the nice buildings that housed the NKVD and the municipality offices. If I did happen to pass by, it was difficult for me to look at the sealed off shul. My heart was pained by the sad sight. It sometimes seemed to me as though the rounded windows of the shul were silently crying invisible tears.

It saddened me to see what they did with the heavy, brown benches of the shul. In Krolevetz there was a public bathhouse that my father would take me to sometimes. It was an old, primitive bathhouse with benches upon which people laid their clothing and bathed. One time, when we went inside the bathhouse, my father blanched. He stood there silently for a while and then returned to the door and cried out, "Oy, Oy, these are the benches from our Old Shul!"

Upon our return home, he mumbled, "On those precious, holy benches where Jews poured their hearts out to their Father in heaven, dirty gentiles now sit!"

SECRET MINYAN

Opposite the Old Shul, on the corner of the street, is where the New Shul once stood. The Soviet leadership of the town destroyed it many years before, probably in my early childhood, and perhaps even before I was born. The building of the "New" Shul was indeed new and nicer than the Old Shul, but it didn't look like a real shul to me. For many years, the Old Shul remained in my mind as an authentic shul.

Many years later, I went to Moscow and saw an active shul for the first time. It was in a large, magnificent building.

I instinctively compared it to the Old Shul in Krolevets and thought that despite its grandeur, the Moscow shul didn't measure up to the Old Shul of my birthplace.

Making comparisons between various shuls and the shul in Krolevets was something I did time and again in my later years, when I went to shuls in free countries after I left the Soviet Union.

In my childhood, I looked at the former New Shul with a measure of pity. I saw what the Soviet thieves had made out of the shul. They turned it into a factory, into a government spinning mill for nice tablecloths. Where did all those lacework tablecloths disappear to? The fact is that not a single one could be bought in that town. I don't think anybody in Krolevets knew where those tablecloths were "shipped off" to (just like the people of the Soviet Union). Actually, to be perfectly accurate, one tablecloth woven in the New Shul, which was especially beautiful, even bourgeois, ended up on our Shabbos table. There's an entire legend about how this came to be, how the tablecloth was transferred from one to the next until it reached us, but I don't recall the details.

During the summer months, the windows of the New Shul – weaving factory – were open, and you could see the spinning looms inside and hear the clacking, along with the voices and singing of the workers, most of them gentiles. I would approach an open window and peek inside and look for some indication, some sign of the former shul, even though I knew I couldn't possibly find any remnant of the bima or Aron Kodesh. I never found anything there, other than



The pond near the town

sights that caused me to walk away sadly.

The Market Shul used to be behind the former marketplace. I did not walk there frequently. I didn't consider this shul a real shul. If I am remembering correctly, the Market Shul was a wooden structure.

After the Jews of Krolevets mourned the loss of their three shuls, a daily minyan was organized in the apartment of Reuven Karasik, a very simple Jew. In town they would say he wasn't overly fearful of counter-revolutionary activity like this taking place in his house because he had children in Moscow who were *gantze knackers* (important people) in the communist party. They sent him money to support him. He was unusually devoted to the rav, my grandfather, whom he praised to the skies. He was a widower and his oldest daughter, who was, *nebach*, a hunchback, ran his house.

THE BUCK STOPS HERE!

By Rabbi Gershon Avtzon



Dear Readers sh'yichyu:

In our previous articles, we explained at great length the activities of each of our holy Rebbeim in bringing the Sh'china from "The Seventh Heaven" down to this physical world. The Rebbe "cemented" the Sh'china into this world with the Mivtzaim campaigns and more. After reading those articles, one may ask himself, "So what now? Let me just watch the Rebbe do his work in bringing Moshiach and reap the rewards with the coming of Moshiach."

Yet this is not the case. While the Rebbeim are the ones to bring the Sh'china to this world, it is incumbent upon us to internalize the power the Rebbeim give us and make Moshiach a reality in our lives, thus making Moshiach a reality in the world. Just as Moshe Rabbeinu brought the Sh'china down to this world, yet the Jewish people had to cross the Yarden into Eretz Yisroel by themselves, so too we have the power and obligation to make the Geula a reality in this world.

