

# The History of “The Rebbe’s Mivtzoim Brigade”

By Project Likkutei Sichos staff

Throughout the summer of 5734 (1974), and the months that followed, bochurim in 770 began going on *mivtzoim* every single day. During the preceding years, the Rebbe had launched the *mivtzoim* of Tefillin, Tzedaka, Mezuzah, Torah, and Shabbos candles, and the young and bold soldiers of the Rebbe carried out their new orders with enthusiasm and creativity. This was the period when the Mitzvah Tank was born; a brand new concept the world had never seen before. The Rebbe was very pleased with this development, saying that “although it would seem that the term “tank” is merely a lighthearted name, in truth it is appropriate. For a military tank is a form of weaponry that doesn’t only defend; it also attacks and conquers... So too is it with the mitzvah tank: it conquers and transforms... even ‘intentional transgressions into merits’” (12 Tammuz 5734).

Another strong expression of approval was heard from the Rebbe on Yud Shvat, 5735: “...What concerns me, is that all those who have participated in the *mivtzoim*, and have done so explicitly as my *shluchim*; not only with regard to the actual campaign, but also as far as the method — to travel by ‘tanks’ and raise a ruckus ‘in the hustle and bustle of Rome’ to cause people there to hear (and ‘derher’) ‘the word of Hashem — *Halacha*,’ should continue doing so in the future and in ever increasing measure. It is clear that they will succeed in anything connected with the *mivtzoim*, since the matter at hand is spreading the wellsprings outward, and spreading Torah and *mitzvos* outward... **It is as if I am going together with each one of those who go out on *mivtzoim* with the tanks, and the whole ‘*shturem!*’**”

However, as with every good and holy thing, there was some opposition to this novel approach. In the winter of 5735 (1975), someone began a public campaign to besmirch the approach of Lubavitch, going so far as to publish an article saying “there is a terror brigade in the Jewish community.” The Rebbe responded to this attack at the farbrengen of *Shabbos parshas Beshalach*, saying “There is indeed a brigade in Lubavitch; but it is a brigade of *mitvoim* under my direction, and I say this with full transparency and pride, and I send them out to influence their fellow Jews positively.

A few weeks later, on Rosh Chodesh Adar, a surprise farbrengen was held. The Rebbe said a *maamer*, followed by a *sicha* where the Rebbe explained that *mitvoim* is not “exclusive” to Lubavitch; this is the Torah obligation of every single Jew! During that *sicha*, the Rebbe said the following: “We live in a world of ‘the hustle and bustle of Rome,’ which requires that there be a ‘hustle and bustle’ of holiness, for ‘Hashem created one corresponding to the other.’ On the contrary: the only reason that the very notion of ‘hustle and bustle’ exists is for the purposes of holiness, {in the example of} ‘a great sound that did not cease;’ it’s only that the ‘other side’ comes and claims its fair share, and that is granted, in order to provide for freedom of choice.”

Finally, on *Shabbos parshas Tetzave*, the Rebbe said the *sicha* we have before us, forever branding *mitvoim* and those who participate in them with the *breitkeit*, pride and joy that has become synonymous with Lubavitch. *Lechatchila Arriber!*

