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Magazine Bechatzrot Hachaim

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Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

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וכל המרבה לספר
ביציאת מצרים
הרי זה משובח



*A Word
from the Editors*

Pesach, the Festival of Freedom and Redemption, has arrived.

On the Seder night, we are commanded to engage in the issue of the Exodus and faith, with special mitzvot related to these topics.

Actually, why is this day necessary? After all, we mention the Exodus three times a day in so many places during our prayer, during Kiddush on Shabbat, and at other countless opportunities.

Faith? Is faith not the foundation and basis of every Jew's life, no matter what level he is on?

Why do we devote to these two seemingly "ordinary" topics in our lives, an additional evening?

The answer is that the main issue on the Seder Night is the issue of "*vehigadeta l'vincha - And you shall tell your son.*" It is the involvement together with our children, sharing with them the experience of the Exodus, with their cooperation, and instilling the fundamentals of faith in the next generation. This is exactly the same way that we received the foundations from the previous generation, generation after generation – until our ancestors who personally experienced the difficult slavery and the Exodus from Egypt, witnessing with their own eyes the Splitting of the Sea and the tremendous miracles involved in the awesome event, and individually receiving the holy Torah from Hashem at Mount Sinai.

This is the secret to the eternal existence of the Jewish people!

On this night, the child sees his father connect to – and continue connecting, from the link before him – to the next link in the chain of the generations, observing the mitzvot and living faith, experiencing the event of the Exodus, in fulfillment of, "In every generation a man is bound to regard himself as though he personally had gone forth from Egypt."

In this way, and only in this way, we can be certain with confidence that our children after us will continue the chain, and link their children after them. They will maintain the eternity of the Jewish nation throughout the generations.

In this publication "Bechatzrot Hachaim" we present to the readers words of inspiration delivered by Moreinu v'Rabbeinu the tzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlit"a, on the topics of relating the story of the Exodus and educating our children, unity and love of Torah.

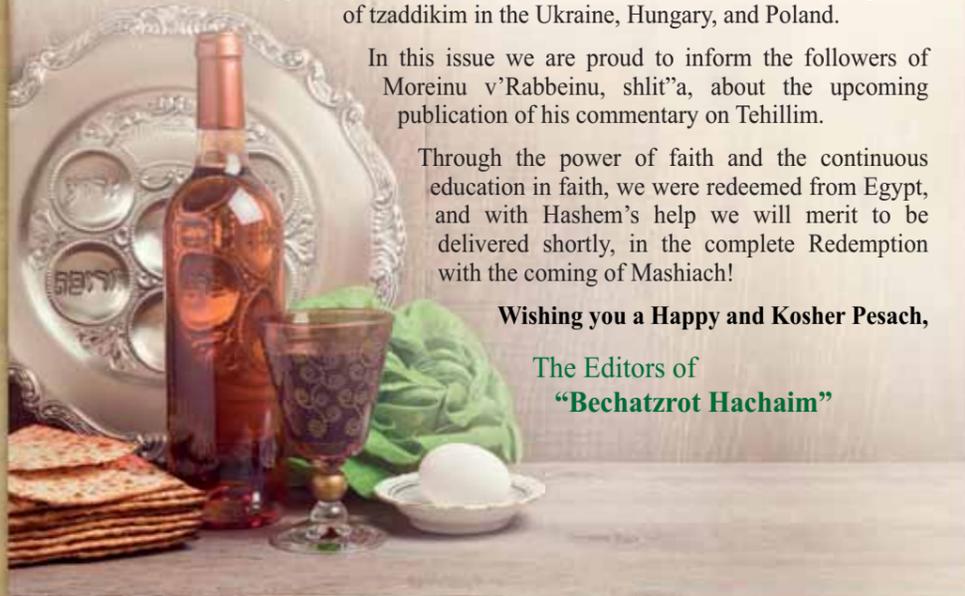
In order to remain connected to our exalted roots, we bring in this issue customs and stories of our great Torah Sages during Pesach and the Seder Night, as well as a description of the journey of Salvation of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu shlit"a, at the graves of tzaddikim in the Ukraine, Hungary, and Poland.

In this issue we are proud to inform the followers of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu, shlit"a, about the upcoming publication of his commentary on Tehillim.

Through the power of faith and the continuous education in faith, we were redeemed from Egypt, and with Hashem's help we will merit to be delivered shortly, in the complete Redemption with the coming of Mashiach!

Wishing you a Happy and Kosher Pesach,

**The Editors of
"Bechatzrot Hachaim"**



Those interested in receiving the bulletin and pamphlet by email can order it at the following address: p@hpinto.org.il

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*"Whoever relates at
length the events of the
Exodus is praiseworthy"*

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PESACH IS THE FESTIVAL OF UNITY

WORDS OF INSPIRATION

Delivered by the Gaon and Tzaddik
Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

“Draw forth or buy for yourselves sheep for your families and slaughter the Passover sacrifice”.

(Shemot 12:21)

The Zohar relates (*Parashat Bo* 40b) that on the *Leil HaSeder* Hashem sends his angels to see His children how they are engaged in honoring Hashem and glorifying Him. The angels descend and see how Bnei Yisrael are sitting in large family gatherings in their homes relating the praise of Hashem and glorifying Him for the miracles that He performed for them with great elation and joy. Then the angels return and tell Hashem in uninhibited admiration “Praiseworthy is the people for whom this is so, praiseworthy is the people whose G-d is Hashem. Praiseworthy is the King that His children glorify Him in this way.”

We need to clarify in what way is this Festival unique in that the angels express admiration for Bnei Yisrael more than any other Festival? And why specifically on this

Festival do we merit a visit from the angels?

It seems to be that the uniqueness of the Festival of Pesach is because of the tremendous unity which presides among Bnei Yisrael. It is this quality that the angels admire greatly; how human beings have the courage and ability to be in unity, which is something that that would seem to be relevant only to angels, since they do not possess a Yetzer Hara. Thus they return and relate the praises and the virtues of Bnei Yisrael.

Their unity is reflected, first of all, by bringing the Passover sacrifice that is only eaten in a large gathering and therefore many families join together to eat it, as it is stated (*Shemot* 12:21), “Buy for yourselves sheep for your families,” and also (*ibid.* 12:3), “Let each one take a lamb for each parental home, a lamb for each household.”

I heard that the Admor Rabbi Yekutiel Yehudah of Sanz, zya”a, wrote that the matzah’s round shape suggests unity. This is because a circle has no edge and all the sides are

equal. This is symbolic of Bnei Yisrael; they are all equal in their uniqueness. There is no individual who tries to dominate and rule over the others, because there is unity and peace among them.

We were also commanded on this Festival to give “*Kimcha d’Pischa*” which obligates each person to assist his fellow and support him to the best of his means. We have to make sure that each Jew has everything needed in order to celebrate the Festival of Pesach correctly.

It is customary to invite guests to the *Leil HaSeder*. Chazal say (*Pesachim* 99b), “Even the poorest man in Israel must not eat [on the night of Passover] until he reclines.” And on this night we all recline together.

These wonderful customs promote unity and add friendship and peace among each other. Therefore specifically on this night we sit gathered together and united as one man with one soul, and we merit a visit from the angels, because we resemble them in our conduct.

Chazal say (*Shabbat* 89a) that there is no jealousy or

hatred among the angels and all are united and bonded together to perform the will of Hashem. Since we resemble them and we are also bonded together, we seem like their “brothers,” belonging to their kind, as family members, and it is customary for family members to visit each other on the Festivals. Therefore, they descend to our homes to visit us in our sphere.

As we know, this world is referred to as “the world of divisiveness” – or a world of dissent, because unfortunately, it is the nature of a person to care primarily for himself and not notice other people’s plight. Of course, such behavior leads to divisiveness.

However, the next world is a world of unity; a world where there is no envy, hatred or competition. There is only love and brotherhood there for one another. This is as Chazal stated (*Ta’anit* 31b) “In the days to come the Holy One, blessed be He, will hold a chorus for the righteous.” The commentaries explain that “chorus” refers to a circle. When one sits around

“Although there are different factions, and within Am Yisrael there are various levels of people, different congregations, and different backgrounds, nevertheless, the ultimate goal must remain very clear and defined, because the goal is to do the will of Hashem. If the purpose remains clear to us, then we can easily achieve true unity and brotherhood.”



“הלילה הזה כולנו מסובין...”

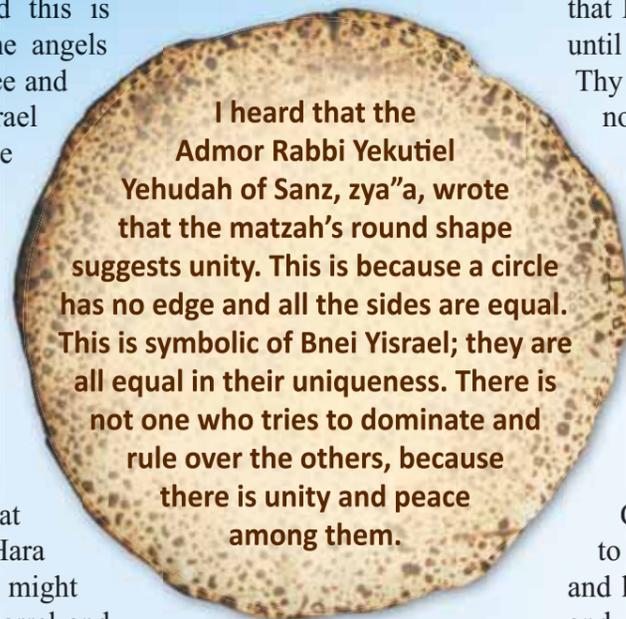
a round table, there is no one who can claim to be sitting at the head, because a circle has no edge, and thus they are all equal in rank.

If we indeed did merit on this holy night to gather together in large family gatherings around the table in complete unity, then we are as if in the World to Come, and we are now in the Upper Spheres in very close proximity to the angels. We become close neighbors with each other, and this is why Hashem tells the angels that they should go see and testify how Bnei Yisrael honor the King of the Universe in a proper manner.

We mentioned above that the deep admiration of the angels stem from the unity they observe among the Jews. This is because the angels know that we possess a Yetzer Hara that tries with all its might to incite people to quarrel and cause dissent, and it attempts to lead them to corruption. Yet, we overcome it and remove all evil from our hearts by promoting unity and peace among us. So they admire us and relate Above our praises before Hashem and tell Him "Praiseworthy is the people for whom this is so."

The virtue of unity is so great since it has the power to arouse much mercy for all Jews and bring them salvation. This is because when there is unity among the Jews, then the Shechinah resides upon them, as it is stated (*Devarim 33:5*) "And He was King in Jeshurun,

whenever the sum total of the people were gathered, and the tribes of Israel were together." Chazal elucidate (*Sifri Shemot 6*): When is Hashem "King in Jeshurun (Israel)"? This is when "the tribes of Israel are together." And when the Shechinah resides among the Jews, it is not possible for them to be harmed, but only goodness, blessing and salvation are showered upon them.



I heard that the Admor Rabbi Yekutiel Yehudah of Sanz, zya" a, wrote that the matzah's round shape suggests unity. This is because a circle has no edge and all the sides are equal. This is symbolic of Bnei Yisrael; they are all equal in their uniqueness. There is not one who tries to dominate and rule over the others, because there is unity and peace among them.

Chazal also teach (*Tanchuma Shoftim 18*) that when all of Bnei Yisrael unite, even if there are idolaters among them, they are spared harsh justice. Therefore, the Festival of Pesach is referred to "Pesach for Hashem." Hashem sees how all Jews overcome (Pass-over) their negative inclinations and straighten them out. This leads to them making peace with each other to achieve unity.

According to this we can understand the story presented in the Gemara about Choni Hama'agal (*Ta'anit 23a*): Once

it happened that the greater part of the month of Adar had gone and yet no rain had fallen. The people sent a message to Choni the Circle Drawer, Pray that rain may fall. He prayed and no rain fell. He thereupon drew a circle and stood within it ... He exclaimed [before God], "Master of the Universe, Thy children have turned to me because [they believe] me to be a member of Thy house. I swear by Thy great Name that I will not move from here until Thou hast mercy Upon Thy children!" ... Then rain fell normally.

Why was it necessary for Choni to form a circle and stand in it and pray? Couldn't he have offered his prayers without forming this shape?

I would like to suggest, with *siyata diShemaya*, that Choni's intentions were to advocate for the Jews and hint to the virtue of unity and peace among them. Essentially, a circle does not have edges, so there is no one side better than the other. This is the significance of the round shape of the matzot, making all sides equal in rank, as with Bnei Yisrael, since no one lords over his fellow, and no one feels superior to another, because they all interact in complete unity.

Therefore, Choni Hama'agal stood before Hashem and said, "Ribbono Shel Olam, Bnei Yisrael are united and there is love and brotherhood among them, and certainly for this tremendous virtue they deserve

Your Mercy to cause plenty of blessed rain to fall on the earth."

Indeed, Hashem heard his prayer and blessed rains fell. It seems to be that since Choni Hama'agal advocated for Bnei Yisrael, he dared to swear in Hashem's Name that he will not move out of the circle that he drew until the rain would fall.

Choni Hama'agal was not concerned that perhaps he had sworn falsely, G-d forbid. Therefore, Rabbi Shimon ben Shetach did not excommunicate him for swearing in Hashem's Name. This is because there is nothing more important to Hashem than one who advocates for Bnei Yisrael. Thus Choni was certain that his prayers would be accepted, and also the Sages trusted in his powerful prayer.

In the sefer "*Imrei Yechezkiel*" it states that a Jew should always live by the rule "all for one" and "one for all."

It is true that it is not an easy thing. After all, Chazal teach us (*Berachot 58a*), "The mind of each is different from that of the other, just as the face of each is different from that of the other." Each person is convinced that his opinion is correct, and his way of serving Hashem is right. Yet, even in such a situation it is still possible to achieve unity. How? Every person should contemplate and admit that although they have conflicting views, their "goal" is the same, which is to do the will of Hashem.

One may argue that things should be done his way, and the other argues that it should be done differently. However, both are aiming for the same ultimate goal.

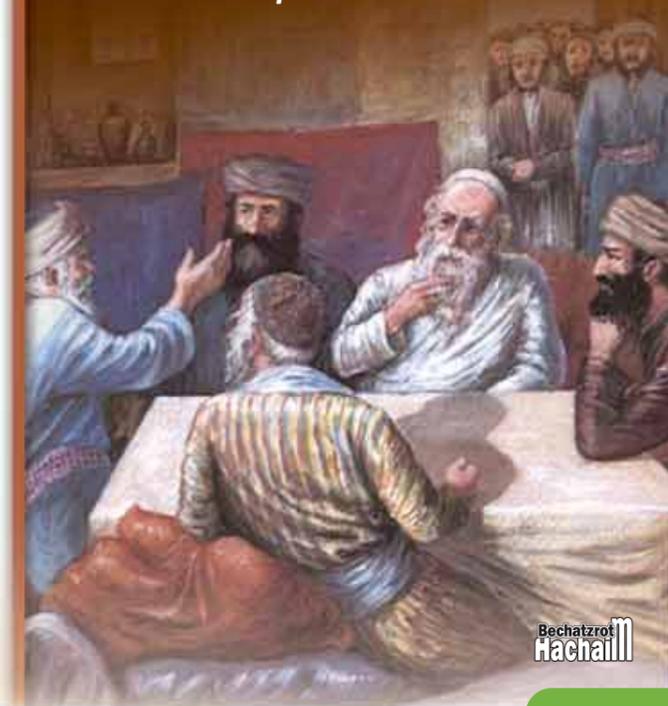
In a similar vein, the Chafetz Chaim once explained, that in the army there are different types of soldiers. There is the Navy, the Air Force, the Infantry, the Engineering Corps, and more. Although each of them differs in their job and career, they share a common denominator that unite them all, which is their common purpose and objective – the defeat of the enemy.

So too are the armies of Bnei Yisrael. Although there are different factions, and within Am Yisrael there are various levels of people, different congregations, and different backgrounds, nevertheless, the ultimate goal must remain very clear and defined, because the goal is to do the will of Hashem. If the purpose remains clear to us, then we can easily achieve true unity and brotherhood.

The Festival of Pesach teaches us what true unity is. It is a lesson which we must take with us throughout the year. This is because the virtue of unity is so enormous to the extent that it can hasten the final redemption, as Chazal say (*Yalkut Shimoni Amos 548*), "Yisrael will not be redeemed until they will gather in unity."

