



The Chassidic Rebbe and Advanced Electronic Aviation Systems

By Ze'ev Ron

I served in the Israeli Air Force for about twenty-three years, working in various key roles related to electronic aviation systems. In the late '70s, about four years after I had been drafted, the commander of Ramat David Airbase, where I was stationed, invited me to join the team tasked with integrating the new F-16 fighter jets, which were replacing our aging Skyhawk and Phantom aircraft.

At that time, a large delegation was preparing to travel to America. About one hundred families, along with forty individuals, myself among them, for a period of about eight months. The culmination of a complex logistical process that had taken more than five years, our mission was to study and train on the new aircraft. We would also be overseeing production and customization of their advanced systems for Israeli Air Force needs, conducting test flights and integration procedures, and then ferrying the planes to Israel.

I gladly accepted the offer, and after a period of specialized training, we set out in the early winter of 1979.

Initially, we were stationed at Hill Air Force Base in Utah. Many in the delegation, like myself, came from religious or traditional backgrounds, but this was a wasteland, as far as Judaism was concerned. Although we had no formal synagogue, we organized ourselves as best we could to maintain Jewish life, with communal prayers, holidays, and kosher food.

As Chanukah approached, a fellow serviceman and I reached out to some friends who had previously served with us in the Air Force, who later became observant and were studying at the central Chabad yeshivah at 770. We asked for help obtaining a Torah scroll, tefillin, and mezuzot. It wasn't easy for them to get permission from the yeshivah, but with the help of Rabbi Yehuda Leib Groner, one of the Rebbe's secretaries, they managed to secure the necessary approval to come visit us.

They arrived loaded with supplies - not only a Torah scroll, but hundreds of mezuzah scrolls and dozens of pairs of tefillin. We celebrated a beautiful, joyous Chanukah together, and since it went so well, we asked them to come back for Purim. One highlight took place on the night after Purim, when they connected a stereo system to a telephone line and arranged a live broadcast of the Rebbe's farbrengen back in New York.

After Purim, we left Utah and relocated to Fort Worth, Texas, home to the massive Lockheed Martin production facilities where the F-16s were built. We lived near the plant and learned how the aircraft and its systems were assembled, with the goal of planning the design of the Israeli iteration of the aircraft and to determine the modifications we would need to make in order to integrate them with our own Israeli-developed technologies.

Inspired by the warmth we experienced during the Chabad students' visits, two other observant colleagues and I decided to travel to New York for Passover. Although I come from a religious home, I had little prior connection to Chabad. But after this initial encounter with the chasidim, I wanted to experience their world more closely.

Once again, we contacted Rabbi Groner, who arranged accommodations for us. When we met him, he asked us if we would like to have a private audience with the Rebbe. My two friends hesitated, but I immediately said yes.

However, when I arrived at 770 at the appointed time, I was very nervous about meeting this figure I had heard so many people talking about. "Who am I to enter the Rebbe's room?" I thought to myself. I would have been satisfied with just shaking his hand.

When I entered and approached his desk, the Rebbe stood up and shook my hand. I was already amazed. He asked for my name, my parents' names, and a few more personal details, before inquiring about my work in the United States.

I responded by telling him about the Air Force team assigned to receive the new F-16 aircraft. He asked some general questions about the delegation and my role, and then began posing a series of highly specific questions that left me astonished.

As I've explained, my field of expertise was in the advanced electronic systems of combat aircraft. The planes manufactured in the United States were designed for the American military, and when the Israeli Air Force acquired them, we would use them as a platform for integrating technologies developed by Israel's military industries - enhancing their capabilities to meet Israel's unique defense needs.

All of this involved innovative systems for combat, communication, and defense - the cutting-edge technologies of the time. This allowed the Israeli Air Force to perform tasks that the public was not aware of and was not supposed to know about. The aircraft we worked on had abilities beyond what most people could even imagine. Due to security restrictions, I cannot elaborate further, as much of this remains classified to this day.

It Once Happened...

