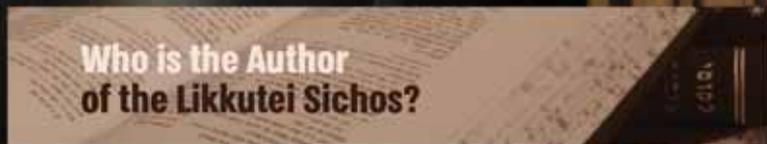
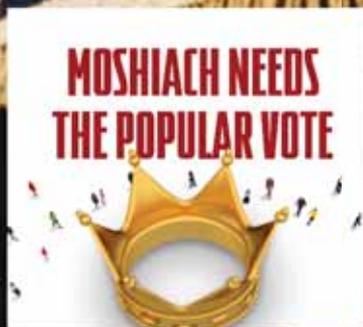
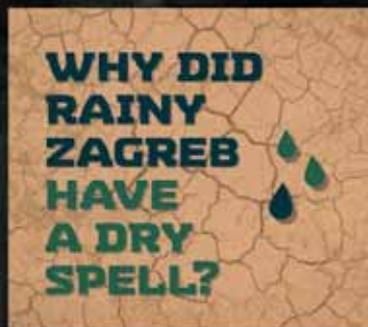


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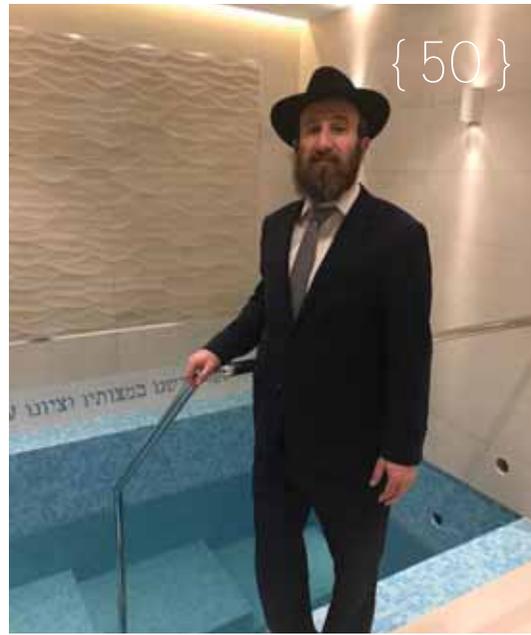
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The Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach Encourages the Chassidim



Published by:
Chabad World Center to Greet Moshiach
744 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn, NY 11213

🌐 BMoshiach.org
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☎ 718.778.8000
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BESURAS HaGeulah

ON THE IMMINENCE OF THE GEULA

WHAT SHOULD WE LEARN?

כב. קטעים משיחות ש"פ תוריע-מצורע, ו' אייר תנש"א (4)
6 Iyar 5751 – April 20 1991 (4)

Increase in Torah study is the most effective way to bring about the revelation of Moshiach. Learning about Moshiach in Torah is especially conducive to hastening the coming of Moshiach. The Rebbe went on to provide detailed instructions on how this should be done:

...Simply put: *"Tiferes"* refers to learning Torah, and *"Malchus sheb'Tiferes"* means learning Torah ideas on the subjects of the King Moshiach and the Redemption that are explained in many places within the Torah:

These places are:

1. In the Written Torah — particularly in **"the words of the prophets"** of which the Rambam writes that **"all their books are filled with this matter"**;

2. In the Oral Torah — namely the Gemara, particularly tractate Sanhedrin and at the end of tractate Sotah, and Midrashim;

3. Also, we should study about Moshiach especially in the inner realm of the Torah, beginning with the book of the Zohar (of which Eliyahu Hanavi said **"with this work of yours, the book of the Zohar, they will leave their exile in mercy"**);

4. Within the inner realm of Torah, we should study about Moshiach particularly in the teachings of Chassidus (as Moshiach told the Baal Shem Tov, that **through the spreading of the wellsprings of Chassidus outward, the master, King Moshiach, will come**);

. . . ובפשטות: "תפארת" - הוא ענין למוד התורה, ו"מלכות שבתפארת" - הוא למוד התורה בעניני מלך המשיח ובעניני הגאולה שנתבאר ברובי מקומות,

- בתורה שבכתב (ובפרט "בדברי הנביאים . . . שכל הספרים מלאים בדבר זה")

ובתורה שבעל פה, בגמרא (ובפרט במסכת סנהדרין ובסוף מסכת סוטה) ובמדרשים,

וגם - ובמיוחד - בפנימיות התורה, החל מספר הזהר (ש"בהאי חיבורא דילך דאיהו ספר הזהר כו' יפקין ביה מן גלותא ברחמים")

ובפרט בתורת החסידות (שעל-ידי הפצת המענינות חוצה אתי מר דא מלקא משיחא)

5. Within Chassidus, we should study the teachings of our Rebbeim and Leaders;

6. Principally, the teachings — Chasidic discourses and *Likkutei Sichos* — of the Leader of our generation

— This is as a sampler and preparation for studying the Torah of Moshiach, which is alluded to in the verse **"For a new Torah shall go forth from Me."**

What Moshiach will teach to all people is the inner realm of the Torah, considered "new," as it was never previously exposed, which contains the reasons behind the mitzvos of the Torah and the knowledge of G-dliness ("know the G-d of your fathers").

This accords with the halachic ruling of the Rambam that **"at that time ... the Jews will be great sages and will know hidden matters, attaining the knowledge of their Creator..."** A "taste" of these teachings is available in Chassidus. —

This increase in Torah study on the topics of Moshiach and the Redemption (*"Malchus Sheb'Tiferes"*) is the **"straightforward path"** to bring about the revelation and coming of Moshiach and the Redemption in actuality.

בתורת רבותינו נשיאינו,

ובפרט בתורתו (מאמרים ולקוטי שיחות) של נשיא דורנו

- מעין ודגמא והכנה ללמוד תורתו של משיח, "תורה חדשה מאתי תצא",

שילמד לכל העם פנימיות התורה (טעמי תורה), ידיעת אלקות ("דע את אלקי אביך")

כפסק-דין הרמב"ם ש"באותו הזמן . . . יהיו ישראל חכמים גדולים ויודעים דברים הסתומים וישגו דעת בוראם כו" -

וההוספה בלמוד התורה בעניני משיח והגאולה ("מלכות שבתפארת") היא ה"דרך ישרה" לפעול התגלות וביאת המשיח והגאולה בפעל ממש.

WHO IS THE AUTHOR OF THE LIKKUTEI SICHOS?

Numerous times in the Rebbe's sichos, he mentions and quotes **"My father-in-law, the Rebbe Nasi Doreinu** — the leader of our generation."

Chassidim always understood these — when in the appropriate context — as references of the Rebbe to himself, based on (1) the idea the Rebbe mentioned several times that all the Rebbeim are one entity; (2) the principle that the *Nasi Hador* is a person who can be seen and heard (See *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 24 on Parshas Vaeschanan); and, (3) the fact that the Rebbe clearly defined our generation as the seventh

generation since the Alter Rebbe, while the Friediker Rebbe was the sixth generation.

In addition, there are several places where this was hinted quite clearly, one of them being this sicha.

The Rebbe mentioned that we should learn matters of Moshiach in **"the teachings of our Rebbeim ... Chasidic discourses and *Likkutei Sichos* — of the Leader of our generation."**

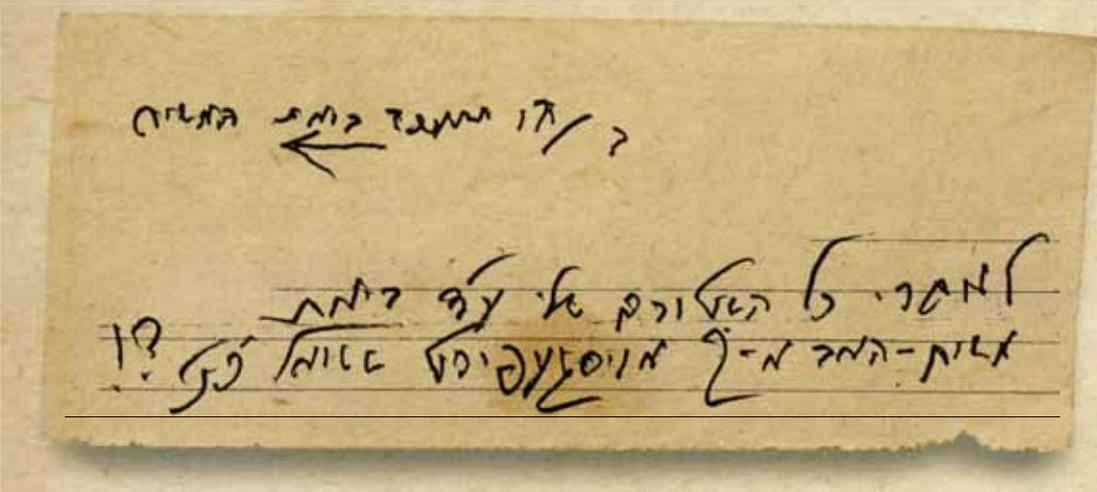
Likkutei Sichos, as famously known, is the title under which the Rebbe's talks were officially published after they underwent the Rebbe's extensive editing.

From The Rebbe's Pen



Asking the Wrong Question

Someone wrote to the Rebbe that “if I have the hope to survive, and I will merit to make it here next year, 5744, to the Rebbe . . . I will then make arrangements with the Gabbai, Mr. Yehoshua Pinson to buy the Mitzvos [aliyos, kibbudim, and the like] before the Shabbos Bereishis auction”.



The Rebbe crossed out the word “hope,” and added a letter **ב** before the word **אם** and wrote the “corrected” version of his question:

ב[אם] ח"ו תתעכב ביאת המשיח

If the coming of Moshiach will, Heaven Forbid, be delayed

At the bottom of the letter, the Rebbe added:

לאחרי כל השטורעם שלי ע"ד ביאת המשיח - האב איך אויסגעפירט [=פעלתי] ששואל כנ"ל!?

After all of my *shturem* about the imminent coming of Moshiach - all I accomplished is that you ask such a question!?! ■

SHABBOS

06/22

י"ט סיון

CANDLE LIGHTING	SUNRISE	LATEST SHEMA	MIDDAY	SUNSET	SHABBOS ENDS
8:12	5:25	9:11	12:57	8:30	9:21

ג' פרקים: הלכות מלוה ולוה פרקים א-ג. פרק אחד: הלכות טומאת צרעת פרק יד. ספר המצוות: מ"ע קצז. מל"ת רלד

SUNDAY

06/23

כ' סיון

SUNRISE	LATEST SHEMA	SUNSET
5:25	9:11	8:30

ג' פרקים: הלכות מלוה ולוה פרקים ד-ו
פרק אחד: הלכות טומאת צרעת פרק טו
ספר המצוות: מ"ע קמב

MONDAY

06/24

כ"א סיון

SUNRISE	LATEST SHEMA	SUNSET
5:25	9:11	8:30

ג' פרקים: הלכות מלוה ולוה פרקים ז-ט
פרק אחד: הלכות טומאת צרעת פרק טז
ספר המצוות: מל"ת רלמ

TUESDAY

06/25

כ"ב סיון

SUNRISE	LATEST SHEMA	SUNSET
5:25	9:12	8:30

ג' פרקים: הלכות מלוה ולוה פרקים י-יב
פרק אחד: הלכות מטמאי משכב ומושב פרק א
ספר המצוות: מ"ע קצט. מל"ת רמ

WEDNESDAY

06/26

כ"ג סיון

SUNRISE	LATEST SHEMA	SUNSET
5:26	9:12	8:30

ג' פרקים: הלכות מלוה ולוה פרקים יג-טו
פרק אחד: הלכות מטמאי משכב ומושב פרק ב
ספר המצוות: מל"ת רמא. רמב

THURSDAY

06/27

כ"ד סיון

SUNRISE	LATEST SHEMA	SUNSET
5:26	9:12	8:30

ג' פרקים: הלכות מלוה ולוה פרקים טז-יח
פרק אחד: הלכות מטמאי משכב ומושב פרק ג
ספר המצוות: מל"ת רלה

FRIDAY

06/28

כ"ה סיון

SUNRISE	LATEST SHEMA	SUNSET
5:27	9:13	8:30

ג' פרקים: הלכות מלוה ולוה פרקים יט-כא
פרק אחד: הלכות מטמאי משכב ומושב פרק ד
ספר המצוות: מל"ת רלו

THE TIMES ON THIS PAGE ARE FOR BROOKLYN, NY



Rabbi
Boruch
Merkur

BEHIND THE PARGOD WITH G-D

JUST after Shavuot, the Rebbe Rayatz was not responding. He wasn't really there. Motioning dismissively with his hand, the Rebbe finally told his secretary, Chatche Feigen, "Leave this for another time."

The Rebbe instructed him to report later on the holy activity behind the Iron Curtain. Then, as if to explain his "absence," his being aloof, the Rebbe added, "*Ich bin noch nisht arup fuhn barg* – **I still have not come down from the mountain.**" The Rebbe was still on Mount Sinai.



"And you, stand here with Me" (D'varim 5:28). G-d told Moshe Rabbeinu to linger at the mountaintop – "in a state devoid of the physical" (Ha'amek Davar). He remained in a transcendent, spiritual state.

This was not the first nor the last time Moshe got VIP treatment, gaining access to the most sacred places. For example, he was permitted entry to the Ohel Mo'ed whenever he pleased. No one else had freedom of passage there. Even Aharon was warned not to go there on a whim; just when duty called. Also, although a partition was erected around Har Sinai, with dire consequences for those who trespassed, Moshe Rabbeinu stood with G-d at ground zero.

But that was Moshe. The Jewish people were cordoned off behind barriers. In fact, G-d **reiterated** the command about respecting boundaries, perplexing Moshe.

In a fascinating lecture titled *Borders Made of Roses*, Rabbi YY Jacobson outlines three approaches to explain the repetitive insistence on boundaries, beginning with the teaching of **Rabbi JB Soloveitchik**.

The **first** command for boundaries refers to an iron fence or the like, sturdy enough to block off the entry of even beasts: "Set boundaries ... **if beast or man** [touch it] he shall not live" (Yisro 19:12-13). Since it goes where it pleases and ignores its own trespass, the animal (within us) needs a strong blockade.

The **repeated** warning not to breach the boundary is more subtle, more symbolic or ideological than material. If it is a fence, it is a **fence made of roses**.

Consider the Midrash on this evocative verse in Shir HaShirim (7:3), "Your belly is a stack of wheat, fenced in with roses":

"Stack of wheat (*chitim*)" refers to a stack of sins (*chata'im*). "Fenced in with roses" refers to **words of Torah**, which **are as delicate as roses**.

[Delicate?!] How many Mitzvos and exacting laws are there!? ...

Rabbi Levi said: When a man ... spends a lot of money on his wedding and seeks to consummate

the marriage, if the bride tells him, "I saw a red rose," he maintains a respectful distance from her. What compelled this distance? Is there an iron curtain between them? ... Why does he not approach her?

All that stands in his way are words of Torah, which are as delicate as a rose, for it is written, "Do not approach, etc."

The second iteration of the need for boundaries is thus spoken to the more sensitive soul, one who can appreciate the delicate beauty of a rose, of the Torah. Its splendid fragrance alone is enough to elicit our respect and reverence.

True, "Your belly is a stack of wheat (*chitim*)," you have an appetite and are drawn towards sins (*chata'im*) – but it is "fenced in with roses." No Iron Curtain is needed for this inspired Jew. He does not hurdle or trample over even a fence made of roses. He willfully bows to G-d's will, respecting the delicate, nebulous fence made of words of Torah.



There is a higher level of reverence for Divinely ordained boundaries, taught by the **Rogatchover Gaon**. On the words, "The nation is **unable** to ascend" (Yisro 19:23):

Moshe Rabbeinu conceived that the Evil Inclination had been uprooted from their hearts, as explained in Avoda Zara 4b. He questioned the repetition of the warning because to Moshe Rabbeinu anything that is prohibited simply **cannot** be done. According to the restrictions of **nature**, they simply cannot trespass there ... Moshe, however, did not know that they were destined to sin [with the Golden Calf]. (Tzafnas Paneiach)

Moshe could not fathom why Jews need reminders not to trespass G-d-given boundaries. It is against their very nature! G-d, however, saw what Moshe was too generous to see – the breach of the Golden Calf.