On the eve of Nissan 28, 5751 (April 11, 1991), the Rebbe, full of emotion, issued a call to his Chassidim, and to the world Jewish community, to increase their efforts to bring Moshiach and the ultimate Redemption. Spoken in an anguished voice and couched in uncharacteristically personal

terms, the Rebbe's words deeply shocked the Chassidim present in the Rebbe's synagogue and reverberated worldwide. "How is it that the Redemption has not yet been attained?" the Rebbe cried. "That despite all that has transpired and all that has been done, Moshiach has still not come? What more can I do? I have done all I can to bring the world to truly demand and clamor for the Redemption ... The only thing that remains for me to do is to give over the matter to you! Do everything that is in your power to achieve this thing – a most sublime and transcendent light that needs to be brought down into our world with practical tools... I have done all I can. I give it over to you. Do all that you can to bring the righteous redeemer, immediately! I have done my part. From this point on, all is in your hands..."

In the sicha of Sukkos 5752, the Rebbe asked a startling question: We know that in each generation there is only one Rebbe. If so, asks the Rebbe, why does the Friedlike Rebbe call each of the Tzemach Tzedek's children with the title "Admur" – Rebbe? The Rebbe answered that from here we see that we can all "have the attributes of a Rebbe."

At first glance there is something very puzzling. This is an old question. Why did the Rebbe wait till 5752 to discuss it?

In retrospect it is clear that the Rebbe was teaching us a lesson and providing us with inspiration. He knew that there would soon be a time when people would ask, "Where is the Rebbe?" The Rebbe is telling us that the answer to that is inside each and every one of us. The Rebbe gave us the Ko'ach to bring the Hisgalus of Moshiach.

I was once sitting at a Farbrengen with Rabbi Zalman Aharon Grossbaum sh'yichyeh (Shliach to Toronto, Ontario) and a Bachur asked him, "Where is the Rebbe?"

His answer was sharp and to the point: "Wherever you let him in to your life – that is where he is!"

It is with this statement of "Do all you can to bring Moshiach" that the Rebbe changed the paradigm of the work of the Jewish people in our generation. While historically we have relied on the Tzaddikim to bring the world to its perfection, the Rebbe trusted and empowered us to get the job done.

From that point on, when one is looking for the answer as to why Moshiach is not revealed yet, they must examine their own deeds. We all were empowered to bring Moshiach. In our times, when we are going through the birth pangs of Moshiach, it is the obligation of every Jew, man and


woman, old and young, to ask himself, “What have I done, and what am I doing, to ease the birth pangs of Moshiach and make us worthy of the complete Redemption through Moshiach?” (Introduction to HaYom Yom)

Since that fateful day in Nissan 5751, the Jewish world was thrown into a frenzy. We have been studying Torah and performing Mitzvos for generations, yet it seemed that we were missing that “Direct Path” and key to the era of Moshiach. Many spent hours thinking of special ideas. On the Shabbos of Tazria-Metzora 5751, the Rebbe made it crystal clear. “The direct path to enter the era of Moshiach is through learning about the concepts of Moshiach in all areas of the Torah.”

There are a number of reasons that this is so.

We can’t work effectively for a goal that we know nothing about. The more we learn about Moshiach, the more we can appreciate the era of Moshiach and that will inspire us to work towards Moshiach. Secondly, since we have been in exile for so long, we are bound and imprisoned by the exile mentality. We need to be freed of this bondage. Torah has the power of freedom and is empowered to change our reality. It elevates us to the world of truth and freedom. Another important point is that there are many misconceptions and preconceived notions about Moshiach. It is therefore imperative that one knows the true Torah sources.

