



אורה ושמחה

The light and joy of Purim
reaches the most
lonesome and destitute

לזכות הילד מנחם מענדל שי', לרגל יום הולדתו - י"א אדר
ולזכות אחותו חנה תחי', לרגל יום הולדתה כ"ב אדר
שירו מהם נח"ר רב כרצו"ק כ"ק אדמו"ר
נדפס ע"י הוריהם הרה"ת יוסף וחי' מושקא שיחיו בענדעט

“Ah Chossid iz ah Lamternshzik!” was how the Rebbe Rashab categorized the role of a Chossid; a Lamplighter.

Throughout the years, the Rebbe utilized every opportunity that arose to dispatch his Chassidim with the charge to serve as lamplighters to their fellow Yidden. Naturally, each of the Yomim Tovim became yet another chance for Chassidim to bring the light of Torah to others, assisting them with the mitzvos of that particular day. The first *mivtza*, *arba minim* on Sukkos, was launched by the Rebbe as early as the year 5714!

Being that Purim is the most joyous Yom Tov on the Jewish calendar, it is not surprising that the Rebbe displayed so much interest and concern towards *mivtza Purim*, urging Chassidim to carry it out with the greatest *shturem*.

The earliest mention of *mivtza Purim* by the Rebbe was in 5721. The Rebbe's *mazkirus* sent a letter addressed to “The honored Rabbonim, Roshei Yeshivos, educators, teachers, and parents” urging them to educate

the youth about the mitzvos of *mishloach manos* and *matanos la'evyonim*.¹

The letter explained that many youth believe that their parents could fulfill these mitzvos on their behalf, when, in reality, the parents did not even fulfill *mishloach manos* and *matanos la'evyonim* themselves.

Therefore, the Rabbonim and educators were asked to reach out to every person they had influence on, and tell them two points: 1) That every single boy over thirteen, and every single girl over twelve, has an obligation to fulfill these mitzvos. (For *chinuch* purposes, children even younger than that should fulfill these mitzvos as well.) 2) To stress that these mitzvos are quite simple to fulfill: For *mishloach manos*, only two types of food are needed, e.g. an apple and a candy or a piece of cake and a drink; and for *matanos la'evyonim*, all one needs to do is give two pennies to two poor people; one penny each.

Special thanks to Rabbi Shmuel Butman, Rabbi Yossi Butman, Rabbi Yisroel Glitzenstein, Rabbi Itche Gurevitch, Rabbi Menachem Katz, Rabbi Lipa Kortzveil, Rabbi Mordechi Laufer, Rabbi Eliezer Lichtstein, Rabbi Shmuel (Mulik) Rivkin, Rabbi Yehuda Weg.

The Rebbe's Call

The next year, in a sicha on *Shabbos mevorchim* Adar 5722, the Rebbe took this appeal to *klal Yisroel*.

First, the Rebbe pointed out an astonishing fact. These two mitzvot of *mishloach manos* and *matanos l'evyonim* are from the easiest mitzvot in the Torah to perform, and one would think that they would be widely observed. Yet, in reality, they are largely overlooked, with some, who meticulously perform the other mitzvot of Purim, leaving these out!

The fact that they are easy to fulfill, explained the Rebbe, is an indication of how essential they are; and because they are so important, the *yetzer hora* comes up with all types of excuses to convince one out of doing them.

Therefore, the Rebbe urged that every person should use their influence to encourage everyone they possibly can to fulfill these mitzvot, explaining to them both the utmost importance of the mitzvot, and how simple they actually are to perform.²

Tzach—Lubavitch Youth Organization—publicized this sicha in flyers throughout Eretz Yisroel, under the headline “The Lubavitcher Rebbe’s Call for the Days of Purim.” A press release was also issued by Lubavitch News Service to all major newspapers, and the Rebbe also instructed that it be translated to Hebrew for Israeli newspapers.

In the Schools

That year, in a telegram to Rabbi Dovid Chanzin, who was the head of the Chabad educational system in Eretz

Yisroel, the Rebbe urged him to arrange for the Israeli education system to organize *mishloach manos* and *matanos la'evyonim* for all the youth in their care above *bar* and *bas mitzva*. The Rebbe added that if money was needed for the poorer children, he would participate with one thousand *lirot*.

The Israeli education system included all Jewish children in Eretz Yisroel, so this had the possibility to bring the mitzvot of Purim to countless Jewish youth.

Following the Rebbe’s instructions, the

WITH GREAT EMOTION, I BOARDED THE PLANE, AND WE TOOK OFF. MOMENTS LATER WE WERE DIRECTLY ABOVE THE MAIN STREET OF HERZELIYA. I TOOK A HANDFUL OF PAMPHLETS, AND TOSSED THEM OUT.

Lubavitcher activists asked Mr. Rinos, the general manager of the education office in Eretz Yisroel, to bring it up to Minister of Education Abba Eban.

Mr. Eban was impressed by the idea, and he committed that next year his office will come up with ways to publicize these mitzvot throughout all the schools in Israel.

True to their word, the following year (5723), the ministry of education published an official statement:

“It would be fitting to prompt our children to fulfill the beautiful mitzva of *mishloach manos*... the children should send to their friends portions of food to eat... It would be fitting to bring this up to the parents ahead of time at class meetings... in order to ensure their cooperation.”

One can only speculate how many young Jews fulfilled the mitzvot of Purim that year because of the Rebbe’s proposal.

Higher and Higher

As the year of 5725 approached, Rabbi Hodakov sent a letter to Rabbi Yisrael Leibov, head of Tzach in Eretz Yisroel. In it he expressed shock that Tzach was unsure whether to arrange a *mitzva Purim* that year.

“In reality, they should be adding more and more. How can they even consider canceling what they had done already?!



AN ADVERTISEMENT PREPARED BY TZACH, ENCOURAGING THE PRACTICE OF THE MITZVOT OF PURIM.



CHASSIDIM POSE FOR A PICTURE BEFORE SETTING IN THE AIRPLANE TO CIRCULATE THE FLYERS. CIRCA LATE 5720S.



“After so much energy, time, and money, was invested into such an operation, they should at least attempt, with Hashem’s help, to arrange [it for the next year] in the best way. They should influence the newspapers to give the *mitvza* huge publicity, both before and after. Bear in mind that the publicity itself is an immense benefit for the strengthening of Yiddishkeit.”