An even more sublime approach, taught by the **Rebbe** (3 Sivan 5749), resonates with Rashi: A person is prepped prior to an event and he is prepped again at show time. That is, a Jew who witnesses the glory of G-d descend upon the mountain – although he had been forewarned – is liable to breach the boundary and **in the throes of Divine ecstasy, race towards the Infinite, even at the cost of his life, soul expiration**. A second warning is thus required.



Regardless of how to understand the repetition of the need for boundaries, Moshe Rabbeinu was the exception to the rule: "*b'chol beisi ne'eman hu* – he is trusted throughout My home."

All the Jewish people at least vicariously have a share in Moshe's unique closeness and intimacy with G-d. Perhaps being like Moshe (and looking at others favorably) will awaken the spark of Moshe in us, the spark of Moshiach within us, and we too will personally realize that unique closeness.

But even as we stand to receive the Torah (throughout the year), respecting our placement, the Divinely allotted boundaries – that itself makes us proper vessels for G-d to reach out to us beyond the barriers. That is exactly what happened at Har Sinai. From all directions we heard the Divine voice, and "with every Divine utterance their souls flew out of them."

Of course, the Jewish people will ultimately be closer to G-d than even the ministering angels, behind the *Pargod* (curtain) with the King Himself, with the true and complete redemption. ■

MAY I SERVE A SCOOP OF ICE CREAM OVER HOT CAKE ON SHABBOS?

A collection of frequently asked halachic questions regarding food preparation on Shabbos (excluding cooking), from AskTheRav.com & Halacha2Go.com – Part 1

By Horav Yosef Yeshaya Braun, Mara D'asra and member of the Crown Heights Beis Din

MAY I SERVE A SCOOP OF ICE CREAM OVER HOT CAKE ON SHABBOS?

Serving ice cream over hot cake poses a problem on Shabbos. If the cake is so hot that *yad soledes bo* (a hand recoils from the heat) — according to many opinions approximately 45C or 113F — it would be considered cooking the ice cream, which is in violation of the *melachah* of *bishul* (cooking).

Even if the cake is somewhat cooler, the fact that it could cause the ice cream to melt may be an issue of *molid* (creating a new entity on Shabbos). Although there might be room for leniency regarding *molid*, it's best to serve the ice cream next to the cake; then if the ice cream melts it's no longer a halachic concern. #556*

CAN I OPEN CANS ON SHABBOS

Opening a can on Shabbos involves a host of halachic issues, some of which are subject to serious debate amongst contemporary poskim. The issues include the risk of transgressing

Shabbos isurim, prohibitions, in any one of the following ways:

1. Fashioning or building a new vessel
2. Demolishing an existing vessel
3. the possibility of *mechatech*, cutting to size, if opening a can on the perforations, and
4. making a *pesach yafe*, a nice [useful] opening, which is a derivative of *makeh b'patish*, completing the final stage of a vessel.

For all these reasons and others, it is a good idea to open cans before Shabbos. In the event that there is a great need to open one on Shabbos, there are those poskim who allow it, although some poskim maintain that it is always forbidden, even under extenuating circumstances.

One creative approach—though not that easy—to satisfy most of the concerns if one absolutely must open a can on Shabbos, is to

open it from both the top and the bottom simultaneously with two can openers, and to remove the entire top and bottom, but not to open the can on the perforations. #191

CAN I DRY LETTUCE IN A SALAD SPINNER ON SHABBOS?

Question: *P'soles* (waste or unwanted food) may not be separated from *ochel* (desirable food) on Shabbos due to the prohibition of *borer* (selecting). When using a *keli* (utensil designed for separating), *ochel* may not be separated from *p'soles* either. That being the case, may a non-electrical salad spinner be used to dry lettuce on Shabbos, since it separates the lettuce, *ochel*, and the water, *p'soles*?

Answer: One of the key principles in *Shulchan Aruch* for determining what constitutes the act of *borer* which is forbidden on Shabbos, is that *borer* is as follows: It applies only when separating two distinct items that are mixed together, such as nuts and raisins, whereas removing an element within a particular item of food or drink that is generally considered indistinguishable, like sediment in wine or pulp in orange juice—although technically separable—is permissible.

Therefore, if there is a small amount of water left on lettuce, it's permissible to use a salad spinner on Shabbos to get rid of the water. This is because lettuce is perfectly edible if it's slightly wet, and most people wouldn't mind. Drying lettuce with a salad spinner would only be considered *borer* to an *istenis*, a person who is very particular, and who absolutely couldn't eat lettuce if it was slightly wet.

Another reason why drying lettuce is permitted is that removing moisture from lettuce is comparable to rinsing fruits and vegetables, which isn't considered *borer* (for various reasons), and is permissible on Shabbos.

Although there are some contemporary authorities who are more stringent and rule against doing this, the accepted halacha is that

using a salad spinner to remove moisture from lettuce on Shabbos is permissible. #441*

MAY TWO CONTAINERS OF LEBEN BE SEPARATED ON SHABBOS?

Separating two leben containers which were connected since production is forbidden on Shabbos for two reasons: the *melachah* of *mechatech* (cutting to a desired size), and primarily the issur of *tikkun mana* (the prohibition of fixing a vessel), a derivative of *makeh b'patish*. This occurs at separation, since the connected items were not considered a user-friendly "vessel" until they were separated.

Similarly, separating two ice pops on Shabbos that were attached since production (as opposed to having been separated previously and later reattached) poses the same two problems described above: cutting the ices to the desired size, and fashioning a useable bag of ices.

Some poskim offer various justifications to explain why the above prohibitions don't apply in these cases, and permit separating them on Shabbos. However, one should avoid these issues and make sure to separate them before Shabbos. #445*

CAN I SQUEEZE OIL OUT OF A DOUGHNUT ON SHABBOS?

On Shabbos, one may squeeze out the excess oil from fried doughnuts prior to eating them—if the intent is simply to eliminate the excess oil, and they are not squeezing the doughnuts for the oil. #472 ■

* References and *marei mekomos* are available for this Halacha on the websites: www.Halacha2Go.com and www.AskTheRav.com

Please note that these halachos apply in general situations. In unique circumstances, a different halacha may apply. If you are unsure whether the halacha applies to your particular situation, please consult a Rav.



TELL ME WHY?

YOU GUYS ARE SO OBSESSED WITH THE REBBE,
 YOU SAY THE WORLD IS READY FOR MOSHIACH,
 YOU SAY THE REBBE IS MOSHIACH,
 YOU SAY THE REBBE IS ALIVE,
WHILE I'M STANDING ON ONE FOOT...

PARTICIPANTS



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HIRSHMAN
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ORIAN
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BEITAR ILIT



RABBI
CHAIM YOSEF
GINSBURGH



RABBI
YOSEF
YEHUDA LIFSH



RABBI
MOSHE
KORNWEITZ

MENACHEM AHARONSON ◦

IT HAPPENS TO EVERY

Lubavitcher Chassid now and then: As he is winding the tefillin straps at mitzvaim, or waiting for a bus or train, or while receiving change at a store, some passerby asks, “Why do you Lubavitchers say that ...?”

For the Chassid on duty, who bears the responsibility to bring Moshiach and feels that this obligates him to act accordingly, this moment is a fateful one. Within a few seconds, he needs to provide a short, to the point, answer and compress an ocean of information from dozens of maamarim and sichos that he learned into twenty or thirty seconds, four sentences, in which the questioner will get an answer. If he comes up with the right response, the person will be pleased, convinced and maybe want to learn with him. If he stammers, who knows if this might not slam the door shut on the sudden interest in these topics?

This is precisely why they eagerly gathered there, at a symposium for “all the answers to all the questions” that took place before 11 Nissan.

As at all gatherings that have taken place during the past twenty-eight years, this one too was organized around the need to agree on a plan to bring the Geula. But this time, it was done from a different angle; it was original, refreshing. In one hour, the listeners tried to get as many ideas as possible to explain the inyan of Moshiach in brief and in the most convincing manner. This is precisely for all those tens of thousands who won't enter a Chabad House or yeshiva; those who won't hear about the Besuras HaGeula except by chance, by asking an offhanded question and getting our brief response.

On the stage sat two bachurim from the yeshiva in Ramat Aviv, new baalei teshuva who, themselves, asked many good questions

when taking their first steps to Chabad and the Rebbe. One, Yisrael Hirshman of Ashkelon, is from a Litvishe family who after a period of time in which he did not find his place within the usual Torah-learning framework, is now returning to religious life and connecting to Chabad. The other, Orian Sharel of Beitar Ilit, is now progressing on his personal journey into the world of Chabad and connection with the Rebbe.

On the other side of the stage sat three veteran shluchim and rabbanim who are involved in spreading the Besuras HaGeula to all kinds of people, in the course of which they have gained tremendous experience in answering common questions.

The bachurim, one by one, presented the questions that were on their minds. In response, the rabbanim condensed deep explanations from the Rebbe's teachings into short, thought-provoking points. The audience listened raptly and upon the symposium's conclusion, left full of food for thought and original ideas of how every one of us can find the right answers and illuminate someone else's journey to the Rebbe and his Besura.

INTRO: THEY SEEK TO LEARN.

NOT TO BE ANTAGONISTIC

Rabbi Kornweitz: Before getting down to business, it is important to emphasize: in the Rebbe's letters you can see that the Rebbe responds to two sorts of questions. When the person is being antagonistic, there is no need to answer him; but when he is truly interested and wants to know, he is to be respected and you should answer him according to where he is coming from. Generally, questioners that we meet want to know, and we need to answer them patiently and in detail.



AT THE SYMPOSIUM

Sometimes, people sound a bit hostile about our Lubavitch perspective. It is important to know that usually this comes from the simple sincerity of the outsider who was not born like us, which is why he presents things as he does. We should not be thrown off by questions like these and of course we are not allowed to disparage them.

R' Lifsh: Another point that bears mentioning is sometimes the tmimim will avoid answering questions on these topics, thinking that an outsider might not be ready to hear things connected to emuna which is above sechel, i.e. Rebbe, Moshiach and Geula.

In my experience on shlichus in Ramat Aviv, and that of many other shluchim, the average Jew that we meet is not lacking in faith, even in those things that are above sechel. The Jewish people make a bris mila at eight days, open the door for Eliyahu HaNavi Pesach night, etc. Even in polls taken worldwide, most Jews live with simple faith that is expressed at many junctures of their lives.

The questions that we hear do not prove that the questioner opposes faith. The only reason for these questions is confusion and lack of knowledge. People really want to learn and know. Each of us Lubavitchers has a wealth of knowledge on the subject and it is our job to transmit it to people on the outside. When they hear it, they accept it. This is known and basic to whoever has actually tried.

Another point to stress is that often, the *content* of the answer will affect the questioner *less than* the way in which you answer him. For example, when you compliment the questioner and praise the question, “Good question!” this makes it easier for him to listen and accept the answer. Likewise, when he sees that facing him is a Chassid who is confident in his beliefs and doesn't stammer, and he's a normal guy with two feet on the ground, that itself works to convince him that there is truth to what is being said, sometimes more than the actual content of what is said.

HISKASHRUS TO THE REBBE: YOU'RE NOT EXAGGERATING?

Orian Sharel: When I look around in Chabad, I hear people talking nonstop about the Rebbe. He is connected to every subject. Are you sure you're not exaggerating? At my birthday party, Lubavitchers wished me that I merit to connect to the Rebbe. They didn't speak about connecting to G-d ... This sounds a bit jarring.

Why is such a big deal made of the Rebbe? Why is this necessary? Doesn't this come at the expense of a connection to G-d?

R' Lifsh: R' Reuven Dunin a'h, who was also a mashpia in Ramat Aviv, once answered a similar question. Come, let us open a Torah and we will see, "And Hashem said to Moshe, saying," "And Hashem spoke to Moshe," – every other paragraph in the Torah mentions Moshe Rabbeinu! The Torah could have stated one time that Hashem sent Moshe to the Jewish people, but it doesn't. It repeats "Moshe" time and again.

This is because really, the foundation of our connection to Hashem, in every circumstance and time is through Moshe Rabeinu and his "extension" in every generation. "Rebbi" is an acronym for "Rosh Bnei Yisrael." The Jewish people are the body and Moshe is the head, and as such, he specifically channels the spiritual life force to us. He is the intermediary and channel for all material and spiritual flows, and all prayers and requests to Hashem pass through him.

R' Kornweitz: The question comes, in part, from a lack of basic knowledge in the fundamentals of Jewish faith. There are a number of mitzvos in the Torah that compel a connection to a Rebbe. For example, the positive mitzva of cleaving to Hashem which Chazal say, astonishingly, means cleaving to Torah scholars. This is how it is paskened in Rambam and Shulchan Aruch.

Dozens of other things can be quoted. The verse emphasizes, "And they believed in G-d and in Moshe His servant." The Medrash says on this that whoever does not believe in Moshe, does not believe in G-d! Chazal also define one who rebels against the kingdom of Dovid as a heretic. In the Gemara it says that whoever confers benefit to a Torah scholar, is like one who brought bikurim, although bikurim are brought before G-d! "*Tzaddik yesod olam*" – this is the way Hashem set things up, that there is a human being who is completely permeated with G-dliness and it is through connecting and bittul to him that we truly connect to Hashem.

There are people for whom this sounds jarring, and they draw associations from places and situations far from Judaism, like people who turned themselves into objects of worship but the touchstone is simple: When it is not done according to Torah, it comes at the expense of subservience to G-d; but when it's a genuine Torah scholar who is completely subservient to Hashem, cleaving to him only adds in cleaving to G-d and in doing Torah and mitzvos with greater intensity. In fact, this is the way Hashem wants us to connect to him.

CONNECTING INTERMEDIARY: IS IT IMPOSSIBLE TO CONNECT DIRECTLY TO HASHEM?

Orian Sharel: I understand that the connection to the Rebbe is important and I try to connect to the Rebbe and learn his teachings, but at the same time, I personally feel that my connection to G-d is excellent without him, boruch Hashem. I daven to Him, I talk to Him, and feel connected to Him without any intermediaries.

I want to understand better: why must my connection to Hashem go through a human being?

R' Ginsburgh: Hashem created a world made up of spirituality and physicality. A

person is also comprised of body and soul and Hashem wants us to work with both.

Usually, when a person feels a closeness to Hashem, it is the nefesh that feels this. The nefesh is beyond the limitations of time and place and so it is natural that it be equipped to undergo spiritual experiences, and at peak moments even rise above the limitations of the body. When a person is immersed in spirituality he is likely to require fewer hours of sleep, forget he is hungry, and in general, his bodily needs barely hold any significance for him.

But this connection to Hashem only affects the nefesh. The body, during these times, is not getting what it needs and like it's explained in Tanya, is in state of "sleep." Sometimes, like a mother might tell her children that it seems like "the body grew while they slept." With us too, it is when the body is asleep that we are liable to grow more and then suddenly, when the inspiration passes, a person lands back in this world and finds himself with cravings that he never imagined he had.

For this reason, we sometimes see Torah scholars who are truly great in Torah and still, when they find themselves having to deal with lowly earthly matters they fall in a way that is out of proportion to their Torah level. It's not their fault! Without Chassidus and hiskashrus to a Rebbe, spiritual elevation does not permeate our entire existence one hundred percent. The body remains as lowly as it was.

This is one of the purposes for which Hashem appointed a Rebbe. On the one hand, as the Rebbe emphasizes, a Rebbe is a human being, a *baal bechira*, i.e. a completely physical being. Our connection to the Rebbe is a physical and tangible connection; we love him on a physical level and feel that he is concerned for our daily welfare. On the other hand, we look at the Rebbe and see his utter bittul to Hashem and he conveys to us and teaches us what Hashem wants of us.

That is how we form the internal connection to G-dliness, along with our physical lives, the soul *and* the body.