The virtue of unity is so great since it has the power to arouse much mercy for all Jews and bring them salvation. This is because when there is unity among the Jews, then the Shechinah resides upon them, as it is stated (*Devarim 33:5*)

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EDUCATING CHILDREN

is First Priority



WORDS OF INSPIRATION

Delivered by the Gaon and Tzaddik
Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

“They said, ‘If it pleases you, let this land be given to your servants as a heritage; do not take us across the Jordan.’ [Thereupon,] Moses said to the descendants of Gad and the descendants of Reuven, ‘Shall your brethren go to war while you stay here?... And behold, you have now risen in place of your fathers as a society of sinful people’” (Bamidbar 35:5-6, 14)

Moshe Rabbeinu delivered sharp reproof to the descendants of Gad and Reuven, and they replied that certainly they did not consider evading their duty to go to war, but rather (ibid 32:17) “We will then arm ourselves quickly [and go] before the children of Israel until we have brought them to their place... We shall not return to our homes until each of the Children of Israel has taken possession of his inheritance.”

This is puzzling. If in the first place the descendants of Gad and Reuven meant to come to the aid of their brethren and join them in war, then they should have said so immediately when Moshe began to rebuke them and give them *mussar*, and not wait until he finished his sharp reproof, as it is stated, “a society of sinful people”, and further on, “If you turn away from following Him... you will destroy this entire people.” Why did they remain silent and not respond to Moshe Rabbeinu’s arguments until the end of his rebuke?

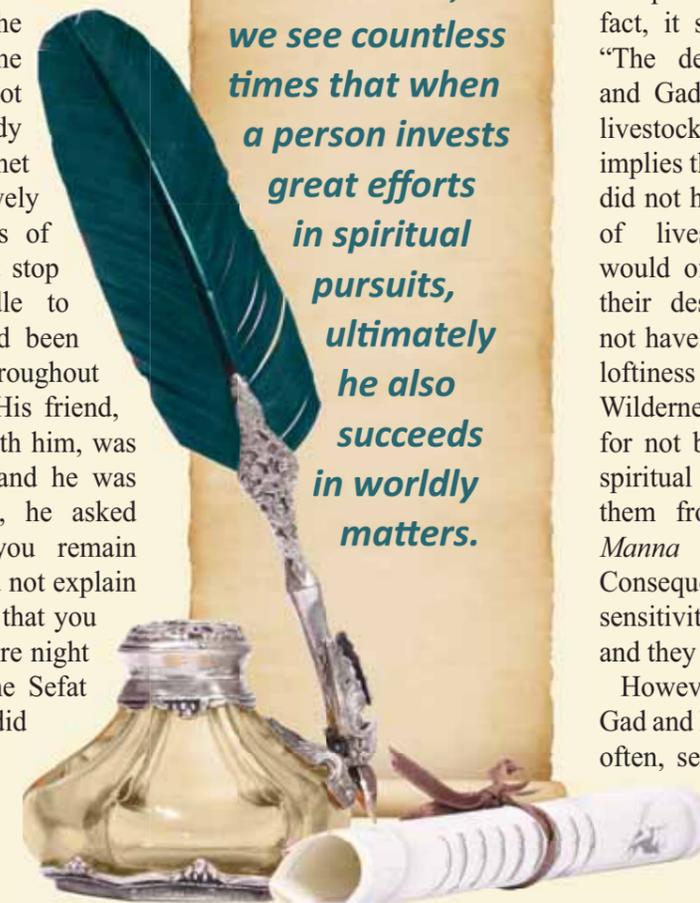
There are those who explain this by claiming that the descendants of Gad and Reuven greatly valued the rebuke of

Moshe Rabbeinu and did not want to stop him in the midst of his *mussar*. They very much wanted to hear every word of censure from a tzaddik as great as Moshe Rabbeinu, since it would certainly have a positive effect on them and help them serve Hashem with greater dedication.

This can be understood better by a story told about the holy tzaddik, the Sefat Emet, ztk”l. Once when he was a young boy, he studied Torah with a friend diligently throughout the entire night. Only at dawn he crept into bed and fell asleep. Due to his overwhelming fatigue, he slept until mid-day.

His grandfather, the holy “Chiddushei Harim,” zy”a, approached him and delivered words of rebuke, for a full hour, that he spent too much time sleeping and did not rise early to study Torah. The Sefat Emet listened attentively to the sharp words of *mussar* and did not stop him in the middle to explain that he had been studying Torah throughout the entire night... His friend, who had studied with him, was also present then, and he was amazed. Afterward, he asked him, “Why did you remain silent? Why did you not explain to your grandfather that you were awake the entire night studying Torah? The Sefat Emet replied, “I did not want to stop my grandfather in the middle of his

This is the essence of Moshe’s rebuke to the descendants of Gad and Reuven. The right attitude is that our first priority is the education of our children, and only afterward do we worry about money. What is more, we see countless times that when a person invests great efforts in spiritual pursuits, ultimately he also succeeds in worldly matters.



reproach. I wanted to hear his words of *mussar*; it would be a shame to miss this opportunity.”

Similarly, although the descendants of Gad and Reuven knew that they had good arguments in their favor, and certainly from the outset they did not intend to evade assisting their brethren, they deliberately chose not to stop Moshe in the middle of his rebuke, because it was preferable for them to hear words of *mussar* from a Torah giant like Moshe Rabbeinu, the leader of the generation.

I would like to suggest, with Hashem’s help, a different explanation, since there are seventy facets to the Torah.

First of all, it’s important to know that the descendants of Gad and Reuven were exceptionally holy people. In fact, it states (Bamidbar 32:1) “The descendants of Reuven and Gad had an abundance of livestock very numerous.” This implies that the rest of the nation did not have such an abundance of livestock, because they would often eat meat to fulfill their desire. Although we do not have the faintest idea of the loftiness of the generation of the Wilderness, they were criticized for not being satisfied with the spiritual food that Hashem sent them from heaven, since the *Manna* was a spiritual food. Consequently their spiritual sensitivity got dulled somewhat, and they became less refined.

However, the descendants of Gad and Reuven did not eat meat often, seeking spiritual pursuits instead, and therefore they remained on a

high spiritual level, especially after satiating their hunger through the heavenly *Manna*. They had lots of cattle, but did not use it for food.

If they were on such a high level, certainly they were well aware of the great virtue of Eretz Yisrael, and they also wished to live there. However, they had a necessity which could not be ignored. Because they had an abundance of livestock, which they accumulated virtuously, since they had not eaten its meat during the forty years that they travelled in the Wilderness, and only ate the *Manna*, which included every taste, when the time came to divide the Land, by default, the descendants of Gad had to request of Moshe to settle in Transjordan because “the place was a place for livestock;” a place appropriate for grazing sheep.

Moshe Rabbeinu knew absolutely that their request did not stem from their lack of appreciation for Eretz Yisrael, but just because they had no other choice. The proof is that in the end he agreed to their request and allowed them to settle in Transjordan. Yet, Moshe admonished them sharply and spoke to them sternly – not for their sake, but for the sake of the rest of the Nation. Moshe Rabbeinu knew that the descendants of Gad and Reuven had a valid claim, but there was a danger that all the other Tribes would also come to request permission to live in “*chutz*



l’Aretz,” with the argument, “What priority to they have over us? We also want to have more pasture for our cattle to graze in.”

In order to prevent such arguments in advance, Moshe Rabbeinu sternly rebuked them, so that “others should see this and fear” – meaning the rest of the Tribes, and they should not entertain any ideas to request permission to settle in other lands. Since the descendants of Gad and Reuven understood Moshe’s intentions, they knew that the sharp words of rebuke were not intended for them, but for the other Tribes to hear. Therefore, they remained silent and did not answer. They waited until Moshe finished his reproof without arguing.

Thus, we can answer an additional question. In the previous parshiot, we find that Moshe Rabbeinu did not rule on halachic matters on his own when a question arose, but he would address the question before Hashem. Thus we find

regarding those people who were ritually unclean and could not sacrifice the Pesach offering, but argued, “Why should we be excluded?”

Then Moshe responded and said to them (*Bamidbar* 9:8), “Wait, and I will hear what Hashem instructs concerning you.”

This also happened when the question arose about the inheritance of the daughters of Tzelofchad, as it is written (*ibid.* 27:5) “So Moshe brought their case before the Lord.” So why here does Moshe decide on his own without presenting the question to Hashem? Although he initially rebuked them sharply, how did he in the end decide on his own to allow them to settle in Transjordan? Why did he not turn to ask Hashem?

From this we infer that Moshe Rabbeinu, a”h, had no doubt about the request of the descendants of Gad and Reuven. He knew clearly from the outset that they had a valid point, and they had no other choice. Therefore, he did not find it necessary to consult with Hashem. Still, he spoke sharply to them and rebuked them sternly, directing his words to the ears of the other Tribes so that it should not occur to them to also request a portion of inheritance outside of Eretz Yisrael. The descendants of Gad and Reuven understood Moshe’s intentions, and therefore did not stop him from delivering rebuke.

In addition, Moshe Rabbeinu

also rebuked them for first mentioning the needs of their cattle, since this signified that were attached to their possessions. They should have first mentioned their concern about their children’s well-being and education, because this is their ultimate purpose in life.

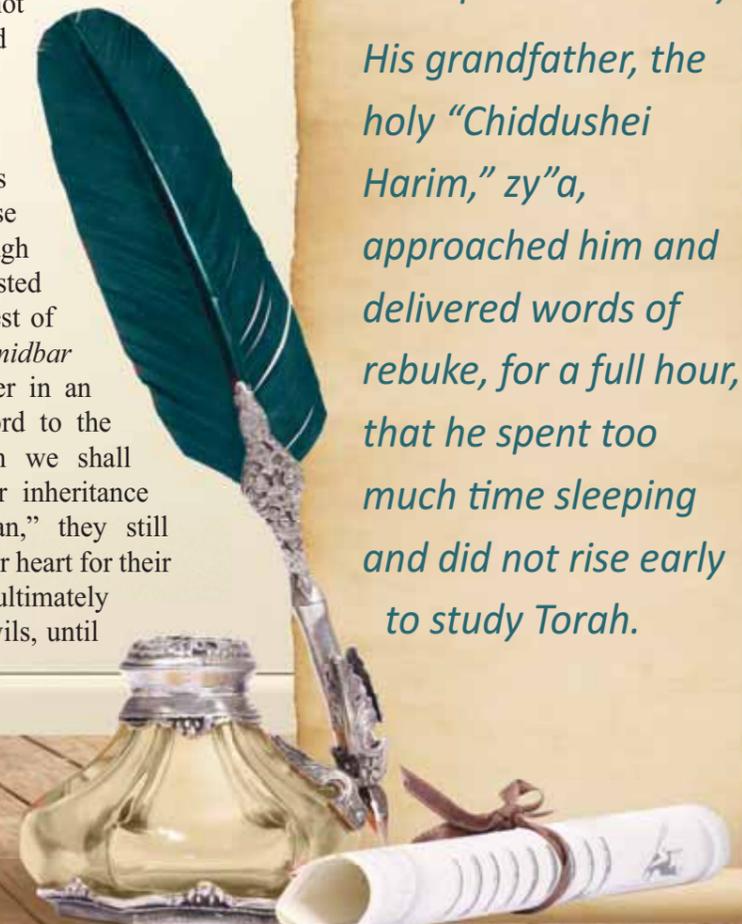
According to what we explained, we can better understand why Moshe permitted the descendants of Gad and Reuven to remain outside Eretz Yisrael. His rebuke to them was delivered in order that the other Tribes should hear it and they should not consider requesting a portion of inheritance outside of Eretz Yisrael. But was there a personal message to the descendants of Gad and Reuven themselves?

It seems to me that Moshe Rabbeinu wanted to teach a lesson to all the Tribes through the example of Gad and Reuven’s request; a lesson which pertains to all generations. He wished to impress how much a person should be careful not to turn a secondary priority to the primary one and the primary priority to a secondary one.

The punishment of the descendants of Gad and Reuven in being exiled first teaches us an important foundation for all future generations.

One who delves into the matter will find that over the time, the wealth of the descendants of Gad and Reuven did not bring them happiness and success. In order to guard their wealth, by default, they had to wage many wars to protect themselves from their enemies who rose up against them. Even though they did teshuvah and assisted their brethren in the conquest of the Land, as it is stated (*Bamidbar* 32:32) “We shall cross over in an armed force before the Lord to the land of Canaan, and then we shall have the possession of our inheritance on this side of the Jordan,” they still harbored a preference in their heart for their possessions. This is what ultimately brought upon them many evils, until

This can be understood better by a story told about the holy tzaddik, the Sefat Emet, ztk”l. Once when he was a young boy, he studied Torah with a friend diligently throughout the entire night. Only at dawn he crept into bed and fell asleep. Due to his overwhelming fatigue, he slept until mid-day. His grandfather, the holy “Chiddushei Harim,” zy”a, approached him and delivered words of rebuke, for a full hour, that he spent too much time sleeping and did not rise early to study Torah.



The Sefat Emet listened attentively to the sharp words of mussar and did not stop him in the middle to explain that he had been studying Torah throughout the entire night... His friend, who had studied with him, was also present then, and he was amazed. Afterward, he asked him, "Why did you remain silent? Why did you not explain to your grandfather that you were awake the entire night studying Torah? The Sefat Emet replied, "I did not want to stop my grandfather in the middle of his reproach. I wanted to hear his words of mussar; it would be a shame to miss this opportunity."

finally they were the first ones to be exiled from Eretz Yisrael, and are not likely to return.

We also find support for this in the words of the Midrash (*Tanchuma Matot 5*): We find that the descendants of Gad and Reuvain were very wealthy, and they had an abundance of livestock and they loved their possessions and settled outside of Eretz Yisrael. Therefore, they were exiled first, as it is stated (*Divrei Hayamim I, 5:26*), "And they exiled the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh." What caused this? This happened since they separated themselves from their brethren because of their livestock. From where do we learn this? This is stated in the pasuk, "The descendants of Reuvain and Gad had an abundance of livestock very numerous." These are the words of the Midrash.

It is important to note that the descendants of Gad and Reuvain were not on a low spiritual level. In fact, they were very righteous. Moshe Rabbeinu's rebuke was important to them, and in addition, Moshe blessed them with generous blessings before he passed away, because they were deserving of them. Moshe said to Reuvain (*Devarim 33:6*), "May Reuvain live and not die"... and to Gad he said (*ibid. 33:20*), "Blessed is He Who grants expanse to Gad."

However the education of their children was not their first priority compared to the importance they attributed to their money. The pasuk states that the descendants of Gad and Reuvain approached Moshe and said to him (*Bamidbar 32:16*), "We will build sheepfolds for our livestock here and cities for our children." And Moshe responded by saying (*ibid. 32:24*),

"So build yourselves cities for your children and enclosures for your sheep." Rashi explains: They were more concerned about their possessions than about their sons and daughters, since they mentioned their livestock before [mentioning] their children. Moses said to them, "Not so! Treat the fundamental as a fundamental, and the matter of secondary importance as a matter of secondary importance. First 'build cities for your children,' and afterwards 'enclosures for your sheep'"

This is the essence of Moshe's rebuke to the descendants of Gad and Reuvain. The right attitude is that our first priority is the education of our children, and only afterward do we worry about money. What is more, we see countless times that when a person invests great efforts in spiritual pursuits, ultimately he

also succeeds in worldly matters.

We can take an example from Shlomo Hamelech, a"h (*Melachim I, 3*). Hashem appeared to him in a dream at night when he was in the Giveon, and told him "Ask what I shall give you." Shlomo Hamelech replied, "You have done Your servant David my father great kindness...that You have given him a son to sit on his throne." Then, Shlomo Hamelech asked only for a spiritual benefit which was for the good of the Nation. He asked (*ibid. 3:9*), "Give (therefore) Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and bad."

Hashem saw that King Shlomo's request was of spiritual nature alone and granted him his request. Thus he acquired supernatural infinite wisdom and was the wisest person ever to exist. In addition, Hashem granted him vast wealth, and promised him that if he would go in Hashem's ways, he would merit longevity.

Here we see that King Shlomo only asked for spiritual benefits, but in the end he merited everything. So too regarding all those who invest their efforts in educating their children and instilling in them pure fear of Heaven. Hashem will never forsake them and will provide for them all their material needs.

This is what we see regarding the lives of all great Torah Sages. Money was something marginal and not important, because spirituality filled their



entire minds. I recently read a wonderful story in one of the bulletins.