Purim “In the Air”

Rabbi Yitzchak Gansburg a”h was involved in *mitvza Purim* in Eretz Yisrael from the early 5720s. In 5724, he came up with the idea to publicize Purim by flying an airplane over the Gush Dan area, scattering pamphlets over the entire area.

“When I found out how much it would cost,” he related, “I almost gave up on the idea. The amount of money it would

entail was way above what we had in those days. But knowing that such an operation would reach every single Jew in Gush Dan pushed me to think beyond the money, and to figure out a way to do it.”

He decided to work on getting a major company to sponsor it in exchange for an advertisement on the other side of the pamphlets. However, he was concerned that it would look like Chabad was endorsing a specific company, so he asked his father-in-law, Reb Refael (“Folle”) Kahn, who was in New York at the time, to ask the Rebbe whether he should do it.

The Rebbe answered that he should, on the condition that it is a company that the public would not be upset that Chabad promoted them. Additionally, the company had to be one with which the *frumme* community was comfortable,

and that the *hanhala* of Tzach should determine which companies were fitting.

They decided on a wine company called Karmel Mizrachi, both because of its kashrus, which was widely accepted in the *frumme* community, and also because Chabad was well connected with the owners. Rabbi Gansburg met with them, and they agreed on one side of the pamphlet being an advertisement, and on the other side would be a sicha of the Rebbe.

Because of the immense reach these pamphlets would have, Rabbi Gansburg was hesitant to choose the sicha himself, so he asked *mazkirus* to provide him with the text.

Mazkirus sent him the text which was based mostly on a sicha of the Rebbe on concept that “Mordechai does not bend nor bow.” In the sicha the Rebbe explains that every person should take upon themselves Mordechai’s conduct—not to be afraid of or influenced by the world at large, rather to fulfill mitzvos with Jewish pride.

Rabbi Gansburg continues to relate:

“On Purim morning, I traveled to the airport in Herzeliya with the boxes of pamphlets. With great emotion, I boarded the plane, and we took off. Moments later we were directly above the main street of Herzeliya. I took a handful of pamphlets, and tossed them out.

“Hundreds of people were startled out of their daily routine, as hundreds of papers descended from the skies, with everyone trying to grab one to find out what it was about.

“I will never forget those moments; hundreds of people running after a pamphlet of a sicha. When I saw that, I knew without a doubt that the Rebbe would derive tremendous *nachas ruach* from this *mitvza*.

“When we got to Bnei Brak it was very windy and all the pamphlets were scattered to the fields at the edge of the city. Suddenly, I saw hundreds of people streaming towards the fields to



RABBI DOVID RASKIN AND RABBI SHMUEL BUTMAN OVERSEE THE PACKAGING OF THE MISHLOACH MANOS, TO BE DISTRIBUTED ON PURIM THROUGHOUT NEW YORK.



grab a pamphlet. To me this was like a fulfillment of the prophecy, 'Not hungry for bread and not thirsty for water, rather to hear the word of Hashem...'"

This operation continued for many years.

One year, Tzach received a letter from the Rebbe. Without a word of explanation, the Rebbe instructed them to cancel the operation.

The Rebbe never allowed anything good to be stopped, and this was an enterprise which had reached literally thousands of Jews. Why would the Rebbe cancel it?

In *yechidus*, the Rebbe explained the reason to Rabbi Gansburg: Because of the security situation in Eretz Yisroel, the citizens are in a constant state of fear. When they hear airplanes flying overhead it scares them; it brings fear, not happiness. So, the Rebbe said, I thought to myself, why should we frighten Yidden?

Even when it came to the *mivtzoim*, the first consideration was the simple, physical well-being of Yidden.

From then on, they publicized Purim through more conventional avenues.

The Rebbe's Mishloach Manos

In 5731, the Rebbe came out with a special call to reach out to the soldiers of the IDF throughout the day of Purim and to assist them with the mitzvot of the day.

Reb Shloim'ke Maidanchik met with Israeli Air Force officials before Purim and coordinated with them to supply an airplane that would enable Chassidim to fly to the far-out army bases and visit the soldiers there. At one point they were about to back out because the airplanes were required for training purposes. However, the Chassidim didn't give up, and they eventually convinced the Air Force personnel to allow the use of the planes for the *mivtza*.

A few days before Purim Rabbi Efraim Wolf wrote a *duch* to the Rebbe outlining the plans for Purim, following the Rebbe's *hora'a*:

"About the *mishloach manos* for the soldiers, we finalized with the military authorities, and we ordered ten thousand sets of *mishloach manos*. We are now in the process of signing up volunteers from *anash* to go to the army bases on Purim."

As Purim got closer, the Rebbe added many *hora'os* detailing how the *mivtza* should be carried out:

Lubavitchers who serve in the IDF and will be taking part in the *mivtzoim* should wear their normal army fatigues.

The *mivtza* should be done on a large scale, but they shouldn't worry about the size of the *mishloach manos*. All soldiers on all levels and all ranks should receive.

No publicity before the *mivtza* takes place.

They should also speak about the concept of Purim and *mishloach manos* as was done in the schools (until now).

They should take *megillos* with as well.

The Rebbe asked that the *mishloach manos* be given to the soldiers as a personal gift from the Rebbe.

Another extraordinary aspect of *mivtza Purim* in 5731 was the Rebbe's request to give *mishloach manos* on his behalf to the widows and children of fallen Israeli soldiers, *Hy"d*.

The Rebbe personally covered the expenses for those *mishloach manos*, and when Purim approached, the Rebbe also



REB EFROYIM WOLFF

added a message to be delivered to each of the recipients:

לכל אחד ואחת מהנ"ל, ולכולן-תחיינה: פורים שמח וקיום מש"נ ליהודים היתה אורה ושמחה וששון ויקר-כן תהיה לנו

"To every single one of them: happy Purim. May the verse [in the *megilla*] be fulfilled for us: 'For the Jews there was light and happiness, joy and glory.'"