Aside from the specialized teams working in this field, it's doubtful whether there was another person in the world who had any familiarity with these systems forty years ago.

I did know that, in addition to being a great rabbi, the Rebbe had a technical background, having studied engineering and worked in that field, but I never imagined he would have knowledge relevant to aviation systems. And yet, during that audience, he asked precise, targeted questions directly related to my work, demonstrating a remarkable understanding of this highly specialized domain.

More than that, embedded within his questions were suggestions - ideas for improving and expanding the systems' capabilities - that were truly ahead of their time. He would say things like, "If you do so-and-so, you could achieve such-and-such capability." Though I was amazed by his knowledge, at the time, I assumed his comments were made out of theoretical interest or curiosity. I did not grasp their practical significance.

The conversation - conducted mostly in Hebrew, along with English technical terminology - lasted about twenty minutes, but to me it felt like three years. The Rebbe looked directly at me as we spoke, and I felt as though his gaze penetrated deeply. There were chairs in the room, but we both remained standing across the table throughout the entire conversation. At the end, the Rebbe gave me a dollar, which I have to this day, he shook my hand again, and he blessed me.

About 15 years later, when a number of operational demands emerged that required us to upgrade these systems, I suddenly recalled that meeting and the Rebbe's remarks. It became clear that many of the ideas he had suggested had real tactical implications; in fact, they formed the basis for developments that were eventually implemented.

It is often said that anyone involved in designing such complex systems must think "outside the box." It is clear to me that the Rebbe excelled in that regard, along with possessing extraordinary long-term vision.

I left the room in a state of shock. And in retrospect, after the ideas suggested by the Rebbe have been implemented in practice, I realize just how significant his contribution to Israel's security was.

Reprinted from Here's My Story, www.myencounterblog.com.

Editor's Note: A long-time veteran of the Israeli Air Force, Mr. Ze'ev Ron continued to work with computers after concluding his service. He was interviewed in October 2013.



Shabbat Times – Parshat Nitzavim - Vayelech

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat	Motzei Shabbat ר"ת
Jerusalem	6:24	7:35	8:15
Tel Aviv	6:39	7:38	8:13
Haifa	6:31	7:38	8:15
Be'er Sheva	6:41	7:37	8:15

The Older Student and the Tzaddik

By Rav Gamliel Rabinowitz

A number of years ago, there was a story circulating in Jerusalem about an older Bachur (student), who approached one of the Tzadikim (righteous) of the generation who had a reputation of being a Mekubal (Kabbalist), who delved in the secrets of the Torah. The young man requested of the Tzadik that he bless him to find a proper Shidduch (match).

However, the Tzadik tried to evade him. When the young man saw that he was reluctant to give him a blessing, he decided to insist on it, and he would not budge from his place. After a short while, the Tzadik said to him, "I am not able to do anything for you, because according to your Mazel (luck), there is no Shidduch for you at all. I'm sorry."

The student left there, confused and upset, and the next morning he returned to the Tzadik again to speak with him. The Tzadik took one look at his face and said, "Tell me the truth. What did you do last night?"

The young man responded, "Yesterday, when the Rabbi told me that there was no possible Shidduch for me, I went to Shul (synagogue) and stood next to the Aron HaKodesh (Holy Ark) and I cried bitterly all night long, and now I have returned."

The Rabbi told him, "You should know that you have been saved in an extraordinary way! The Torah teaches us that if someone kills accidentally, he must go live in an Ir Miklat (a city of refuge), 'until the death of the Kohein Gadol (the High

Priest)', and the Mishnah (Makkot 2:6) relates that 'the mothers of the Kohanim would supply these people with food and clothing, so that they should not pray for their sons to die'.

"Everybody asks a question on this. Is it because of the food and drinks that the mothers supplied, that these people will stop Davening? They are in jail in that city! They can never leave! However, the answer to this is that even if they continue to pray, their prayers will not come from the depths of their hearts. They still think about the food and clothing. When you spent the entire night crying and Davening, your prayers came from a completely broken heart, and those cries and prayers were heard and answered. I can now give you a blessing for a Shidduch, and you will indeed get married very soon!"