It is important that each one of us realize that it can be our own mitzva that will tip the scales. In the words of the

 In retrospect it is clear that the Rebbe was teaching us a lesson. He knew that there would soon be a time when people would ask, “Where is the Rebbe?” The Rebbe is telling us that the answer to that is inside each and every one of us. The Rebbe gave us the Ko’ach to bring the Hisgalus of Moshiach.

Rambam (Hilchos T’shuva 3:4): “Accordingly, throughout the entire year, a person should always view himself as equally balanced between merit and sin and the world as equally balanced between merit and sin. If he performs one sin, he tips his balance and that of the entire world to the side of guilt and brings destruction upon himself.

“On the other hand, if he performs one mitzva, he tips his balance and that of the entire world to the side of merit and brings deliverance and salvation to himself and others. This is implied by (Proverbs 10:25): ‘A righteous man is the foundation of the world,’ i.e., he who acted righteously, tipped the balance of the entire world to merit and saved it.”

I know that many people reading this may feel overwhelmed by the responsibility. They may question their ability – and their commitment – to bring Moshiach. The Rebbe, in the Sichos of 5751-52, dealt with such questions and doubts. However, before we discuss the Rebbe’s approach to answering our worries, I feel that it is important to address the obvious question: Why did the Rebbe take his time to deal with our questions, fears and doubts? Isn’t our motto “The deed is the main thing?”

The answer lies in

understanding the basic difference between a regular Mivtza campaign of the Rebbe and Mivtza Moshiach. While the goal of a Chassid who was committed to a regular Mivtza was to encourage a Jew to commit to a certain action, the goal of Mivtza Moshiach is to change our lifestyle and outlook. This can only be accomplished if Moshiach is internalized in a persons’ being. This internalization comes through learning and contemplating intellectually the concepts of Moshiach.

In the words of the Rebbe (Balak, 5751): “Despite the uproar associated with this matter in recent times within this year, the year of ‘I shall show him wonders,’ and after witnessing the wonders which testify that this is ‘The year that the King Moshiach will be revealed,’ we see how difficult it is to inculcate the awareness and the feeling that we are literally standing on the threshold of the Messianic Era, to the point that one begins to thrive on matters of Moshiach and Redemption...”

“The solution to this dilemma is **Torah study** concerning Moshiach and Redemption. For Torah, which is G-d’s wisdom and thus transcends the natural order of the universe, has the capacity to **alter** the nature of man. Even when one’s emotions are still **outside** the parameters of Redemption,

G-d forbid, (because he has not yet emerged from his internal exile), he can nevertheless learn the Torah's teachings concerning Redemption, and thereby become elevated to the state of Redemption. One then begins to thrive on matters of Redemption, **borne of** the knowledge, awareness and feeling that 'Behold he is coming.'

While with every other Mivtza, the main thing was a specific deed, and therefore it did not matter as much to address the persons' inner emotions, Mivtza Moshiach is very different. If a person has questions, fears or doubts, it is very difficult for him to internalize Moshiach and make his life change into a Moshiach lifestyle. This is one of the reasons that the Rebbe addressed these concepts publicly.

We will go through the four questions and the Rebbe's answers to them regarding Moshiach and Geula.

1) Why are we spreading inyanei Moshiach if the world is not yet ready?

The answer to this question is:

"The world is ready and completely receptive! When a Jew performs his work properly, transcending all limits and constraints, and simultaneously channeling these efforts within the parameters of nature, he will see how the world, nature and the nations of the world will assist him in his work." (Korach 5751)

2) How will the family and the world at large react to the news that Moshiach is imminent?

"In truth, if the subject of Redemption were an innovation,

the question would possibly have a place. But the Redemption is not new; rather all of it has already begun ("as in the beginning") and has been brought into and received in this physical world, the lowest of all possible worlds (in the context of "your advisors as in the beginning"). Therefore it won't be a wonder when the Redemption arrives imminently!" (Shoftim, 7 Elul, 5751)

3) How can we say that the world is ready, if I look at myself and see that I still am not ready?

