

# l'Chaim



By Rabbi Shalom Avtzon

Some months after the passing of the Alter Rebbe (Rabbi Shneur Zalman, founder of Chabad Chasidism), the Jewish community in Haditch received a letter from the Imperial Government. The Jewish community was informed that the cemetery that they were using was located on land that belonged to the Imperial Government. Since they had converted it into a cemetery without permission, all the graves there had to be removed to another location.

The Jewish community was shocked and distressed. It was disrespectful to move one from his eternal rest. They replied that they were sorry for any misunderstanding; however, they used the plot as a cemetery with permission of the local authorities. As evidence, they sent a copy of the permits from the local jurisdiction where it stated clearly that the provincial government bequeathed that parcel of land to the Jewish community of Haditch for this specific purpose.

The Imperial Government replied, "Yes, we see that the provincial government gave you permission, but they mistakenly permitted you to use land that is not theirs. Their parcel is a short distance away and you can reinter your loved ones there. However, they must be removed from the place where they are now buried."

The provincial government acknowledged that it was their mistake and apologized. They then offered to swap a larger parcel of land to the Imperial Government in order not to violate the dignity and sanctity of the cemetery. However, it was to no avail. The government was firm in its decision: All graves must be removed! However, out of their understanding that it wasn't done intentionally they will extend the time frame in which this has to be done.

The Mittlerer Rebbe, Rabbi Dovber - son and successor of the Alter Rebbe, was informed of the situation, and he was asked what does he prefer to do? Does he want to send someone to move his father or should the community do it?

The Mittlerer Rebbe heard that one of his father's former Chasidim who was no longer religious was an important official in the Imperial office that has the final say on this matter. So he decided to send a Chasid to beg that person to leave the Jewish cemetery as is, and accept the provincial government's offer of swapping parcels of land.

The chasid, Reb Moshe Vilenker, had been a friend of this official when he had studied with the Alter Rebbe. So he was chosen to discuss and plead with him about this important matter.

Reb Moshe immediately travelled to Petersburg and went to visit the official. Seeing Reb Moshe, he immediately recognized him and granted him an audience. However, as soon as Reb Moshe entered his office he said, "I realize you came to request something of me. But that is not the ways of chasidim. First you will come to my house this evening, where we will have a farbrengen (Chasidic gathering). After that, you can present your request."

Saying that, he wrote down his home address and told Reb Moshe that he is looking forward to meeting him at the designated time.

Reb Moshe arrived at the designated time, hoping that he will be successful in his special mission. They sat down at the table, sang the Alter Rebbe's melodies, and reminisced about their time with the Rebbe. The officer then said, "You notice that I have a beautiful mansion; I am wealthy and have whatever I desire. But you should know the truth is I don't really enjoy it, not even for a moment."

"Yes it sounds strange, but let me tell you why. Even when I was a student by the Rebbe, I had my doubts about G-d, and that is what ultimately caused me to leave and eventually become what I became. However, one time, without explaining his reasons, the Rebbe instructed me to go visit the tzaddik, Reb Aharon Karliner.

"Reb Aharon's custom was that he didn't have private audiences with people, as the Rebbe did. But whoever came to him would sit in the study hall, say Psalms or study and wait until Reb Aharon gave him an answer. After I was sitting for some time, Reb Aharon entered the study hall from his room that was adjoining it, and said, "Young man, Young man, maybe after all there is a G-d."

"When he said this, no one in the room took it as if he answered his question and everyone remained in their place. A few minutes later, he came into the room for a second time and repeated the exact same words. When Reb Aharon repeated himself a third time, I realized he was talking to me and informing me, that notwithstanding my questions and doubts, there can still be a Creator.

"So every time I sit down to enjoy something that is forbidden by the Torah, those words come back and haunt me. But I don't have the strength and will power to give up everything I have."

Some hours later, he said, "Now that we farbrenged, please tell me what is the reason for your coming to visit me?"

When Reb Moshe informed him of the dilemma and showed him the legal papers, he immediately replied, "Only for the Rebbe's sake will I agree to accept the offer of the provincial government."

(The Alter Rebbe passed away in Piene. Chasidim suggest that the reason the Alter Rebbe expressed a desire to be interred in Haditch was that he wanted to help all the Jews buried in Haditch that their eternal rest not be disturbed. And that was accomplished only because he too was there. So he did a favor for other Jews even after his passing.)