[The Rebbe clearly explains this point in Likkutei Sichos volume 24, page 6, when he says that for a Jew here below to have a connection with Hashem and serve Him properly with all his soul powers as well as with his sechel and emotions, it is necessary for abstract divinity to be drawn and descend down below, to the level of human understanding in the intellect and consciousness of the Jew. For this to happen, it is necessary for G-dliness to be revealed to a physical human being in this world, who can be seen and heard, and the G-dliness be invested within him to the point of wondrous unification, like Moshe Rabbeinu who combined the two extremes and was an *Ish HaElokim* – "man of G-d"].

MOSHIACH NOW: ARE WE READY?

Yisrael Hirshman: One can hear Chabad Chassidim talking nonstop about Moshiach and his imminent arrival. I don't quite understand: where exactly do you see all this happening? If we open our eyes and look around to the right and the left, we see that most Jews are as of yet not observant of Torah and mitzvos, and we personally are quite far from the spiritual state of the era of Moshiach. Why do you think that we are ready?

R' Lifsh: The Rebbe asked this exact question, and also provided the explanation, in the sicha of Shabbos Parashas Noach 5752. The Rebbe brings a simple analogy that every child can understand. A person whose main body parts, brain, heart and liver, are healthy and whole, but has some problem in a fringe portion of the body, such as a toenail, is clearly considered a healthy and fully functional person despite the existence of a minor problem.

The entirety of the Jewish people, throughout the generations, from the Exodus from Egypt

to today, has worked hard and prepared itself for Geula. At this time, all of the efforts of the previous generations have reached the aggregate total needed to be accomplished prior to the Geula, which is why we are considered today to be healthy and whole, rectified and ready for redemption. The peripheral problems that exist are only fringe issues affecting the toenail.

R' Kornweitz: In order to make the point more sharply, I would like to give an example from a familiar halachic concept: chillul Hashem, the desecration of the name of Hashem. Someone can ask, what is the precise definition of chillul Hashem? In halacha, there is no clear-cut answer. Chillul Hashem is a concept that changes according to the situation, time, place and person. What for one person would be a chillul Hashem, to another person would not. This is a concept that is not objectively defined.

All the more so when we are talking about concepts such as cleaving to Hashem, bittul to Hashem, etc. These aren't things that can be objectively measured, with our earthly vision. We cannot point at someone and unequivocally state, according to what we see, that he is close to Hashem, just like we cannot say that someone is distant. These are concepts that we are unable to measure.

Only the Rebbe, who has the ability to look inward and measure them as they are internally, beyond what we can see, can state what condition a Jew, and the Jewish people, is in, as far as closeness to Hashem which is required as a preparation for Geula. The Rebbe sees the inner divine reality and he says that the Jewish nation has already done teshuva and deserves the Geula. Therefore, even though we don't see how this is so, we make no claim to having any understanding of such matters. These are things that in order to be able to measure them, you need a G-dly perspective, beyond what our eyes can see.

R' Lifsh: Another point that is brought in the Rebbe's sichos is an example from the state the Jewish people were in after the splitting of the sea. The Jewish people were so preoccupied in collecting the booty spit out by the sea that Moshe Rabbeinu had to get them moving, against their will, to get the Torah. Why did it reach this point, that Moshe had to compel them to move on? After all, they did not lack for gold and silver!

Rather, says the Rebbe, the work in collecting booty was a spiritual avoda of refining sparks of holiness. The Jewish people were so immersed in this avoda that it was hard to get them away and move on to the next avoda.

It's important that we internalize the lesson for us, for we too, have been occupied in refining sparks throughout the years of exile, refining ourselves and the world around us to be fit for Geula. Now, the avoda changed. The Rebbe tells us that the world is ready and we need to progress to the next stage, to internalize that Moshiach is about to come and be ready for this. We can't get stuck in the previous avoda; we shouldn't have to be pushed to move on ... We should realize that we are in the next phase and Moshiach is coming.

a year in which Moshiach is revealed. In 5751, the Rebbe pointed out the signs in the Medrash and showed how all of them had been fulfilled that year. On Shabbos parashas Chayei Sarah 5752, in the last sicha that the shluchim heard from the Rebbe at a Kinus Ha'Shluchim, the Rebbe announced that Moshiach was already sent by Hashem.

In later sichos of that period, the Rebbe showed more and more indications of how the events of the Geula are starting to unfold: agreements between world powers to advance peace, announcing the start of the prophecy "and they will swords into plowshares," the fall of the Iron Curtain and the mass aliya from Russia as a start of the gathering of the exiles, and more.

The signs are not enough for us. We await the true and complete Geula and the actual building of the Beis HaMikdash, but from what the Rebbe said, we see how we are in an entirely different era. It's not just that we are looking forward to the coming of Moshiach; we are already in the Geula process. Geula events already started thirty years ago, and therefore, the Geula is not merely a hope; it is a certainty that *is already happening*.

When a person is waiting for a train that is delayed, if he is sure that the train will come and the time for its arrival is already here he won't despair. On the contrary, his certainty becomes stronger. He knows it should be arriving now! When we know that the Geula process has begun, the inexplicable delay does not make us despair; it strengthens our trust that it is happening.

R' Kornweitz: Sometimes, what makes it hard for us to believe in the fact that Moshiach is coming now is that we lack perspective, a long-range view. A person sees what is happening now and thinks about what could happen in a year, but he does not pay attention to things taking place over a long period of time. If we compare reality today to that of 200 years ago,

FROM RIGHT TO LEFT: RABBI YOSEF YEHUDA LIFSH, RABBI MOSHE KORNWEITZ AND RABBI CHAIM YOSEF GINSBURGH, MENACHEM MENDEL REICHMAN (EMCEE), YISRAEL HIRSHMAN, ORIAN SHAREL



HINEI ZEH BA: BUT YOU SAID THAT YESTERDAY TOO!

Yisrael Hirshman: I understand that we are progressing toward the Geula but from the first day I met Chabad Chassidim, I have constantly heard that Moshiach is coming now. I don't get it. If you said the same exact thing five years ago, and he still didn't come, don't people get sick of it? How can I be expected to believe in Moshiach's coming now when I don't see any progress?

R' Lifsh: Indeed, it is many years that the Jewish people are waiting for the Geula, but today, we are at a completely different stage. In a Medrash from 1500 years ago (Yalkut Shimoni), Rabbi Yitzchok describes the signs of

even 50 years ago, we see monumental changes, physically and spiritually; things that, back then, a person could not imagine.

For example, a soldier who served on the northern border told me about the heightened alert on the front with Syria in his day. Throughout his service, the forces stationed there were kept at peak readiness and the commanders kept repeating warnings that the biggest threat against Israel was from the Syrians. Then, within a few years, the biggest threat dissipated without our involvement, in a way that the military could not have imagined, and only Hashem, in His wisdom, knew just how to arrange this process.

In this example, and many others, we can more readily begin to understand how Hashem arranges matters so that the world is running and constantly changing without our realizing it. Similarly, the colossal change of Moshiach's coming can happen in an instant even if at the moment, it is hard for us to understand how.

MOSHIACH AT THE DOOR: WHY DOES LIFE CONTINUE AS USUAL?

Yisrael Hirshman: And yet, it is hard for me to see this emuna and bitachon that Moshiach is coming literally right now being integrated into our lives that continue as usual. Are we supposed to plan our lives around, and prepare ourselves for, the impending celebration, or is Moshiach just going to come and mess up all our plans?

R' Ginsburgh: We can compare the anticipation and preparation for Moshiach's coming to other big, one-time events in our personal lives. When a person plans a wedding, for example, he has a lot to do as he waits and anticipates it. Sometimes, it is hard to carry on with daily life while preparing for the big day, but a person must eat and carry out his usual, daily tasks.

This is what the Rebbe Rayatz explained when he was asked: isn't it a contradiction to

the constant anticipation of Moshiach's coming to make big, long-term plans, plans that won't be relevant in the Geula? The Rebbe explains that we need to carry on with what is expected of us in ordinary life because this itself will advance Moshiach's coming.

Why? The truth is that Hashem can bring the Geula on His own, but He chose otherwise. He wants us to have the privilege of taking part in bringing the Geula. We carry out our part by having to deal with this galus that drags on and on to the point that it is intolerable – and in fact we cannot tolerate it and cry out “ad mosai?” – while at the same time, we don't weaken and don't give in. We continue to believe and look forward to Geula while simultaneously taking positive actions to hasten its coming. When Hashem sees this, He values our coping with this challenge and declares that we deserve the Geula.

MOSHIACH: WHAT WILL IT DO FOR ME?

Orian Sharel: When I hear talk about Moshiach and the Geula, I often find it hard to understand why this should interest me personally. How will Moshiach affect me? What will he add to my life and what will he contribute to the world?

R' Ginsburgh: In order to answer your question, we need to clarify our perception of Moshiach. Moshiach is not only someone who will appear from outer space and then I'll have to think about whether he is good for me or not. To begin with, Moshiach is someone who *exists within me*. Each of us has a spark of Moshiach.

When the “general Moshiach” is revealed, he will enable all the sparks within us to burst forth so that everyone together will become a huge conflagration of G-dly light. Then, our lives will change completely. The inner point of the spark of Moshiach that will be revealed within us will liberate each one of us and make

us better, more authentic, in all aspects of life. Every detail of our lives will be better.

R' Moshe Kornweitz: In order to understand the significance of the spark of Moshiach and how it will change our lives, it is important to emphasize that Moshiach is the revelation of the truth, the purpose of every detail in the world. Moshiach is peace; Moshiach is unity within nature; Moshiach is also the solution to pollution.

That a person today can toss away a cup and pollute nature is only because he does not feel that the cup has a purpose and nature has a purpose. When the purpose of everything will be revealed, he will feel it and will feel compelled to preserve a clean world! This is one example from our lives and there are many more. People involved in politics or petty conflicts, drivers who drive like maniacs or businessmen who compete unfairly, all this can happen only in a crazy world in which the good in the world goes unrecognized, i.e. the inner truth for which Hashem created every detail in it.

When Moshiach comes and the spark of Moshiach is revealed within us, the good that exists within every detail will be readily felt, that it has a purpose, and therefore, every aspect of our lives will become better.

THE REBBE AS MOSHIACH: WHO SAYS IT'S HIM?

Yisrael Hirshman: We understand that the Rebbe is a giant of the generations but you have taken this a few steps further when you proclaim that he is Moshiach. Where do you get that from? What makes you so confident that others aren't more suitable? The Jewish people must be wary and think twice before deciding that we have Moshiach, because we've been burned more than once over the generations with “Moshiachs” who led to great disappointment.

Aside from that, if it's really true, why don't other big rabbis from other groups support crowning the Rebbe as Moshiach?

R' Lifsh: Obviously, it is not for us to make comparisons between rabbinic authority figures, but I think that the average Jew does not find it hard to understand the difference between the Rebbe and other rabbis, as important as they may be.

The Rebbe is not just another tzaddik, gaon, talmid chacham or chief rabbi. Since the beginning of the world, there hasn't been a leader who concerned himself with the welfare of every Jew in the world and not just in a perfunctory manner. Most likely we can find stories about other gedolei Yisrael who also took an interest in those who were not of their flocks, but with the Rebbe we see that this is his main focus.

The Rebbe is not merely the Rebbe of a group; he is the Rebbe of all Am Yisrael. This can be seen in a tangible way. When we simply say “the Rebbe,” anywhere in the world, people know you are referring to the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach.

The simple and basic point is that this belief is not merely that it expresses the ardent admiration of Chassidim. It is based on halacha, on the Rambam, and also on what the Rebbe himself said, and therefore, it is an inseparable part of a Jewish-Torah outlook. It is not merely a Chassidic sentiment.

R' Ginsburgh: There is another point that is important to emphasize in connection with the difference between the Rebbe and other tzaddikim. Sometimes, the question can arise when you try to compare tzaddikim according to their spiritual qualities, who is bigger or greater. But when we are speaking about the Rebbe, the point is not to establish the Rebbe's greatness as compared to others; it is not our intention, nor do we have the authority, to measure this.

That the Rebbe is Moshiach is not a “quality” of his, but *Hashem’s choice*. When Hashem planted tzaddikim throughout the generations, He decided that the Rebbe is Moshiach, just as He decided that Moshe will be the one to take the Jewish people out of Mitzrayim and not Aharon or some other great tzaddik. That does not take away from the greatness of anyone else; on the contrary, who is there like the Rebbe that is exceedingly particular to amplify the honor of every rav and gadol b’Yisrael. This is simply how Hashem established it, that the Rebbe from his inception was designated for this role.

R’ Kornweitz: In your question, you pointed out two causes of concern that people often have. First, what is different about the Rebbe over other tzaddikim and second, whence the absolute confidence that the Rebbe is Moshiach and how are we so sure we won’t be disappointed when throughout the generations we knew not only of false messiahs but even of genuine tzaddikim who deserved to be Moshiach but weren’t Moshiach in the end.

The two questions can be answered with one point that the Rebbe tells us in the sichos of Vayeira and Chayei Sarah 5752. These questions were relevant only before the Rebbe’s chiddush; now, they no longer exist!

The Rebbe revealed to us that Hashem already chose the Moshiach of the generation, appointed him and sent him to redeem the Jewish people. The Rebbe is not only *deserving* of being Moshiach; he *already started* his mission as the redeemer! At this point, there is no question regarding what is so special about the Rebbe specifically, and who says that it is not subject to change. With tzaddikim who lived in earlier generations, when the world was not ready, even if there were those who were deserving to be Moshiach, it was possible that it wouldn’t happen. But from the moment that the Rebbe was chosen and *actually began* to operate as Moshiach, the certainty in his being Moshiach who will redeem the Jewish

people is manifestly clear; there is no room for questions.

THE REBBE IS ALIVE: BUT WE SAW OTHERWISE?

Orian Sharel: Here is the question that bothers me the most. Since I began my process of becoming involved, I set this question aside so it wouldn’t interfere with my progress, but it really bothers me.

We saw that the Rebbe ceased being with us in his physical body. If you say he is alive spiritually, fine; but you say the illogical, that he is physically alive!

R’ Kornweitz: The answer can be divided into three parts. First, is it possible in principle, that after what occurred on Gimmel Tammuz the Rebbe continues to be alive in a physical body. Obviously, what will determine whether this is possible or not is not what we see but what the Torah says. If Torah allows for it, it’s logical; if not, not.

Torah sources on the subject have been collected in many places. There is the idea brought in the Medrash and the writings of the Arizal (and the Rebbe in Likkutei Sichos anchors this in the Rambam too, giving it the status of a rule of halacha) that Moshiach, before being revealed, will “be revealed and be once again concealed.” This is so clear that I once spoke with someone and showed him the sources, and when he agreed that this is what will transpire he asked: What would you have done if not for Gimmel Tammuz? How would you have believed that the Rebbe is Moshiach?

Second, according to the teachings of Chassidus there is an absolute necessity for the existence of a Nasi in every generation (as was mentioned earlier in brief). It is not possible to have a situation in which there isn’t a human being in our generation who connects us to Hashem through a physical body.



AT THE SYMPOSIUM

Third, is the fact of the stage we are in, the period of the revelation of Moshiach (as mentioned earlier): since the Rebbe was already sent by Hashem as Moshiach, revealed and starting to operate, we have passed the point of no return. Nothing can stop the Rebbe’s activities as Moshiach in this physical world until his complete revelation with the complete Geula. Therefore, when we learn about the stage of Geula that we are in, from the Rebbe’s explicit words, we must conclude that it is not possible that the Rebbe ceased being here in a physical body.

In light of all this, although we are in a trying situation in which we do not see the Rebbe, this cannot stand in contradiction to what is clear from all the Torah sources.

Obviously, we can’t ignore the fact that for many people, this is hard to digest. A person finds himself having to reconcile the conclusions that he reaches through his intellectual analysis of what is stated explicitly in Torah, and the conclusions that he reaches through what he sees with his physical eyes, and it’s not always easy to hang on to the truth according to Torah. But as we mentioned before, a Jew by nature is

a believer even in things that are beyond reason and he can ultimately attain this emuna too.

R’ Lifsh: People put on tefillin made of an animal hide, eat shmura matza, etc. so, there’s no question that matters of emuna are accepted. This question needs to be answered just like the questions about any seeming conflict between the truth of Torah and the reality of what we see. When they “prove” to us from the number of rings on a tree that the age of the world is far greater than 6000 years, obviously, a Lubavitcher Chassid won’t be thrown off. He will say that absolute truth is what it says in the Torah and ultimately, this will be accepted.