"Even though a person recognizes his own personal deficiencies that need correction, this does not contradict, G-d Forbid, the testimony of the leader of our generation that we have already completed the Divine Service and stand ready to greet our righteous Moshiach. This is because **the Jewish people's collective** Divine Service over the course of the generations, required during the time of exile to bring the complete Redemption (which depends on our deeds and service during the entire period of exile) **has been concluded and perfected**. There is absolutely no explanation or reason for the delay of the Redemption. Therefore, even if an individual's Divine service is lacking over the course of time that the Redemption has been delayed, this is a **personal matter** that certainly needs to be corrected and completed. But this does not diminish, G-d Forbid, the completion and perfection of 'our actions and service' of the Jewish people as a whole, which stands ready for the Redemption. The very fact that the collective has been perfected allows the individual to correct himself more easily and with joy, knowing that the true and

complete Redemption is coming imminently." (Noach, 5752)

4) I see that the world may be ready, but considering that I have yet to internalize Moshiach, I feel that I must refrain from spreading the concept of Moshiach.

"This announcement of Moshiach must be made even by those who argue that they have not completely absorbed its full meaning. Since their faith is intact, they are able to (and consequently, required to) publicize these matters to others, first and foremost their own family members. (Certainly their families do not need to suffer from their own lack of comprehension of this matter.) They should also spread the word to all those within their environment and ultimately to each and every Jew. Undoubtedly, the appropriate effort will be well received and it will have its intended effect on others, as well as inspiring the one making the announcement and doing the publicity, that he too should internalize the message." (R'ei 5751)

From the above is clear that the world is receptive to the Rebbe's Message of Moshiach. We now have to clarify: What exactly is the Message that the Rebbe wants the world to hear? This and more will be explained in our next article IY"H.

Rabbi Aytzon is the Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivas Lubavitch Cincinnati and a well sought after speaker and lecturer. Recordings of his in-depth shiurim on Inyanei Geula u'Moshiach can be accessed at <http://ylcrecording.com>. Weekly shiurim on Moshiach topics given by Rabbi Aytzon can be viewed at chabad.info.

SPIRITUAL DISORDER

By Rabbi Yisroel Harpaz

Is it better to get high on spiritual revelation or to be practical and down to earth?

Once upon a time, we experienced miracles as supernatural phenomena that were literally out of this world, blowing away the natural order and leaving an unmistakable and permanent mark on all who experienced them. The advantage of these miracles is the immutable character of the revelation; we have no option but to attribute a phenomenon that defies the laws of nature to the Creator; the only One who can break the rules is the One who made them. The exodus from Egypt, the splitting of the Red Sea, and the mysteries of the Temple are distinctly G-dly in the manner and quality of their manifestation.

On the other hand, some miracles are experienced as intranatural, where the phenomenon may be equally awesome, yet it conforms to the rules of the natural world. As a result, we can attribute the phenomenon to any number of causal factors, and we can deny its purpose or divine source. Improbable military victories, the story of Purim, and the power of healing are all miracles that, although they go against the grain, are still within the general realm of nature and can be easily explained using the physical parameters that define them.

It seems that the open, revealed miracles, the ones that are totally outside of nature, contain an incomparably greater spiritual quality. It is these

miracles that imbue us, and the world around us, with a powerful and immediate sense of humility, and make the presence and omnipotence of G-d known in a very obvious way; they transport us out of the confines of everyday life and put us face to face with the truth. By contrast, the types of miracles that are garbed within natural phenomena seem to serve no greater purpose than to change gears and hasten the turning of the cogs that dictate the pace of history; because they don't disrupt the natural order, they can pass undetected under our spiritual radar – even of those who are attuned to such things.

However, when an event is obviously supernatural, it doesn't have a lasting impact; it necessitates that nature be temporarily set aside or distorted, but not actually transformed. When, on the other hand, events unfold in a way that maintains the natural order, rebelling from within, then nature itself is forced to take on a supernatural persona without divesting completely from its usual course. Thus, the nature of nature is transformed; instead of nature grudgingly stepping aside so that the divine will can have its way, nature itself changes in order to fulfill the divine will.

