

# The Chassidische Vibe

THE BEIS MOSHIACH MAGAZINE  
FOR N'SHEI U'BNOS CHABAD

## HOME FARBRENGENS

HOW TO MAKE OUR CHILDREN A PART OF CHASSIDISHE YOMIM TOVIM

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יחי אדוננו מורנו ורבינו מלך המשיח לעולם ועד



# HOME FARBRENGENS:

How to make our children a part  
of Chassidische Yomim Tovim



**WHY** are birthday parties in preschool so popular? Because of the big deal that is made? That too! But I think the real reason is that they speak to the child, about the child, and with the child.

Let's think together, how to get our children (and ourselves) immersed in the Chassidische special dates. Which dates are we talking about? The birthdays and days of passing of the Rebbeim and Rebbetzins, the days of Geula and joy, the dates the Rebbe Rayatz and the Rebbe arrived in America. We have a nice long list and the question is how to get our children's souls to assimilate them.

## CONNECT AN EXPERIENCE TO A DATE

There are Chassidische dates which everyone remembers like Yud-Tes Kislev, Hei Teves,

Gimmel Tammuz, Yud-Beis/Yud Gimmel Tammuz. The big difference between these dates and the others is that a big deal is made of these dates.

Yud-Tes Kislev celebrations are marked by all. Why? Because of the public events. Hei Teves is also taking a place of honor, more so than in the past, thanks to the Rebbe saying sefarim should be bought and learned. Rosh Chodesh Kislev is a moving date, when a Chasid feels his great love and concern for the Rebbe. If we think about it, we'll realize that the spiritual and sensory experiences that these days provide are the key to remembering them.

The secret to success is to connect an experience to a date. What does an experience do? Gets you out of the routine, provides a connec-

tion with the animal soul, and the participation of the body.

## SOMETHING THAT CONNECTS

We can't go through all the dates, so we'll take the passing of the Mittlerer Rebbe, as an example of a date which doesn't seem to speak to the world of a child.

It is said about the Mittlerer Rebbe that on Lag B'Omer, he would go with all the Chassidim to the fields. Although the Rebbe did not wash, he would drink some mashke even though he wasn't allowed to because of his health. On that day, many miracles were seen, most of them brachos and yeshuos for having children. The Chassidim waited all year for Lag B'Omer.

The Mittlerer Rebbe had mesirus nefesh to help childless women. He would drink mashke despite it being off-limits for him, in order to be able to bless people with children. How important a Jewish child is, that the Mittlerer Rebbe was moser nefesh for this! If we consistently mark the birthday/histalkus of the Mittlerer Rebbe over several years, it will be engraved in the soul of a child.

How about thinking of something you can do to show the importance of children who grow up to a life of Torah and mitzvos? Maybe you can make crowns. Perhaps visit babies and bless them and give them a small gift and say the pesukim during the visit. Perhaps the children named "Dovber" can get a small prize or they themselves can give out a small prize to their friends.

## USING ALL THE SENSES

An important principle in creating an experience is using all the senses.

**Sight:** put a picture of the Rebbe whose date we are marking on the table.

**Sound:** Niggunim of that Rebbe play in the background. A short speech in rhyme which we will teach the child (like the commercials

we memorized when we were kids), something catchy and fun.

**Taste and Smell:** Let's give out a treat in honor of the event or, on the day of a histalkus, let's give out a treat for learning from the teachings of the Rebbe or reading stories about him.

**Touch and Kinesthetic Experience:** Let's try and think of something moving and enjoyable for the child.

Even a Chassidische farbrengen with the adults is definitely an unforgettable experience. It's important to ask afterward, how did he experience the farbrengen? What did he learn from it? How were the refreshments? What did he "take" from the farbrengen? (We should also think along these lines because this is the reason that these days are commemorated.)

Another way to use the sense of touch is creative: a sign for the door, decorating a picture.