One can only imagine how touched the soldiers were to witness the care and

"A SPECIAL YASHER KOACH GOES TO THOSE WHO BROUGHT THE JOY OF PURIM TO YIDDEN IN ERETZ YISRAEL... THOSE WHO TRAVELED TO SINAI, TO THE NORTH, AND TO THE OTHER ARMY BASES, BRINGING JOY TO THE YIDDEN WHO GUARD THE BOUNDARIES OF ERETZ YISRAEL... THEY ARE PHYSICALLY DISTANT, YET SPIRITUALLY THEY ARE CLOSE AND UNITED WITH US. WITH THIS L'CHAIM, THE PHYSICAL DISTANCE WILL BE NULLIFIED..."

concern of the Rebbe, to the extent that he sent his Chassidim to visit them.

Almost all of them heeded the request of the Chassidim to put on *tefillin*. In addition to the public readings of the *megillah* that were arranged for the soldiers, and the words of inspiration that were spoken, above all what the Chassidim brought was the joyous Purim spirit.

In the report that was sent to the Rebbe after Purim, we read of the soldiers' strong emotional impressions that they experienced from these visits. They were all very thankful to the Rebbe for his initiative. One particular soldier, upon seeing the Rebbe's picture that was handed out together with the *mishloach manos*, burst into tears. Many took the picture of the Rebbe and affixed it next to

PURIM FARBRENGEN IN 770. CIRCA LATE 5720S.



THE REBBE ASKED
IF WE ARE ABLE
TO HEAR THE
FARBRENGEN FROM
SINAI TO WHICH WE
ANSWERED YES,
AND ONLY THEN
DID THE REBBE
GO DOWNSTAIRS
TO BEGIN THE
FARBRENGEN.

their beds. The *duch* was filled with many more such stories, of the heartfelt thanks that the soldiers expressed to the Rebbe.

An interesting anecdote from the *mivtzoim*, as reported in the long and detailed *duch* that was sent to the Rebbe:

“When we were there, a reserve soldier related that for a long time, he had had only sons, and he wished to have a daughter. A friend advised him to turn to the Rebbe, and the Rebbe told him to check his *tefillin* and *mezuzos*, which he did, and they turned out to be *possul*. After he bought new *tefillin* and *mezuzos*,

a daughter was born. After hearing this story, many soldiers asked for the Rebbe’s address.”

That night (on *Motzei Purim*) the Rebbe entered the Farbrengen a few minutes later than usual. He immediately began by saying, “We were delayed by a few minutes, beginning a bit later than planned. This is *be’hashgocha protis*; meanwhile, word was received from Eretz Yisroel that all those who had traveled to the Suez Canal to visit the army bases and bring the joy of Purim to those [soldiers] who protect the Jewish people of the Holy Land, returned home safely.”

These words were spoken by the Rebbe with great emotion, and he began to cry, adding that the officials of the army spared no effort in assisting them with a safe journey there, enabling them to fly and drive to all the places that special security is needed.³

With a “K’nak”!

The following year, on 6 Adar 5732, Rabbi Yisroel Leibov sent a letter to all the Chassidim who had joined in *mivtza Purim* the previous year, writing that a *hora’a* had come from the Rebbe that the *mivtza* with the soldiers should be increased accordingly [i.e. because it’s already a year later].

Rabbi Efraim Wolf, who headed the Chabad *mosdos* in Eretz Yisrael, used to hold daily phone conversations with *mazkirus*, which he would later transcribe.⁴ Reading the transcripts from Adar I 5733 one can see the immense interest the Rebbe took in *mivtza Purim*.

In one conversation, the following message was relayed for Rabbi Yisroel Leibov: The *mivtzoim* of Purim this year should be done in the nicest and largest fashion. Regarding the great financial cost, if the *mivtzoim* would be with a *shturem* and a *hiddur*, the *mazkirus* would cover 95% of the expenses!

In addition, Rabbi Wolf was told to “inform Tzach that the Rebbe *shlita* is happy about the preparations for *mivtza Purim* with the bereaved families, and



LUBAVITCHERS BRING THE JOY OF PURIM TO IDF SOLDIERS STATIONED NEAR THE SINAI DESERT.



RABBI DOVID RASKIN AND RABBI YISROEL LEBOV CONVERSE AT THE TZACH OFFICE IN CROWN HEIGHTS.



A PURIM DANCE WITH THE SOLDIERS IN THE SINAI DESERT.

that the activities should be done with a “*k’nak*” [a bang]!”

Over the next month, Rabbi Wolf was repeatedly asked to provide updates of the preparations for *mivtzoim*, and to check with Rabbi Leibov throughout all the proceedings.

As Purim neared, the Chabad activists in Eretz Yisrael came up with more and more ideas of how to arrange *mivtza Purim* with the greatest *shturem*. Also, at that time there were many immigrants arriving in Eretz Yisroel from Russia, and the activists set out to reach them in the most successful manner.

Then, on 9 of Adar II, a few days before Purim, Rabbi Wolf was instructed to give

Rabbi Leibov 10-15 thousand *lirot* for the *mivtzoim*, based on Rabbi Leibov’s guarantee that the *mivtzoim* would be with the greatest *shturem*, and to give it immediately, so that *mivtza Purim* could be carried out free of worry.

On Shabbos *mevorchim* Adar II, the Rebbe said⁵ that among the mitzvos of Purim, *mishloach manos* and *matanos la’evyonim* have unique significance. Yet, at the same time, they are for some reason less observed (as the Rebbe had spoken years before). Therefore, the Rebbe said, an emphasis should be put on encouraging every single Jew, male and female, young and old, to fulfill these mitzvos. The Rebbe added that this must start now, before Purim, in order that by

the time Purim comes, everyone should be ready to fulfill these mitzvos.

The Rebbe gave a bottle of *mashke* to one of the organizers of the *mivtza* and said:

Those involved in this *mivtza* should take *mashke* and split it among themselves, and this will add in the *bracha* and *hatzlacha* for their activities. *Yehi ratzon*, that these activities will be with *pirsumei nissa*, with the greatest publicity, and that the activities should be done with the greatest amount of *shluchim*; in quantity, and even more so, in quality.

At the farbrengen on Purim⁶ the Rebbe made special mention to all those who took part in the *mivtzoim*, asking them to say *l’chaim*:

“A special *yasher koach* goes to those who brought the joy of Purim to Yidden in Eretz Yisrael, and also to those who were involved in *mivtzoim* here in America. A special *yasher koach* to those who traveled to Sinai, to the North, and to the other army bases, bringing joy to the Yidden who guard the boundaries of Eretz Yisrael, enabling the soldiers to fulfill *mishloach manos* and *matanos la’evyonim*. A *yasher koach* also goes to those in overseas countries who encouraged Yidden to perform the mitzvos of *mishloach manos* and *matanos la’evyonim*, as fulfilling these mitzvos alone causes simcha.