Human life operates under a similar dichotomy. On the one hand, we can experience moments of tremendous inspiration that push us to do things that we otherwise wouldn't consider possible. At

these moments, our awareness of the self, knowledge of the divine, sense of purpose and vision of the objective we want to accomplish are heightened to the point that they overwhelm our usual inhibitions. But as the inspiration fades so does the resolve; because we cannot integrate the height of the inspiration into our being, it remains disconnected from it. If, on the other hand, the motivation comes from a more practical, down to earth process of self-improvement and consciousness, then the resulting resolve is integrated into our being and becomes second nature; though the inspiration is not as high and the change less perceptible, our actual human nature changes, and the change has a lasting effect on who we are.

For now, spiritual ecstasy and pragmatic self-improvement each have their distinct time and place within the mosaic of human experience.

In the Messianic era, we will be able to experience the advantages of both lifestyles simultaneously. We will have the tremendous high of supernatural inspiration, but we will also be able to appreciate it to the extent that it can be internalized and lead to permanent change; we will experience miracles that operate within the natural order and transform it, but at the same time contain the quality of revelation now reserved for metaphysical phenomena. Because it will be an era in which peace will reign, including peace between concepts that are now paradoxical, we will be able to have our cake – the beauty and inspiration of spiritual transcendence – and eat it – the transformation that comes about through practical, down to earth integration.

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Exodus Magazine*

THE HIDEOUS FACE OF THE NEW MIDDLE EAST

For the past three decades, since the signing of the Camp David Accords up until the past few months, there were many people who simply didn't understand why the Rebbe cried out so passionately against the Sinai withdrawal. Only after thirty years has the profound vision of the leader of the generation become clear, and the gross misconceptions of peace have come crashing down.

By Sholom Ber Crombie

Translated by Michael Leib Dobry

is worried – very worried – as he sees the strategic threat from the south.

Another Knesset Member who has had a close relationship with the Egyptian leadership is Yisroel Hasson, a former deputy head of the General Security Services. He's also very worried: "This is a period when Eretz Yisroel finds itself in very poor condition. First and foremost, there's a chill in the peace agreement to the point of an absolute freeze in relations, and then there are the expected dangers affecting our relations with Jordan as well. The situation is liable to become very complex and complicated."

1.

In the past fortnight, Knesset Member Binyamin (Fuad) Ben-Eliezer has decided to open his mouth. He broke his silence and spoke honestly about the situation with Egypt. Fuad said what everyone knows: "The recent developments in Egypt testify to the fact that with the passage of time, the people in the Land of Israel will find themselves facing a confrontation with Egypt, and therefore, it

would be appropriate for us to prepare for a confrontation." When Fuad, a former Labor Party minister of defense, makes such a statement, it receives far greater validity, even among the most cynical politicians. Fuad is considered to have one of the closest relationships with the Cairo regime among Israeli political figures. He was a close friend with former Egyptian president, Mr. Mubarak, and was quite familiar with the deposed Egyptian leadership. Today, Fuad

2.

During that week when Fuad and Hasson made their statements, a mysterious explosion took place in an ammunition stockpile in Lebanon. While Hezbollah denied any connection to the weapons warehouse, most people didn't believe this seemingly innocent denial. According to foreign sources, this was a Hezbollah weapon stockpile and our forces were



behind the explosion. Reports spoke about an unmanned IDF aerial vehicle that penetrated Lebanese territory and fell in the vicinity of the stockpile, and when Hezbollah soldiers dragged it into the warehouse, it exploded together with the entire munitions dump.

Even without this report, the possibility that Israeli security forces were operating against the Hezbollah in Lebanon was always taken into account. The explosion merely confirmed the reality taking place far from the media spotlight. The Hezbollah and, *l'havdil*, the Israel Defense Forces are constantly busy with preparations for the next confrontation.