It is told about the gaon, Rabbi Chaim Kreizworth, ztk"l, the Rabbi of Antwerp, Belgium, that at the time when he served as a Rabbi in Chicago in the United States, he once had to appear before a judge to receive his United States citizenship. Since he was a prominent person, the judge did not demand of him to cite the laws of the Senate, as was mandatory in those times in order to acquire citizenship, but asked him, "What impression do you get of the United States?"

Rabbi Chaim replied, "I was impressed to see that on every dollar there appear the words "In G-d we trust." But unfortunately, my impression is that many Americans believe the dollar is G-d"....

Indeed, the great Torah Sages perceive the eternal life as primary, causing them to invest

much effort in educating their children to go in the correct path, because this is one's eternal spiritual acquisition, and it takes priority over material wealth and physical possessions.

As we know, there is no word in the Torah written in vain. These parshiot all teach us important lessons – about the education of our children, which takes priority over money. Since a person is very drawn to material matters, which dull his senses, he has to constantly be wary to make spiritual pursuits his priority. Otherwise, he will surely fall for the scheme of his evil inclination, even if he is entirely righteous, like the descendants of Gad and Reuven, who were lofty people, but the Yetzer Hara defeated them in this matter.

Every father and mother should invest more efforts in the education of their children than in monetary matters, because the education of children is top priority.

THE MITZVAH OF TELLING THE STORY OF THE EXODUS



WORDS OF INSPIRATION

Delivered by the Gaon and Tzaddik
Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

“And in order that you tell into the ears of your son and your son’s son how I made a mockery of the Egyptians” (Shemot 10:2)

The Rambam cites (*Hilchot Chametz u’Matzah 7:1*) that it is a Torah mandated mitzvah to discuss the miracles and wonders that were done to our ancestors in Egypt on the eve of the fifteenth of Nissan, for it is stated, “Remember this day, when you went out of Egypt,” just as it is [similarly] stated “Remember the Sabbath day to sanctify it.”

We need to clarify – what is the connection between remembering Shabbat and remembering the Exodus from Egypt? Why did the Rambam forge a connection between them?

I would like to suggest, with Hashem’s help, that just as concerning Shabbat it is stated “Remember” and “Keep” – so too regarding the Exodus from Egypt on the Festival of Pesach it is stated “Remember” and “Keep.” For example, “Remember” is stated in the pasuk “**Remember** this day, when you went out of Egypt,” and “Keep” is also stated, “And you shall **keep** this statute at its appointed time, from year to year.”

There is a need for both “remembering” and “keeping” concerning Shabbat as well as the Festival of Pesach. It is

possible that if only “Remember the Sabbath day” would have been commanded, then perhaps the memory of Shabbat would become dulled in our hearts because we would become accustomed to it, and in the end it may be forgotten, *challila*, since it would become commonplace and routine. We would not reflect constantly upon the enormous holiness and uniqueness of Shabbat because we would get used to it. Then Shabbat would turn into a command that people would keep by rote.

Therefore, the Torah also warns, “Keep the Sabbath day” so that we do not suffice with just “Remembering” it, but cherish its importance at all times and value its unique benefits, not letting routine and habit undermine its importance.

This is similar regarding Pesach. Since every year we are commanded to “remember” the Exodus – the Torah feared that perhaps the remembrance would become routine and turn into a mindless habit, and then even Pesach, when we are commanded to tell at length the story of the Exodus, it may not be done as it should, with enthusiasm and excitement. Thus, the Torah was not satisfied with stating “Remember” alone, as it is stated, “And you shall remember this statute,” implying that a person should remember the importance of telling the story of the Exodus in his heart,

and he should arouse himself to feel at all times the excitement as if he was presently leaving the bondage of Egypt, as it is stated (Hagaddah of Passover) “A person is obligated to view himself as if he left Egypt.”

It also seems to me that “Shabbat Hagadol” forges a connection between the “Remembrance” of Shabbat to the remembrance of the Exodus from Egypt. On that Shabbat Bnei Yisrael tied the sheep to their bedpost. Despite the fact that the sheep was the god of the Egyptians, Bnei Yisrael were prepared to risk their lives in honor of Hashem and fulfill His will. They slaughtered the sheep in front of the Egyptians and ate its flesh. Hashem performed wondrous miracles for them and fought against their wicked oppressors.

Similarly, I found in the eloquent words of the Admor of Belz, ztk”l:…This is elucidated in the words of the Hagaddah “Vekol hamarbeh l’saper b’yetziat Mitrayim – Whoever elaborates upon the events of the Exodus from Egypt” – as much as one elaborates and dwells on this night upon the events of the Exodus from Egypt, “Haray zeh meshubach – He is praiseworthy” – through this the transmission to his children will be effective and beneficial.



Just as on this Shabbat, when Bnei Yisrael left Egypt, they merited nullifying the Avodah Zarah (idolatry) of the Egyptians from their hearts and they distanced themselves from it; they chose to accept upon themselves only the yoke of Heaven, thereby becoming partners with Hashem and connected to Him, likewise one who keeps Shabbat correctly merits becoming partners with Hashem in the Creation. This is as stated in Gemara (*Shabbat* 119a) "He who observes the Shabbat according to its laws becomes partners with Hashem in the Creation." And this is the connection between "Remembering" the Exodus from Egypt and "Remembering" Shabbat.

Just as the purpose of Pesach is to bring a person to teshuvah and to eliminate the Yetzer Hara, destroying it completely, thereby meriting complete atonement for all sins, so too is the extraordinary nature of the holy Shabbat.

If a person observes Shabbat properly, Hashem forgives him for all his sins, as it is stated in Gemara (*Shabbat* 118a) "He who observes the Shabbat according to its laws, even if he practices idolatry like the generation of Enosh, is forgiven."

The commemoration of the Exodus and remembering Shabbat is interdependent, because both are strong fundamentals that must be rooted in our souls, strengthening our faith in Hashem at all times.

While mentioning faith, now we can understand the main purpose of telling the story of the Exodus from Egypt, which is entirely designed to instill pure faith in our children's hearts, as well as great love for Hashem, the G-d of Israel. This is as it is written (*Shemot* 10:20), "And in order that you tell into the ears of your son and your son's son how I made a mockery of the Egyptians, and

[that you tell of] My signs that I placed in them, and you will know that I am the Lord."

Thus, the more one elaborates upon the praise of Hashem and extolls Him before his children about all the wonders He performed, the more he will increase their awareness of Hashem in their hearts, and consequently he is praiseworthy.

Similarly, I found in the eloquent words of the Admor of Belz, ztk"l: The more one elaborates upon the events of the Exodus from Egypt more and more, the more he will instill sanctified faith in the hearts of the listeners. This is elucidated in the words of the Hagaddah "*Vekol hamarbeh k'saper b'yetziat Mitzrayim – Whoever elaborates upon the events of the Exodus from Egypt*" – as much as one elaborates and dwells on this night upon the events of the Exodus from Egypt, "*Haray zeh meshubach – He is praiseworthy*" – through this the transmission to his children will be effective and beneficial. The word "*zeh*" (lit. this) signifies transmission (as explained in the holy sefer "*Kedushat Halevi*" parashat Chukat). In addition, the word "*zeh*" denotes the masculine gender (the role of the male is to transmit.)

Thus, when we will, with Hashem's help, sit around the table on the Seder night, let us remember the purpose of this sanctified moment; which is designed entirely to transmit the power of faith from generation to generation and instill it into the souls of our offspring.



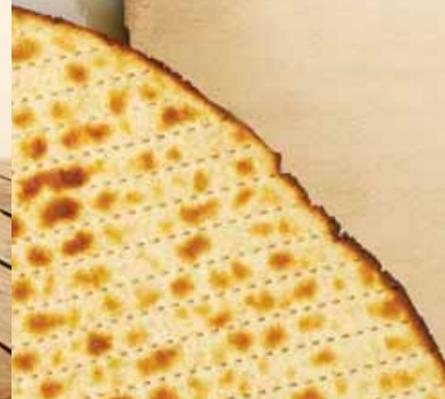
As the Festival of Pesach approaches
We would like to extend our blessings and warmest wishes
To the Rabbis and Avreichim of the Institutions
And to all those gathered in the halls of our Institutions
And to all of Klal Yisrael

A HAPPY AND KOSHER PASSOVER
May we merit celebrating the Festival of Matzot
With Joy and Festivity

And may we soon merit the fulfillment of the blessing:
"There we shall eat from the Festival offerings and from the Pesach offerings, whose blood will be sprinkled on the side of Your Altar for gracious acceptance. And we shall thank You with a new song for our redemption and the deliverance of our souls."
Speedily and in our days, Amen!

With best wishes
The Editors of "Bechatzrot Hachaim"

- "Peninei David" Institutions - Jerusalem
- "Chevrat Pinto" Institutions - Lyon
- "Kol Chaim" Institution - Ra'anana
- "Orot Chaim U'Moshe" Institutions - Argentina
- "Orot Chaim U'Moshe" Institutions - Ashdod
- "Ohr Chaim U'Moshe" Institutions - Paris
- "Orot Chaim U'Moshe" Institutions - New York
- "Chevrat Pinto" Argentina, Mexico, Marseilles



THE WAYS OF OUR FATHERS LOVE OF TORAH



I heard from Rabbi Chaim Walkin, shlit"á, the Mashgiach of the Yeshiva "Ateret Yisrael" – that once there was a boy who was a genius, very talented, and blessed with many good virtues.

But he had a fault; he would regularly come late to the prayer services. Despite all the admonishments of the Mashgiach of the yeshiva, nothing changed, and the boy remained with his fault, always coming late to prayers.

Understandably, such behavior warrants consultation with a Torah authority. Therefore, the Mashgiach, shlit"á, decided to travel to Bnei Brak, to the well-known residence of Maran, the leader of the entire Diaspora, the gaon Rabbi Shach, ztk"l, zya"á, seeking to clarify the Torah outlook on the matter.

Maran Rabbi Shach, zt"l, listened to his question and weighed the matter seriously. Afterwards he responded and said, "You should warn the boy again not to come late, and if there will be no change, then there is no choice but to expel him from the Yeshiva, since he may, G-d forbid, influence other boys and cool their reverence."

From here we see that the decision of a great Torah Sage is required for weighty decisions like this. It is dangerous to expel a boy from Yeshiva, because many times it may involve endless consequences, also for the boy himself, and also for his future progeny.

Hence, this is an admonishment to all leaders of our holy Yeshivot, may they live long. One has to weigh heavily such a serious decision as spiritual capital punishment when deciding whether to expel a boy from Yeshiva. It requires extensive evaluation, and certainly one should consult with a proper halachic authority as the great Torah Sage of the generation, who are considered "the eyes of the people," and have the insight to decide on such complex matters, so that, G-d forbid, we should not, in a spiritual sense, spill the blood of an innocent boy and of all his future descendants. We should not be held accountable, as is stated "Our hands did not shed this blood."

Since the attribute of goodness exceeds the attribute of retribution, we are assured that the reward for the Rosh Yeshiva is enormous when he invests in building each and

every student that finds shelter in his yeshiva. Every boy who blossoms into a splendid Torah scholar with great aspirations brings merit to his teachers who lead him to good life in this world, and endless reward in the World to Come.

THE RACE OF LIFE

"He used to say: You are not required to complete the task, yet you are not free to withdraw from it. If you have studied much Torah, they will give you great reward; and your Employer can be relied upon to pay you the wage for your labor, but be aware that the reward of the righteous will be given in the World to Come."

Once a man from Argentina approached me and asked me for a blessing that he should win a marathon. He added that thousands of people would be participating in the marathon and in his heart he knew that he did not stand a chance to win, but nevertheless, he wanted my blessing. When I heard his request, I asked him why he chose to compete if he knew with absolute certainty that he had no chance of winning. And even more importantly, why did

he feel the need to contact me and ask me for a blessing for success? The man replied that although he knew clearly that he would not win, and in his own merit he did not stand a chance, not even a slight chance, he still wanted to participate in the marathon, because participating in such a prestigious marathon would give him a feeling of self-importance since he would be able to tell everyone that he participated in the marathon, even if he did not win.

Hearing his words, I got to thinking that it clarified to me the words of the Mishnah in Avot: "You are not required to complete the task, yet you are not free to withdraw from it." This implies that Hashem does not judge an individual according to his achievements, but tests him to see what his actions are. According to Judaism, the end result is not what determines the reward a person will receive, since Hashem considers all the trouble and every small detail that was involved in each deed, to the extent that even a good thought is considered as a good act.

This Mishnah teaches us that

Every boy who blossoms into a splendid Torah scholar with great aspirations, brings merit to his teachers who lead him to good life in this world, and endless reward in the World to Come.

every person is obligated to take the trouble to toil in the study of Torah and fulfillment of its mitzvot, even though he knows clearly that he will not succeed in getting to the bottom of the matter, or fulfilling the mitzvah absolutely to perfection. Nevertheless, a person is obligated to do everything in his power and invest every effort to the best of his ability. However, if he is unable for various reasons to accomplish the task to absolute perfection, regarding this the Mishnah states, "You are not required to complete the task." It is sufficient to invest efforts and take the trouble to do as much as you can to the best of your ability.

I would like to suggest that just as there is a marathon in various fields such as a marathon to race, or a swimming marathon, etc., so too is there a spiritual marathon, when the soul descends from the Upper Worlds from their place under the Heavenly Throne and comes to this material world. If one contemplates he sees that the world is round, and likewise a person's head is round and his heart is round, in order to remind him that at the starting point of his life

there is also a finishing point. Just as he is created from the earth, he is destined to return to the earth, as it is stated, "For dust you are, and to dust you will return." This is why we have a custom to eat an egg in the house of mourning. It reminds us that the world is round; its point of origin and end point converge to a single point – the soul returns to its source in the Upper Spheres, while the body returns to its point of origin in the earth.

This world is like a race. The question is what a person chooses to run after; does he choose to chase after the temptations and pleasures of this world, or seek the mitzvot of Hashem, as in "Yehudah ben Tema said: Be...swift as a deer... to carry out the will of your Father in Heaven." Sometimes, although a person runs to fulfill Hashem's will, for reasons beyond his control, he is prevented from being able to perform Hashem's will perfectly. This experience may, G-d forbid, cause him to get dejected and halt further efforts in observing mitzvot. Therefore, our Sages warn us to be aware that we are not obligated to complete the task. Hashem, who is aware of our inner intentions and thoughts, knows if one truly did everything he could to fulfill His will, but circumstances beyond his control prevented him from accomplishing his task, or whether he was negligent and enjoyed the fact that he was unable to perform the mitzvah.

Nevertheless, we must focus on the words of the Mishnah, "Yet you are not free to withdraw from it." This implies that "man is born to weariness," and this world is a world of deeds. Therefore, a person must go through life knowing clearly that he has to trouble himself and invest efforts to fulfill Hashem's will, despite its difficulties. It is like what this man told me – "at least I know that I participated in this race, even though I did not win." We too have to fulfill our obligation to participate in the competition, and one who seeks to become sanctified and rise to great heights in Torah and fear of Hashem, ultimately,

This world is like a race. The question is what a person chooses to run after; does he choose to chase after the temptations and pleasures of this world, or seek the mitzvot of Hashem.

merits Heavenly assistance.

On the other hand, *l'havdil*, what spiritual damage may result if there isn't the proper relationship to students, Heaven forbid!

And how can one escape these dangerous pitfalls? Sometimes wrong things are done innocently, or spoken without any bad intentions, while the spiritual harm may be very damaging.

The answer is to pray, and to pray again. Every Rosh Yeshiva and the entire educational faculty should plead for Divine mercy that no mistakes should result from them, and also that their precious students should acquire a pleasant and sweet taste for Torah.

It is important to know that every Rosh Yeshiva of our generation and all those devoted to the needs of the community carry a tremendous responsibility towards the people. They resemble the Kohen Gadol, whose duty was most sacred and sanctified in the Beit Hamikdash and in the Holy of Holies, amongst the exalted Nation.

It is well-known that the prayers of the Kohen Gadol during the entire year, the prayer supplicated for the Jewish people, and especially on Yom Kippur, affected the Nation the entire year.

We learn of the tremendous power the Kohen Gadol had through prayer from the laws of the Cities of Refuge.

It is stated (*Bamidbar* 35:25), "And he shall remain there until the Kohen Gadol dies." Why is the murderer's

return to his hometown dependent upon the death of the Kohen Gadol? Rashi explains (*ibid.*): Because the Kohen Gadol should have prayed that such a misfortune should not befall Israel during his lifetime.