## REPETITION AND SOMETHING NEW

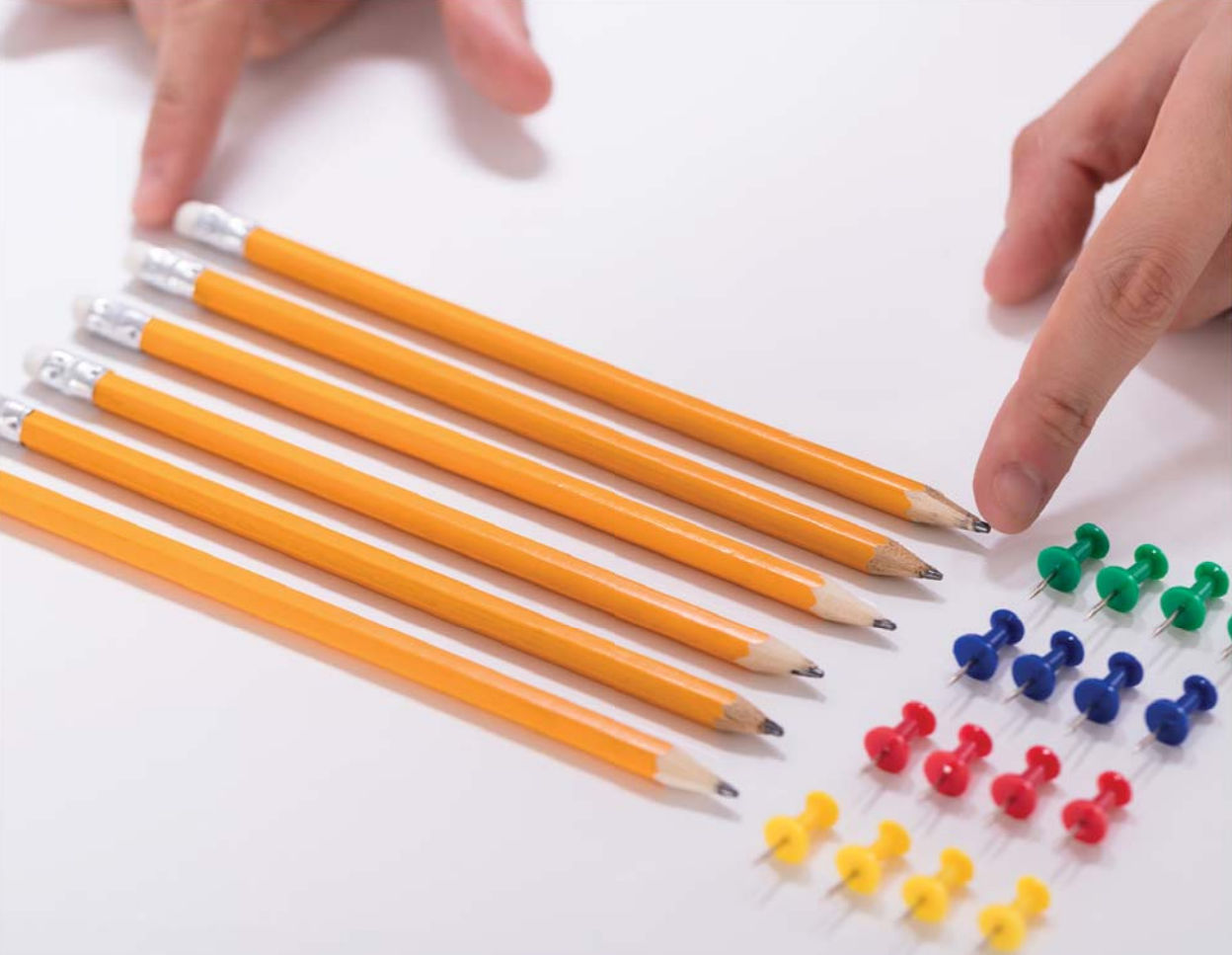
On every significant date it's important to mention the main point as well as have something new. Let's try and find something new in connection with the date, stories that they don't know, short sayings.