The Hezbollah is accumulating weapons for the day of decision. The organization is taking into consideration the possibility that the regime of their ally – Syria's Assad – will collapse. In such a case, Hezbollah is contemplating a military revolution in Lebanon, thus preventing the IDF from taking advantage of the situation and attacking south Lebanon. Hezbollah's main worry is a sudden attack by Israeli forces

“It has turned out that the blissful “Arab spring” which brought joy to the enlightened world like a vision of a new day is actually an Islamic revolution that will bring extremists to power throughout the Arab world.

against the organization's ammunition stockpiles spread throughout south Lebanon. Even the Israel Defense Forces remain engaged and they are preparing for any possible changes that the terrorists might be planning for the northern border, as soon as the revolution in Syria is completed. Even without a political earthquake in Syria, it's quite clear that Hezbollah has not forsaken its plans to fight yet another round in an inevitable war.

3.

On the Israeli side, the defense forces are constantly preparing for possible military action. The IDF is taking into account the possibility of an escalation of violence simultaneously on the northern and southern fronts. After all the

“September scenarios” failed to materialize, the Israel Defense Forces turned their attention to the real threat. The withdrawals from Lebanon and Sinai have led to a most precarious condition that can potentially detonate at any moment.

The main concern is that there might now be an overall regional conflict, enabling the situation in the Sinai to spill into Gaza and send the whole Middle East into utter chaos. Suddenly, it has turned out that the blissful “Arab spring” which brought joy to the enlightened world like a vision of a new day is actually an Islamic revolution that will bring extremists to power throughout the Arab world. Countless young Arabs went out into the streets last spring and screamed for revolution. They brought down tyrannical despotic regimes only to replace them with

fundamentalist Islamic leadership that display open hostility towards the Jewish People.

It seems so absurd today to recall the statements heard only last year from people who tried to present the peace agreements with Arab countries as a solid success. They spoke about secure peace with Egypt, a true peace with Jordan, and the possibility for peace with Syria – if we gave them the Golan Heights. Our prime minister, Mr. Netanyahu, had once boasted about how he had offered Assad Sr. the Golan Heights in exchange for peace.

The withdrawals from the Sinai and Lebanon are today blowing up in our faces. Hezbollah is preparing for battle, the situation in Egypt becomes more unstable from day to day, and every incident has the potential to plunge the region into the next war. The dark clouds of the Palestinian terrorist organizations hover ominously overhead, waiting for the right moment to unleash another torrent of violence. But all this didn't stop the leftists and the prime minister from developing plans for more withdrawals and settlement expulsions.

It would seem that something has gone out of whack within the vaunted Jewish head. The Israeli leadership acts like someone being beaten into the ground, certain that if it will just lower its head a little bit more, the whole world will give it an affectionate embrace. Haven't we degraded ourselves enough already?

4.

The strengthening of the Moslem world – in Tunisia, Morocco, Turkey, and Egypt – must serve as a sign of the need for a new brand of leadership within the government in

Yerushalayim. We simply cannot continue to use the same humiliating approach while the extremist Islamic threat grows more intense. The Israeli leadership must turn on the switch in its head and change direction – in order to understand that this is the time to modify its position regarding the Arab world and to learn how to act against the neighborhood bullies.

About six months ago, we heard every morning the threatening declarations by Turkish premier Erdogan, who hurled unprecedented verbal attacks against the residents of Eretz HaKodesh. Finally, after a prolonged period of vacillation, the prime minister decided not to give in to Erdogan's pressure and he announced that the government would not apologize for attacking his citizens during the Gaza flotilla incident. And lo and behold, it's been quiet ever since! We no longer hear the threats and declarations, as the Turkish leader has lost his platform to make himself heard. He simply departed and went back to his own business.