This is awesome. The Torah places the blame on the Kohen Gadol because he did not pray properly in the Kodesh Kodashim that no Jew should be murdered, not even by accident.

It is written in Gemara (*Makkot* 11a) "that [the high priests were not without blame, as] they should have implored Divine grace for [averting the sorrows of] their generation, which they failed to do. Just as in the case of that poor fellow who was devoured by a lion some three parasangs from the town where R. Joshua b. Levi lived, when [the prophet] Elijah would not commune with the Rabbi, on that account, for three days!" Eliyahu Hanavi argued that Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi should have prayed for the people in his community that no calamity should befall them.

This implies that similar to the leaders of the generation and the Kohen Gadol, the Roshei Yeshivot and poskim of today should pray for the people and plead for them before Hashem to open their hearts to acquire love and fear of Hashem. They should merit to become true Torah Jews, fearing Hashem in sanctity, and they should never be responsible for bringing calamity or making errors. If, G-d forbid, they do not pray for the people, they are held accountable, just as the Kohen Gadol is blamed for not praying properly for his brethren that they should not come to murdering, G-d forbid, even by accident.

Thus, the termination of the murderer's exile in the Cities of Refuge, after murdering by accident, was dependent upon the death of the Kohen Gadol. This teaches us who is ultimately responsible.

May Hashem's save us from errors and reveal His wonders to us through His mercy and help us merit spreading Torah across the entire world.

While on this topic, I would like to mention the immense gratitude I have towards my master and teacher, the gaon Rabbi Shammai Zohn, ztk"l, the Rosh Yeshiva of Sunderland, England. Any success I had as a young boy, sitting in the shelter of the Yeshiva and dedicating myself to laboring in comprehending the complex issues and clarifying the words of the Gemara to uncover truth, is all due to the exceptional fondness that my Rosh Yeshiva, ztk"l, displayed to me.

Something that I experienced in this context is etched in my heart to this day. When I was about fifteen years or so, I had to leave the Yeshiva in England and travel home to Morocco, in order to renew my passport after it expired. In those days, renewing a passport involved a prolonged wait of several months at times! I had to stay in Morocco to wait for the renewal, so that I could go back to Yeshiva. When I received my renewed passport, my esteemed father, zy" a, told me "Go back to Yeshiva."

At that time, my whole family was preparing to immigrate to Eretz Yisrael, and I thought that I would stay with them and not return to the Yeshiva in England. I was so determined to travel with them, I even confided my intentions to my father. "No!" my father told me. "You have to return to Yeshiva!" I cannot describe how difficult it was for me to return to Yeshiva..

At one point, after leaving my home, I saw my teacher and mentor, the Rosh Yeshiva, the gaon Rabbi Shammai Zohn, ztk"l, walking in front of me. I ran toward him to greet him, and he responded with sincere warmth, "My dear student, I was anticipating your return and could not wait to see you again in Yeshiva. I missed you so much!"



No hint of accusation was expressed in his voice, and not even a mild rebuke about my extended absence was voiced. On the contrary, just loving kindness flowed from his words, and his affection was evident with every word he said. His words were sincere. And every time that I recall it, I can visualize his loving gaze, conveying just how much he longed to see me, as if I was his only student in Yeshiva...

After we talked a bit, I found out that he used to visit Morocco every year. The purpose of his journey was to investigate if there were any parents who wished to send their sons to Yeshiva in England, and to help them do so. At the same time, he would make an appeal for the maintenance of the Yeshiva and its disciples.

It was not a long visit. The Rosh Yeshiva, Maran Rabbi Zohn, ztk"l, stayed only three days in Morocco. However, during his entire visit, his hands never left mine, and wherever he went, he took me with him. Also my blessed father, zya" a, accorded him great honor and asked



The Yeshiva of Sunderland



Rabbi Shammai Zohn, ztk"l, with Moreinu v'Rabbeinu, shlit" a

me to accompany him to the homes of charitable people that he knew. At the end of his visit to Morocco, Maran Rosh Yeshiva, ztk"l, said to me gently but firmly, "You are coming back with me to the Yeshiva!"

His warmth and tolerance and sincere affinity for truth captivated me. I was determined that I would return to Yeshiva as soon as I was ready. You have to understand that years ago things were very different. In those days going to Yeshiva involved leaving home, which was not easy. While we were in Yeshiva, we were completely cut off from any connection to our home.

Only once every few years we were able to travel home to see our families. It was a trip fraught with dangerous roads and many unbearable hardships. Telephones were not available, and we only communicated through letters that we sent once every few weeks.

So what kept me going throughout this difficult period? What inspired me to resolutely return to Yeshiva? It was only the warmth of the Rosh Yeshiva, his sincere affinity for truth that radiated from him as he was closely supervising my spiritual well-being. This is what gave me the strength to return with him to the confines of the Yeshiva.

Today, I have tremendous appreciation for Maran Rosh Yeshiva, zt"l. I and my family owe him owe him immense gratitude. When I reflect how, through the favors of Hashem, I founded and established institutions of Torah and chessed, and spread the light of Torah throughout the world, I realize that it is all in the merit of Maran Rosh Yeshiva, zy" a, the gaon Rabbi Shammai Zohn, ztk"l. He was the messenger by Divine Providence who fondly drew me with chords of love to the holy Torah, as it is stated (*Shir HaShirim* 1:4), "Draw me, we will run after you."

My intention in this illustration is to emphasize how important the fond relationship of a Rebbe is to his student. Sometimes one good word has the power to inspire his student to realize his special potential and to turn into a true "*ben Torah*."

To this day I still sense the resolute voice, burning with fire, of my master and teacher Maran Rabbi Shammai, zt"l, resounding in my ears. Every year during the Days of Awe when I say "the Holy King," I recall my master and teacher, zy" a; everyone that heard him clearly felt that this was the day of Hashem's coronation... and this left an indelible impression in my soul.



PESACH CUSTOMS AND DEEDS OF OUR SAGES

WHO OPENS THE GATES OF GAN EDEN?

It is brought in the holy sefarim in the name of the Arizal that on every Chag and Festival the same illumination of miracles and wonders that occurred when the miracle took place, occurs again on the same date each year when we celebrate that miracle. For example: On Pesach – the same light of the miracles that occurred during the Exodus from Egypt. On Chanuka – the light of the miracles that occurred in the times of the Chashmonaim is illuminated, and so forth. On Purim the same light exists as on the original Purim day when wondrous miracles occurred in the days of Mordechai and Esther, when the Jews merited through the power of their prayers and teshuvah to undo the terrible decree of Haman. The same illumination that shone during the days of Esther, shine on Purim every year. It is the light of faith, the love of Torah, teshuvah, faith in our Sages and love for our fellow Jews.

The Admor, author of “*Hakol Yitzchak*”, ztk”l, used to relate the following story each year on the second night of Pesach after arranging the Seder – these were his words (excerpts from the Hagaddah of the Spinka Dynasty):

My father, zt”l, the author of “*Imrei Yosef*,” used to relate every year on the second night of Pesach following the second Seder that there was an *avreich* who, after arranging the Seder on the second night of Pesach, used to recite the Megillah of Shir HaShirim and elaborate on the story of the Exodus from Egypt in fulfillment of the mitzvah. However, since sleep did not overcome him, as

described by our Sages of blessed memory, he did not want to lie down to sleep. The *avreich* reflected that since the second day of Pesach is the time when the “Feast of Esther” had taken place, therefore it would be a timely opportunity to read the Megillah of Esther.

When the *avreich* concluded the reading of the Megillah, he saw a woman approach him and she begged him to provide her with a *tikkun*. The *avreich* asked her, “Tell me please, what do you have to do with me? And what do you want from me?” The woman began to explain that there are souls that even after passing judgment in the Heavenly Court Above and receiving their sentence, they still cannot enter Gan Eden until they earn a special merit to ascend to the Upper Spheres of Gan Eden. However, every year, during the reading of the Megillah of Esther, the angels open the gates of Gan Eden and then anyone can enter.

So – the woman continued – already many months before the time of the reading of the Megillah of Esther, thousands and thousands of souls stand by the gate of Gan Eden and wait for the moment it will open. However, since the reading of the Megillah takes only one hour, perhaps two or three at the latest, whoever manages to jump in and enter – merits a place. But, whoever is left out has to wait until the reading of the Megillah the next year.

Therefore, the woman continued telling the *avreich*, she already

stood for many many years by the gate of Gan Eden, but because of the enormous crowd pushing to get in to Gan Eden, she did not manage to slip in and get inside. Also the previous year, the gates closed just at the moment when her turn came to enter.

After missing several opportunities, she decided that she would not budge from her place and she would remain in her spot next to the gateway to Gan Eden until the reading of the Megillah the next year.

A few weeks passed, and the soul still stood waiting for the reading of the Megillah. She stood there waiting and yearning for the opening of the gate of Gan Eden, and suddenly she heard on the night of Pesach someone reading the Megillah. She immediately began knocking on the gates of Gan Eden to allow her entry, because now the Megillah was being read...

Upon hearing her knocking, the guard came out and told her: True that now the Megillah is being read. But, it is not the time for the reading. The soul pleaded: What’s the difference if the time for reading the Megillah is now or later? Since the Megillah is being read, you must let me enter.

While they were arguing, a member of the Heavenly Court came out and told them: The guard is right that the reading of the Megillah must be in its proper time, and at a different time it does not help. However, if you will descend to the *avreich* reading the Megillah

of Esther, and he will rule that you can enter, then you will be allowed to enter Gan Eden.

Thus, the woman begged for her soul that the *avreich* should rule that this reading should also present an opportune time as on Purim, and she should be allowed entry into Gan Eden.

Elderly Chassidim used to say that Rabbeinu, the author of “*Imrei Yosef*” of Spinka, zt”l, who was very precise in relating facts, was very careful not to tell any story without mentioning the name of the main character, or tell the story over in the name of the disciples of the holy Jew – Rabbeinu the Ba’al Shem Tov, zya”a. But in this story he withheld the name and did not reveal who the “*avreich*” was. It seems that this is because it was really him, and because of his enormous humility, he did not want to reveal that the story happened to him. Therefore, he was evasive and did not specify who it was.

This is the power of the Megillah!

THE MASHGIACH AND THE LABLE

While this pamphlet goes to print, many of us are continuing with our daily routine, in our fixed daily schedules, in the service of Hashem, and thank Him for every single breath that He graciously gives us with favor. At the same exact time, thousands of Jews and prominent Rabbis stand on guard in order to supervise and monitor the kashrut of the food production

systems, since their contents will be marketed shortly to millions of our Jewish brethren all over the world.

The preparations for the Festival of Pesach and the supervision to guarantee the kashrut of the products for the Festival fall on the shoulders of the heads of the Kashrut system. Most of them remain anonymous and we have no idea what is going on behind the Kosher label adorning every product, indicating that it is truly “Kosher for Passover.” In this article, we will give you a quick glimpse into the Kosher labels and the story regarding it.

The strong stand and responsibility that the head of the London Beit Din, Rabbi Yosef Zvi Halevi Dunner, zt”l, took concerning the Kashrut system “Kedasya”, which he headed for more than fifty years, was outstanding, bordering on self-sacrifice. For over the last thirty years he would come every year to Eretz Yisrael, in order to personally supervise the baking of the machine matzot for the Festival of Pesach, benefitting the Jews of England.

Once, his grandson saw him muttering something during the baking of the matzot. When he asked him what he was saying, he explained: At the beginning of the baking process, I pray that no error should result from our efforts and the baking of the matzot should be accomplished properly. At the end, I pray that all those who eat from these matzot should eat them for the sake of Heaven; for the sake of matzot of mitzvah.

Twice it happened that his



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fingers were cut in the process of baking matzot. Once it happened in a bakery in England, and before they rushed him to the hospital for medical attention, he did not lose his wits and instructed his *mashgichim* about how to continue with the supervision to substitute for him before he lost consciousness. The

non-Jewish owners of the bakery were amazed and declared: “We never came across a person who so courageously overcame his natural instincts for the sake of his principles.”

The second time, it was during the baking of matzot in Eretz Yisrael. At first, he refused to go for medical treatment, and when others urged him to rush to the hospital, he did not allow his sons to accompany him, but gave them detailed instructions of how to continue the scrupulous supervision. Even while in the hospital, he was in contact by telephone with the matzah bakery, to the astonishment of the doctors, who could not imagine how he was not writhing in agony.

Once when there was a discussion with him about the different levels of kashrut existing in various matzah bakeries, one of the people present stated that the matzot of a certain bakery did not taste good enough. Rabbi Dunner responded in amazement: I never tasted a difference in the matzot. All matzot are the same; the main thing is that we eat the matzot for the sake of the mitzvah. So how is it possible to think about the taste while eating the matzah?

MILK OF A GENTILE

Approximately fifty years ago, Rabbi Yosef Zvi Halevi Dunner went with his family to a remote village in the summer. Early every morning, he sent two of his sons to

the barn to supervise as required: “milk supervised by a Jew” while the cows were milked by the Gentile, so that the milk should not be milk of a Gentile.

One day, the boys came a little late for the beginning of milking, so they did not want to take the milk. They only took two bottles for the young children. When they returned to their lodging with the bottles of milk, the Rabbi refused to take them saying, even though according to the letter of the law there is a place to be more lenient for young children, he was not interested in doing so.

Moreover, if the Gentile owner of the barn would see that sometimes Jews buy his milk without supervision, in the future he would not agree to allow supervision of the milking.

The two boys retraced their steps at once to the barn to return the milk. When the Gentile heard about their refusal to use his milk, he got very angry and shouted: “You don’t trust me? Do you suspect me of mixing milk of other animals into the cow’s milk?!” The Gentile warned them never to come back again.

When Rabbi Yosef Zvi Halevi Dunner heard what happened, he decided to go himself to appease the Gentile. When the Gentile saw him at a distance, he began shouting and even began threatening the Rabbi that he should not come near the barn.

The Rabbi pleaded to the owner of the barn to listen to what he had to say. When he calmed down, the Rabbi explained to him in a manner that a Gentile can appreciate, that he should not think, *challilah*, that we do not trust him, but since in the Middle Ages there were Gentiles who mixed milk of other animals, which are not kosher, into the cow’s milk, the Rabbi’s instituted

The Zohar states the following: ...anyone who recites this Song each day with proper concentration merits saying it in the Future. After all, it is relevant to this world and to the World to Come, and it contains the essence of faith, and is connected to the days of Mashiach. It is the foundation for all the other praises that is said Above and below. This is because anyone who merits [reciting] the Song in this world – will merit [reciting] it in the World to Come, and will merit [singing] praises in the days of Mashiach with joy of the Divine Presence with the A-Imighty!



that a Jew should always be present during milking to supervise that milk of other animals were not mixed into the cow's milk.

Upon hearing this, the Gentile asked the Rabbi to come into his office. He locked the door and the windows, and after he made sure that no one could hear from outside, he said: "I would like to confide to the Rabbi something on condition that you will not tell it to anyone. Your Rabbis are smarter than you think. They know what they are talking about, and they are right. Behind the barn, I hide a pig-pen and I usually mix the milk of the pigs into the cow's milk."

Rabbi Dunner was stunned and asked the owner of the barn: "Are you not afraid that you are breaking the law and you might get caught?!" The Gentile explained that the government looks at the percentage of fat in the milk. Pigs milk have a much higher percentage of fat than cow's milk, and therefore, it is possible to add a large amount of water and mix it into the cow's milk without anyone noticing it at all.

Of course, the Gentile agreed to have Rabbi Dunner's son continue to come supervise the milking of the cows.

The head of the Beit Din of London used to recount this story, since during his years in the Rabbinate people tried over and over again to argue with him that nowadays there is no question regarding the milk of Gentiles...



"By reciting 'Hashem saved' [the Song at the Sea] joyfully, he is forgiven for all his sins without suffering penance. 'Hashem saved' should be said with the cantillations. It is stated in the "Sefer Chareidim" among the ten segulot that he listed for which one is atoned for all his sins without suffering penance, is the segulah to recite 'Hashem saved' with great joy and with its cantillations, just as Bnei Yisrael said it with extraordinary joy at the time of the Splitting of the Sea."