Rabbi Avtzon is a veteran educator and the author of numerous books on the Chabad Rebbes and their Chasidim. He is available to speak in your community and can be contacted at avtzonbooks@gmail.com

## THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

on the weekly Torah portion

### These are the names of the Children of Israel coming into Egypt (Ex. 1:1)

The verse says "coming," in the present tense, rather than "who came," in the past tense. For the duration of the 210-year exile in Egypt, the Jews felt as if they had just arrived in that land. They never adopted Egyptian ways and always considered their sojourn temporary. (Ohel Yehoshua)

### And she saw the child, and behold it was a weeping boy (Ex. 2:6)

We can learn (and emulate) three things from a child: He is always happy, he is always occupied and never sits idle, and when he wants something, he cries. (Reb Zussia of Annapoli)

### And Moses was shepherding the flock of Jethro (Ex. 3:1)

A young goat once ran away from the rest of the flock. Moses was tending in the desert. Moses followed the animal into a thicket that hid a pool of fresh water. Seeing the goat drinking he exclaimed, "I didn't realize that you were thirsty. You must be so tired now." After the animal had quenched its thirst, Moses tenderly picked it up and carried it back to the rest of the flock. When G-d saw Moses's act of kindness toward his father-in-law's goat, He decreed that Moses was equally worthy of tending G-d's own flock--the Jewish People. (Midrash Rabba)

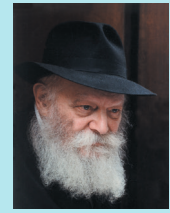
### For I am heavy of speech, and heavy of tongue (Ex. 4:10)

The fact that Moses had difficulty speaking shows that his leadership was accepted solely because he carried G-d's message, and not because he was a skillful orator and master of rhetoric. (Drashot Rabbenu Nissim)



### 4:25 Candle Lighting Time

NY Metro Area  
24 Tevet/ Jan 5  
Torah Portion Shemot  
Blessing of the new month of Shevat  
Shabbat ends 5:28 pm



## LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe on the Torah portion

"These are the names of the Children of Israel who came to Egypt," begins this week's Torah portion, Shemot. The Midrash explains that the names of the Twelve Tribes which follow, enumerated when they made their descent into the land of Egypt, are mentioned in connection to the Jewish people's eventual redemption from that land.

We see that the narrative which follows tells of the beginning of the Jews' servitude, seemingly the direct opposite of their liberation and redemption. What is the meaning of this apparent contradiction?

Secondly, another opinion in the Midrash states that the names of the Twelve Tribes are mentioned to emphasize that they descended into Egypt with the names Reuven, Shimon... and ascended after the redemption with these very same names. The emphasis is on the merit of the Jewish people, that throughout the Egyptian exile, they did not change their names.

The implication of both these passages is that one must understand the descent into Egypt as a phase in the redemption of the Jewish people, and indeed, as connected with the ultimate redemption which will take place with the coming of Moshiach. In that context, the obligation to recall--and relive--the exodus from Egypt every day serves as a catalyst to bring about Moshiach's arrival.

The Jews' redemption from Egypt, the first of their four exiles, "is a great fundamental principle...of our Torah and faith," according to our Sages. That first redemption represents the opening of the potential for all future redemptions. The freedom which was granted at that time continues at all times.

In a spiritual sense, the exodus from Egypt represents the liberation of the G-dly soul from the limitations of the body, and in general, of the triumph of the spirit over the limitations inherent in the material world. Our obligation to remember the Exodus every day therefore consists of the following:

Every day, each of us must strive to go beyond his own personal boundaries and limitations;

Our obligation to recall the Exodus at night refers to carrying out our service of G-d during the long "night" of our exile; and We will also be obligated to recall the exodus from Egypt after Moshiach comes, even though the final redemption will far surpass the one which took place in Egypt. The potential for evil will be totally eradicated, and the Jewish people will never again be exiled.

In fact, the entire period of time from the Egyptian Exodus until the Future Redemption is described as "the days of your exodus from Egypt," for the exodus which began in Egypt will not be complete until the ultimate redemption is realized.

In practical terms, one must therefore anticipate the redemption and experience a foretaste of it in our daily lives by bringing a consciousness of Moshiach into all our actions, for doing so will act as a catalyst and hasten the actual coming of the redemption.

Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

## The Pilot & The Passengers, the Charge & the Silence

By Rabbi Mendel Rubin

A few months ago, parents in Denver were called that their son was in a major accident, was brought to Albany Medical Center and at the time it was unknown if he would make it. Hearing this news they rushed to the Denver Airport and tried to book the first flight they could to Albany. Southwest does have direct flights from Denver to Albany, they booked the flight, rushed through security, made their way to the gate – but just missed the flight. It took off moments before they got to the gate.