“They are physically distant, yet spiritually they are close and united with us. So everyone here should say *l’chaim* for yourselves and for them. With this *l’chaim*, גדולה לגימה שמקרב, the physical distance will be nullified. And we will become a unified nation, even though in the current situation we are scattered among other nations.”

Farbrengen in the Desert

In the sicha, the Rebbe specifically mentioned those who went on *mivtzoim* in Sinai. In an interview with A Chasidisher Derher, Rabbi Lipa Kurtzveil, a senior member of Tzach in Eretz Yisroel, related:

Be Original

The Rebbe took interest in every small detail of the *mishloach manos*, as we saw earlier regarding the size and *shiur* of the *mishloach manos*. In a sicha on *Shabbos parshas Terumah* 5740, the Rebbe exhibited a similar unique interest in the brochures for Purim, admonishing the fact there was no thought being put into them.

יעדן יאר ווען עס קומט דרוקן א "בראשור" מיט די אלע פרטים וואס זיינען מיט פורים וכי"ב - גייט מען און מ'נעמט ארויס א "בראשור" וואס מ'האט אוועקגלייגט פאר א יארן, און מ'איז פון דארטן מעטיק אות באות, און דאס דרוקט מען אפ.

וואס יענער "בראשור" וואס מ'האט געדרוקט מיט א יאר פאר דערויף איז אויך א העתקה אות באות פון דעם וואס מ'האט געדרוקט פאר צוויי יאר צוריק, און עד"ז איז יענער א העתקה פון דעם פריערדיקן, און אזוי גייט דאס ביז צו דעם זמן פון מ"ת, וואס דעמאלט האט מען קיין ברירה ניט געהאט, און מ'האט געדארפט זאגען א נייע זאך, אבער נאך דערויף וואס דארף מען הארעווען און יעדן יאר איבערטראכטן וואס מ'דארף דרוקן - מ'קען דאך ניצן דאס וואס מ'האט געדרוקט פאר א יארן!?

The Rebbe went on to list details that could and should have been changed in this year's brochure. For example: Purim (in 5740) fell out on Sunday, which meant that certain laws were different than in other years;

machatzis hashekel needed to be given before Shabbos; people needed to be reminded not to prepare their *megillos* on Shabbos for the reading after Shabbos; and so on.



THE FLYING MEGILLAH: RABBI CHAIM BRIKMANN, THEN A BOCHUR, TOURED THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA ON A PRIVATE JET, BRINGING THE JOY OF PURIM TO VARIOUS REMOTE COMMUNITIES AND ARMY BASES. CIRCA 5749.

"That year, I was in charge of dispatching the groups of *bochurim* and *yungeleit* who traveled to the Sinai desert for *mitvzoim* with the soldiers. Now, you have to remember, there were no cellphones then, and there were no means of contact between the different groups, so we set a time, well after we were all due to finish the *mitvzoim*, to meet together and board the airplane back to Tel Aviv.

"The time came and we were all waiting at the plane, but one of the groups still did not return. The pilot was getting edgy and said that he would only wait one more hour. If by then the group did not return, we will have to take off without them. I told the pilot that if this was the case then I will have to remain behind with my group. We could not take off and leave the other group behind. The pilot took off and a few of us stayed behind.

Now we had a real dilemma; how would we hear the Rebbe's Purim farbrengen? We approached the Army officers and asked them if they would be willing to open the office for us so we can hear the Rebbe; the officer agreed. We entered the office and called New York to say that we were safe and sound. The Rebbe asked if we are able to hear the Farbrengen from Sinai to which we answered yes, and

only then did the Rebbe go downstairs to begin the farbrengen. Yet again, we can see the Rebbe's special affection for the participants in *mitvza Purim*!

The Rebbe's Encouragement

The Rebbe always showed great appreciation for the *shluchim* who would take part in *mitvza Purim*, and he would often speak of the great privilege of those involved.

In a *yoman* from Purim 5734 a bochur records a unique incident which took place that year:

"After davening Rabbi Dovid Raskin announced that whoever joins in *mitvza Purim* will receive a dollar from the Rebbe [a rare occurrence in those days]. Understandably, everyone was very happy about this, and we all rushed to go on *mitvzoim*. The Rebbe gave the dollars to Rabbi Raskin after davening and said,

ס'זאל זיין פירות טובות במשך כל השנה

"There should be good results [from this] throughout the entire year."

Women as well

On Rosh Chodesh Adar 5735 the Rebbe held a special farbrengen. The Rebbe said⁷ that one of his intentions in holding

this unusual farbrengen was so that Chassidim throughout the world could participate via hook-up, and hear directly from the Rebbe his encouragement to take part in *mitvza Purim*. Every man and woman should be involved.

The Rebbe added that the involvement of *nshei ubnos Yisrael* is especially important in *mitvza Purim*, even more than in any of the other *mitvzoim*. The Shulchan Aruch rules that with *mishloach manos*, a man gives to a man and a woman gives to a woman. In order for a woman to do the mitzvah properly, both the giver and the receiver must be women. Because the emphasis in this mitzvah is that it must be woman to woman, it is critical that women go out on *mitvzoim* and encourage other women to fulfill the mitzvah.

The Rebbe continued, saying, that surely all the women and girls will join in the *mitvza Purim* in *tznius'dike* manner, but still, there should be much enthusiasm! Just as we saw by the redemption on Pesach, that in the merit of the righteous women the Yidden were released, the same is true in our *galus*. We need the merit of the righteous women, and it

should start with their involvement in *mitvza Purim*.

Not only Lubavitch

In this farbrengen the Rebbe also emphasized that *mitvza Purim* is not exclusively for Lubavitch. It is for every person in *klal Yisroel*:

The mitzvos of Purim are written in Shluchan Aruch; and even earlier, in *rishonim*; and even earlier than that, in the Gemara; and earlier still, in the Mishna; and even before that, in Megillas Esther. They are written in a way that is understood to every person, even a *ben chamesh limikra*! Don't let anyone try to twist it by saying that it is only for Lubavitch, it is incumbent on *every person in klal Yisroel* to be involved in *mitvza Purim*!