We must learn something from the incident with Turkey to know how to deal with our neighbors. Instead of our fighting for the embassy in Cairo, it would be better to let them fight for their embassy in Tel Aviv, something that probably won't happen. However, neither will anything happen if our ambassador gives up his accommodations in Cairo. After the violent incident against the Israeli embassy there, when throngs of inflamed Moslems threatened to overtake the compound and attack the guards, while the head of the military council, Mr. Tantawi, disappeared as if the ground had swallowed him up, the

government of Israel should have announced the freezing of diplomatic relations and the return of its ambassador until Egypt got the message. But instead of taking this course, the Netanyahu government chose to ingratiate itself further, thus enabling Mr. Tantawi to run away again the next time and give his loyal citizens greater freedom of action against the Jewish People.

5.

The self-deprecating message conveyed to Egypt by the government in Eretz Yisroel is that the peace agreement must be preserved at any cost, even the maintenance of frigid relations without ambassadors or diplomatic activities. Today, the Israeli leadership understands that under the prevailing circumstances, the treaties between us and Arab nations carry no importance whatsoever. Anyone involved in this state of affairs knows that the most we can hope for is the Arabs honoring their signed commitments and not waging an all-out war against Eretz Yisroel. However, even that might be too much to ask for.

Thirty years after the disgraceful withdrawal from the Sinai Peninsula, the mother of all withdrawals, relations with Egypt are similar to those with Syria. The thirty years when we told ourselves the stories of peace with Egypt have brought us nothing except visits to the pyramids and the sands of Sinai. Egypt remains a hostile neighbor that represents a genuine strategic threat to Eretz Yisroel. Along our northern border, we at least have the Golan Heights, thus placing the Syrians at a serious strategic disadvantage against us. In the south, however, we gave up the

Sinai long ago, and the situation there is just getting more and more complicated.

Throughout all the years since the signing of the Camp David Accords up until this past year, there were many people who simply didn't understand why the Rebbe cried out so passionately against the Sinai withdrawal. The cold peace with Egypt and the fact that we periodically saw pictures of Israeli politicians together with Mubarak were clear signs for many Jews in Eretz Yisroel that we can have good relations with our Arab neighbors. Only after thirty years has the profound vision of the leader of the generation become clear, and the gross misconceptions of peace have come crashing down.

6.

We can only imagine what would be happening today were it not for the shameful withdrawals, when we would still be in control throughout the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip, without any security problems at the Philadelphi Route, and with the oil wells continuing to provide relatively easy economic solutions for Israeli citizens.

The Rebbe's fervent warnings against the Sinai withdrawal have today come true in a most prophetic sense. Very few people

“About six months ago, we would hear every morning threatening declarations by Turkish premier Erdogan, hurling unprecedented verbal attacks against the residents of Eretz HaKodesh. Finally, after a prolonged period of vacillation, the prime minister decided not to give in to Erdogan's pressure and he announced that the government would not apologize for attacking his citizens during the Gaza flotilla incident. And lo and behold, it's been quiet ever since!

foresaw the situation so clearly. Most of those who opposed the withdrawal from Sinai did so for ideological Zionist reasons, making the claim “Please don't uproot the plant.” Even the residents of Sinai themselves had no objection to the withdrawal, as their only demand was for appropriate compensation to enable them to build new homes after the expulsion. There was only one voice calling for people to see the true reality – the voice of the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach. The Rebbe spoke about the serious consequences from a security standpoint, the strategic threat, how Egypt wouldn't honor the agreement for a single day, the loss of oil reserves constituting the most important economic asset to Eretz Yisroel, and the loss of IDF forces training in the region.

The public in Eretz Yisroel couldn't seem to see this at the time. The Rebbe explained the situation using clear and logical arguments, and gave reasons for all his claims. Yet, the Israeli leadership was still in a trance over the hug it had received from the clever Egyptian leader of the day, as if the fact that “Eisav hates Yaakov” was no longer valid. Once again, only the leader of the generation knew how to perceive the reality for what it really was.

Now, as the warnings and calls of the Rebbe are being realized before our very eyes, and all his prophecies thus far have come true, we must pray and wait for the moment when his ultimate prophecy will be fulfilled, the prophecy of the Redemption – immediately, *mamash*.

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