In conclusion, all those topics that we need to explain to people are not our personal position and ideas that we came up with, but what *the Rebbe said*. The Rebbe himself openly spoke about these things so that it would reach every Jew. If the Rebbe is not reticent or embarrassed, surely we have nothing to be embarrassed about and we need to serve as conduits for the Rebbe’s message. No doubt, with the Rebbe’s koach, it will all be accepted and the world will be ready for his hisgalus. ■

AN OASIS OF TORAH IN THE POCONO MOUNTAINS



Just a **two-hour drive** from Brooklyn, there is a yeshiva **surrounded by forests,** waterfalls, and brooks, forming **a unique opportunity** for learning and growth, free from the hustle-bustle of the city

Beis Moshiach drove up to the Poconos to meet the staff and the students who make up **a yeshiva that's a family**



AVROHOM REINITZ ◦

IN EVERY YESHIVA THERE ARE

bachurim who are more successful in their learning and those who are less successful; that's normal. But when a bachur is transformed in yeshiva, and three years after entering he emerges a most successful bachur, that tells you something about the yeshiva.

That is the story of Y, a bachur without the strongest learning background. When he was accepted to shiur alef, he still was struggling somewhat with reading. After spending a Shabbos-yeshiva in Tomchei Tmimim in the Poconos, he believed that he would be successful here. The Chassidish homey atmosphere in the midst of nature, along with the warm personal attention of the staff, greatly appealed to him.

“This talmid became an outstanding lamdan,” the rosh yeshiva, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Eisenman told us. “The turning point was in the first year. The second year, he stayed in yeshiva for the summer to review the entire maseches Bava Basra and the third year, he was already considered the lamdan of the group, one who delves into a sugya well, and every reasoning that he offers is solid. When he raises a difficulty, we have to work hard to find an answer. Every question he poses is well constructed and thought out. He is a symbol and model of the uniqueness of our yeshiva.”

The yeshiva gedola in the Poconos opened five years ago as a continuation to the yeshiva in Queens. Director of the yeshivos, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Hendel, saw the need for a yeshiva gedola that would enable those who graduated from the mesivta (yeshiva ketana) in Queens to continue being educated in the spirit of Chassidishkeit permeated with faith and hiskashrus to the Rebbe MH”M.

One of the yeshiva's founding principles was a letter from the Rebbe to Rabbi Shlomo Chaim Kesselman about the advantage of the yeshiva in the town of Lubavitch: “And several times I heard from my father-in-law, the Rebbe, about the matter of residence in large cities being difficult, and he extolled the advantage of the yeshiva in Lubavitch where the yeshiva was the main thing, and the rest of the matters of the town played no role in disturbing the students... as opposed to in New York, etc.”

The first year, the yeshiva was in Sea Gate in Brooklyn, which is one of the quietest neighborhoods in Brooklyn. A year later, the complex in the Poconos in Pennsylvania was purchased and the yeshiva moved there with the start of the 5775 school year.

In its second year, Rabbi Shmaryahu Matusof joined the staff as the lead mashpia. Until then, he was a teacher in the elementary school in Brunoy, France. The rosh yeshiva is Rabbi MM Eisenman, and for 5779, R' MM Silman joined the staff as menahel ruchni and R' Shmuel Newman joined as mashpia and maggid shiur for *girsas*. Each member of the staff is a special person and the combination of all of them together provides a power boost that translates into a unique impact on the talmidim of the yeshiva.

ORIGINAL APPROACHES TO LEARNING

R' Eisenman, who is considered an outstanding lamdan in the world of yeshivos, has fresh methods in learning Gemara. This past year, the yeshiva incorporated the approach of learning *aliba d'hilchasa* (from Gemara to halacha) in which the focus is on those Rishonim and Acharonim that are directly connected to the halachic ruling. The entire process ultimately leads to the rulings of the Alter Rebbe in Shulchan Aruch

with an emphasis on his chiddushim on the subject. After understanding the Alter Rebbe's chiddushim, they go back to clarify the simple meaning of the Gemara, Rashi and Tosfos in light of the Alter Rebbe's chiddushim.

R' Eisenman began implementing this approach years ago, but last year the approach was intensified in light of the fact that the maseches being learned was Pesachim, where most of the sugyos are brought down, halacha l'maaseh, in the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch. The *aliba d'hilchasa* was emphasized this year to the point that R' Eisenman told the talmidim not to buy a Kovetz Meforshim, but a Tur Shulchan Aruch on Hilchos Pesach on which the learning focused, so as to better understand the Alter Rebbe's chiddushim.

The sources that the rosh yeshiva posts every Sunday before the shiur klali also focus on Rishon and Acharonim that need to be learned in order to understand the Alter Rebbe's approach.

This unique way of learning makes it possible to divide the talmidim according to

level, thus enabling each one to bring out his potential. Every Sunday, the rosh yeshiva posts the weekly learning goals, divided into three tracks: the basic track includes Gemara, Rashi, Tosfos and the Alter Rebbe. The intermediate track includes commentaries like the Rosh, Ran and Tur Beis Yosef. The third track includes the Mechaber, Bayis Chadash, Turei Zahav, Magen Avrohom and Chok Yaakov on Hilchos Pesach (mentioned often in the Alter Rebbe's Hilchos Pesach).

At the beginning of the year, the talmidim choose which track they prefer. Most of the bachurim try to challenge themselves with a track that is a bit beyond their current abilities, so they have what to strive for. After a few months, they can change tracks, but most of them remain in the track that they pick at the beginning of the year. This learning approach fits well with the personal attention that is provided.

Standard tests don't always reflect a talmid's knowledge. And who keeps a test after getting a mark? The alternative is the weekly summary

LEARNING AMONG THE TREES WITH RABBI EISENMAN





RABBI SHMARYAHU MATUSOF

that the talmidim write on Thursday. The summary has to fully cover one of the sugyos, from the Gemara all the way to the Alter Rebbe's psak. These summaries are dear to the talmidim and they keep them.

“The approach to learning that we instituted,” says R' Eisenman, “allows every bachur to find his place. One who is able to learn more in depth will find himself in the track with all the Rishonim. One who likes to focus on practical halacha, can feel at home in the basic track.”

PRACTICAL CHASSIDUS

In a conversation with R' Matusof, he tells me that for many years, the Rebbe did not allow him to leave his chinuch job in France. In answers in the Igros Kodesh he was told to stay where he was. It was only after the yeshiva in the Poconos opened and he was offered a position as mashpia, that he opened to a clear answer from the Rebbe about his devoting himself to the talmidim in the yeshiva, with a bracha for success that the talmidim be tmimim deserving of that title.

After consulting with a mashpia, he moved to the Poconos. The move wasn't easy and when, after two years, his wife wrote about the difficulties, the Rebbe answered her: you are in yeshiva two years already and are seeing success, so why are you writing that it's hard? On the contrary, put in more!

As he tells it, “So too, after a year, I opened to a letter from the Rebbe which said he was happy with the development of the new yeshiva and when all members of the staff will invest more, also in the material matters, the yeshiva would grow in quality and quantity.”

When I speak with talmidim about R' Matusof, they talk about him with great fondness. Aside from his astonishing encyclopedic knowledge of Chassidus and the ways of Chassidus, he has a special, unique style. In his farbrengens, he talks a lot about events from Tanach and with special skill he connects them to events in daily life and the tests of our generation. When he describes the period of the exodus, for example, the listeners feel like they are exploring the minds of the Jews who left Mitzrayim.

Aside from farbrengens, R' Matusof gives weekly shiurim on Chassidic topics. He produces booklets on various topics in the life of tmimim as they are illuminated by sichos and maamarim and stories of Chassidim. These shiurim strengthen Lubavitch pride in the talmidim as well as emuna.



RABBI MM EISENMAN



RABBI MM SILMAN



RABBI SHMUEL NEWMAN

R' Matusof and R' Newman pick the maamarim to be learned in the evening seder so that they fit with the general approach of hiskashrus to the Rebbe. For example, last year, which marked 90 years since the Rebbe and Rebbetzin married, the yeshiva learned the Rebbe Rayatz's maamarei chasuna with the Rebbe's maamarim and explanations.

LIKE IN LUBAVITCH

While touring the yeshiva, one can't help but be amazed by the wonders of nature. On one side of the campus there is a river which feeds into a gorgeous waterfall. On the other side is a dense woodlands with a powerful brook running through. Picture what it's like to wake up in the morning and hear the crashing waters of the waterfall, or beyond that, to immerse in a cold brook and walk back through the woods. Nature is here in full glory and the air is crisp and intoxicating.

“One of the big problems of our generation is the inability to concentrate,” says the rosh yeshiva. “In order to thoroughly understand a daf Gemara, you need a high level of concentration. When you are in middle of the hubbub of the city, it is very hard to attain

that focus. Here, in the Poconos, there are no disturbances and it's easier to concentrate.”

The fact that the yeshiva's staff lives on campus and are accessible 24 hours a day, contributes a lot to the homey atmosphere. Talmidim feel that staff members are willing to listen to them at any time, and the staff will often show up in the learning space even during off hours.

Occasionally, the bachurim are inspired and they go to the mashpia's house and ask for a farbrengen. “There is a real feeling of closeness here,” says R' Matusof. “The bachurim feel comfortable knocking at my door and asking for a farbrengen.”

Sometimes the knock is late at night and it's one bachur at the door who needs help. The staff is always there for the talmidim, to listen and try and help. Speaking of personal conversations, when the weather makes it possible, the mashpia goes to the woods with the bachur and sits with him next to the waterfall and helps him work things out.

R' Silman, the menahel, took the natural setting one step further and for Pesach, made





wine with the talmidim. All the bachurim took part and, in the end, they each received a bottle of wine for the seder. “It consolidated us and helped the atmosphere of achdus tremendously,” he says.

“In addition to the special atmosphere thanks to the natural setting,” adds R' Eisenman, “the hanhala of the yeshiva invests a lot into the gashmius and takes care of whatever the bachurim need. The living quarters are well-constructed, the beds are comfortable, and the dining room always serves tasty, nutritious food and in great quantities. There is no feeling of scarcity, on the contrary, there's plenty and this helps a lot on the spiritual side of the learning. The talmidim have all the conditions for success!”

INFLUENCING THE ENVIRONMENT

Although the yeshiva is isolated, the bachurim illuminate their environment. It starts with the few Jews who live in the Pocono Mountains who are visited occasionally by the tmimim. There is outreach in nearby towns. Some travel two hours on Fridays to Philadelphia where there is a large Jewish community, and they do mitvza tefillin there.

The light of the yeshiva attracts people from the outside. In the summer, hundreds of religious Jews go on vacation on the campus near the yeshiva and many of them are exposed for the first time, from the inside, to a Chabad yeshiva.

For special days in the calenar, the yeshiva's hanhala tries to bring a guest mashpia. Shluchim, rabbanim, and mashpiim who come to farbreng, leave with a feeling of open amazement by the Chassidishkeit of the bachurim and their chayus in inyanei Moshiach and Geula.

PERMEATED WITH MOSHIACH AND GEULA

In accordance with the sicha of the Rebbe at the Kinus HaShluchim 5752, that all matters of shlichus need to be permeated with the point of how does it lead to kabbolas pnei Moshiach, all of life at the yeshiva revolves around this point.

At farbrengens, mashpiim speak a lot about the need for avoda pnimis to be ready to greet Moshiach; on mitvzaim the bachurim publicize the Besuras HaGeula; after the learning sederim there is a daily seder for learning inyanei Moshiach and Geula and once a week there is an in-depth shiur on Geula topics.

R' Matusof edits booklets that summarize topics on inyanei Moshiach and Geula and he learns them in depth with the talmidim. In my conversation with him, he emphasized that the policy of the yeshiva on inyanei Moshiach and Geula is clear, including the belief that the Rebbe MH”M will immediately be revealed.

The fact that the yeshiva is not all that far from 770, about two hours away, affords the hanhala the opportunity to decide on a trip to Beis Chayeinu now and then, mainly for special calendar days, to derive strength and chayus from “Beis Rabeinu sh'b'Bavel.”

In light of the Rebbe Rayatz and Rebbe saying how important learning mishnayos is to hasten the Geula, there is a half an hour a day to learn mishnayos every afternoon. Beyond the great importance of learning mishnayos to hasten the Geula, there is a tremendous educational aspect to it. The bachurim learn several mesechtos a year and acquire a broader knowledge base in learning, and it gives the bachurim much satisfaction which is somewhat lacking in a yeshiva gedola where you learn a limited number of pages of Gemara in depth.

At the end of the year, the bachurim have knowledge in several mesechtos.

R' Newman emphasizes that the chayus in inyanei Moshiach is not something that only comes from the hanhala but all the bachurim “live” Geula. “It is a pleasure to see how the bachurim 'live' with the Rebbe and his horaos as something that is current. Sometimes, bachurim discover some sicha in which the Rebbe said a directive for daily life. They don't see it as a sicha that was said many years ago; it's like the Rebbe just issued this horaah, directly to them. And of course, they implement it enthusiastically.

“At one spontaneous farbrengen at my house, every bachur told how he came to the yeshiva. It was amazing to see how all of them came because of clear instructions from the Rebbe through the Igros Kodesh. There were some who were thinking of going elsewhere and the Rebbe guided them, step by step, to the yeshiva in the Poconos. We saw how the Rebbe is 'chai v'kayam' is not a slogan; here in yeshiva, it's real life!” ■

THE TALMIDIM AT A FARBRENGEN WITH RABBI MATUSOF



MOSHIACH MUST WIN (ALSO) THE POPULAR VOTE

UNDERSTANDING 'KABOLAS HAMALCHUS'

TSYRL TUREN ◦

THE 22ND OF SHVAT 5748 (1988)

the passing of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, wife of the Rebbe, marked the beginning of a new era cosmically. Now the world is ready for Moshiach. Having reached this final stage in the redemption process, we began hearing "state secrets", innovations, to guide us through this fateful difficult period.

On the 2nd of Nissan, less than 6 weeks after the 22nd of Shevat, the Rebbe discussed the expression of *Yechi Hamelech*, the traditional statement of acceptance and coronation of the Davidic king, explaining that it both gives life to the king and causes the resurrection. Our action impacts the king and gives him his ability to rule.

Then in 1991, for three weeks in a row, the Rebbe clarified our role in this critical time, what we must do to bring Moshiach now.

On Shabbos Parshas Vayera the Rebbe stated that all the work to bring Moshiach is done, we are standing ready to accept Moshiach, now we have not only the existence of Moshiach but also the revelation of Moshiach. We need only *accept* him in actuality. He is here, he is revealed, and we must accept him, that's the remaining work.

The following week, on Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sara, the Rebbe disclosed more details. We are on the threshold of Redemption. Moshiach has already fulfilled the criterion established by the Rambam of successfully fighting G-d's wars. All missions have been accomplished. The *only* thing left is to accept Moshiach in actuality. This will enable him to fulfill his mission and take us out of exile. Everyone must infuse all he does with acceptance of Moshiach. We must explain

the concepts of Redemption so everyone can accept him.

Then the following Shabbos, Parshas Toldos, the Rebbe explained even further, based on the mishna, "all the days of your life' to bring to the days of Moshiach." When King Moshiach is revealed, this brings to the days of Moshiach, as his existence contains within it all details of the days of Moshiach. Metaphorically, the Rebbe compares this to the air of Moshiach versus the light of Moshiach. Air of Moshiach symbolizes his existence while light of Moshiach represents his activities. Through acknowledging Moshiach's identity, Moshiach's activities will be revealed to all. The *primary* way to bring Moshiach is to reveal his existence as all the details of the days of Moshiach will come as a result of the revelation of his existence.

The Rebbe is establishing that we have an obligation to accept Moshiach in order for him to bring the Redemption. Let us explore the traditional sources on this subject.