Even though some [i.e. Lubavitch] *tumul* more than others—which would seem to indicate that it is connected to Lubavitch more than to other circles—on the contrary, if only they would *tumul* with the *mitvzoim* more than Lubavitch, this itself would stir the tumult in Lubavitch and make it grow stronger. We are living in a world with the *קול המונה של רומי*

“great noise of Rome,” and we need to counter it with the “המונה” of holiness!

The same is true regarding *mitvzoim* in general—whether *mitvza Torah*, or *mitvza tefillin*, or *mitvza mezuzah*, or *mitvza tzedaka*, or *mitvza neiros Shabbos kodesh*, and even more so *mitvza Purim*—each one of the *mitvzoim* is for all of *klal Yisroel*, and it is incumbent upon every single person to be involved in them, with happiness and a joyful heart. Every person who does so is extremely fortunate and has great merit.

In truth, the Rebbe said, these are simple facts, as we have discussed many times and it is printed in several places. But in order to ensure that no one is bothered by this question *for even a single moment*, we are emphasizing that *mitvza Purim* is connected to every person in *klal Yisroel*.

On the night of Purim 5735, Rabbi Wolf received a *hora'a* from *mazkirus*:

“The *mitvza* of going to the soldiers to distribute *mishloach manos* should be strengthened and grown as much as possible, without considering the expense, and it should be done with *simcha*.

“*Bihashgacha protis*, Purim is on Tuesday, which is a day of *טובים וטוב* לבריית good for heaven and good for the creations, so the *mitvzoim* for the soldiers - good for the creations - should be done with even more *geshmak* and energy.”

Yet again, we see the Rebbe's unbelievable “*koch*” in the *mitvzoim* for the soldiers.

Prisons and Hospitals

On Shabbos *mevorchim* Adar 5736⁸, the Rebbe introduced a new phase of *mitvza Purim*—to visit Yidden in prisons and hospitals to help them perform *mishloach manos* and *matanos la'evyonim*.

The Rebbe also detailed how to go about it. *Mishloach manos* is simple to arrange, because according to law prisoners are generally permitted to receive food; but *matanos la'evyonim* may prove to be a bit trickier, as they cannot receive money



PHOTO: THE ALEPH INSTITUTE

A PURIM PARTY ARRANGED FOR THE JEWISH SOLDIERS STATIONED IN IRAQ, PURIM 5768.

Mivtza Purim – Eilat 5737

In 5737 Rabbi Yisroel Glitzenstein of Eilat, Israel oversaw a massive *mivtza Purim*, reaching all the IDF bases in Southern Israel, near the Egyptian border.

The soldiers were very moved by the Chassidim's visit and enjoyed a joyous yom tov celebration with their guests.

The following is a very touching letter sent to the Rebbe by Mr. Shimon Vagim, commander of the IDF base in Eilat, expressing his heartfelt feelings about the visit of the Chabad Chassidim to his base on Purim:

To the Honorable Lubavitcher Rebbe, Greetings!

It is my duty and great privilege to extend kind wishes to you from all the IDF soldiers in our unit, and to thank you, and all of your Chassidim, for the mivtzoim carried out on your behalf and at your behest.

We spent Purim this year in the company of Chabad Chassidim, who took care to bring us your blessings along with mishloach manos, thus sweetening our holiday.

The devotion and dedication of your Chassidim is noteworthy; they go above and beyond [the call of duty] for the IDF soldiers. There was not one corner in the entire region where our soldiers serve that was not visited by your Chassidim, extending your blessings.

It is also noteworthy to point out the mezuzah campaign on the army bases, as well as the tefillin campaign, that your Chassidim practice at every opportunity.

Honorable Rebbe, all the activities done with your inspiration by your Chassidim contribute to bringing the hearts [of the soldiers] closer to love of their fellow man, and to a deeper appreciation of the fundamentals of the Jewish nation; fulfilling the verse "Ve'ohavta le'reiacha kamocha."

I wish to bless you again on my behalf and on behalf of all the soldiers in my unit. We wish you many long years, that you may witness the fulfillment of the prophecy of the end of days [i.e. the coming of Moshiach].

לכבוד הרב מלובביץ; שלום רב!

חובה וזכות גדולה נפלה בחלקי לשגר אליך פריסת שלום מחילי צה"ל במילואינו, וכן להודות לך ולכל חסידך על המבצעים שנעשים בשמך ולפי המלצתך.

את חג הפורים השנה בלינו במחיצת חסידי חב"ד אשר דאגו להביא לנו את ברכתך ואת משלוח המנות אשר המתיק לנו את החג.

ראוי לציין את המסירות והדבקות של חסידך אשר עשו ועושים מעל ומעבר למען חילי צה"ל לא היתה באזור פינה אשר משרתים בה חילי צה"ל שחסידך לא הגיעו לשם והפיצו את ברכתך.

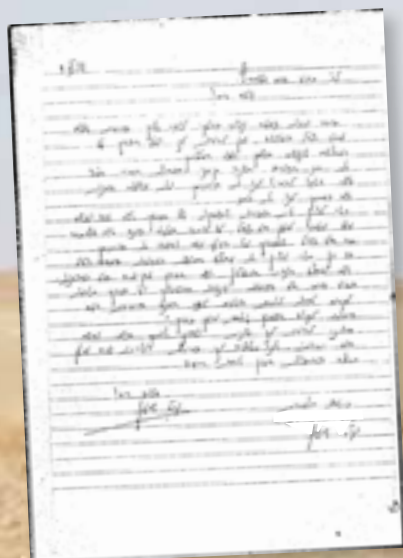
כמו כן ראוי לציין את מבצע החלפת המזוזות בבסיסי צה"ל וגם למבצע הנחת התפילין אשר חסידך מקיימים בכל הזדמנות.

כבוד הרב, כל הפעולות שנעשות בהשראתך וע"י חסידך תורמות לקרוב לבבות לאהבת האדם ליתר הבנה ביסודות העם היהודי, לקיום הפסוק "ואהבת לרעך כמוך".

ברצוני לברך אותך שנית ולברך אותך בשמי ובשם חילי יחידתי. אנו מייחלים לך בריאות ואריכות ימים למען תראה בהתגשמות חזון אחרית הימים.

שלום רב!