They explored their options, they looked at the soonest flights available, perhaps they could fly elsewhere and make connecting flights, get a light to New York and Boston and drive 3 hours to Albany... they didn't know how much time they had and they wanted to make it to be with their son.

Just then someone came out of Southwest Operations and said they should wait at the gate – the plane is coming back!

The couple couldn't believe it. A plane turning back after take-off!? But they were anxious, how would all the passengers feel about coming back to pick up two passengers? The delay, the hassle, they were awkward about it. But the stewardess walked them onto the returned plane, found them their seats, there was zero fuss, and the flight took off again for Albany.

The father couldn't help but ask the person in the seat next to him: "What did they tell you? How did they explain why the plane was turning back to Denver?"

Their fellow passenger told them: The pilot got on the mic and said what you were going through. He said if it were my son I'd want the plane to go back. But I have to ask

the passengers, should we turn back to pick them up? And the whole plane shouted as one: "Go Back!"

Thankfully their son took an incredible turn for the better and we're happy to share he was discharged after about a week of care and was able to go home with them!

Two takeaways from the story (aside for the obvious testament of empathy by a full plane of travelers...)

We're all pilots of our own destiny. We're charting our course through the ups and downs, takeoffs and landings, across the vast expanse, and all the ports of call in our lives.

But we're not flying solo. This pilot was able to do what he did because he had the backing and encouraging support of family and community.

We're not alone. We each do our own thing but we're better when we're connected to the community, when we have others along for the ride, backing us up.

It's not a small thing that the plane was quiet when they boarded. Everyone somehow understood that it was best that no fuss be made, no clapping, no cheers. Just quiet. To paraphrase the Talmud, sometimes we're credited for what we say (as in the "Go Back!") and sometimes for what we don't say. Our experience is shaped by what we choose to do, and also by what we choose not to do. Both things.

This story was related by Rabbi Mendy and Devorah Leah Mathless who run the University Heights Chabad adjacent to Albany Medical Center and Bikur Cholim services to patients and families at this major regional hospital and trauma center. Over this couple's Albany stay, the Mathlesses helped with Kosher food and support during that very trying time.

לעילוי נשמת  
מרת מרים רייזע שושנה בת ר' מנחם מענדל ע"ה  
Dedicated in memory of  
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On the occasion of her Yahrzeit  
By her family



# SLICE OF LIFE

## Jewish Continuity! A Visit to Auschwitz With Three Generations of Descendants



Rabbi Nissan Mangel was born in Košice, Slovakia. In 1944, together with his father, mother and elder sister, young Nissen Mangel had been caught by the Nazis, arrested and deported from Bratislava.

He was first sent to the Sereď labor camp near Bratislava, then on to Auschwitz, where he was selected as one of the subjects of Dr. Josef Mengele's ym"sh horrific human experiments. He was sent on to Birkenau, Mauthausen, Melk and Gunskirchen, from which he was liberated in 1945 after surviving a forced death march as the Nazis fled the oncoming Allied armies.

Nearly 80 years later, the boy who survived Auschwitz returned there to celebrate his 90th birthday with his wife, children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, nearly 100 people in all. The children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren came together from Ohio, Florida, Colorado, New Jersey, Georgia, New York, Montreal, S. Paulo, and Israel.

Their first stop was the city of Łańcut – Lantzut in Yiddish – a city that once served as an important center for Chassidic life. The next stop was Lizensk, home of the great Tzadik, Reb Elimelech, author of the Noam Elimelech, and the site of his kever. For Rabbi Mangel, a direct descendant of Reb Elimelech, and for the entire Mangel

family, the visit was a reach back to their roots, generations of Chassidim over many generations. A return to Krakow followed, where a visit to the historic Jewish Quarter and famous Rema Synagogue.

On Thursday came the highlight of the trip with the much-anticipated visit to Auschwitz. Upon arrival, the whole family posed for a photo on the tracks through which Rabbi Nissen Mengel and his family entered Auschwitz.

While taking the photo, the family members sang the song that Rabbi Mengel composed, with the words 'Hodu LaHashem' - Thank God, expressing their praise to the Creator for bringing them to this moment.

He recently received a call from the Reagan Library in California, asking for a copy of the photo. Starting today, this photo will be displayed in the library!

Walking through the camp, Rabbi Mangel pointed to various buildings, the gas chambers, the crematoria, the sleeping pavilions, and other places where countless Jews suffered and were killed. He showed his great-grandchildren the barracks where he slept and told his family his memories of his time in this hell.

But along with the painful stories, the family members also heard about the miracles and wonders that happened to their father amid the German hell.