APPOINTING AN ALREADY APPOINTED KING

Sefer Hachinuch questions the commandment of appointing a king. A commandment necessitates something people do. But G-d already chose Dovid and his descendants forever; the commandment was fulfilled. Sefer Hachinuch clarifies that the command is a mandate for us to establish the sovereignty of the descendent of Dovid. (Sefer Hachinuch Mitzvas Minuy Melech 497)

The prophet Hoshea promises that the redemption will come when all the people will gather and accept upon themselves one head, appointing a leader from the house of Dovid. (Hoshea 2,2)

The Malbim explains that the revelation of Moshiach will occur when the Jewish people



accept upon themselves as king the Davidic leader of the generation of redemption. (Malbim Amus 9,11)

The Rebbe already alluded to this in 1991, Shabbos Parshas Mishpatim. The appointment of the Moshiach already was, all that is needed is the complete bonding between the king and the people. That was in 1991, 28 years ago!

But why is the process of revelation in this fashion, and not directly from G-d?

Dovid's sovereignty is within every fitting male descendent. When Moshiach will emerge, his kingship is already intact; it is Dovid's kingship that has continued and is expressing itself through him. Dovid's appointment is embedded in every one of his descendants.

Seemingly, we are appointing the king who was already appointed some 3000 years ago.

DOVID'S LONG JOURNEY TO THE MONARCHY

If we look into Dovid's journey to the monarchy, we will understand. We will actually see the same process.

Dovid was anointed by the prophet Shmuel, through G-d's direct command. The Rambam rules that from the moment of his anointment Dovid merited the crown of sovereignty, but he didn't immediately become king. Even after the passing of the then king Shaul, Dovid still did not become the king. He needed an additional anointment by the people, first the people of the tribe of Yehuda, where he initially led only his tribe, and then seven years later by the elders of the entire nation, to become ruler of the Jewish people.

The people acknowledged Dovid after the chief general of Shaul, Avner, pledged allegiance to Dovid and committed to go to the people and bring them to accept Dovid as king. We see in the verses of Shmuel the discussion of Avner with Dovid concerning this plan, Dovid's agreement and Avner's fulfillment of his self-appointed mission. (Shmuel II chap 3)

Dovid, anointed by the prophet from the direct word of G-d, needs a campaign manager and an election platform.

Avner even stated that just like G-d promised Dovid, so I will do to him. Metzudos explains, just like G-d promised to make him king over all the Jews, so I will help Dovid with this issue of the sovereignty. (Metzudos Dovid Shmuel II 3,9)

G-d promised. He needs Avner's help to fulfill?

Yes, because the people needed to accept him. Dovid didn't become king through Divine wonders. Only through Avner's efforts did the people decide they wanted Dovid to be their king. Then the elders, representing all the Jews, said, "behold we are your bones and your flesh," expressing how much the people desired him to be their king. (Shmuel II 5,1)

The reasoning behind this seeming incongruous disparity, that G-d's words and the prophet's anointment didn't cause the kingship, but Avner's popular campaign did, is based on a principal of our Sages, "there is no king without a people." A king only exists by virtue of people believing in him as such. (Pirkei D'Rebbi Eliezer chap 1; Rabbeinu Bechayei Vayeshev 38,30)

Dovid was anointed three times, by the prophet Shmuel, by the tribe of Yehuda and by the elders of the Jewish people. According to Jewish law it is forbidden to anoint a king with the special anointing oil who has already been so anointed. Here it was permissible because the first two times didn't make him king as he didn't have the popular acceptance of the people. He only became king with the people's coronation. Solomon also had two anointments because the first time was exclusively with the people of Jerusalem. To be king he needed the entire Jewish people, and that is what happened by the second anointment. In both of these cases, the people's acceptance is creating a legal situation that did not exist previously.

This entire example with Dovid is powerful and relevant, but even more so when we recognize how Moshiach and Dovid are so intertwined. All aspects of Dovid are a microcosm of King Moshiach. This is the reason the Rambam, in writing the laws of Moshiach, quotes verses containing two phrases. In each, the first phrase refers to Dovid and the second to Moshiach. By Dovid in a small way, by Moshiach in a complete fashion. Dovid's inability to rule until the people's acceptance of him, despite being chosen by G-d, is a powerful message to us about our need to accept Moshiach now, to enable him to redeem the Jewish people and the entire world.

Moshiach already has the "crown of sovereignty" which Dovid received through his anointment by the prophet Shmuel, he also has the appointment to kingship which was given to Dovid when he was further anointed by the Jewish people, but in order to reveal the sovereignty of Moshiach in actuality he needs the acceptance of his rulership by the people of that generation.

Dovid was appointed by the people, so too his successors need to have the people's acceptance of their reign.

LONG LIVE THE SEVEN-YEAR-OLD KING

Historically, we see that this is a necessary component. Creating a critical juncture in the line of the Davidic kings, Queen Asalya tried to wipe out every descendant of Dovid, to destroy his line and become the sole ruler of the Jews without any fear of competition. She almost achieved her diabolical desire, but there was one child, a year-old baby, Yoash, that was hidden from her murderers. Asalya's brother in law, the high priest Yehoyada, smuggled Yoash and his nursemaid into the temple, and for six years Yoash was hidden with his nursemaid in the attic area of the Holy of Holies. When Yoash was a seven-year-old child, Yehoyada made a covenant with the high officers that they would do whatever they could to restore Yoash's rule, and then they all declared together, "Yechi Hamelech," "Long live the king." Why was this necessary? Yehoyada knew that they needed to do an action that expressed their nullification



to Yoash's rule. Though this seven-year-old child was innately king as the heir of Dovid's line, and he is referred to in the verses as "king" because he was the king before anyone even knew of his existence, but for his kingship to be actualized, he needed the people's nullification to him. *Yechi Hamelech* was the traditional expression of the people's nullification to the king's rule. Therefore, Yehoyada and the officers proclaimed this to seven-year-old Yoash, to actualize his rulership by their formal acceptance of it. (Kings II chap 11)

Similarly, with Solomon, Dovid declared that Solomon would be his successor. Then Dovid said that the people should proclaim "Long live the king" to Solomon. (Kings I 1,34) This act of acceptance of his reign by the people made Solomon the king in actuality. Dovid's statement was not enough.

We see that Dovid's successors need acceptance by the people, even though they are innately king by virtue of Dovid's rule. In the commandment of the appointment of the king there are two dimensions. The first is the appointment the first time of G-d's king, as happened to Dovid when the elders of the Jews accepted him as king over the Jewish people. The second aspect is the future generation's acceptance of the sovereignty of Dovid's descendants.

THE IDENTIFYING SIGNS OF MOSHIACH ARE A SIGNAL FOR US TO ACCEPT HIM

Most significantly we see this with Moshiach himself. Since the completion of his kingship is through the people accepting his authority, Rabbi Akiva proclaimed that Bar Kochva is the King Moshiach. (Talmud Yerushalmi Taanis chap 4, halacha 5) He realized Bar Kochva fulfilled the criteria for Moshiach; his proclamation impacted the process of revelation. Based on this, when we identify a leader from the line of Dovid who has all the attributes of Moshiach, we should acknowledge

him as such. As the nation identifies the Davidic king and accepts his authority, this is the beginning of his revelation from a legal perspective. Thus, the Rambam describes for us the criteria by which we can identify Moshiach. Criteria are only needed before the official reign. Then we need them to determine the man who is the Moshiach, to fulfil our commandment of appointing the king. When we identify the person who fulfills all the criteria, we know the time has come for us to accept his sovereignty.

In the Yalkut Shimoni it explains that exile began with the rejection of the Davidic reign, and this will be rectified by the restoration of the Davidic reign at the beginning of the redemption. (Yalkut Shimoni II Remez 106) When the nation identifies, reveals and requests the revelation of Moshiach, fulfilling the prophecy of Hoshea, "and they will seek ... Dovid their king," this is the beginning that allows the ultimate revelation with the redemption. (Hoshea 3,5)

Concerning this verse of Hoshea, "and they will seek the Almighty their G-d and Dovid their king," the Metzudos explains, they will seek the King Moshiach who comes from the seed of Dovid, and from him they will seek their request that he should rule them. The people will seek Moshiach and ask him to rule them. This is critical to the process of the revelation of Moshiach!

THE KABBALAH OF ACCEPTING MOSHIACH

Beyond the legal ramifications, the historical aspect and the prophecies that express this process, the concept of the Jewish people accepting Moshiach to enable him to rule is an expression of a deep Kabbalistic truth. "There is no king without a people." We enable G-d's sovereignty over the world by our coronation of Him. Our sages say, "G-d requests, say before me the verses of malchios, sovereignty, to coronate Me upon you." (Rosh Hashana 16,1) Kabbalistically, as explained by Rav Chaim Vital in the Prei Eitz Chayim in the name of the

Arizal, the dimension of Malchus, sovereignty, has nothing of its own, constructing it is only through the acceptance of its authority by creations. On the eve of Rosh Hashana, G-d's desire for creation retreats. Then, with the blasts of the shofar and prayers on Rosh Hashana expressing our self-nullification to Him and His reign, G-d once again accepts our coronation and rules this world.

"The kingship of this world is like the kingship of Heaven." (Brachos 58,1) Therefore we see this pattern by the kingdoms of Dovid and Moshiach. Both in the Talmud Sanhedrin and in the Zohar, Dovid and Moshiach are referred to as "bar nafli," miscarriage, in a fallen state. Establishing the kingdom of Moshiach from its fallen state occurs when the Jewish people accept his sovereignty, causing his rule to be revealed. (Sanhedrin 96,2; Zohar I 55,1)

Kings on this world reflect G-d's kingship. The Tzemach Tzedek, in a foundational discourse entitled "The Commandment of Appointing a King" explores the need for a king. Since we don't have the ability to be completely nullified to G-d, we need to connect to the person who is truly nullified. At the same time this selfless person needs to be fitting as king over the people, nullified to G-d and ruling with G-d's power over the people and connecting them to G-d. This is a human we can relate to, who is completely fused with G-d and can help us come closer. We need a human king as for us G-d is an abstract reality. When we accept this human as G-d's representative, we can nullify ourselves to him and through him connect to G-d Himself.

The human king is a representative of G-d's sovereignty. Since G-d's system is that we need to arouse His will to reign, the same is with the human king. For him as well, "There is no king without a people." Therefore, our acceptance of the king's sovereignty is as critical for his kingship as is our acceptance of G-d's reign every Rosh Hashana.

// THE HUMAN KING IS A REPRESENTATIVE OF G-D'S SOVEREIGNTY. SINCE G-D'S SYSTEM IS THAT WE NEED TO AROUSE HIS WILL TO REIGN, THE SAME IS WITH THE HUMAN KING

Additionally, Moshiach is one of the five "comprehensive souls" of all times, as explained by the Ramaz to the Zohar. (Ramaz on Zohar III 260,2) There are five levels of soul, and there is one person who is the absolute embodiment of each level. Dovid – *nefesh*, Eliyahu – *ruach*, Moshe – *neshama*, Adam – *chaya* and the highest human embodying the highest aspect of soul, Moshiach – *yechida*. Every Jew has in the core of each level of soul a spark of the comprehensive soul of that level. So, each of us has at the core of our yechida, our highest level of soul, a spark of the soul of Moshiach. (Meor Einayim end Parshas Pinchas) When a Jew accepts the sovereignty of Moshiach, nullifies and connects to him, he is gifting Moshiach with the power of his spark. Through this process, Moshiach is receiving his life as Moshiach and the ability to reveal the absoluteness of his sovereignty.

From all of the sources, we have seen one unifying message: we empower Moshiach. G-d has placed the key to redemption in *our* hands; He trusts us to use it. Let's not disappoint Him. For the sake of every human on this planet, for the sake of every soul waiting above, for the sake of G-d longing for this world to be His home, accept Moshiach now. ■

PARADOXES Of The Rebbe

RABBI HESCHEL GREENBERG

ARDENT ANTI-ZIONIST, STRONGLY PRO-ISRAEL

LOVED peace and pursued peace yet fought battles to protect Judaism and Jews.

There is probably no one who stressed the importance of peace as a subset of Ahavas Yisroel, the unconditional love for every Jew.

The Rebbe not only preached peace but did everything in his power to bring peace between Chassidim, husbands and wives, and even between Israeli government ministers.

I am aware of the fact that the Rebbe did not allow Chabad to plant itself in several communities because it would cause discord in those communities.

Yet, the Rebbe did not hesitate to fight against policies that would prove harmful to the security of Israel or that would undermine the Torah and its Mitzvos.

For example, the Rebbe struggled to have the Law of Return amended that conversion must follow Halacha and that no compromises of Israeli territory could be made because of security reasons.

A political operative questioned one of the Rebbe's decisions concerning the elections in Israel and argued that it would disrupt the peace between different Chassidic groups.

The Rebbe's response was that unity among Chassidic groups was an admirable goal, but it doesn't override matters of Pikuach Nefesh – life and death considerations.

DEMANDED respect for and devotion to teachers and rabbis; yet was critical of the teachers' and rabbis' lapses.

The Rebbe went to great lengths to tell students that they must have an unconditional submission to their teachers. The same was said to members of the community that they must follow the directives of their rabbis.

The Rebbe personally would consult with other rabbis when he had personal Halachic questions. While the Rebbe was more than competent to answer his own questions, in his humility and his desire to serve as a role model of showing respect and submission to Halacha, he deferred to the local rabbis.

However, the Rebbe did not hesitate to criticize the leadership for their lapses in their educational and communal responsibilities.

In some cases, the Rebbe deviated from his stated position not to get involved with issuing Halachic rulings, leaving that for the rabbis. But

when the Rebbe saw that the rabbis neglected to rule on certain issues or whose rulings were flawed, the Rebbe did not hesitate to make his position public.

OPPOSED to Zionism but the most pro-Israel and was the source of inspiration and support for Israel and its leaders.

The Rebbe was an ardent opponent of modern Zionist ideology, but he was the strongest supporter of Israel's independence and its security.

The Rebbe's "quarrel" with modern Zionism (both secular and religious) is that they settled for less than what the Torah wants for Israel.

While even some of the most right-wing Zionist were willing to make some compromises in Israel's integrity and the integrity of Judaism, the Rebbe did not allow for any compromises.

The Rebbe objected to referring to Israel as a *medinah* — a mere state. Israel, detached from its historical-Biblical moorings cannot survive.

Only when we recognize that it is G-d's land can Israel be strong.

The Rebbe's infinite love for Israel was recognized by Israel's leaders. The president of Israel, Zalman Shazar was an ardent Chassid of the Rebbe, and all its Prime Ministers had tremendous respect for the Rebbe as a Jewish leader and as a lover of Israel. ■



THE REBBE & ZALMAN SHAZAR EMBRACE OUTSIDE 770, 13 MENACHEM AV 5726

Rabbi Greenberg's popular "Moshiach in the Parshah" essays (as well as archives from over 20 years) can be read on JewishDiscovery.org



Levi
Liberow

"Y'KNOW, JUST TALK ABOUT MOSHIACH..."

A famous story is said about a new rabbi who arrived in town. He ascended the pulpit to give his first sermon and the topic was the importance of observing Shabbos.

After the sermon, the president of the congregation approaches the rabbi and tells him, "Rabbi, the speech was fabulous, but some of our prominent members operate their businesses on Shabbos. Perhaps, if you can, do not speak so openly about Shabbos, we don't want anyone to feel unwelcome in shul..."

The rabbi took note of this, and in his next sermon, he spoke about the importance of Jewish education and sending the kids to Yeshivahs. He thought that topic was within the consensus of people attending shul. Again, the President approaches the Rabbi and tells him, "Rabbi, the speech was fabulous, but a large percentage of our membership send their kids to public school. Perhaps, if you can, do not speak so openly about Jewish education, we don't want anyone to feel unwelcome in shul..."

The rabbi took this to heart, and the third week he spoke of something he thought can't offend anyone, kashrus. How would anyone know what exactly is cooked in their neighbor's kitchen? But again, the president approaches the rabbi and tells him, "Rabbi, the speech

was fabulous, but a large percentage of our membership like to eat at a new non-kosher restaurant. Perhaps, if you can, do not speak so openly about kosher, we don't want anyone to feel unwelcome in shul..."

The rabbi was at a loss. "I can't speak about kashrus, I can't speak about Jewish education, I can't speak about Shabbos. What *do* you want me to talk about, politics?"

"Why don't you just talk about Yiddishkeit?" said the president.