וג'ים שמעון



Much Success

In response, the Rebbe sent a letter to Mr. Vagim, urging him to allow these heartfelt impressions to be translated into practical deeds:

With pleasure I received your letter regarding the visit of Chabad personnel, carrying out mitvza Purim, and of the impressions left upon you and all the IDF soldiers in your unit. I thank you for your courteous gesture to write to me about this; it has obviously caused me great pleasure.

I hope that the impressions did not remain only in the feelings of the heart and in speech, but that they found their expression in action as well; as Chazal say the המעשה הוא העיקר.

Soldiers need not be explained this concept; it is a basic tenet of the army—although one goes through training and preparations etc., this is all mere preparations for the action itself.

The Rebbe concludes with a P.S.:

Obviously, all of the above is addressed to all the members of your unit. Many thanks for your willingness to convey this message to them.

This letter is a *michtav kloli-proti* sent before Purim 5736. Receiving reports about all the preparations, the Rebbe expressed his thanks for the reports, and added a special *brocha* in his holy handwriting (see *ksav yad kodesh*):

בברכת הצלחה בעבודה"ק [=בעבודת הקדש]



from outside the prison. The way to get around this is to bring a *tzedaka pushka*, give them coins which will completely belong to them, and then have them put it directly into the *pushka*. [As *achronim* explain, if there is no poor person to whom to give the *matanos la'evyonim*, one can put it in a *pushka*.]

This also solves another issue. There are no poor people in prison or in the hospital, because their facilities provide their clients with all their needs. Therefore, the only way to fulfill the mitzvah is by putting the money into a *pushka*.

On Rosh Chodesh Adar the Rebbe again farbrenged, adding⁹ that now is the time to remind everyone about *mitvza purim* since it is a weekday, and Chassidim throughout the world are listening to the farbrengen via the hook-up.

Again the Rebbe spoke about going on *mitvzoim* to prisons and hospitals, and he went on to stress the unique merit associated in doing *mitvzoim* in these locations, specifically prisons. Besides for enabling them to fulfill the mitzvot of Purim, it brings them the joy of Purim when it is most needed.

The Rebbe explained at length the importance of going to prisons; at one point addressing an interesting question:

This person is sitting in prison, and it is quite possible that he is sitting there for a valid reason, so why the emphasis on helping criminals? The Rebbe answered that there is a fascinating Midrash, relevant to this topic, on the *possuk* אֱלֹהִים יִבְקֹשׁ אֶת הַטוֹב (Hashem seeks [the good of] the pursued). The Midrash says that even if the pursuer is a *tzaddik*, and the one being pursued is a *rasha*, Hashem seeks the good of the pursued, the *rasha*, because he is in a trying situation. From this we see how important it is to assist people who are in arduous circumstances, no matter who they are or what they did to end up there.

Surprise Farbrengen

A few days later, on 7 Adar II, the Rebbe went to the Ohel, as he would most years. No one expected there to be a farbrengen, especially since the Rebbe had already conducted a special farbrengen, when he spoke about *mitvza Purim*, on Rosh Chodesh.

At 6:30 p.m. the Rebbe davened *Mincha* following his return from the Ohel, and immediately thereafter called Rabbi Chodakov into his room.

Rabbi Hodakov came out and announced that at 7:30 p.m. there will be a short

farbrengen. Being that 7:30 was only a few minutes away, and because no one had expected a farbrengen, the shul downstairs was not ready at all for a farbrengen. So everyone ran downstairs to set up the shul before the Rebbe came in.

In those years, when the Rebbe farbrenged on weekdays, he often began with a *maamor*. This time, as the Rebbe entered the farbrengen and sat down—even before a *niggun* was started—the Rebbe began to speak about the reason for this farbrengen¹⁰.

This farbrengen, the Rebbe said, should serve as a reminder to begin all arrangements for *mitvza Purim* to be even greater than years before, being that this year is a leap year.

The Rebbe went on to say that the נקודה הפנימית, the inner meaning of all of the *mitvzoim of Purim*, is that they should lead to תורה או תורה—to learn Torah. That when speaking to a Yid about *mishloach manos* and *matanos la'evyonim*, one should ensure that it brings to learning Torah, and *chinuch* according to Torah.

In the third sicha, after the *maamor*, the Rebbe said¹¹ that in some places they had sent out miniscule *mishloach manos*; so small that it was doubtful



whether they were worth more than a *pruta* or constituted the necessary *shiur*. The Rebbe went on to speak about the *halachos* of *mishloach manos*, and asked that the *mishloach manos*'s that were too small should be corrected in the days before Purim. Then the Rebbe concluded:

“Hashem should grant success to the *mitvza Purim* of *mishloach manos* and *matanos la'evyanoim*, and especially in the *mitvza Purim* with those who guard and defend Eretz Yisrael, ארץ אשר ג' עיני ה'—the land which Hashem's eyes are on it from the beginning of the year until the end of the year. They defend—literally with their physical bodies—the many Jewish men, women, and children who live there. *Mivtza Purim* should be arranged for them, הצלחה ביתר שאת וביתר עוז, and with them, מופלגה.”

Because the Rebbe had spoken so passionately that year about prisons, hundreds of Chassidim spread out to visit prisons across America, to bring them *mitvza Purim*. During the Purim farbrengen that year, the Rebbe spoke again about *mitvza Purim* in prisons, and gave an intriguing explanation about the role of prison in Torah and in society in general.¹²

Through the Winter

The *mitvza* became larger and larger as the years went on, and the Rebbe showed much attention in *mitvza Purim* and all those who participated in it.

Each year, the Rebbe sent large sums of money to the administration of Tzach in Eretz Yisroel (through the *mazkirus*) to help cover the expenses of *mitvza Purim*.

An example of his great concern for the *mitvza* is in 5743, when the Rebbe instructed Tzach that they begin with the planning of *mitvza Purim* as early as mid-Cheshvan!

Today hundreds and thousands of Yidden are reached and influenced to observe the mitzvos of Purim, bringing light into their lives; the light of Torah and the joy of this most joyous Yom Tov. As the *megillah* attests regarding the outcome of the miracle of Purim:

“ליהודים היתה אורה ושמחה וששון ויקר.”

And might we add: כן תהי' לנו!