Everyone knows the great miracle of Avraham Avino from the fiery furnace in ur Kasdim. I received the grace of heaven. I was also saved from the fiery furnace. One such miracle was the miracle during an encounter with the 'Angel of Death of Auschwitz', Dr. Manglele.

His first encounter with the 'Angel of Death' was right at the entrance to Auschwitz, where Dr. Mengele who made the selection was already waiting for them. He was still smoking a cigar for pleasure and decided who would be sent to life and who to death.

I was ten years old, small, and skinny, but I told him I was 17 years old. Manglele laughed devilishly and said: 'I know you are not 17 years old, but go with your father.' That's how I continued with my father towards

those who were sent to labor camps, and not towards the crematoria.

At that site where Dr. Josef Mengele selected Nissen Mangel out of the line to the gas chambers, the patriarch pointed and recited the prayer, "She'asah li nes b'makom hazeh," that God performed a miracle for me right here.

The trip felt so much more potent with the current situation in Israel, family members said. Once again, there arise those that seek to destroy the Jewish people, but we know that Hashem will save us.

Rabbi Mangel related, it is stated in the Midrash Rabbah that Hadrianus asked Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chanania From where will the Holy One, blessed be He, revive man in the future to come? That is to say: if G-d will just create new people, then these are not the same people who died, and from the expression 'resurrection of the dead' it means that the dead themselves - will live.

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chanania said to him: from the Luz bone. Meaning that there is a small bone in the spinal cord, which remains always present, from which God will create the body.

He said to him: How do you know? Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chanania said: Bring it to me, and I will show you - he ground it, and it did not grind, burned in fire and did not burn, put in water and did not dissolve, put on the anvil and began to hit it with a hammer, the anvil split and the hammer split and nothing was missing.

I was in the extermination camps, in Auschwitz and more, where millions of Jews were burned. There were days when thousands of Jews were burned there! Even this terrible fire could not destroy the Luz bone. A Jew who was forced by the Nazis to take care of the crematoria, told me that in the ashes there was always a small bone that was not burned!

At the time, when he told me about it, I didn't understand the meaning of things. But after a few years, when I studied the aforementioned midrash, I realized that it was actually the Luz Bone, from which these millions of saints will rise to life.

## The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

Excerpts From a Letter Written in 1973

Greeting and Blessing:

I am in receipt of your letter. Since it is customary to remember one in prayer by one's full Hebrew name and the mother's Hebrew name, would you please let me know these names when you write to me next time.

With regard to the subject matter of your letter, specifically in reference to your success in defending your thesis, it is not clear why this has left you with a bitter taste, as you indicate. Surely you know that this is the usual thing for a thesis to be criticized; indeed, this is the purpose of every defense. It is not unusual, also, that precisely when the thesis has strong supporters, it will also have strong critics. Finally, surely it should be a source of satisfaction to you that despite the attacks on the thesis, you were able to overcome and successfully defend your work.

With reference to your general question as to whether you have chosen the right course, etc., I trust that you know the basic principle of our Sages, of blessed memory, that the essential thing is the deed (Avot 1:17), that is to say the practical result. Similarly, in your case, whether you have taken the right course or not will depend upon how you utilize your degree; if you do so in the direction of the good and the holy, and use it to help illuminate your environment – it will prove that it was the right course.

On the other hand, if your qualifications and capacities will not be utilized, as above, or utilized in the opposite direction, the inevitable conclusion, with all due respect, will have to be that it was not the right course. For a person must not be a passive observer in his environment and society, not to mention a negative factor; he has a duty to his society to be a positive and active agent to improve his environment. And everyone has the capacity to do so, at least

to some degree.

If the above is true of every human being, there is an additional and very essential aspect in your case, as a Jew. Consider: the Jewish people, hence every member of it, has always found itself in the unique situation of being a small minority among the nations, most of whom were not friendly, and very often quite hostile. In these unfavorable circumstances, Jewish survival has always been a problem and a challenge. Consequently, this situation imposes a special and sacred duty on every Jew, man or woman, to do the maximum to strengthen and ensure Jewish survival. However, a Jew should not view this duty simply as an inevitable obligation, but should see in it his privileged divine mission in this world, through which the Jew attains fulfillment.

Moreover, this is not something which can be left to the Jew's choice, for his choice lies only in whether he desires, or does not desire, to fulfill his duty; but that this is his sacred duty is not of his choosing, since he was born a Jew. And being born a Jew, he arrives in this world with a rich heritage, which equips him with special capacities, special privileges, and special obligations. There is no point in his arguing that he had not been consulted, etc., for whether this argument is valid or not, it does not change the reality, in the same way as the reality of every man in that inasmuch as one receives from society a variety of positive benefits, one is obligated to the society to compensate it with his best efforts. To argue that these obligations have been imposed on him without his prior consent, etc., cannot serve as an excuse to shirk these responsibilities.