WE find ourselves three weeks away before Gimmel Tammuz number 25. Anyone who sees himself as a Chassid of a *present* Rebbe, whether he chooses to call him *Nasi Doreinu*, *Melech HaMoshiach*, or just the Rebbe, cannot avoid dedicating some thought to where he or she stands in his faith in the Rebbe's *Besuras Hageula* and on what he or she is doing to share it with the world.

With all due respect to the importance of focusing on *Hiskashrus* and on the yearning to see the Rebbe again, and a host of other important themes that Gimmel Tammuz brings up, they are all just tools to help in facilitating the most important thing — Moshiach.

They don't contradict at all the theme of Moshiach, but let's not forget that a palace is beautified only because there is a king residing in it. What good is *Hiskashrus* if it doesn't lead to fulfilling the Rebbe's most recent *Horaos* concerning Moshiach?

Many times, when such claims are presented by people from one "camp" to those who are members of the so-called other "camp," a common rebuttal will be, "What are you talking about? Everyone *kochs* in Moshiach, we mention it in every single speech!" and similar statements.

Let me tell you a personal story.

As a new shliach, I came to town all ready and inspired to prepare my spot on the globe for Moshiach.

I sit down to plan my first speech on Moshiach, and the topic I choose is a thorough explanation as to why the Rebbe is Moshiach. I have all the sources open before me, and I begin preparing the course.

As I proceed, my trusted advisor who forever sits to my left says to me, "Rabbi, this lecture is fabulous, well organized and quite informative, but some of our potential listeners may have some prejudices on this topic, as any mention of a human Moshiach reminds them of other religions. Perhaps, if you can, do not speak so openly about who is Moshiach, we don't want anyone to feel unwelcome in our Chabad House..."

I take note of this and move on to prepare a new topic for my Moshiach course — the topic I'm looking into now, is how the world is ready for the Geulah. Superpowers are making peace and powerful nations are helping countries less fortunate than them, and other signs. I feel this is something people would have an easier time connecting to; it's a very current and relevant theme. It'll make me sound worldly and down to earth.

Again, my advisor who sits to my left says to me, "Rabbi, this concept is fabulous, but some of our potential listeners may have some other perspectives on the matter, they're more involved in politics than you are, and may challenge you with questions like the rise in terror in recent years and similar questions. They will think you to be naïve and slightly romantic about the current world situation. We don't want anyone to get a wrong picture of what Chabad believes about Moshiach. I don't think you should focus on that. Whoever is really interested can find a lot of articles on this topic on our beautiful website..."

I have to agree to his observation, and so I choose to go back to basics. I prepare a lecture on *Avodas Habirurim*, and how every mitzvah we do in essence brings Moshiach closer and reveals Moshiach in the world. "This is purely my arena — spirituality and religion, I say to my trusted advisor sitting to my left.

"Rabbi, this lecture is truly amazing, it's so deep and meaningful! But a large percentage of our membership are "social Jews" and will probably enjoy a lighter topic on the parsha or the holiday. They'll feel disappointed if they come to shul on Pesach and you start telling them this deep Kabbalah stuff, you'll lose half the crowd in the first five minutes of the speech..."

I'm at a loss. "I can't speak about who is Moshiach — its controversial; I can't speak about the current state of the world — it's not my field of expertise; I can't speak about spirituality — it's too deep. But my mission is to get the place ready for Moshiach, are you saying I should just give up on it?"

"G-d forbid! Why not end off every single speech you give with fervent prayers for Moshiach? The last line of the speech is always the most memorable!" said the advisor on my left. ■

PRINCIPLE #7

Although the Coming of Moshiach is the Purpose of Creation, Hashem Doesn't Want to Do It Alone

By the World For the World



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ALTHOUGH THE COMING

of Moshiach is the purpose of creation, Hashem doesn't want to do it Alone.

“Who is Moshiach?” is a question that many of us have on our mind. Some questions have more than one answer, and this one isn't an exception.

One of the sources speaking of Moshiach in the Torah says that “a star will shine from Yaakov.” The Talmud Yerushalmi teaches that this verse refers to *all* the Jewish people.

But it's no contradiction. Chassidic works speak of every Jew containing within himself a “spark” of Moshiach's soul. Moshiach's function is to redeem the world from exile and the way that happens is by every Jew taking part and being the “Moshiach” of his portion in the world, in the process of readying the world for the Geulah.

No one knows the precise moment when Moshiach will arrive, but we all have a part in making it happen.

Galus and Geulah are opposites in many ways, but ironically, without Galus – Geulah isn't possible. Geulah isn't the world *without* galus, it is the world *after* Galus. The reality of the Geulah is created through the Divine service of observance of Torah and mitzvos, *in* Galus specifically.

“Mitzvos bring Moshiach” is something we grow up with together with our mothers' milk.

The following teaching of the Rambam, based on the Gemara, is widely known: “one must see himself and the world as a balanced scale and one mitzvah can tip the scale and bring salvation to the entire world;”

The 12 Principles

- 1 Moshiach is a principle of Jewish faith.
- 2 Moshiach is the purpose of creation.
- 3 Moshiach is a topic in Torah.
- 4 Moshiach has a halachically defined role.
- 5 We must await him.
- 6 We must pray for and demand Moshiach.
- 7 **Our actions create the Geulah.**
- 8 Moshiach could come any second.
- 9 There are signs that indicate he's near.
- 10 Moshiach is a person.
- 11 There is a Moshiach in every generation.
- 12 There is an order of events in Moshiach's arrival.

But why indeed? To answer this question, we must go back to the beginning of everything. We must uncover the secret of creation.



The final words of the section in the Torah describing the creation of the world are “Which Hashem has created to make.” Chazal interpret the word “*la'asos* — to make” as “to perfect.” In spoken language, Hashem created the world in an imperfect fashion which requires still more work, and it is specifically by means of this work that the world will reach its goal and be complete.

In a previous article in this series (Principles 1 and 2) we discussed the idea of *Dira B'tachtonim* — that Hashem desired to reside in this lowest, material world. The term has further depth: Hashem wanted to reside in this world as it becomes perfected *through* the deeds of the *tachtonim*, the lowly ones – us human beings.

This is an expression of the great love Hashem has for the Jewish people. The greatest gift that can be given to a person is to let him feel accomplished by using his own powers. “A person would rather one *kav* of his own labor than nine of his fellow man” is how Chazal summarized this natural tendency of a human being.

Because of this, Hashem created the world imperfectly, so we can perfect it and thus “partner” in the creation and feel that we have a part in causing Hashem pleasure, which is the greatest feeling of value and importance possible to be attained by a human.

But what exactly does this mean? How can we make something more perfect than the way Hashem created it?

THE DESTROYED WORLDS

For that we must travel back in time to the pre-time and pre-creation stage:

Before our world was created, the Midrash teaches, Hashem was busy creating worlds and destroying them. The worlds Hashem created prior to ours were not physical ones, they were spiritual.

The Arizal teaches that this Midrash refers to a term in Kabbalah referred to as *shviras hakeilim* – “the shattering of the vessels.”

What this means is the following: Hashem is the “light” and life-force of everything. All the creations are “vessels” that contain that light which makes them exist.

In these previous worlds, the “light” was too powerful for the vessels to contain and they “shattered,” thus forming our world. Our world is one in which the true force creating it — Hashem — is hidden, just like sparks don't shine as brightly as a torch does.

Our world then, despite being the lowliest in spiritual terms, is filled with sparks of the previous worlds, sparks of holiness, which when gathered together will shine once again.

It was no mistake; Hashem didn't destroy this world because it was a failed experiment. It was created *in order to be broken*, and that its remains be dispersed throughout our world, in order to create a one-of-a-kind paradox: a lowly world whose inhabitants will be able to elevate it to the greatest heights, from within it itself.

And here is where Torah and Mitzvos enter the equation.

WHAT IS A MITZVAH?

When Moshe ascended to the heavens to receive the Torah from Hashem and pass it on to the Jewish people, the angels protested to Hashem: “Your hidden treasure you wish to give to mortals?!”

Hashem asked Moshe to respond: “In the Torah it is written ‘I am the G-d who took you out of Egypt,’ have you descended into Egypt? In it, it says ‘rest on the Shabbos,’ do you toil in the weekdays? In it, it is written ‘honor your

parents,’ do you have parents? In it, it says, ‘do not kill, do not steal, do not commit adultery,’ — do envy and greed exist among you?” Said Moshe to the angels.

The angels were left speechless, and the Torah was given to *us*.

Could the angels have not answered that these laws have more depth to them than just practical instructions and carry deep spiritual significance which only they can appreciate in the higher worlds?

The answer is no.

TWO CONTRADICTING MISHNAYOS

The Mishna teaches: “A single moment of repentance and good deeds in this world is greater than all of the World to Come. And a single moment of bliss in the World to Come is greater than all of the present world.”

At first glance this seems to contradict; if one single moment of bliss in *Olam Haba* is greater than the present world, then why is a single moment of *Teshuva* and good deeds greater than the entire *Olam Hazeih*?

The answer lies in what we are exploring here:

The Mishna is making a differentiation between the *experience* level of the two worlds (“one moment of *bliss*”) and the *accomplishment* level of the two worlds (“one moment of *Teshuva* and good *deeds*”). “Bliss” is the reward, the work itself is done here, in the world of action and a moment of work is far greater than any reward imaginable.

Our world is indeed the lowest and furthest from Hashem if we judge by where the divine *experience* is more felt, yet only our world allows us to connect to the *essence* of Hashem and to the sublime spiritual energy trapped into this world alone, by doing his will, the mitzvos.

The greatest angels have no access to the physical materials of which Hashem desired

that an abode be made for him. Only we can do these mitzvos into which a tremendous level of divine energy is trapped, and by using them for a mitzvah that energy is unlocked.

The mitzvos, first and foremost, must be followed literally and observed physically. They of course contain spiritual meaning, but the main thing is the deed.

Someone who meditates on the spiritual significance of Matzah and studies all the secrets hidden in the mitzvah but doesn't eat it on Pesach night has failed to do the mitzvah, while if someone absentmindedly ate the Matzah, entirely unaware of its spiritual significance, did fulfill the mitzvah; he actually *did* what Hashem wanted.

This idea, of the importance of serving Hashem in *this* world, primarily doing *mitzvos*

FROM גוּלָה – TO גְּאוּלָה

From a proper understanding of the “service of refinement” we can understand that the Divine service which brings Moshiach isn't about destroying and nullifying the world and to transform it to something different, rather it is about revealing the hidden good, the spark, which is already within it from the very beginning.

This concept is hinted in the Hebrew word for Redemption – גְּאוּלָה. The word גְּאוּלָה includes in it the word גוּלָה which means Exile; there is only one more letter – an א. This א refers to the one master of the universe, who when inserted and revealed within the very world which is in exile, turns it into a redeemed G-dly world without breaking it, for the world in essence is good and the Exile state is just a concealment and covering to the truth.

WHY DON'T WE SEE THE WORLD GETTING BETTER, IF IT IS?

If indeed with every mitzvah the world is progressing towards the Geulah, why then isn't it visible? We should see the world improving with every mitzvah? Shouldn't there be an *Aliyas Hadoros* – the generations becoming better with time, not the opposite which we see so much more of?

This question is even more striking when we study about the *simanei hageualah* (the signs of redemption — see **Principle #9**) which will take place prior to Moshiach's arrival; the clear majority of these signs — many of them taking place before our eyes — tell us of a world which is so spiritually desensitized. How does this fit in with a world which is getting more refined with every passing mitzvah?

There are several answers to this question:

1. When we say the world is becoming more refined, it doesn't necessarily mean that it must be apparent (despite the fact that some aspects of it are — see below). What we see is only on the surface level, there are much deeper processes going on which more refined people can observe. A company may be at work making money, but it only releases the financial reports to the public at the end of the fiscal year, only the insiders know what is going on.

Chassidus teaches that all the spiritual accomplishments done in this world are “stored in a chest” in the world of *Atzilus* and will come down to the world when the time is right. A person may look perfectly healthy on the outside and inside him, G-d forbid, a deadly disease is breeding; a person may look externally ill, but inside he is doing excellent and healing rapidly. It takes a good physician to tell what's going on inside, and if a physician tells us to persist with a certain treatment because it's doing good for us on

the inside, we should follow and trust him that change is indeed happening.

2. For it to become visible, Moshiach must come. Let's imagine a large bonfire to which more and more lighter fluid is added. Until a burning match is applied to the fire all that flammable material is invisible, but when the match will touch the bonfire, its effect will be apparent to all. Similarly, while we are each a *spark* of Moshiach by contributing to preparing the world for Geulah, the *general* Moshiach will apply that match which will use our mitzvos to light up the world.

3. The assumption that the world is worse-off now isn't entirely true. In many ways we are actually doing much better. Let's take freedom of religion for example. Virtually all Jews today live in countries where one is free to live as a Jew with no one bothering him. Even the negative sides associated with this liberal spirit which allows this is a reaction of a world adjusting to a new reality. Sometimes the end of a surgery seems to be the messiest and ugliest sight, but the reality is that the patient is doing much better than the way he came here.

4. The darkest part of night is before dawn. Indeed, there are some areas in which our generation is very low, but it is purposely arranged by Hashem that way so the light of Moshiach can be better appreciated when it comes on the backdrop of the darkest dark.

5. Did you ever walk into a house right before Shabbos? Did you ever see a stage right before the performance? The moments before showtime are often the most chaotic, because that's when all the strings are being pulled together. The spiritual mess in our world now is the process of everything that we as a nation worked on for centuries coming together.

ma'asiyos, practical and physical mitzvos, is what is called in teachings of Kabbalah and Chassidus עבודת הביטויים – the service of refinement.

THE SOUL AND THE SHELL

To explain:

A well-grounded principal in Jewish thought is that in every creation in the entire universe there is a G-dly spark which makes it exist and infuses it with life, a soul. The body of the object serves as a “shell” (*kelipa* in Hebrew) which covers up and, to a great extent, conceals the G-dly force of life which is within it. The thicker the shell is, the coarser the creation, and consequently the more concealed the G-dly spark is.

The level of holiness of a certain object is defined by how concealed its spark is. This will have a direct impact on the objects “pull” towards and association with good or negativity.

Spiritual creations, angels and souls, have a very fine “body” which is virtually transparent and allows their G-dly soul to be fully revealed through them, whereas the creatures in *this* world have a coarse material body which is virtually almost opaque thus making its spark and meaning almost invisible.

But as we saw above, this relates only to the *experience* of G-dliness, but in an ironic twist, with regard to the actual level of G-dliness, the lower and coarser something is, the greater the essence of the G-dly spark within it is. It's like a wall that was toppled down; the tallest bricks fall the furthest away and seem the hardest to retrieve and fix.

As cited earlier from the Arizal, our world was formed from the greatest spiritual heights, but in a manner where this energy has been hidden so strongly in the materiality of this world.

It can fall so low that that its “shell” can be so far removed from acknowledging its source and can even deny the existence of a Creator!

This is the reason why in our world evil can get so strong and seem to prevail. A world unaware of its source is a great habitat for such forces. And it's the very same reason we are here, to help redeem these great sparks, from the exile they are trapped in.

THE GREAT REFINERY

Our task, then, is like that of a goldsmith who must take the precious metal that was mined from the ground and separate the dirt and waste from the precious metal. Only then can that metal shine and glimmer.

We must “soften” that shell, we must refine the coarseness of that matter whose present nature is to reject G-dliness and cleanse it of all its negative components thus making it possible to facilitate a point of contact between it and its spark of life, thereby enabling the mind and the soul to “overpower” the matter and elevate it to G-dliness.

How do we do this? How do we take materialism and uncover the “soul” of G-d within it?

That is the main point of the mitzvos.

The Torah and its material-focused mitzvos, deal primarily with our physical life: business, eating and drinking, our way of dress, family life, etc.; Even the mitzvos which deal with our *spiritual* life are associated in one way or another with physical objects, like Tefillin, Tzitzit, Mezuzah, Bris Milah, sacrifices, agricultural mitzvos and so on.

Even the purely spiritual mitzvos, like faith, love and fear of Hashem, have “physically” measurable dimensions. They must be up to par to similar feelings one would have to worldly matters. Simply put, one must love Hashem the same way he would feel love to a person close to him.