SONG THAT SHATTERS ALL BARRIERS

Throughout all Jewish communities, the practice of saying the Song at the Sea after *Pesukei D'zimra* every day has been adopted to praise Hashem for all the wondrous miracles He performed for us with our ancestors. In these days, when we are in the midst of the Festival of Pesach, the Festival of the Redemption of the Jewish people, when we thank and sing songs of gratitude to Hashem for the marvels that He displayed to our forefathers in Egypt and at the Sea, we need to reflect and appreciate the virtue and importance of the Song at the Sea that we recite before Him each day.

Since ancient times, there were Jewish communities that instituted reading the Song at the Sea as an expression of acknowledgment and praise for Hashem for miracles and salvation that they experienced. This is evident by the Response of the gaon Rabbi Mordechai Carmi, a leading Rabbi from the West, in his sefer "*Ma'amar Mordechai*" (566:5): This custom was instituted in various places from ancient times on the date that the miracle occurred, to celebrate it as a Festival of praise and gratitude to Hashem, and the parashah of the Song at the Sea is read from the Sefer Torah; with the blessings on the Torah. Even if that day falls on Monday or Thursday, the Song at the Sea is read instead of

the reading of the parashah of the week. The source of this custom is based on sacred foundations and can be relied upon."

The Zohar (*Beshalach* 54b) explicitly praises the virtue of reciting the Song at the Sea each day. It states the following: To teach us; that anyone who recites this Song each day with proper concentration merits saying it in the Future. After all, it is relevant to this world and to the World to Come, and it contains the essence of faith, and is connected to the days of Mashiach. It is the foundation for all the other praises that is said Above and below. This is because anyone who merits [reciting] the Song in this world – will merit [reciting] it in the World to Come, and will merit [singing] praises in the days of Mashiach with joy of the Divine Presence with the A-lmighty!

The sefer "*Yesod v'Shoresh Ha'Avodah*" states: And now your eyes behold that all the praise that the Zohar bestows about reciting the Song, etc, is not upon one who just says the words of the Song as lip service without truly meaning to thank and praise Hashem, but certainly the great merit in its recitation is to constantly [recall and] relate the greatness and wonders that Hashem performed for all the holy Jewish Nation in Egypt and at the Sea.

WITH GREAT JOY

The author of the Shelah Hakadosh (*Masechet Yoma*) adds

to the subject of reciting the Song each day that it should be said with great joy: One should make sure while reciting the Song at the Sea each day, that it is said out loud with great joy as if that moment he was leaving Egypt, etc. Hashem commanded us to recite the Song each day, as it is stated "And they spoke saying," and Rashi explains that this implies that we should say it every day with great joy, just as [it was said] the first time we said it. If so, certainly the segulah applies when it is said each day in the same way that it was said originally.

RECITING THE SONG WHILE STANDING

In the sefer "*Ketzot Hashulchan*" the author cites a basis for those that follow the custom to stand while reciting the Song. According to the Mishnah (*Sotah* 27b), when Moshe recited the Song at the Sea, Bnei Yisrael followed along as when saying Hallel. We rule that Hallel has to be said while standing; thus we infer that also the Song has to be said while standing.

AS IF HE WAS THERE

"By reciting 'Hashem saved' [the Song at the Sea] joyfully, he is forgiven for all his sins without suffering penance. 'Hashem saved' should be said with the cantillations. It is stated in the "*Sefer Chareidim*" among the ten segulot that he listed for which

one is atoned for all his sins without suffering penance, is the segulah to recite 'Hashem saved' with great joy and with its cantillations, just as Bnei Yisrael said it with extraordinary joy at the time of the Splitting of the Sea. Consequently, I was accustomed to recite it with its cantillations as if reading from the Torah." ("*Yosef Ometz*")

Another worthy custom that the Chida cites in his sefer "*Avodat Hakodesh*" is: "A person should imagine as if he was standing on the dry bed in the Sea, and the Egyptians are drowning and he is being saved."

An additional quote from the Chida (Sefer *Hanhagot Tzaddikim* 47a) is the following: "Whoever recites the Song at the Sea with joy, and he imagines as if he was the one who was saved from the Sea, and Pharaoh and his army are drowning and he is chanting the Song; through this he is atoned for all his sins."

ALL SALVATIONS

The first letters of "*Az yashir Moshe uvene Yisrael et haShirah hazot – Then Moshe and the Children of Israel chose to sing this song*" has the same numerical value as the word "*mazla* – fortune."

In the same vein that it is written in the holy sefarim, this implies that by reciting the Song one merits children, life, abundant livelihood, the booty at the Sea, and all salvations. All this is dependent upon "*mazla*." ("*Chaim v'Shalom*")

TEHILLIM

A Commentary on Tehillim, excerpts from the Sefer of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu, shlit"a, which is about to be published, G-d willing

Thus, only because Chizkiyahu did not sing Shirah to Hashem, he did not merit being Mashiach, despite his tremendous righteousness. Subsequently, the Redemption was delayed, and until today we are still in exile.

"I have placed the L-rd before me constantly; because (He is) at my right hand, I will not falter" (Tehillim 16:8)

With this pasuk, King David is teaching us one of the most basic foundations in serving Hashem, which is "I have placed the L-rd before me constantly." This implies that a person must always be aware of the reality of Hashem's presence.

Not only when a person is involved in sanctified matters must he know Whom he is serving, but even when he is engaged in his mundane affairs, he must always be aware of Hashem's presence in his life. When a person works for a living, or when he is engaged in his physical necessities, such as eating, drinking, and so on, he must remember that he is not doing it for pleasure only, but his entire purpose in taking care of his physical needs is in order to be able to fulfill Hashem's will, as it is stated (*Mishlei* 3:6), "Know Him in all your ways."

A person who is always aware of the presence of Hashem is imbued with humility and fear of Heaven, and therefore he does not stumble in sin, and the Yetzer Hara cannot sway him. Also all his mitzvot are performed perfectly, since he remembers Whom he is serving. Furthermore, all his mundane actions are considered mitzvot, because he performs them for the sake of Heaven. This level is extremely lofty and is acquired only after laboring to achieve it. A person who reaches this level is close to the level of prophecy (*Shemonah Prakim l'Rambam*, 5).

In fact, we find among the great

tzaddikim that they would always sense Hashem's presence, and they would not be distracted from this awareness even for a short time. Thus we see regarding Avraham Avinu, when Hashem revealed Himself to him when he was sick and in pain following his Brit Milah, and the angels came to visit, he asked Hashem's permission to invite them in because of his fondness for the mitzvah. Indeed, Hashem agreed and remained in his company the entire day (*Shabbat* 127a). Avraham merited this because all his actions derived from a constant awareness of "I have placed the L-rd before me constantly."

Even Yaakov Avinu, when he met with Yosef, his beloved son, after twenty-two years of being separated from him, he recited Kriyat Shema (*Rashi, Bereishit* 46:29). This seems strange. Could Yaakov not find a different time to recite Kriyat Shema? However, Yaakov did not want to lose even for a moment his awareness that he is standing before the Presence of Hashem, and he feared that his great emotions upon meeting his beloved son would distract him momentarily from this awareness. Therefore, he transcended his emotions and recited Kriyat Shema at that critical time, in order to subjugate himself entirely to Hashem's will.

Chazal relate (*Yoma* 47a) about Kimchit, who had seven sons, and they all served as a Kohen Gadol. When they asked her how she merited this, she answered that never did the beams in her home see her braided hair. Obviously, Kimchit's fear of Heaven and her constant awareness of Hashem's existence in her life helped her maintain a lofty level of modesty. As a reward, she merited having seven sons serve as a Kohen Gadol.

I can attest to my father and teacher, Rabbi Moshe Aharon Pinto, zy"ta, that he lived all his life in sanctity and purity, with a tangible awareness of Hashem's constant presence, as it is stated "I have

placed the L-rd before me constantly." All the time his face radiated pure fear of Heaven, and he would conduct himself at all times as if he was standing before the King of kings, Hakadosh Baruch Hu. He merited this virtue because his service of Hashem was performed with all his heart and from an intense love of Hashem, and all his limbs and senses were sanctified to the service of Hashem.

How does one reach such an exalted level of "I have placed the L-rd before me constantly?" This is by imagining to oneself constantly the reality of Hashem's existence, and that He is watching over us at every moment and providing us with life constantly. Many mitzvot are mentioned in the Torah which accompany a person all the time and remind him constantly of Hashem's Presence.

However, it is important to make sure not to observe the mitzvot by rote, as in "with their mouth and with their lips they honor Me, but their heart they draw far away from Me" (*Yeshayahu* 29:13), but one must intend with every deed for Whose sake is he performing it. In this way a person will always be aware of Hashem's Presence and he will merit that Hashem will always be at his side to protect him, as King David said further on in the pasuk, "[He is] at my right hand, I will not falter."

"But I trusted in Your loving-kindness, my heart will rejoice in Your salvation; I will sing to the L-rd for He has bestowed [it] upon me" (Tehillim 13:6)

The Rav of Brisk, Rabbi Yitzchak Zev Halevi Soloveitchik (*Chiddushei*

תְּהִלָּתְךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ
אֲרָמְךָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ
אֲלֹהֵינוּ
הַמְלִיךָ
וְאֶבְרַכְךָ
שְׂמֵךְ
לְעוֹלָם
וָעַד



Torah no. 127) explains in the name of his father, Rabbi Chaim Halevi of Brisk, the issue of Shirah (song), recited after experiencing a miracle. Can one recite Shirah to Hashem even before the salvation, since he is confident and trusts that Hashem will save him, for example, when he is promised by a prophet that he will be saved, and the like? Or does one recite Shirah of thanksgiving only after the actual salvation takes place?

He brings proof from the pasuk above that upon trusting in Hashem before experiencing salvation, one does not recite Shirah, but one rejoices, as it is stated, “But I **trusted** in Your loving-kindness, my heart will **rejoice** in Your salvation.” This implies that when a person trusts in Hashem’s Kindness that He will perform a miracle for him, he is joyful in his confidence, however he still did not as of yet he has not experienced salvation, thus he does not sing Shirah. Nevertheless, after Hashem saves a person in a miraculous way, he can sing Shirah to Hashem, as it is stated, “I will sing to the L-rd for He has bestowed [it] upon me,” signifying that singing is sung verbally only after the actual salvation. This is because Shirah to Hashem has to burst forth from the depths of one’s heart, and such an intense joy comes only after a person has tangibly experienced a miraculous salvation.

Similarly, Chazal say (*Berachot* 35:1) that Shirah – a song of praise is sung only over wine. The Rav of Brisk asks a question regarding this (*Reshimat Shiurim Sukkah* 50:2): we find many times that Shirah was sung without wine, such as the Shirah that Bnei Yisrael sang by the Sea, the Shirah sung at the time when the Korban Pesach was sacrificed, and so forth. One can see his explanation at the source.

We can explain it in a different way. The reason why Shirah is sung specifically over wine is because the nature of wine is to bring a person to happiness and joy, as it is stated (*Tehillim* 104:15), “And wine, which cheers man’s heart.” Since the Shirah has to burst forth from the depths of

one’s heart, and cannot be superficial, it was decided that Shira - a song of praise is sung only over wine.

But when a person personally experiences a tangible miracle, as was the case with Bnei Yisrael at the Sea, or he recalls a great salvation that he experienced, as it was when the Korban Pesach was brought in the times of the Beit Hamikdash, he rejoices in his heart and is overcome with happiness. Consequently, he does not need to drink wine in order to express thanksgiving, because the joy bursts forth instinctively from the depths of his heart.

The immense importance of reciting Shirah before Hashem is learned from Chazal (*Sanhedrin* 94a), who relate that Hashem wanted to make King Chizkiyahu the

Mashiach, but the Attribute of Justice argued:

Ribbono Shel Olam, how can it be that King David, who sang so much Shirah and praise to You, You did not make him Mashiach, and Chizkiyahu, whom you performed great miracles for, but did not sing Shirah, You intend to make him Mashiach? Thus, only because Chizkiyahu did not sing Shirah to Hashem, he did not merit being Mashiach, despite his tremendous righteousness. Subsequently, the Redemption was delayed, and until today we are still in exile.

It is important to be aware of how important it is to praise and thank Hashem from the depths of our hearts for all the favors and kindness He bestows upon us.

“He who walks uprightly and works righteousness, and speaks truth in his heart” (*Tehillim* 15:2)

The Radak explains that this pasuk describes a man who only speaks truth, to the extent that no falsehood can be found in his words. Moreover, the truth that he speaks with his mouth is also what is found in his heart; it is not mere lip-service. Just as the words he utters are true, so too his inner thoughts are true, and he does not ponder thoughts idly which he has no intention of acting upon.

As an example of such conduct, the Gemara cited the example of Rav Safra (*Makkot* 24a). Once Rabbi Safra had an item to sell, and a man came to him to buy it when he was in the midst of reciting Kriyat Shema. The buyer offered a certain price for the item, and Rabbi Safra agreed to the deal in his heart, but he could not respond because he was in the middle of reciting Kriyat Shema. Since the buyer did not receive a response, he thought that perhaps Rabbi Safra did not agree to the price he suggested, so he offered a higher price. When Rabbi Safra concluded the Kriyat Shema he told the man that he was ready to sell him the item for the original price that he had proposed, because he had already consented to that price in his heart, and only because he could not talk while reciting Kriyat Shema, he had not expressed his consent immediately. This is the way a person whose mouth speaks what is truly in his heart conducts himself, as it is stated, “He speaks truth in his heart.”

Also concerning the holy Tribes we find this virtue of sincerity, where their mouths and hearts worked in union. When they felt that they hated Yosef in their hearts because of his dreams, they could not speak to him in a friendly way. They did not outwardly display a cheerful countenance with inner hatred, but they were honest in their relationship and they expressed how much they hated him. This was the virtue of the Tribes who were sincere and did not act in a hypocritical manner.

Once when I visited Argentina to bring merit to the people, I met a Jew that I knew on the street, who had come to hear my lecture. This man lowered his eyes and turned his head in order not to stumble by looking at a prohibited sight. When I probed him if he always conducted himself in this manner, he admitted the truth and confessed that he usually acted this way, but sometimes he wasn’t so careful. When I heard his honest response, I told him that now I respect

him even more because I see what a sincere person he is.

However, there are people whose mouths and hearts are not in union, and they speak glibly. While they speak, they say one thing, but they mean something else completely. One who behaves in this way enters the category of people that Hashem despises (*Pesachim* 113b). And one who, in addition to his glib speech, also flatters others, distances himself even more from Hashem and belongs to one of the four classes of people who will not receive the presence of the Shechinah (*Sotah* 42a).

One should always be careful to guard himself well from hypocrisy, in thought as well as in action, so that he should merit achieving the exalted virtue of being one who “Speaks truth in his heart.”

“He does the will of those who fear Him,” meaning, one who calls Him “sincerely,” fully believing that only He can help him, Hashem not only fulfills his request, but also gratifies his heart, and even things that he did not ask for, but wished for them, He bestows upon him generously and graciously.

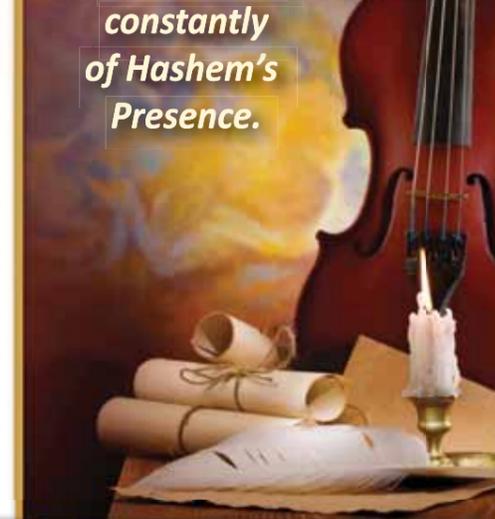
How does one reach such an exalted level of “I have placed the L-rd before me constantly?” This is by imagining constantly the reality of Hashem’s existence, and that He is watching over us at every moment and providing us with life constantly. Many mitzvot are mentioned in the Torah which accompany a person all the time and remind him constantly of Hashem’s Presence.

“[He is] the G-d Whose way is perfect; the word of the L-rd is refined; He is a shield to all who trust in Him” (*Tehillim* 18:31)

Chazal explain in the Midrash on *Tehillim* that Hashem did not give the mitzvot to Bnei Yisrael for other than to refine them. After all, it seems that there is no reason that Hashem would command us to slaughter an animal specifically by slaughtering its neck and not the back of its head, but in order that the mitzvot should refine us.

In fact, we are given the reasons for many mitzvot, and it is proper to concentrate on the essence of the mitzvah when performing it, because the mitzvot require concentration (*Berachot* 13a). However, even when one does not understand its reason, one should not neglect performing it, since the mitzvot were given to us in order to refine us.