I am impelled to add yet another essential point. The survival of our Jewish people, and the impact that this matter has upon every Jewish individual, is not something that has as yet to be investigated and experimented with. The Jewish people is one of the oldest in the world, and in its long history as a nation it has gone through various conditions and circumstances, mostly very unfavorable, as mentioned above. If one wishes to know the secret of Jewish survival under circumstances that have obliterated larger and stronger nations, one has but to apply the same scientific method as in other cases.

This letter will Continue in the next issue

## MOSHIACH MATTERS

Before Jacob passed away, he said to his sons: "Gather together and I shall tell you that which shall occur to you in the end of days." According to the Aggada, Jacob

said, "Though it is not known when the Day of Judgment will be, I do tell you that the hour you gather and assemble together you shall be redeemed." The unity of Israel, all being as one, is the preparation and condition for the ultimate redemption.

(Rabbi J.I. Schochet in Mashiach.)

## A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

There are many similarities between Rabbi Moses Maimonides (Rambam) whose yartzeit is, 20 Tevet (this year January 1) and Rabbi Shneur Zalman, the founder of Chabad Chassidism, whose yartzeit is 24 Tevet (This year Friday, January 5).

The Rebbe spoke about the connection between the two in a talk on Shabbat, 24 Tevet, 1982.

He explained, "The connection between Rabbi Shneur Zalman and the Rambam is expressed in many stories and in many ways.

"Each one was a leader of his generation, each one was a Jewish legal authority of his generation. And both continue to guide the generations that followed.

"There is also a unique and obvious similarity: When one speaks of Maimonides, one mentions "Rambam" - which while being an acronym for his name is actually how his Jewish legal work the Mishne Torah is known. One also mentions "The Guide for the Perplexed," his book on the Jewish world-outlook, matters of the heart, and prayer: Similarly, when speaking of Rabbi Shneur Zalman, for what was he most known? For his Shulchan Aruch HaRav (Code of Jewish Law) and his philosophical work Tanya.

"Another similarity is that Maimonides encountered tremendous opposition and persecution, more so than even Rabbi Shneur Zalman. And yet, those who actually took the time to explore and investigate Maimonides' teachings eventually became his staunchest supporters and disciples. And so, too, with Rabbi Shneur Zalman.

"The lesson for us is not to be discouraged when we are doing the right thing. Even if there are detractors or opposition, if and when they will properly investigate the reason for their opposition, they will find that there is nothing to oppose and ultimately they will become supporters.

Shmuel Beiman

## L'ZICHRON CHAYA I MUSHKA לזכרון חיה'י מושקא

The name of our publication has special meaning. It stands for the name of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson (obm), wife of the Rebbe.



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## \$25 Million Jewish Education Campus in Buenos Aires Marks Milestone



Oholei Chinuch school to educate 800 future leaders a year Marking a milestone in Jewish education for their nation late last month, Argentina's 250,000-strong Jewish community opened the Chabad-Lubavitch Oholei Chinuch primary school for boys. The school is the first stage of a \$25 million educational campus, blending modern technology and design with timeless Jewish tradition.

Architect Flavio Janches told the gathering of local and national dignitaries, that the school was crafted with attention to space, light and color and was designed to foster the holistic growth of students immersed in teachings of Chassidic principles—particularly joy, faith in G-d, a positive, proactive outlook and compassion for all.

Rabbi Tzvi Grunblatt, regional director of Chabad-Lubavitch of Argentina, said that "to be here is a miracle, and above all, we are here because we have a guiding light, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, who shows us that the possibilities are always there, we just have to look and find them."

## All Together

SHOSHANA means "rose." In Song of Songs, the verse "Like a rose among thorns" alludes to the Jewish people amongst the nations. The Midrash (Bereishit Rabbah) refers to our matriarch Rebecca as a "rose amongst thorns" having grown up in the home of her wicked father and brother. The Yiddish version of the name is Raizel.

SHEMAYA is from the Aramaic, meaning "to hear." Shemaya was a prophet during the times of King Rehoboam (I Kings 12:22). Shemaya was also the name of the President of the Sanhedrin (Great Court) during the first century, b.c.e. He said, "Love work; abhor taking high office; and do not seek intimacy with the ruling power." (Avot 1:10)