To paraphrase: mitzvos don't only mean commandments and directives from Hashem; the word mitzvah means also צוותה וחיבור – “connection” — a means through which one can connect and bond himself, the world around him and the world at large, to Hashem.

Every mitzvah and good deed which a person does causes a certain measure of refinement of the physical object it's done with, the shell concealing over its G-dly spark is then slowly removed thus revealing its essential connection to Hashem.

Even more: not only does the object itself become close to Hashem, it also indirectly refines also any objects which prepared it and helped it reach this goal, like the food and livelihood which made it possible for one to daven and study and do mitzvos. They also get elevated.

EVERY STEP IS PREPLANNED...

This “service of refinement” designates the path of life and destiny of the individual.

Individual Divine providence directs each Jew to “his” part of the world – the part that assigned to him to refine and elevate. Where you will live and what your occupation will be is Hashem’s way of directing you to the part in the world you need to redeem.

How long a person will live is also decided according to this. He is given enough time to live to fulfill his task.

The Alter Rebbe expresses this idea explicitly in his *Likkutei Torah*:

“One is given 70 years while the other is given 80, all according to the measure incumbent upon him to refine and transform from bad to good . . . each day of his life he is to refine a certain portion, thus over his lifetime he has completed all that he needs to refine, which is why his soul descended to this world.” (Parsha Re'eh, p. 33c)

Just as the *private* life of the individual is built around his mission in refining the world, so too it is true concerning the general public as a generation: each generation is allotted to a certain mission which is part of the general “service of refinement” and thus its destiny and situation in physical and spiritual terms is

HOW MANY SPARKS?

The Arizal teaches that 288 sparks fell at the *Shviras Hakeilim*.

This is hinted in the words describing the first moments of creation, “the spirit of G-d was hovering over the water.” “The spirit of G-d” refers to the spirit of Moshiach, and the Hebrew word for “hovering” — מרחפת, comes out to be רפ"ח מת, the *gematria* of 288, the number of sparks that fell and “died” at the “shattering of the vessels.”

When the Jews left Egypt, the Torah says that “also the *erev rav* ascended with them.” The word רב has the *gematria* of 202, which is the number of sparks already refined to that point through the Divine service of the Avos (the patriarchs) and the *galus Mitzrayim*, and 86 (הטבע) remained still trapped in nature, awaiting refinement by the Jewish people through Torah and mitzvos.

decided, such as where they will mainly reside in that time, under which government they will be, and how that government will treat them and so on.

Chazal teach that “Hashem dispersed the Jewish people throughout the world only for the purpose that converts be added on to them.” Chassidus sees this statement in a broader sense as well: “Converts” means not only people that joined the Jewish faith, it means also materialism that it given Jewish meaning by Jews using in for *Avodas Hashem*.

When taking in account the work of each individual and of every generation under various circumstances, overcoming and prevailing against different types of barriers to the performance of Torah and mitzvos, especially with *Mesirus Nefesh* (self-sacrifice),

they collectively bring to the complete refinement of the entire world and of all that is in it.

WHAT HAPPENS AT THE END OF THE REFINEMENT?

Once this endeavor is met, and the entire world reaches the culmination of its refinement — the coarse “shell” is totally removed — then the world abandons its self-perceived definition as an entity independent from Hashem and it ceases to be עולם — world, which is a play on the word העלם — concealment. Instead, the Divine spark shines brightly through it thus turning it into an abode for Hashem, fulfilling the purpose for which it was created.

Such a world has no tolerance for any sort of evil and opposition to holiness; in such a world good and kindness prevail, and the entire world announces with its mere being that it was created for the Torah and for Israel and “Whatever Hashem created is only for His glory.” Such a world is naturally free of hunger and war, of envy and competition and it is immersed only in the knowledge of Hashem, as all these evils stem from a lack of realizing the G-dly nature of the world.

In the words of the Alter Rebbe in his *Torah Ohr*: “The reason why the *galus* has stretched long over 1700 years, is in order to refine the 288 sparks, and *when all the sparks will be refined Moshiach will arrive*, may it be speedily in our days.” (Parshas Vayeshev p. 27d)

At that time, the Torah and mitzvos will not cease to exist, G-d forbid. They will serve a different purpose – not to refine, rather to “unite unities within unities” – to grow higher and higher within holiness itself, a topic for itself.



So, every Jew is the Moshiach, the redeemer, of a part of this big project we need to finish collectively. We were all anointed and appointed by Hashem to bring perfection to the world.

When we each finish our assignment, the big manager, *Melech HaMoshiach* comes and brings all the parts together, unveiling a perfect world, a home for Hashem in which he feels more “comfortable” to show his essence than with the greatest angels.

And we can all take pride in being a part of it. ■

SUMMARY:

- The purpose of the world is to have a *Dira B'Tachtonim* – a home for Hashem in this lowest world.
- The purpose includes also that this be done *by* the inhabitants of the lowest world – human beings.
- This is out of Hashem’s great love to us, so we can be His “partners” in this great endeavor.
- It is brought about by doing physical mitzvos, as physical mitzvos refine and cleanse the physical matter of the world and uncover the G-dly spark that’s in it.
- The coming of Moshiach means that the entire world is refined and is receptive to its G-dly spark.
- Even though we don’t always see the immediate effects of the mitzvos, it’s all there waiting for Moshiach to reveal it.



WHY DIDN'T IT RAIN IN ZAGREB, CROATIA?

RABBI PINCHAS & RAIZEL ZAKLAS, SHLUCHIM TO CROATIA, FINALLY BUILT THE FIRST MIKVAH IN THE COUNTRY SINCE WWII, BUT IN THE NORMALLY-RAINY CITY, THE RAIN WOULDN'T COME...

OUR STORY BEGINS

a little over one year ago, on Erev Pesach 5778. Rabbi Pinchas (Pini) Zaklas and his wife, shluchim of the Rebbe to Zagreb, the capital of Croatia, were in a huge bind. They were overjoyed that after much effort, financial and emotional, they managed to complete the massive project that they had

MENDY DICKSTEIN ◦

undertaken with the building of a five story Jewish Center, which now stood proudly in the city of their shlichus. The building housed all of the institutions needed to maintain an active Jewish community: a shul, preschool, offices, a modern well-equipped kitchen to provide all the food needs of visiting tourists and local residents, and even a cafe for those wishing to

sit and relax over a hot beverage. The one thing that marred the celebration was the fact that the mikva, which was the main breakthrough aspect of the entire building, remained empty.

The shluchim had placed great hopes on this mikva, which is the first ever built in the entire country since the end of World War II. Every last mikva in the country that had stood before the war had been destroyed and were completely out of commission. The shluchim themselves had been forced to travel for hours to a nearby country in order to use the mikva

there. Over time, more and more young couples joined the community and took on the level of observance needed to maintain the sanctity of the Jewish home, and they were forced to travel as well. The newly built mikva would enable the locals to observe the laws of purity without added layers of burdensome exertions.

Although the season during which the building was inaugurated was early spring, the shluchim were confident, since Croatia is a country where rain is plentiful even in

spring and summer. However, something truly strange took place. Despite plentiful rainfall throughout the entire country, the clouds skipped over the capital city and left it high and dry for an unusually long period of time.

The matter pained the shluchim greatly, as they hoped for the rain that would fill the *otzar* (reservoir) pit and bring the project to its completion. Days turned into weeks, which turned into months, and no rain fell inside the city limits.

Spring passed and autumn arrived. The disappointed shluchim were certain that the cold season would bring the anticipated salvation, but the summer dry spell continued into the fall, which was considered most strange and even bizarre. Local media began to comment in amazement about the bizarre phenomenon of the rain, and even snow, which had begun to fall in many parts of the country, skipping over Zagreb which continued to remain dry.

One night, R' Pini Zaklas was awakened by a suspicious noise. A quick check revealed that it was actually rain falling from the sky! His joy knew no bounds, and as soon as the rain stopped he hurried to check the reservoir pit of the mikva to see if enough water had accumulated to render the mikva operational.

As great as was the previous joy, the disappointment that followed was all the greater. The pit had filled with a minimal amount of water which was insufficient to make the mikva kosher, and now had to be completely dried out before awaiting for it to be filled by the next rainfall.

This scene played itself over a number of times, to the point that R' Zaklas began to feel really badly about the whole story.

One evening, the Zaklas couple were sitting and talking, with the topic of the mikva taking center stage. During the conversation, Mrs. Zaklas told her husband that she had recently

read a number of stories about mikvas that were unable to begin operations due to inexplicable turns of events, and when the people involved consulted the Rebbe, he instructed them to check if the mikva was kosher from a halachic perspective. In each story, only after the mikva was checked and fixed, did everything work out fine. As she suggested, "It is possible that we, too, have a problem that we are unaware of, and that is what is preventing the mikva from filling up properly."

Winter was already well underway, the cold was fierce and the winds were stormy, but rain in sufficient amounts was nonexistent. R' Zaklas realized that there was something to what his wife was suggesting, and he decided to recheck the kosher status of the mikva. Although he had been in regular contact with highly experienced experts in mikva construction throughout the entire building process, perhaps some detail had escaped their attention and this was preventing the rain from filling the reservoir.

He decided to solicit another opinion from an expert in the field of mikva construction, to see if he could discover the reason why the mikva wasn't being allowed to fill properly. R' Zaklas contacted Rabbi Shmuel Levin, an expert of international renown. R' Levin was already acquainted with every detail of the site, as he had paid a personal visit during the construction, so he was familiar with the reservoir and the immersion pit.

R' Levin heard the great distress that the shliach found himself in, and gladly agreed to look into the matter and try to resolve the problem. He asked R' Zaklas to photograph the entire mikva from every corner and angle, and R' Zaklas did just that.

When R' Levin received the pictures, he immediately identified the problem that seemed to be the heavenly cause for holding up the works. The gentile contractor innocently had thought of a certain addition to the reservoir that would make it easier to

access. However, that little addition rendered the entire mikva not kosher and unfit for use until that unsuitable "improvement" would be corrected. In fact, if the reservoir had filled as expected, besides for any immersion in the mikva being invalid, the problem would never have been discovered once covered by water.

By a stroke of amazing divine providence, on the very day that the problem was identified, a world renowned expert in the field of mikva supervision, Rabbi Mintzberg, arrived in Croatia. He had been invited by the Rabbinical Centre of Europe to conduct a round of visits among the shluchim in Europe and to check the kashrus and level of standards of the mikvas in each place.

Upon hearing from R' Zaklas the story of the extended rain delay and the problem that was uncovered that very day, R' Mintzberg immediately got involved and saw to it that it was fixed that very day.

What was truly amazing (or not?) was that on the very next day, the residents of Zagreb were informed of a major winter storm system heading towards the city with great force. Two days later, the powerful storm hit the city and dropped huge amounts of precipitation on the city, easily filling the reservoir to satisfactory levels. The mikva that had stood forlorn for many long months was inaugurated with a great celebration and the participation of the local residents, the donors and many visiting dignitaries.



RABBI ZAKLAS AT THE NEW MIKVA

Despite the happy ending to the story and the impressive launch celebration, the entire episode left R' Zaklas with a bad feeling. Why did he have to endure the tremendous aggravation? Why did there have to be this hitch that caused the mikva to remain deserted for close to an entire year, causing so much heartache?

He decided to write to the Rebbe, then and there, and ask for a special sign that the entire building, and especially the mikva, is pleasing to the Rebbe and that the delay should not be seen as a sign of some lack or flaw in the shlichus.



Very shortly after, R' Zaklas received a phone call from a relative of his by the name of Yosef Yitzchok Lipsker, who had recently become engaged, with a news flash for him. In his search for rare letters to include in a “teshura” (lit. gift, in this case a memento pamphlet) for his wedding, he discovered something that heretofore was entirely unknown. It turns out that many years earlier a letter of the Rebbe was translated into the Croatian language. This was no short letter of a few lines, but a long and detailed letter three pages long!

R' Zaklas could not believe his ears. He was sure that his relative was making a mistake and misunderstanding what was written there. To make certain, he asked him to send the letter posthaste. It was only when he got the letter that he realized that even after fourteen years of shlichus to that country, there were always surprises, and that he was in fact holding a rare letter that the Rebbe had written in the language of his country of shlichus.

After he recovered somewhat from the shock, he set to actually reading the contents of the letter. The letter seemed as if it was written to him and his community at this very point in time!

The Rebbe begins the letter by explaining the legal ruling in the Rambam by which it is possible to identify the Moshiach. Following that, the Rebbe explains that the only way to leave the exile is through being particular in the study of Torah and the performance of mitzvos.

R' Zaklas' excitement knew no bounds, especially upon receiving it on the very same day of the opening of the mikva, and following the letter that he had written himself. It was such an amazing feeling that despite all of the hardships and upheavals they had been through, they had the privilege of receiving a letter from the Rebbe.

The general attitude in the Jewish community of Croatia was guided by the assumption that Judaism is purely a cultural matter, associated with the folklore of an ancient people with interesting traditions and history, but certainly not something that came with obligations or a coherent belief system meant to guide a person through every step of life.

Obviously, the shliach battled long and hard through pleasant means against this approach. Many times over the years, he was involved in deep discussions about this very matter, and now here was a letter from the Rebbe written in the local tongue clearly delineating the significance of Judaism, and how the way to actualize it is specifically through the study of Torah and actual mitzva performance.



The mikva that was named for Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, actually opened its doors for use on the anniversary day of her passing 22 Shevat. The immersion pool was filled on the day before, and the first actual use after such a long wait took place the very next day.

In the months that have followed since the opening of the mikva, the fact of its existence has resonated far and wide within the local community and throughout the country. Demand for the mikva has come from places that the shluchim never dreamed about back when they started the building project. Even Israeli medical students studying in Croatia who heard about the mikva, have decided to take advantage of the opportunity and put it to use. Even more surprising has been the interest on the part of local families that seemed far removed from the whole concept, some of whom have even requested to pay a visit.

Clearly, this mikva that experienced divine intervention in guaranteeing its kosher status to the highest standards, serves as an important milestone in the increase of purity among the Jewish people. ■



*Rabbi
Simon
Jacobson*

DOES INSECURITY STAND IN THE WAY OF YOUR SUCCESS?

THIS one goes out to all the single and dating people out there, and to the married people too.

There is one thing that love is not, and that's judgement. Growing up in the Western world, we're given the message that we're only worthy of love if we meet certain criteria. Conversely, the culture at large teaches us that we can only love someone or something that meets our expectations. Our children fail and we treat them like losers, our spouses don't measure up so we look elsewhere. Our parents were the harbingers of our psychological problems, and our friends don't show up the way we want them to. If only people were better — if only they would measure up — it would be so much easier to love.

UM, NO

Love is experienced through being able to hold simultaneous truths. The infinite wisdom of the intelligence of the universe created us as imperfect creatures with plenty of work to do on ourselves. Love, as an entity, is not dependent on perfection. If it were dependent on perfection, it would mean that only a

perfect power way above reality is deserving of love, since every single human is created with problems to work out over time. Love is holding space for imperfections.

YOU ARE WORTHY OF LOVE, AND SO IS EVERYBODY ELSE

Love is your birthright. It's your birthright to receive it, and it's your birthright to give it to other people. You can stop telling yourself that you're only worthy of love if you are perfect and if you please other people. You, and everybody else, is worthy of love by virtue of the fact that you exist. Birth is G-d saying that you matter. Love is not a competition. It's not an elimination battle. It's something that we are born to receive and born to give, regardless of levels of perfection. ■

EXERCISE:

Think of one person you have, or wish to have, a loving relationship with. Assess your level of judgment toward that person.

PARASHA Of The Future

RABBI NISSIM LAGZIEL

REFUSING TO GIVE IN

A JOKE TO BEGIN WITH...

At an anti-war demonstration, protesters waved signs and cried out against government policies. One demonstrator with an especially loud and dominant voice repeatedly screamed at the top of his lungs, “I won’t move from here until the war ends!”

Just at that moment, a bicyclist came riding along and wanted to enter a nearby coffee shop. Unfortunately for him, there didn’t appear to be an available pole to chain his bike to.

He went up to the noisy protester and asked him to raise his hands. Then he chained the bicycle to his waist and started to go...

“What do you think you’re doing?” the protester asked.