When a person fulfills the mitzvot, which he does not comprehend its reason, he proves that he is a servant of Hashem, because the entire essence of a servant is to fulfill the command of his master



We are here in this world only to buy and not to sell. We buy Torah and mitzvot, and do not sell the merit of the Torah for worldly pleasures.

even when he does not understand its reason. Once the servant disregards even one command of his master, he has already cast off the yoke of servitude and is no longer called a servant.

However, when a Jew fulfills all the mitzvot of the Torah with joy and passion because Hashem commanded them, even when he does not understand its reason, he achieves fear of Heaven and recognition of Hashem. In this way the Jew draws closer to Hashem through fulfilling the mitzvot, and his soul becomes refined and pure.

For observance of the mitzvot, we earn an immense reward in the World to Come, and as explained at the end of the Midrash cited above, discussing the issue of slaughtering the animal at the neck rather than the back of its head, “If you didn’t consume [your reward] in this world, I promise that a grand feast awaits you in the World to Come.”

“Praiseworthy is the people that has this; praiseworthy is the people whose G-D is the L-rd”
(Tehillim 144:15)

We may ask, if King David is talking about all the Jewish people in this pasuk, and includes himself among them, as in the words preceding these, when he says, “For our sons are like saplings,” etc. “Our corners are full,” etc. “Our princes are borne,” etc, then also here he should have stated in the same way – “Praiseworthy are we that have this,” etc. Why does he speak in third person, as if he is referring to different people, saying “Praiseworthy is the people that has this.”

We can explain this according to the Ben Ish Chai, ז”ל, (*Parashat Vayigash Shanah Shniya*) in the name of

the author of “*Ollelot Efraim*,” that this world is compared to a market where there are many buyers and sellers. The tzaddikim come to buy more and more merchandise which they bring with them to the World to Come, such as Torah and mitzvot that accompany the person to the next life [see *Avot* 6:9], whereas the wicked do not buy anything, but rather sell the few good deeds that they did for worldly pleasures.

According to this he explained the pasuk (*Bereishit* 46:33-34): *V’haya ki yikra lachem Pharaoh ve’amar mah ma’aseichem v’amertem anshei mikneh hayu avdecha minureimu v’ad atta gam anachnu gam avoteinu – And if it comes to pass that Pharaoh calls you and asks, “What is your occupation?” You shall say, “Your servants have been owners of livestock from our youth until now, both we and our ancestors.”* **Mikneh** lit. is from the root word to buy. This implies that we are here in this world only to buy and not to sell. We buy Torah and mitzvot, and do not sell the merit of the Torah for worldly pleasures.

It follows, that Pharaoh reminded the Tribes that in this world one needs to be in a constant state of buying. Therefore, he asked them “*Mah ma’aseichem – what is your occupation*,” because even the Nations, who are sunk deep in the temptations of this world, know the truth that this is not the objective of the world, but only the study of Torah of the Jewish people is the true goal, and this is what keeps the entire Universe in existence. Hence, they remind Am Yisrael not to slacken in their prayers and study of Torah, so that the world should continue to exist.

On Chanukah (2006) the President of the United States lit the Chanukah candles in front of the whole world, and said that Israel should pray to the Creator of the Universe about the situation of the world, because the situation is very difficult. Thus we see that even a

person who reached the summit of human ambition, and holds the reigns of authority in the world, knows in his heart that he is not the one sustaining the world, but it is Am Yisrael, through their prayers and their study of Torah.

This is what King David implied: “Praiseworthy is the people that has this,” since not only we know that we are praiseworthy to have Hashem as our G-d, but also all the Nations of the world, and even our greatest enemies know this, and in their hearts they cry out “Praiseworthy is the people that has this, and praiseworthy is the people whose G-d is the Lord.”

There is an allusion to this in the pasuk, since the letters שׂכָּכָה (this) has the same numerical value as “Moshe.” This signifies that the Nations of the world say – praiseworthy is the people who possess the Torah, which they received through Moshe on Mount Sinai, and consequently they became the Chosen people of Hashem.

“The L-rd is near to all who call Him, to all who call Him with sincerity”
(Tehillim 145:18)

There is a lesson to be learned from King David’s words in this pasuk. It speaks about those who call to Hashem and beg Him to help them. If so, it should have stated, “The L-rd hears all who call to him.” A person who turns to his friend and calls to him and asks for his help, what does it help him if his friend merely draws near to him? This was not his request, but that he should listen to him and help him. If so, why does King David say that one who calls to Hashem with sincerity and pleads for his help and salvation, Hashem draws closer to him?

We can explain this in the following way. Chazal say (*Ketubot*

111b) “The man who [by smiling affectionately] shows his teeth to his friend is better than one who gives bins of milk to drink, for it is said in Scriptures, And his teeth white with milk.” This also needs to be clarified, since it is talking about a person who needs a cup of milk. What does it help him if his fellow shows his teeth affectionately to him? Will it satisfy his hunger or quench his thirst?

Chazal also bring (*Kiddushin* 31a), “One may give his father pheasants as food, yet [this] drives him from the world; whereas another may make him grind in a mill and [this] brings him to the world to come!” Rashi comments that honoring him verbally with comforting words is preferable. This too is puzzling. If his father is hungry, how do the words of consolation help him more than feeding him satisfying delicious food?

The reason is as Chazal teach us that nourishing a person’s emotions – his soul – is preferable to him than nourishing his body. A person who feels lonely and abandoned, even if he is very hungry, will prefer being received warmly and lovingly by his friend, rather than receiving a cup of milk from him. Doctors determined that when a patient is suffering from a dangerous illness and he despairs from improving, it is much more difficult to cure him and help him recover than another patient who did not lose hope, since his state of mind affects the condition of his body.

When a man calls his friend and asks for help, if he helps him with a frown and contorted face, he did not perform the chessed properly. On the contrary, even if one does not have the ability to help a lot, but he shows his teeth affectionately to his friend and shares in his pain, it is much more beneficial.

Regarding this King David said that when a person calls to Hashem sincerely and asks for His help,

knowing that there is none other than Him, and only He can save him even from the most difficult situations, then Hashem not only will help him and fulfill his request, but also will draw closer to him and share in his pain, which is much more beneficial than filling his physical need.

However, one merits this only if he calls to Hashem “sincerely.” One who places his trust in man, and just goes through the motions of praying to Hashem, and thinks to himself that even if it won’t really help, at least it won’t cause harm; this is not a sincere call for help. Hashem does not desire to draw close to such a person, and even if sometimes He fulfills his request, it is not with a “happy countenance,” but with a cold, set “face.”

King David goes on to say (*Tehillim* 145:19), “He does the will of those who fear Him,” meaning, one who calls Him “sincerely” fully believing that only He can help him, Hashem not only fulfills his request, but also gratifies his heart, and even things that he did not ask for, but wished for them, He bestows upon him generously and graciously.

Someone approached me and began complaining against Hashem that despite his prayers and supplications, Hashem does not rescue him from his troubles, and moreover, just adds to his pain and hardship. I told him that from his words it is evident that he is not calling to Hashem “sincerely,” but only providing lip service so that He should be saved from his difficult straights to experience relief. I consoled him and gave him some tips on how to develop a close relationship with Hashem and to pray sincerely, without expecting any reward, etc., and then surely he will perceive amidst the hardship, how Hashem is treating him with goodness and kindness in His great mercy.



THE INSPIRING JOURNEY

TO THE UKRAINE TO HUNGARY AND TO POLAND

A personal interview with Moreinu v'Rabbeinu the tzaddik Rabbi **David Chananya Pinto**, shlit"a, full of revelations of his journey to the graves of tzaddikim in Europe • At the graves of the saintly leaders of Chassidut, their disciples and the students of their disciples • At the grave of the Rema and a visit to his Beit Hakneset • At the graves of the Admorim of the Gur dynasty • Astounding miracles that took place during prayers and the salvation that arrived moments afterwards • In addition: The ways of the tzaddik Rabbi **Chaim Pinto**, zya"a, in serving Hashem

By Rabbi Yosef Alkouby

The conversations with Moreinu v'Rabbeinu HaRav, shlit"a, take place between one trip and another, between lectures, and amidst bringing merit to the public in one place and elsewhere.

The Rabbi weighs his words, in his usual fashion. Sometimes there is excitement in his voice when he recalls a point in time and place where he experienced a special inspiration during his prayers, and other times a smile of great joy radiates his face when he is informed of salvation that arrived during their prayers in a certain place.

At first the Rabbi begins: As is our custom every year, the week before the Hilulla of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu my grandfather, the well-known tzaddik Rabbi **Chaim Pinto** zy"a, which takes place in Mogador, Morocco, attended by a large following coming from all over the world, we travel with a limited group of family members and friends to the graves of tzaddikim in Europe.



The grave-site of Rabbi Chaim Pinto, zya"a, in Mogador, Morocco

Every single tzaddik living in the world has a spiritual path of his own, his personal way of serving Hashem through which he also influences his followers, his disciples, and all those who come to receive his blessings

and to learn from him. Furthermore, every individual tzaddik has a unique influence affecting people who seek to draw from his spiritual wellsprings even after his passing.

"Tzaddikim are greater after their passing than during their life-time," is what Chazal teach. The merits of every tzaddik is magnified after their demise – depending on the way he would serve Hashem during his life on earth. We tried recalling the sefarim, the lessons and merits of each tzaddik by his grave, in order to arouse mercy upon Am Yisrael in the merit of the unique virtues of that tzaddik.

For example, when we arrived in Poland, we had the privilege to pray at the grave of the Rema, Rabbi Moshe Isserlis, who was one of the foremost Ashkenazi poskim of his times and one of the great tzaddikim of all generations. To this day, all the Ashkenazi Jews follow in his ways according to his sefer, the "Mapah" on the Shulchan Aruch, as a clear final conclusion on Jewish law (Maran the Chatam Sofer stated colloquially about this, quoting the pasuk "U'nei Yisrael yotzim beyad **Rema** – and the children of Israel were marching out triumphantly"). The grave of the Rema is found in the city of Cracow, by the banks of the Vistula River, south of the Royal Castle Hill by the Wawel Valley.

It is told about the Rema that already in his youth all the great Sages of the generation recognized his outstanding greatness in Torah. When the Rema became Bar Mitzvah, he was so well-versed in Torah that at that young age he was ordained as a Rabbi!

Already at the age of eighteen he was appointed by the people of Cracow for the lofty position of judge in their city's largest Beit Din. At this age he mastered the entire Torah! When he was appointed for this prestigious position and arrived at his post, he received a festive reception reserved for great Torah Sages – towering Rabbis.

As was the custom in those days, there was a meeting held between the presiding judge of the Beit Din and the King of Poland. The King saw the preparations for the appointment of the presiding judge of the largest Beit Din in the city, and he prepared himself



The grave-site of the Rema, zy"a, Cracow

to honor the one who would lead the Jewish residents of the largest city. What a great disappointment it was to see that the person for whom all the festivities were solemnly arranged with all the Jewish residents was none other than a young man...

The king was very angry since he thought the Jews were mocking him. But as he began speaking with the Rabbi, he understood that no one compared to him, and he was convinced. From then on the King began to accord him honor as a royal king and even took his advice, seeing that this was a man whose wisdom in Torah filled him with the a G-dly spirit and exceptional insight.

This is the power of Torah! This is the great power of one who studies Torah with self-sacrifice and devotes all his energies to it from an early age. He merits all the wisdom contained in the Torah.

DEEP ROOTS

The exalted greatness of the Rema stems from deep sanctified roots: There is a story about his father, Rabbi Isserlis, who was one of the most prominent people of the Cracow community, a successful merchant and community leader. Thanks to the elevated status of the father, the King of Poland allowed him to conduct business and trade in Vilna without restrictions.

Despite his flourishing business, he was very careful to close his shop at noon on Erev Shabbat Kodesh in order to free himself from all mundane occupations and devote himself entirely to preparing for Shabbat.

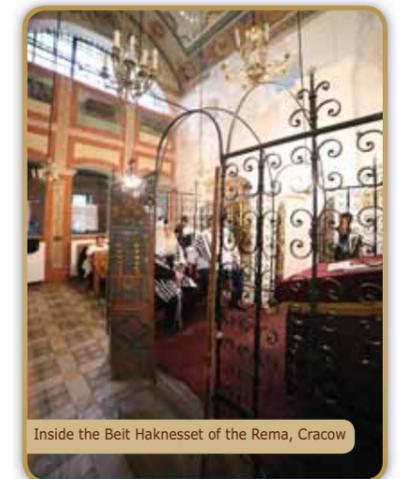
Once the Yetzer Hara, none other than the Satan, came to him in the form of an important Minister and began collecting great quantities of expensive merchandise to place a profitable order. The Minister took his time comparing the value of the merchandise and measuring quantities, and the merchandise piled up on the check-out counter for payment.

It was Friday and noon was fast approaching. Rabbi Isserlis tried hinting to him that the store was closing soon, but the Minister was consumed with his order and figured that since he was purchasing such an enormous amount of merchandise, certainly no sensible merchant would want to lose out by closing his shop in the middle of such a profitable transaction.

The hour approached noon and Rabbi Isserlis announced, "The store is closing now!"

The Minister watched in astonishment as Rabbi Isserlis firmly placed the keys in the door. He began begging the owner to wait until he would complete his large order. "Wait! In about fifteen minutes I will finish my order." But Rabbi Isserlis did not want to disturb his preparations in honor of the Shabbat Queen, not even at the cost of the enormous profit he would lose by cancelling the large order.

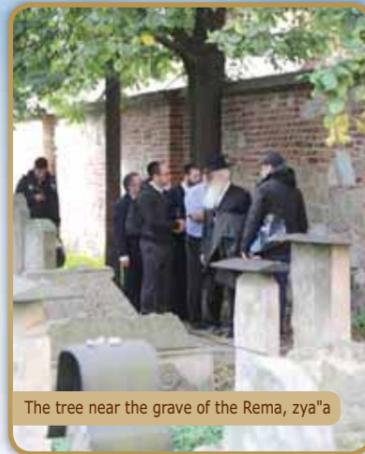
The store indeed closed with the goods lying on the counters, and the profits did not materialize, but a greater reward, larger and more meaningful came to him from Heaven for overcoming the enormous challenge of money. A son was born to him shortly after this event,



Inside the Beit Hakneset of the Rema, Cracow



The Beit Hakneset of the Rema, Cracow



The tree near the grave of the Rema, zya" a

they also desecrated the Jewish cemetery in Cracow. At that time, the branches of the tree bent over and hid the gravestone of the Rema. Hundreds of gravestones were desecrated at the cemetery, but the gravestone of the Rema remained complete until the present day.



In Cracow we were privileged to visit the city's Great Synagogue. The huge Beit Hakneset was exceptionally beautiful and only recently it was returned to the Jews.

We also visited the graves of the gaon **Rabbi Yoel Sirkis, ztk"l**, the **Bach – Bayit Chadash**, **Rabbi Nathan Nota Shapira, ztk"l**, author of the **"Megalleh Amukot"** (one of the great Rabbis of Poland and an outstanding Mekubal), **Rabbi Yehoshua Heshel, author of the "Meginei Shlomo,"** **Rabbeinu the "Tosfot Yom Tov,"** **Rabbi Yom Tov Lipman Heller**, and many other tzaddikim buried in this ancient cemetery.

who illuminated all the Jews with his greatness in Torah and with the "Mapah" (lit. tablecloth) spread over the "Shulchan Aruch" (lit. set table) in an outstanding sefer, which is one of the most fundamental sefarim on halachah of the Jewish people.

The Rema's father was very wealthy. He built a Beit Hakneset for his son in Cracow. This Beit Hakneset served also as a Beit Midrash for the Yeshiva of the Rema. During the second World War, the Beit Hakneset turned into a warehouse for the local fire department and was thus saved from demolition.

In the Ark of the Beit Hakneset there was a Sefer Torah that the Rema personally wrote, which was used only on Yom Kippur because of its uniqueness and sanctity. After the Nazis entered Cracow, this Sefer Torah was lost and has not been found until today.

Approximately ten years after the Holocaust, the place was redeemed and it serves as a Beit Hakneset until today. On the left of the Ark in the Beit Hakneset there is a "Ner Tamid – an eternal light" burning constantly with the inscription "Ner Tamid in memory of the Rema, z"l," and on the right there is a plaque commemorating the place right where the Rema used to pray. There is also a chair reserved on the eastern wall in honor of the Rema.