Within just a short while, this young man became a groom and was married soon after! Rav Gamliel explains that everyone has needs and issues that they are facing, and the main thing that we must realize is that a person needs to pray. This doesn't mean simply 'lip service', rather it is true prayer which comes from the depths of the heart. This rises and splits the sky until it reaches the Kisei HaKavod (Holy Throne)! This can be done for any matter that one needs help with, both physical and spiritual as well. Prayer that emits from the depths of the heart is guaranteed to not come back empty!

With that, we wish that all your prayers get answered and are blessed for an amazing year ahead.

Reprinted from an 5785 email of Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg's Torah U'Tefilah.



נצבים - וידר

Please note:

This will be the last issue until after the Chagim.
The Jewish Weekly wishes
שנה טובה ומתוקה א תו

May you and your family
be blessed with a happy,
healthy, safe, sweet,
awesome and amazing
New Year



Here's a question for you.

What is not over the heavens, not over the seas but in our mouths and our hearts to do?

This is how Parshat Nitzavim describes the mitzvah of תשובה, of penitence. It is so apt that we read this portion on the Shabbat immediately preceding our new year, Rosh Hashanah.

Rav Meir Twersky asks: Why in our mouths and in our hearts? Why these particular parts of the human form? He explains as follows. There are two great barriers to teshuva.

First of all, I might say that I haven't done anything wrong; that I'm perfect and everything is fine with me. Alternatively, I might say, yes I've done something wrong but other people are to blame so Hashem will forgive me. I'm alright because there are extenuating circumstances. Many of us explain away our errors in this fashion. So in order to correct that, 'בפיך' – we have to express 'with our mouth' what we have done wrong. We need to acknowledge with וידוי, with our confession, that actually there's a lot that needs repairing.

Then there is the second hurdle. Perhaps we acknowledge that we've done wrong. However, we feel that we can't correct the situation. Perhaps we're already too old, or maybe the sin is too great and we feel that Hashem is not going to forgive us, or we've been repeating it so often, or perhaps other people aren't available in order to assist us. That's why the Torah says 'בפיך ובלבבך' – 'in our mouth and in our heart'. Within our hearts we need to have the right feeling, the right recognition of our errors in order to guarantee that we will change our ways for the better.

Just before the Torah tells us that it is with our mouths and our hearts to perform we are told 'כי קרוב אליך הדבר' – this matter is close to you'.

It is achievable.

Let us not shirk our responsibility and let's guarantee that this year we will utilize the forthcoming High Holy Days to correct everything that is wrong and to guarantee that we will receive the full blessing of Hashem in the following year.

So let's pray together with all our hearts, for our soldiers and healthcare professionals, and Chevra Kadisha members worldwide, and for those who need healing, shidduchim, children and parnassah and may we be blessed to have the most awesome, gorgeous, beautiful, peaceful, healthy, amazing, relaxed, spiritual, loving and sweet Shabbat.

Yossi

The Jewish Weekly's PARSHA FACTS

Parshat Nitzavim
NUMBER OF MITZVOT: 0
MITZVOT ASEH: 0
MITZVOT LO TAASEH: 0
NUMBER OF PESUKIM: 40
NUMBER OF WORDS: 657
NUMBER OF LETTERS: 2575

Parshat Vayelech
NUMBER OF MITZVOT: 2
MITZVOT ASEH: 2
MITZVOT LO TAASEH: 0
NUMBER OF PESUKIM: 30
NUMBER OF WORDS: 553
NUMBER OF LETTERS: 2123

HAFTORA:
Yeshayahu 61:10 - 63:9 (שש ואיש) (this is the last of the seven Haftorot, that precede Rosh Hashanah).

This week we study Chapter 5 and 6 of Pirkei Avot.

Motzei Shabbat, after midnight, or in the early hours of the morning, Ashkenazim begin the recitation of Selichot.

Rosh Hashanah is Shabbat and Sunday, Sept. 12 & 13.