“Uh, I made up to have lunch with a friend,” the bicyclist replied.

“And what about the bicycle?” the protester continued to angrily inquire.

“Don’t worry,” the bicyclist replied. “If you won’t move from here until the war is over, I can have lunch, do some shopping, and come back with plenty of time to spare...”



THIS week’s Torah portion, **Parshas Beha’aloscha**, is a particularly full parsha. It talks about, among many other

topics, the offering of the only Korban Pesach in the desert and how a group of Jews who were *tamei* complained that they wanted to join too. Another episode of complaining in the parsha tells us about how the Jewish People complained about the difficult passage and the shortage of food. The harsh results of the excessive complaining were not long in coming...

One of the questions that crops up whenever we study Parshas Beha’aloscha pertains to the chronological position of the parsha in accordance with the Chumash’s timeline.

Sefer Bamidbar opens with the pasuk: “... On the first day of the second month, in the second year after the exodus from the land of Egypt”, i.e., the first of Iyar 2449. In contrast, the command to offer the Korban Pesach (appearing in *this week’s* Torah portion) is stated the month before... If so, why is Parshas Beha’aloscha the third parsha of Chumash Bamidbar, and not the first?

True, there is the well-known principle that “there is no chronological order in the Torah”, but what is the reason for arranging the portions this way?

Rashi quickly comes to our aid. “Why did Scripture not begin with this [chapter]? For it is a disgrace to Israel that throughout the forty years the children of Israel were in the desert, they brought only this Pesach sacrifice alone.”

(Bamidbar 9:1) The Torah doesn’t want to start an entire book of the Torah with a negative episode about the Jewish People. That’s a fair answer, isn’t it?

However, a brief review of the pesukim in Chumash (Parshas Bo) reveal to us that the children of Israel were never commanded to offer the Pesach sacrifice in the desert! This command was meant to be only after they entered Eretz Yisrael:

“When Hashem will bring you to the land ... He promised to your forefathers, you shall observe this service on this month.”

Hashem did command afterwards, at the first anniversary of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, that the Korban be brought, but that was an exception!

If such is the case, what is the disgrace in not offering a sacrifice we were not commanded to bring? Is there a problem with not observing the laws of *shmittah* or not separating *t’rumah* and *ma’aser* in the wilderness?

When we learn the rest of the story of the first-and-last Korban Pesach in the desert in depth, we discover the answer to this mystery.

As the parsha continues, the Torah tells us about “men who were ritually unclean [because of contact with] a dead person” (ibid., 9:6), and came to Moshe Rabbeinu with a complaint: “Why should we be excluded so as not to bring the offering of G-d?” (ibid., 9:7)

At first glance, the complaint sounds quite reasonable, however, in the words of the holy **Ohr HaChaim**, “One has to understand the

claim of the men who stated ‘Why should we be excluded?’ Doesn’t the reason given by their own mouths provide the answer – ‘We are ritually unclean?’ What is it that they are asking? To give them a new Torah?”

So exactly what did these men want? Reform in religious affairs? A change in the Halacha?

Their status didn’t allow them to bring the Korban and that’s Hashem’s will! They should have accepted it and moved on!

It turns out that there’s no rational claim here; we’re talking about a spontaneous cry that genuinely burst out of them due to the pain of being compelled to give up on offering the Korban Pesach. This cry coming straight from the inner depths of their souls was the very thing that created a new mitzvah – the mitzvah of Pesach Sheini.

The connection between a Jew and Hashem is on two levels. In general, Hashem speaks and we do, Hashem commands and we fulfill His Will, He is the “*mashpia*” and we are the “*mekablim*.” This is a connection built upon the fulfillment of the instructions of the Torah, similar to the connection between a master and a servant or between a king and his people. By contrast, there is a deeper and more profound level – here, on this inner plane, the Jew is the “*mashpia*”, whereas Hashem is, so to say, the “*mekabel*”!

Through this genuine and heartfelt cry, a Jew is prepared to forge a connection with Hashem Himself, beyond even what was already given in the Torah. Hashem, so called, “digs deep

under His Throne of Glory” and grants the pleading Jew his request and introduces into the Torah the ability to connect to Him, even where the Torah itself placed a limit!

Thus, we have the explanation for the claim made by these ritually unclean men – “Why should we be excluded?” They weren’t there to G-d forbid “reform” the Torah. On the contrary, they openly expressed their deepest wishes and personal anguish over losing the opportunity to offer the Pesach sacrifice according to the Torah. In the merit of their fervent pleas, Hashem Himself “got involved” and granted them the mitzvah of Pesach Sheini, as did the entire Jewish People for the generations that followed.

“The disgrace to Israel” is not the fact that they didn’t offer the Korban Pesach in the desert — Hashem didn’t tell them to, rather it is shameful that they didn’t ask for it, demand, and cry out that He let them offer it.

The fact that they didn’t cry out teaches us something quite simple (and shameful...) – we didn’t care about it enough.



THIS, of course, reminds us of how much the Rebbe pleaded that every Jew should wholeheartedly ask Hashem: “Ad Mosai? How long will it be until You send us Moshiach?!”

Some expressed their criticism over the Rebbe’s conduct: “Hashem has His own plans, and He surely knows how much longer this has to continue. What good will it do if we scream? Anyway, who are we to scream – and why suddenly now, of all times? Perhaps G-d wants (*ch”v*) to delay the Redemption?”

We can learn the answer to this question from the Pesach Sheini episode. In this story, we see clearly the tremendous power of a Jew’s cry, what a Jew can, so to speak, lead Hashem into doing through a real honest-to-goodness plea from the heart. This cry can

literally create something out of nothing, a special commandment from Hashem that was originally not meant to be given, as it were.

The same is true with the cry for the Redemption. It carries a powerful advantage. The cry itself, when it is made truthfully from the depths of our hearts, can hasten the coming of the Redemption and make it happen now! The only thing necessary is for the continuing exile to cause us actual emotional anguish. We must truly long for and anticipate the Redemption, and when the cry will be real the Redemption will come, perhaps solely in the merit of this cry.

TO CONCLUDE WITH A STORY

Once, the Rebbe Maharash went to see his sons, the Rebbe Rashab and his older brother, Rabbi Zalman Aharon, and he found them sitting and learning a section of Gemara dealing with the intricate laws of the financial claims that a Jewish maid-servant or the female Canaanite slave may present to their owner in Beis Din. The Rebbe Maharash reviewed the *sugya* for them in all its detail, as he noted that he hadn’t learned this *sugya* in twenty years!

Afterwards, the Rebbe told his sons: This *sugya* carries an important teaching. How is it possible that a simple slave-woman could think about all those deep arguments made by the *Tanna’im* and *Amora’im* in the Gemara on her behalf?

The answer:

When something is truly relevant to you, even a simple uneducated maid-servant can provide the most profound arguments...

A TAKE-A-WAY

Sometimes, it’s shameful to *kvetch* and complain. Sometimes, it’s shameful if we don’t...

Good Shabbos! ■

Based on Likkutei Sichos, Vol. 23, first sicha on Parshas Beha’aloscha

KIDS Corner

STORY TIME

STORIES ABOUT THE REBBE’S CHECKS

IT was 5749, a special year. The Rebbe made a number of special announcements about this year: *T’hei Shnas Moshiach Tovah*, *T’hei Shnas Maasim Tovim*. The Rebbe also referred to this year as the *Shnas HaYeled v’haYalda* and *Shnas Ha’Binyan!*

In order to encourage the Chassidim, the Rebbe said he would give his token \$100 participation for whoever would build.

Now, we will tell of two miracles that happened with those \$100. Rabbi Kumer of Tzfas relates:

When we heard the Rebbe’s instruction, we happily obeyed. We bought the house next door, thus enabling us to enlarge our home. We reported to the Rebbe and received \$100.

Then I went around Tzfas and when I saw buildings under construction, I went over to the owners and said, “Do you want \$100 from the Rebbe as his participation in your construction?” Of course, they were happy to report to me their full names.

Then I went to hospitals and other places and encouraged many people to carry out the Rebbe’s instruction and build. I had a list of about twenty people who built, renovated or said they would do so, and I sent the list to the Rebbe.

About two or three weeks later, I received about twenty checks and gave them out according to my list.

Some time went by.

One morning, as I was teaching children the alef-beis in school, a bell rang. A woman had come to talk to me. I asked her what she wanted and she said disappointedly, “The Rebbe’s check bounced.”

A check “bouncing” means that the bank cannot pay the check, as the person giving the check doesn’t have enough money in his account to cover the check.

At first, I felt like the sky had fallen. Could a check from the Rebbe have bounced?!

On second thought, I thought, that’s impossible!

“Show me the check, please. I want to see it.”

The woman took out the check and handed it to me. On the check, the bank clerk had written, “It is not clear from which account to take out the money.”

I looked at the check and I could see that it was torn and taped. The tear was right through the Rebbe’s account number. Because of the rip and tape, one of the numbers was missing.

I examined the check in surprise and asked the woman, “What happened to this check?”

The lady said, “I put it in my pocket to take to the bank and deposit it. Suddenly, it began to rain. The rain wet the check and it tore.

“When I went to the bank and showed the torn check, the teller took it and taped it. Then she sent the check to the collection department where the check is cashed.”

I said to the woman, “Fine, I don’t know what to do about it though.”

Interestingly, I did not say to her, let’s send it back to the Rebbe. I suppose it was obvious to me that we couldn’t do that.

The assistant heard the conversation between me and the lady and when she left, the assistant said to me, “Do you know that woman’s story?”

“No,” I answered.

“She is my neighbor and I know her. She may have wanted to do renovations but, in the end, she did no construction or renovation. She just wanted the \$100 from the Rebbe ...”

The amazing thing is that I received twenty checks and this was the only check that got rained on and ripped through one of the numbers of the bank account, so that she could not receive the money that she did not deserve.

“Money from the Rebbe is holy money,” said Rabbi Kumer. “Whoever is supposed to get it, gets it, and whoever is not supposed to get it, doesn’t get it.”

Another story is told by Rabbi Zalman Garelik:

Following the Rebbe’s instruction to build houses and neighborhoods or add rooms to existing houses, my friend said, let’s build a Chabad shul in Beer Sheva.

I liked his idea and we asked the Rebbe for a bracha. The Rebbe sent a check for \$100 as his participation, but for some reason, it did not reach us.

Things did not go as easily as we had thought they would. In order to build a shul, you need building permits and getting them is hard work. You first need a permit for the land and then permits for building, etc.

We started the process and when we finally got to the last permit, the door was closed in our faces. “We cannot allow this construction. The property is too close to a gas station.”

Many years passed and the bomb shelter, where the shul was located, became too small for all of us. Not only that, but this shelter was also used for farbrengens, a kollel, lecture rooms and other activities. We couldn’t go on like this; we had to grow.

In 5760, after many years of effort, we got all the permits to build a Chabad center in Beer Sheva. The cornerstone was laid amidst great festivity.

Then we got down to work fundraising. One day, I called R’ Yisrael Rosenberg of Nachal Har Chabad. I told him that we finally got the permits and now we were raising money. I asked him for a donation.

R’ Rosenberg said he would get back to me on motzoei Shabbos.

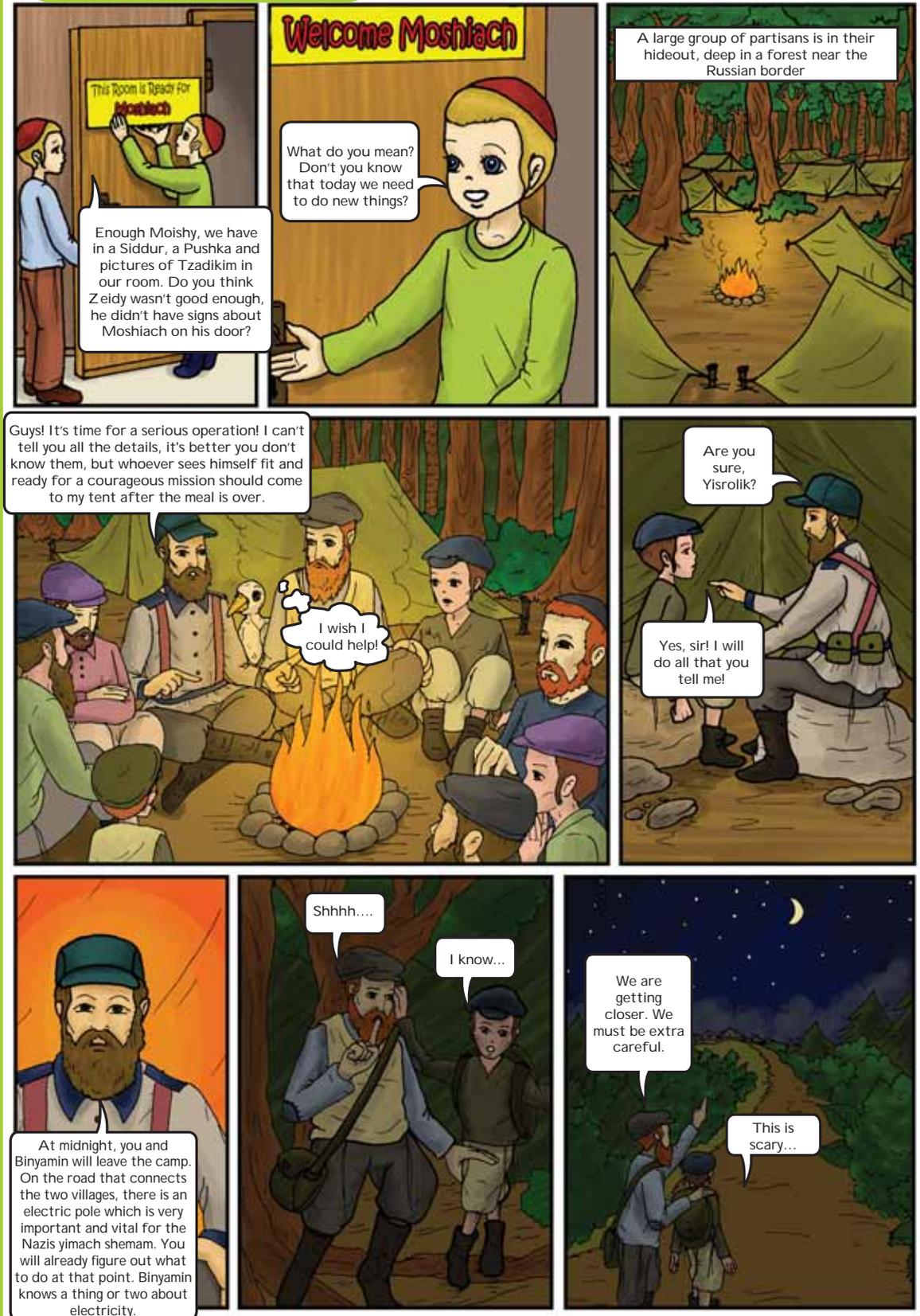
Shabbos was over and R’ Rosenberg lost a very important document that he had to find quickly. He turned over his house as he looked for it.

He came across a closed envelope. He opened it and before his astonished eyes he saw a check for \$100 from the Rebbe!

It all came back to him, in an instant. This was the check that the Rebbe sent for the shul in Beer Sheva! Of course, he called me very excitedly and told me about the check that had waited eleven years until the building got underway.

People were very excited to hear the story of the check and it helped a lot in the fundraising. The Chabad House started a fundraising campaign and for those who made significant donations there was a raffle for the check.

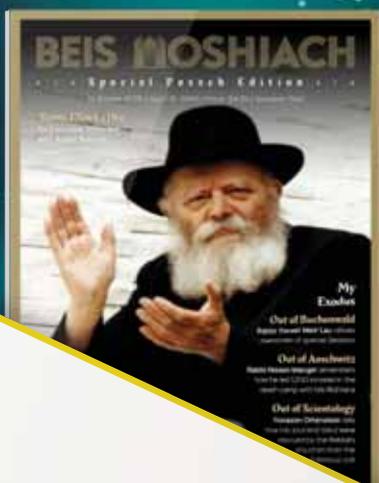
On Pesach 5771, the chanukas ha’bayis for the new, three-story building took place. Since then, it has been preparing the entire city to welcome the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach. ■





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