The Rema passed away on Lag B'Omer. It is well-known that the Rema lived thirty-three years, composed thirty-three sefarim, and died on the thirty-third day of the Omer, and in the eulogies, the Rabbis

praised him for thirty-three virtues he excelled in.

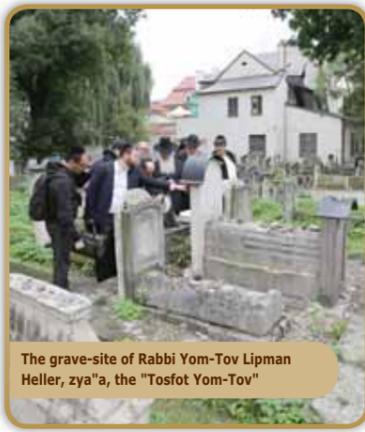
The graves of the Rema, his father and family members are located in the ancient Jewish cemetery in Cracow, just behind the Rema's Beit Hakneset. The Jews of the city would tell the traditional story that the manuscript that the Rema began to compose, but stopped in the middle, was buried by the Rema under a tree in the cemetery of Cracow, and before he died, the Rema ordered to bury him under that tree. Ever since the manuscript was buried under the tree, it began to flourish in an extraordinary manner.

When eventually the leaders of the community wanted to uproot the tree in order to make way for the masses of Jews coming to pray at the grave of the Rema, a powerful storm suddenly hit the area; the strong winds prevented them from performing this task and the tree remained in its place.

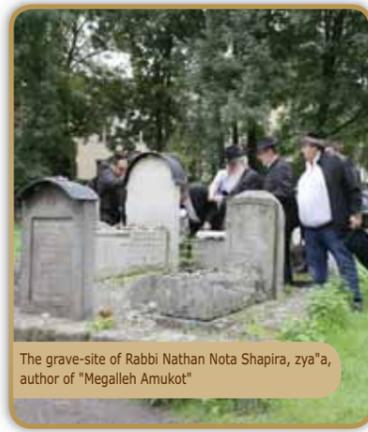
When the Nazis arrived in Poland



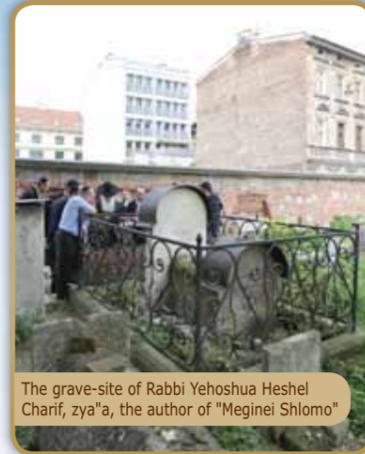
The grave-site of Rabbi Yoel Sirkish, zya" a, the "Bach"



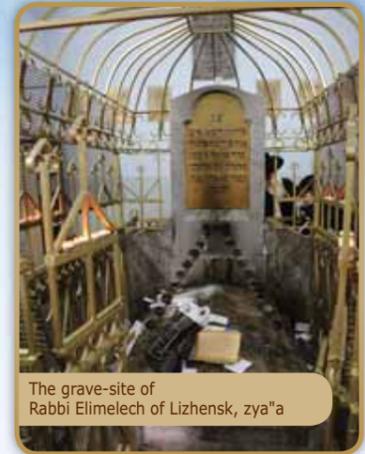
The grave-site of Rabbi Yom-Tov Lipman Heller, zya" a, the "Tosfot Yom-Tov"



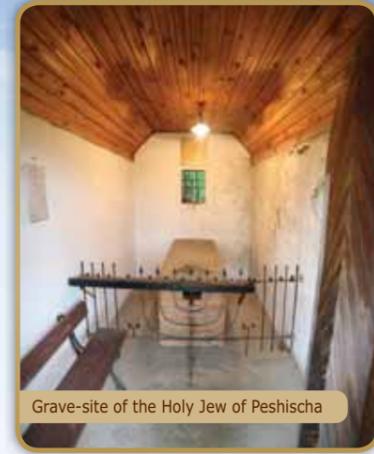
The grave-site of Rabbi Nathan Nota Shapira, zya" a, author of "Megalleh Amukot"



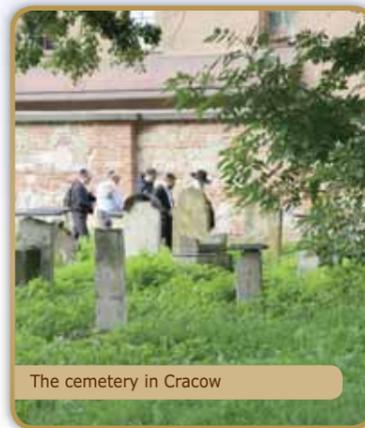
The grave-site of Rabbi Yehoshua Heshel Charif, zya" a, the author of "Meginei Shlomo"



The grave-site of Rabbi Elimelech of Lizhensk, zya" a



Grave-site of the Holy Jew of Peshischa



The cemetery in Cracow

While we were there, just at the time when we were praying at the grave of the "Bayit Chadash," a prominent Rabbi called and asked us to pray for his daughter who was in the midst of a most difficult birth. For several hours the woman was in the throes of agonizing pain, and the father called to request that we pray for mercy at the graves of the tzaddikim. Upon our arrival at the "Bayit Chadash," we prayed from the depths of our heart for her that she give birth easily and that the baby should be healthy and well in body and spirit.

Moments after starting to pray in that place, the Rabbi called back excitedly to inform us that miraculously his daughter had given birth smoothly and easily with a normal delivery and without surgery or added pain.

This is the power of faith. It is only the pure faith of Jews who believe in the great merits of the holy tzaddikim and in the power of prayer at the graves of tzaddikim, whose merits are immeasurably infinite.

A G-DLY MAN

In Poland we were privileged to also visit the grave of the famous tzaddik Rabbi Elimelech of Lizhensks, zya" a. He was really a G-dly man.

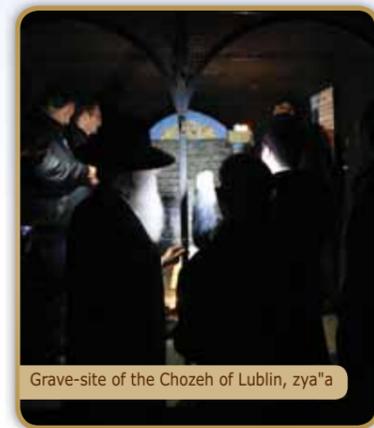
It is told that once a man came to him with his daughter, a girl of about twenty-two, who because of a medical problem, did not develop properly and looked like a child of two years old. Rabbi Elimelech, zya" a, placed his hands a bit above her head and kept raising them as if to signify growth.

While raising his hands higher, the girl suddenly began to grow taller and taller. She grew more and more until she reached a normal height of a girl her age. When she reached the average height, the stunned father turned to the tzaddik and pleaded that he cease raising his hand because if she would grow any taller, she would look strange and no one would want to marry her. The tzaddik ceased to raise his hand and with that the girl stopped growing more.

A SPIRITUAL VISION BEYOND THE PHYSICAL REALM

We continued with our journey and arrived at the grave of the holy disciple of Rabbi Elimelech of Lizhensks, who is a tzaddik referred to as the "Chozeh of Lublin" – since he was a "chozeh – prophet" who was able to perceive what was hidden from the human eye.

It is told that once a Jew came to him and asked him to write an



Grave-site of the Chozeh of Lublin, zya" a

endorsement for his sefer which he had composed. The "Chozeh" refused and did not grant his endorsement for the sefer.

Upon the man's surprise, "Why does the Rabbi refuse to give his endorsement for my sefer?" The Rabbi responded, "Because when you were writing the book, several times your Kippah fell off your head, but you continued to write with your head uncovered. I do not give endorsements to sefarim written in this way, with a lack of Yirat Shamayim!" His holy vision, seeing beyond the physical realm was astonishing. This is literally as is stated, "And he shall be animated by the fear of the L-rd," like a tzaddik who is the foundation of the world.

Later in our journey, we were able to pray in the city of Peshischa, near a disciple of the "Chozeh," who also took a major part in the spiritual leadership of the Jews of Poland, the holy tzaddik Rabbi Yaakov Yitzchak of Peshischa, known as the "Holy Jew."



Extermination Camps



Extermination Camps



Extermination Camps



Extermination Camps

ONE OPPOSITE THE OTHER

After praying by the graves of these holy tzaddikim we went to an extermination camp, where hundreds of thousands of Jews were killed in sanctification of Hashem's Name by the brutal German Nazis and their lowly collaborators in their appalling lust to spill holy pure Jewish blood.

We prayed there in memory of the holy and awesome souls, who are infinitely sanctified, as the Rambam says that the exalted level of those who are killed in sanctification of Hashem's Name is so great to the extent that even perfect tzaddikim are not worthy of residing in their presence.

This is a dreadful place where one can see both extremes of the capacity of human beings: On one hand there are the baseless murderers, who lost all human dignity and massacred people like animals; men and women, elderly people and young babies who did no harm to anyone. These are people who have lost all compassion and became entirely corrupted, behaving in an inhuman manner.

On the other hand, we see holy, refined Jews, who marched to their deaths only because they were Jews. These are people who served their Creator during their lives with simple faith, and in their death they ascended to the highest level humanly possible.

From there we continued to Warsaw. This is the city in which outstanding great tzaddikim lived and were buried. Famous Admorim, who

guided sectors of Jews in their unique service of Hashem, and in the ways of Chassidism, which they received from the holy Ba'al Shem Tov and his disciples.

Among the sacred graves in Poland, we were privileged to pray at the graves of the Admor of Gur, the "Chiddushei Harim," and also by his grandson (the second Admor of the Gur dynasty), the "Sefat Emet." This Chassidut was established by the Chiddushei Harim, who was a disciple of the Rabbi of Kotzk, who was a disciple of the "Holy Jew" of Peshischa. Thus we managed to pray at the graves of great Rabbis and their disciples and their disciples' students, who enlightened the world with their righteousness, as it is stated, "Every generation and its thinkers."

A MESSENGER IN THE DARK

Continuing on our journey, we arrived at the graves of many tzaddikim. In every place we heard more stories about the sanctity and righteousness of the Rabbanim who were buried there. We were also privileged to witness wondrous *siyata diShemaya* in the merit of the tzaddikim.

For example, in the middle of one night, when we were staying in the city of Ostroh (a city in the western Ukraine), we searched for the gravestone of the Maharsh" a. The Maharsh" a was one of the greatest commentators on the Talmud, one of the greatest "Acharonim." He was a descendant of the Klonimus family, who stem from King David.

There was a thick darkness surrounding us, and we were unfamiliar



The graves of the Admorim of Gur, zya" a

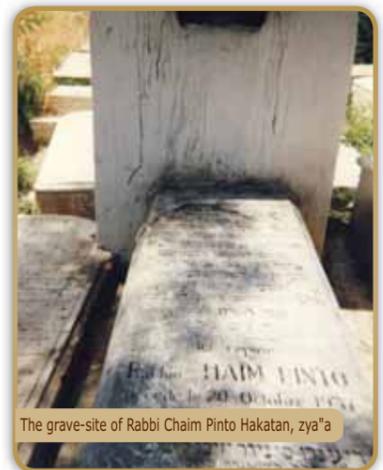
with the territory, and we mistakenly came to the wrong grave, thinking that this was the grave of the sacred Maharsh" a. We felt really lucky that we succeeded in reaching our destination despite the inky darkness that prevailed there. However, when we drew closer to the tombstone, we realized that it was a different grave.

Suddenly we saw a man, a non-Jew, enter the cemetery. He came up to us and said something. When he saw that we did not understand his language, he started using his hands to gesture in an effort to explain to us that we were not in the right place. He began to walk and signaled us to follow him. A short distance from where we first saw him, he stopped. Using the same hand gestures, he pointed to the tombstone beside which he stood, as if to say, "Here! This is the place you are looking for." We made out the letters on the tombstone, and we discovered that this was indeed the grave of Rabbeinu the holy Maharsh" a!

We looked to see who the person was, perhaps he expected to get paid



Rabbi Shlomo Luria, zya" a - Maharshal



The grave-site of Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan, zya" a

for his services, but he had disappeared as if the earth had swallowed him!

We felt that this non-Jew was sent to us by Heaven in order to get us to the grave of the Maharsh" a. With exceptional eagerness we stood by the grave for a long time to pray for Klal Yisrael and for our private requests. In our great ecstasy over the *siyata diShemaya* that accompanied us to this place, we began dancing in joy.

In addition to his greatness in Torah, and his outstanding commentary, which is studied by all Torah scholars of all Jewish communities throughout the world, the Maharsh" a was also known for his virtuous character traits. The Maharsh" a was famous during his life for his many wonderful deeds of kindness, and on the door of his house there was an inscription, "My door is open to guests." It is told that he had especial gratitude to his mother-in-law, the mother of his wife, who supported him so that he could learn Torah. She even financed the yeshiva of the Maharsh" a. Consequently, he always referred to her as his second mother, and even called himself by her name; she was called Mrs. Eidel, and he called his family name Eideliss.

Today, many people alienate themselves from their in-laws, yet the Maharsh" a behaved in the opposite manner: "All my Torah that I learned is in her merit," declared the Maharsh" a, and he named himself after her.



Of course - the Rabbi concludes his personal account - every time we travel to different countries, we discover more and more tzaddikim



The grave-site of the holy Baal Shem Tov, zya" a

and hear more and more inspiring stories about each one of them. Each tzaddik had a special character trait and way to serve Hashem in which he labored and perfected during his lifetime on earth.

There are many Chassidic sects, each one has a different method of serving Hashem according to the different nature of each person. The intention of all of them is to reach the highest level possible in the service of the Almighty. Every person is drawn to a different tzaddik according to his nature and character.

If we talk about the Baal Shem Tov, his great love for every Jew was outstanding. From him emerged several disciples who enlightened the world with their Torah and their different methods, which they learned from their Rebbe, according to their individual nature and the source of their souls.

As I understood from the Torah and the holy ways of Moreinu v' Rabbeinu my great-grandfather the holy Rabbi Chaim Pinto, zya" a, he possessed unparalleled staunch faith. He acquired trust and faith.

This is the way I myself try to follow, as I learned from my master and teacher, my father, a" h.

Faith and trust are not traits that are acquired easily. One must labor and work on these character traits in order to be able to live his life with faith.

A person can be great in Torah and wisdom, but if he does not invest efforts and labor to acquire the trait of trust, he will not achieve it at all!

Faith and trust come to man at moments when he feels that he is facing a problem, and everything seems completely dark, but he is confident that very soon everything will be resolved in the best possible way. As if he was walking in a room without electricity and no light, but is confident that in a moment the place shall be lit.

This was the virtuous trait of the holy tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto, zya" a: He was able to promise people with confidence things that no human mind can comprehend. Things that are irrational and beyond logical reason. He assured people through the force of his staunch faith which he possessed to an outstanding degree.

This is a great asset that one can achieve when he acquires the trait of faith, as they say, "Trust in the One and do not be afraid!"



Rabbi Massoud Lugasi is the man who conceived and carried out the idea of opening a Kollel for Jews of Sephardic origin in Toronto, Canada. Ultimately, he raised high the pride of Sephardic Jewelry in Toronto.



Before opening the prominent Kollel, there was a religious community of Jews only of Ashkenazi origin, Chassidish and Litvish. There were also Sephardim that lived in Toronto, but they integrated and blended into the existing communities.

Thanks to Rabbi Massoud Lugasi, the Sephardim began to establish an outstanding community. At last the Sephardim also had a respectable place of their own.

It started when on some occasion we met and talked, in our usual friendly manner, and during our conversation, Rabbi Massoud turned to me and suggested that we open a Sephardi Kollel and Beit Hakneset in Toronto in memory of my master and teacher, my father the tzaddik Rabbi Moshe Aharon Pinto, ztk"l. The place was opened and created a revolution! It made history!

One cannot but be impressed by the number of exceptional Torah scholars that are the product of this sacred place. Rabbi Massoud and



In Hungary, too, we visited the graves of holy tzaddikim.

There we went to the grave of the famous tzaddik, Rabbi Yeshaye of Kerestir, zya"á, of Hungary, who was known by his contemporaries as the "Master of Miracles."