A Gift from the Rebbe

Rabbi Kurtzveil relates:

One year the Rebbe delivered an instruction to Rabbi Yisroel Leibov that all *bochurim* and *yungeleit* participating



RABBI YOSEF YITZCHOK GUREVITZ

in *mitvza Purim* are to take one of the *mishloach manos* packets for themselves and consider it personal *mishloach manos* from the Rebbe! Imagine, what would a Chossid not do to receive a dollar, a *kuntres*, a piece of *lekach* or anything from the Rebbe? Here we have the chance to receive *mishloach manos* from the Rebbe himself. Who could resist but go out on *mitvzoim* this Purim with the greatest *shturem*?!

The Rebbe's Shlichus

In an interview with A Chassidisher Derher, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Gurevitz, mashpia in Migdal H'aemek related:





I merited to be one of the shluchim sent by the Rebbe to Eretz Yisroel in 5736. The Rebbe sent a group of *bochurim* and *yungeleit* to Yerushalayim and a group to Tzfas. We left New York for Eretz Yisroel on 11 Shevat 5736. I was a Bochor at the time and my shlichus was in Yerushalayim.

A few weeks earlier, at the farbrengen of Shabbos parshas Miketz, when speaking about the shluchim who would be leaving soon to Eretz Yisrael, the Rebbe said: "Those shluchim who are traveling to Eretz Yisrael, I accept upon myself the responsibility for their trip - עלי ועל צווארי - [lit. upon me; on my neck]."

When Purim arrived, Tzach coordinated a massive *mitvza Purim* for the soldiers, with Chassidim branching out to army bases all over Eretz Yisroel. I was directed to an army base near Shechem. Together with several other Lubavitchers, a driver from the IDF, and another soldier, we entered an army truck and traveled the twisted, curvy roads on the way to our destination.

Suddenly, we came to a shrieking halt. After a moment of deadly silence, a

cacophony of ominous voices was heard outside the truck. The smell of fire filled the air, and black smoke began seeping in. We were sitting in the back and were oblivious as to what was going on outside. A roadblock was barring the way, and crowds of Arab youth holding stones were standing nearby. "We have no choice, we have to turn around," the driver said, his face white as chalk.

I turned to the driver and said, "We are not going back, we must continue on!"

The driver looked at me as if I fell off the moon. "We are turning around," he repeated. "I am responsible for your safety!"

But I didn't give in. "If you turn around, I'm getting off right here!"

The soldier couldn't understand. Why would I want to go on in the face of obvious danger? Why not just return another day? "I am a shliach of the Rebbe," I said. "And the Rebbe said that the responsibility for the shluchim is on his shoulders. We have no reason to be afraid."

"Do you really believe so strongly in your Rebbe?" the driver asked me.

"Yes," I replied. "We have nothing to be afraid of."

Hearing my strong reply, he finally gave in.

The driver backed up the truck, and went full speed ahead straight into the burning roadblock, with the truck almost flipping over. We then went directly through the crowd of Arabs, as they threw heavy stones on the truck. The soldier fired a warning shot in the air, but the Arabs didn't disperse. The rocks kept coming from all sides.

Finally, we got out to the open; the danger had passed. When we arrived at the army base, the commander had already heard the harrowing story and the courage we had displayed, and so he hurried to gather all the soldiers on base. In the broken *Ivrit* I had at the time, I repeated the story, and the soldiers were moved by the powerful faith we had displayed, many of them rolling up their sleeves to put on *tefillin*.

That night, when we returned to Yerushalayim, I immediately called Rabbi Binyomin Klein and told him all the details of the story, which he passed on to the Rebbe.

At 4:30 a.m. Israel time, the Rebbe's Purim farbrengen began. The Rebbe spoke two sichos followed by *niggunim* and then in the third sicha, the Rebbe said:¹³

"I would like to share something which just took place, just a short while ago. A message arrived from Eretz Yisrael about an episode which brings out that when a Jew stands strong for Yiddishkeit, and doesn't think twice about it—rather he does what he has to do—he is successful without getting hurt and without hurting others."

The Rebbe went on to relate the story at length:

"The *minhag Yisroel* is that when the chance arises to bring good tidings and encouragement to another Jew who can use it, especially those whose job it is to guard Eretz Yisroel, they seize the opportunity immediately.

"There was a request to bring *mishloach manos* and lift the spirits of those Jews who are privileged to guard Eretz Yisroel. I received a message that a group of shluchim traveled to the soldiers that are stationed in Shechem.

"Seeing that recently it has been very tumultuous in Shechem, the shluchim

were accompanied by a driver and one or two¹⁴ soldiers. When they were a short distance away from Shechem, they encountered a roadblock that the Arabs had built, to stop Jews and soldiers from entering Shechem and its surroundings. They soon realized that it was not only a block of stones sticks and earth, but many Arabs stood there as well. The driver did not want to take the risk and responsibility for the shluchim who were bringing the *mishloach manos*, especially since their *shlichus* could be done another time.

"The shluchim, however, told him simply, that since they were given a *shlichus* to bring encouragement to other Jews, and to enliven them with the joy of Purim, they should ignore the barrier of stones, sticks, and earth, and even if there are people there. Since they were going to do a good thing, nothing bad would happen. They convinced the driver and the soldiers to go on further and not to be afraid.

"The driver went further, and broke through the roadblock. The Arabs tried throwing stones, and the soldier had to fire a few shots in the air to scare them off.

"When they arrived at the army base, they had a very lively Purim gathering. They then returned to Yerushalayim unharmed and in good spirits. Now in Yerushalayim the Purim celebration is starting, since in Yerushalayim Purim is celebrated on the Fifteenth of Adar."

The Rebbe concluded with an important lesson that one need not be intimidated by the goyim around him and stand up proud with his Yiddishkeit.

This story sends us a very powerful message. When we go on *mitvzoim* and fulfil the Rebbe's directive to help another Yid—in whatever mitzvah it may be—we are the Rebbe's shluchim! We must go with courage and not allow ourselves to be disturbed by barriers that can often stand in our way. The Rebbe is protecting us and making sure that we fulfil the *shlichus* properly; and when we persevere, we merit to bring the Rebbe great *nachas ruach*, as evident in the above story.