There is a known and accepted *segulah* of hanging up a picture of the holy countenance of Rabbi Yeshaye, and in a place where his picture is hung, no mice come! This is a famous *segulah* among all Jews throughout the Diaspora.

his wife, the Rebbetzin, worked and labored with great self-sacrifice in order to establish this extraordinary institution, which serves as a beacon of light for all of the Sephardic Jews in Toronto.

The most prominent Torah scholars of the world who visited the place praised it highly and showered blessings upon Rabbi Massoud, commending the great merit of establishing a place of Torah in the memory of my father and teacher, zya"á.

I was privileged to attend an event held there in honor of laying the cornerstone and for the *Hachnasat Sefer Torah*, and I saw with my own eyes how Rabbi Massoud devotes himself even in times of great difficulty and feeling ill. May Hashem send him a speedy recovery and grant him much strength to continue in the holy work that he has taken upon himself.

There are no words to adequately describe and recount the wondrous miracles that took place in this sacred place.

I would like to extend to Rabbi Massoud and his wife, the Rabbanit, together with all those who help them, my blessings for further great achievements. May the merits of the tzaddik protect them to grant them success, blessings and great salvation. May they continue and merit raising the banner of the Torah and glorifying it.



Rabbi Chaim Lusky, who lives in Canada, told me that according to the doctors, his mother was medically incapable of having children.

His virtuous mother did not give up, and despite the gloomy predictions of the doctors, she would supplicate with prayers, shedding many tears that in the merit of Rabbi Chaim Pinto, she should have children. For some reason, she was deeply attached to the tzaddik, and she would light candles *l'iluy nishmat* Rabbi Chaim, a"á, and would strengthen herself with great faith that in his merit she would one day conceive a child. It was her faith that kept her going and not giving up in the face of all the well-meaning people who tried to make her accept her unfortunate reality, clearly predicted by the top doctors.

One night in her dream Rabbi Chaim Pinto, zya"á, appeared to her and informed her, "Behold! Your prayers were answered. You have conceived a child, who will be born in perfect health. You will give birth to a son and call him Chaim." She woke up excitedly, and in the morning told her husband, with great emotion, her vivid dream.

That month, indeed, she conceived a child!

"My mother believed wholeheartedly, and indeed, thanks to her faith and the great merit of the saintly tzaddik, she gave birth to me, and of course, she called me Chaim after the holy tzaddik, who was revealed to her in her dream." Rabbi Chaim Lusky recounted the story with great emotion about his miraculous birth in the powerful merit of faith in tzaddikim.

Our Rosh Kollel, Rabbi Nissim Malka, shlit"á, Rosh Kollel of "Peninei David," is an outstanding *Talmid Chacham* who has the honor of delivering Torah lectures in our Kollel to Torah scholars. Once he told me that every time he is in need of salvation, of Heavenly assistance, he always lights a candle *l'iluy nishmat* my master and teacher, my father Rabbi Moshe Aharon, zya"á, and pleads that his merits should stand by him.

I pray for important things," he said, explaining that, of course, he only pleads in the tzaddik's merit regarding essential matters, such as the *shidduchim* of his children, getting accepted into suitable yeshivot and seminaries, as well as other similar cases when he requires salvation, then he would light a candle *l'iluy nishmat* the tzaddik Rabbi Moshe Aharon, zya"á.

He also told me that he had once driven in his car and noticed that a truck in front of him was carrying iron rods, which were tied loosely and were in danger of falling on the vehicles behind it. Such an iron falling on a car posed an immediate danger to people's lives. Due to the attempts of the drivers behind the truck to escape the danger in front of them and swerve around the truck, there was a chain accident involving four or five cars. Because of the speed with which they were travelling, there was no way to avert the pile-up, and also his car crashed into the car in front of him. He was sure that the two cars were badly damaged.

In the split second before the collision, the Rabbi managed to offer a prayer that in the merit of the tzaddik Rabbi Moshe Aharon, zya"á, he should be saved and the merits of the tzaddik should protect him as well as the occupants of the vehicle in front of him.

After a few seconds, when the car came to a halt together with all the vehicles around, Rabbi Malka emerged from the car, while the driver of the car in front of him also got out of his car. He looked up and lo and behold! He recognized the driver of the car in front of him! It was none

other than his friend Yehudah Chadad, may he live long. First they inquired about each other's safety, in order to insure that there were no bodily injuries, *chalila*, and afterwards, they went to examine the extent of the damage that was caused to the vehicles due to the powerful magnitude of the collision.

They both stood amazed! The cars that collided with such force, with a resounding bang, now stood neatly behind each other, without even a scratch on them.

Rabbi Malka told me, "Rabbi David, there is no logical explanation for this. The bang was so strong and powerful, and the collision was substantial. All the cars that were behind the truck knew that it was preferable for them to collide with each other than to suffer a blow from the flying metal bars on the truck. It was clear to us that the damage was worth the price of saving lives. However, in the end, we have no idea how it happened that also our property did not suffer damage. I do not understand it!"

Of course, there is nothing to understand here. It was the merit of the tzaddik which continues to protect us in a supernatural manner, beyond logical explanation and against all the rules of nature.

We are living in a generation where we are exposed to a lot of corruption and immorality. We must be careful, because when one sees things that are not proper, it affects the heart and the mind.

These blemishes in the mind and heart damage our faith because the immoral sights fill the brain with thoughts that cannot coexist with a sanctified mind. The negative thoughts eliminate all sanctity and this is why we must work harder than ever before to acquire perfect faith. It is important to work hard to fill ourselves with simple faith through the study of Torah, and through the influence of tzaddikim who sanctified themselves and their actions through the study of the holy Torah and observance of mitzvot by overcoming their evil inclination. They prevailed over their base nature, and in this merit Hashem helps them prevail over all the rules of nature.



In the United States an amazing story occurred with a businessman who used to do business with another person.

The person whom he used to do business with owed him a huge sum of nearly three hundred thousand dollars, but he denied that he owed the money and refused to pay it.

The man turned to his local court, but the other man won the case and succeeded in evading his duty to pay by misleading the court and causing them to decide the case in his favor.

The Jew who lost the case was very upset by the injustice done to him and he filed additional appeals to the Higher Court, but lost the case there as well.

Shortly after the trial, the man traveled to Morocco to participate in the Hilulla of Rabbi Chaim Pinto, zya" a. He took to the Hillula with him his entire file with all the paperwork that dealt with the lost debt, and when he arrived at the grave of the tzaddik, he placed the file on the grave with a broken heart.

As he stood there, with the file on the grave and pleading in prayer that in the merit of the tzaddik his stolen money should be returned to him, he announced that now he intended to appear at the High Court and appeal the decision absolving the other man from paying his debt to him. The chances of winning the appeal were not good, because after two appeals the chances of success in another appeal were slim. However, "If I will win the appeal in the merit of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto, zya" a, I will give ten percent of the sum to tzedaka l' ihuy nishmat the tzaddik."

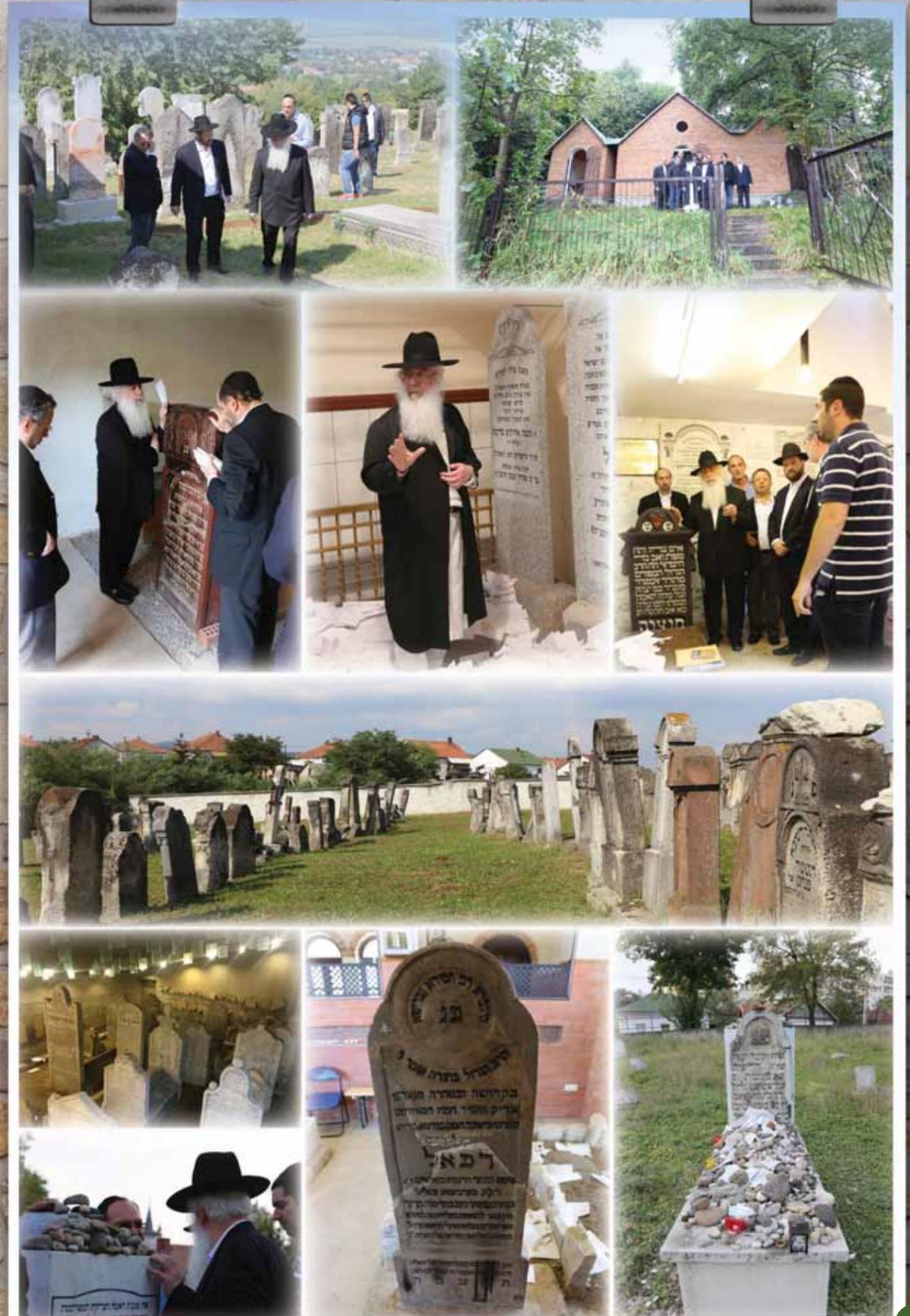
Under normal circumstances, he had almost no chances of winning the case. His lawyer tried to dissuade him from filing another appeal. "You have no chance! It's a shame for you to spend the money on lawyers and court fees for filing an appeal," his lawyer told him pityingly, realizing that his client was unwilling to accept his heartbreaking loss. "No! Now we have a different case. We have big chances of winning," the man informed his lawyer. "Now we have the outstanding merits of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto in our favor. He is the best lawyer. With him on our side, we have the highest chances of winning."

He appealed the case and he won!

The case was decided in his favor immediately. The court did not suffice with just declaring that the latter indeed owed him the money, but even forced the other man to pay his debt at once, without a right to appeal the decision.

The man who won the case did not forget his vow. As soon as he received his money, he came to me and donated the money he promised to the Institutions founded in memory of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto and for his *illuy neshama*.

This is the power of the simple faith of a Jew who overcame all negative thoughts of despair – since under normal circumstances he did not stand a chance to win, and instead filled himself with perfect faith in the ability of a tzaddik to perform miracles that would help him win the case in court against all odds. The merits of the tzaddik indeed stood by him by the virtue of his unwavering faith, and ultimately, he also merited giving tzedaka for the elevation of the soul of the tzaddik.





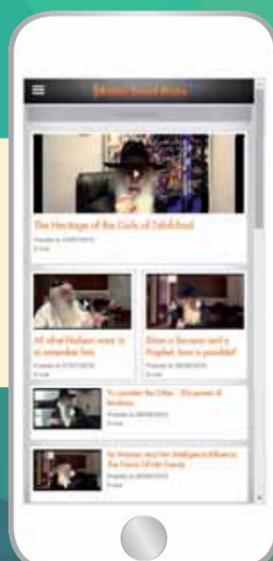
The Hillula of Rabbi Chaim Pinto, zya" a, (Hakatan)
Paris, France

The Hillula of Rabbi Chaim Pinto, zya" a (Hakatan)
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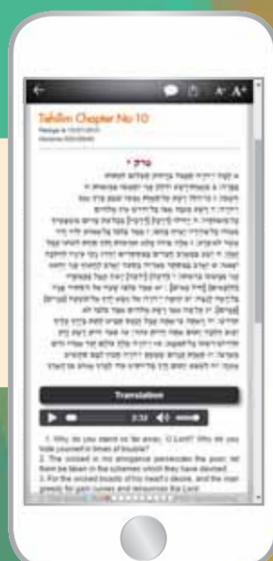
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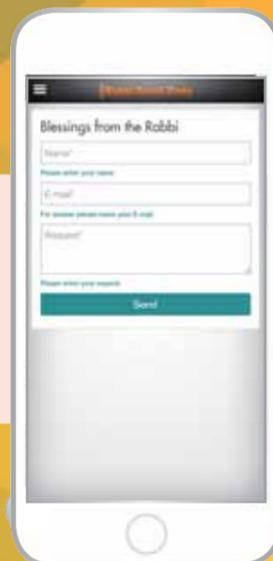
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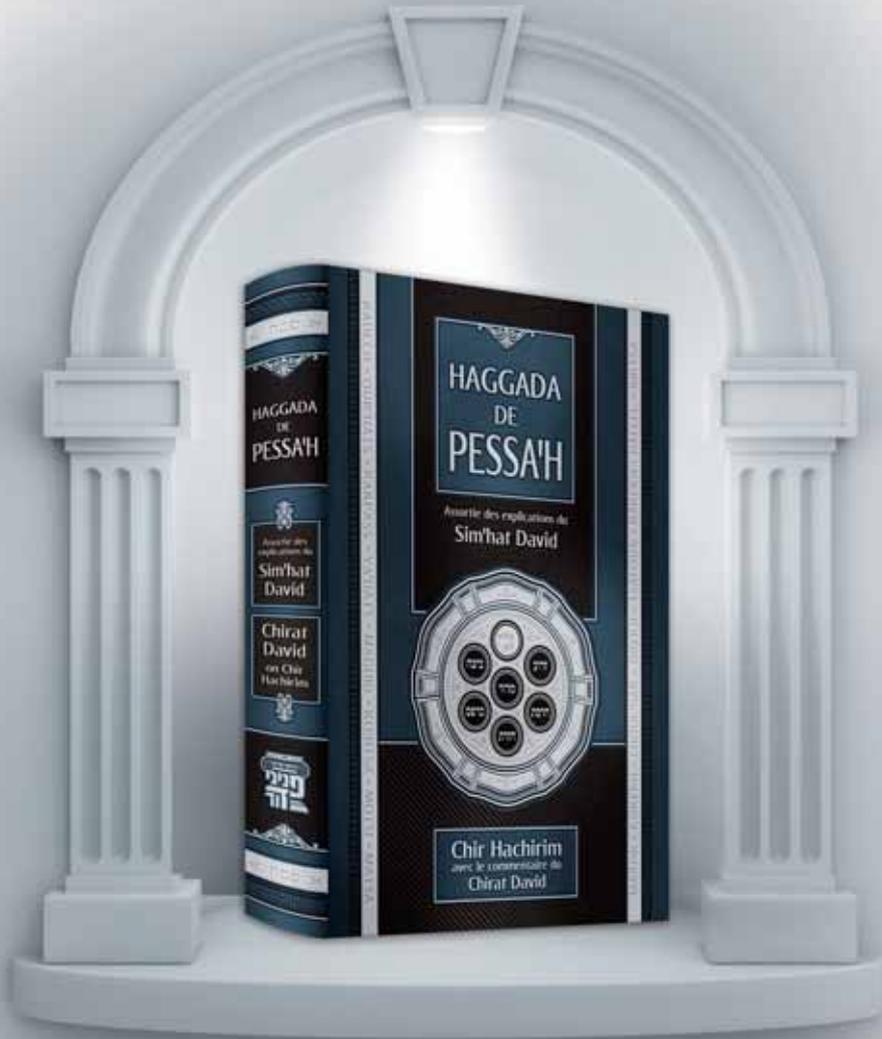
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