May we merit to great success in doing the Rebbe's *mitvzoim*, thereby becoming vessels to true *nachas ruach*. And may we be *zoche* to spend Purim with the Rebbe *b'gashmiyus* and hear the Rebbe's Purim farbrengen this year! **D**



1. Igros Kodesh vol. 20 p. 176
2. Likkutei Sichos vol. 2 p. 536
3. Sichos Kodesh 5731, vol. 1 p. 509
4. Many of these transcripts are published in Yemei Temimim - 8 volumes (Kehos, Eretz Yisroel).
5. Sichos Kodesh 5733, vol. 1 pp. 365-367
6. Ibid. p. 425
7. Sichos Kodesh 5735, vol. 1 pp. 417-418
8. Sichos Kodesh 5736, vol. 1 pp. 525-526
9. Ibid p. 546
10. Ibid p. 555
11. Ibid p. 565
12. Ibid. p. 611
13. Sichos Kodesh 5736, Vol 1, pages 608-609
14. Rabbi Gurevitz pointed out, that interestingly enough on the way to the base they picked up a rabbinic army chaplain who was hitching a ride. This chaplain was also present during the entire story. However, when he related the story later to Rabbi Klein he didn't mention anything about the additional passenger. Here the Rebbe hinted to the fact that there was an additional soldier present.

Purim in the News

Throughout the years, Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky has brought the Rebbe's messages to the press for public dissemination. The Rebbe often edited the press releases, commenting and correcting as necessary.

The Rebbe launched *mitvza Purim* in 5721. Below is the text of the press release detailing the Rebbe's call.

7th of Adar, 5721

February 23, 1961

LUBAVITCHER RABBI CALLS FOR INCREASED PURIM OBSERVANCE

The Lubavitcher Rabbi, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, issued a call to Rabbis, Principals, Teachers and Parents, urging them to encourage Jewish children to observe the Purim festival by attending the reading of the Megillah on the night and morning of Purim, and sending food-gifts to friends (Shallach Monos) and giving alms to the poor (Mattonos loEvyonim) in accordance with Jewish precept.

Pointing to the widespread misconception among Jewish children in regard to these observances, the Lubavitcher Rabbi urged the Jewish spiritual leaders, educators and parents to inspire the children with the spirit and observance of the happy Purim festival...

A few weeks later, a follow-up statement was issued:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(LNS) - March 7, 1961

The pre-Purim call of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, to Rabbis, Jewish educators and parents, for revitalization of the observance of the Purim Mitzvochs - "Mishloach Monos", sending gifts of at least two edibles one to another, and "Matonos loEvyonim", giving charity to at least two poor people, with special emphasis that these Mitzvochs be taught to and practiced by Jewish youth - has received wide recognition and acclaim the world over.

As a result of the Rebbe's initiative in this matter tens of thousands of young Jewish people will observe these Mitzvochs for the first time.

It has been learned from the Lubavitcher Department of Education in the Holy Land that the text of the Rebbe's message was relayed by radio and newspapers to all communities there. Mr. Abba Eban, Minister of Education, warmly received the Rebbe's suggestion and expressed his intention to institute a special program for the observance of these Mitzvochs in all schools throughout the Holy Land.

With this project another link is added to the long chain of the Rebbe's ramified activities in the area of bringing the masses of Jewish youth closer to Torah observance.

Every Jew

Featured here are the Rebbe's edits on a press release about *mitvza Purim* in 5732.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The secretariat of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, has issued the following announcement concerning the forthcoming Festival of Purim:

"The Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, has issued his annual call to world Jewry to observe the Purim festival in full accord with its meaningful and inspirational message.

This year Purim begins Monday night, February 28, and lasts until Tuesday night, February 29.

The Rebbe called upon Jewish spiritual leaders to inform their congregants, and educators and parents to teach their students and children, about the proper observance of the festival.

The Rebbe pointed out that in addition to reading the Megillah (Book of Esther) on the evening and morning of Purim, and reciting the 'Al Hanissim' prayer, there are two special precepts incumbent upon all to observe in the morning or afternoon of Purim, namely, Mishloach Manos - sending food gifts to friends, and Mattovos LeKvyonim - donating to the needy.

These Mitvos can easily be observed. In the case of Mishloach Manos, by giving a friend two kinds of edibles such as fruit, cake, beverages, etc., while the minimal requirement in observing Mattovos LeKvyonim is to give alms to at least two needy persons.

These Mitvos are easy to observe and should not go unheeded simply because of unawareness.

The Rebbe also noted that youngsters, girls under 12 years of age and boys less than 13, should also be taught to observe the Mitvos. However, after this age, they are personally obligated to fulfill them."

2/15/72

The Rebbe deleted "world Jewry" and suggested it be replaced with "every Jew?"

The Rebbe also noted that it must be stressed that "Al hanissim" is recited in both *tefilla* and *bentching*, and commented that *mishloach manos* is given to "at least" one friend.

Hospitals and Prisons

In this press release from 5736, we see the Rebbe's emphasis on assisting hospital-bound and incarcerated Jews with the mitzvos of Purim, as well as the special lesson for Jewish women from the story of the *megillah*.

(Teshura Krinsky-Raskin 5771)

-3-

by giving at least one friend two kinds of edibles such as cake, fruit, beverages, etc., while the minimal requirement in observing Mattovos LeKvyonim is to give alms to at least two needy people.

The Rebbe emphasized that youngsters, girls below 12 years of age and boys under 13, should also be taught to actually observe the Mitvos. However, after this age, everyone is obligated to fulfill them.

In his address the Rebbe asked that Jewish people incarcerated in prisons and patients confined to hospitals be visited on Purim and be given the opportunity to observe the Mitvos. Prison regulations do not usually allow money to be given to prisoners, the Rebbe suggested that the visitor take along a phishka (charity box) in which the prisoners can deposit the money for Mattovos LeKvyonim.

In addition to re-emphasizing the necessity of further spreading among all Jews the Mitva campaign begun in recent years, that everyone set aside time every day for Torah study, that all men and boys over 13 put on Tefillin every weekday, that a Mezuzah be properly affixed to every right doorway, that every home have a charity box to facilitate frequent contributions, and that every home have sacred books, at least a Bible, Prayer Book and Book of Psalms, the Rebbe specifically mentioned the three mitvos which are particularly incumbent upon the Jewish woman to observe.

The Rebbe said that the central role of the woman in the history and miracle of Purim, which is underscored by the very name of Megillah Ester, named after a woman, even though Mordechai and others played an important role in the event, illustrates the central role of the woman in Jewish life in all times and places.

The three mitvos related for the most part to the Jewish woman are: candlelighting

-more-