## LEARNING BY HEART

In the introduction to the HaYom Yom, the Rebbe put the history of the Chabad Rebbeim which shows how important it is. It's a good idea to take some special dates and encourage the children to know them by heart. Learning by heart sharpens the memory and is a worthwhile activity. They can be tested and given a prize.

Another way to learn Chassidische dates by heart is by playing a Chassidische trivia game with them.

The main thing is to rejoice and for we, ourselves, to appreciate each of these dates. ■



# A LUBAVITCHER TEEN OPENS UP ABOUT HER STRUGGLE WITH "FRUM" OCD

For someone struggling with OCD, it is common to try to find someone who can offer assurance. At different points I had different people I would turn to, that became my assurance seeker; my parents, teachers, and mashpia'h.

I trusted them and would ask about the most specific details, waiting for approval or disagreement. If they would tell me to do less, I would feel as if I'm not actually supposed to do that, and I should really do more.

**Throughout this whole time, I was sure that I was being so frum and machmir. The fact that I felt like I was choking in the shirt I was wearing? Such mesirus nefesh!**

**I**N this article, I want to bring awareness to living life as a Lubavitcher teen with OCD. Please note that this is my personal experience and how I dealt with it. Although it affected me in many areas of my life, in this article I will focus primarily on the “frum” aspect. OCD plays out differently for each person in their own circumstances.

If you are concerned that you are struggling with OCD, consult with someone qualified in this area for further guidance. My goal is just to bring awareness and let people know that they are not alone in this struggle.

The core issue of OCD revolves around a need for certainty. I have often heard people speak about double-checking the locks and doors again and again, being excessively careful about cleanliness, or making sure no one is following you. When it comes to Yiddishkeit, it can very easily lead to obsession over making sure you followed every single halacha, *minhag*, and *chumra* correctly. Because there are a lot of details when it comes to Yiddishkeit, it can be hard to differentiate the fine line between being very *machmir* and being OCD. If someone is constantly redoing the same thing - such as washing negel vasser, just in case the first five times weren't good enough, that is not being extra frum, that is bordering on OCD.

Throughout this whole time, I was sure that I was being so frum and *machmir*. The fact that I felt like I was choking in the shirt I was wearing? Such mesirus nefesh! It can be very challenging to differentiate between OCD and being strict in halacha. If your actions lead to anxiety, stress, and guilt, chances are it's a hint of OCD. It might be easier to tell from a more subjective view, but as someone who genuinely thought I was doing the right thing, it's important not to be mocked or belittled over it.

I think it is important to be aware that OCD is not just something that you can 'stop' doing right away. Oftentimes, it requires professional intervention and having a friend, sibling, parent, neighbor, or teacher telling you to 'just move on,' 'stop it,' or 'just don't think about it,' is not only not helpful, but can actually intensify the urge and need for certainty, and can very likely end up with the person becoming more extreme behind closed doors, where no one can see.

I would very often feel the need to call a rav to clarify anything that I wasn't completely sure of. A rav who doesn't fully understand the concept and thought process behind OCD, can have good intentions but might make things even harder. Speaking to a rav who is familiar with this, was a huge help for me.

As a Lubavitcher, one of my big struggles is the fact that there are always more things we should take on and do. We are encouraged to push ourselves, keep going and keep adding in all areas, whether it be mitzvaim, Chitas, or any other mitvza. I would find myself being extremely anxious after each farbrengen, overwhelmed by the feeling of “I have to do everything.” I would take everything literally which just led to anxiety and panic rather than action.

For someone struggling with OCD, it is common to try to find someone who can offer assurance. At different points I had different people I would turn to, that became my assurance seeker; my parents, teachers, and *mashpiah*. I trusted them and would ask about the most specific details, waiting for approval or disagreement. If they would tell me to do less, I would feel as if I'm not actually supposed to do that, and I should really do more.

Very often I found that I would create rituals for myself to get reassurance from whatever

was giving me anxiety. This played out in a lot of different areas of Yiddishkeit. Here are a few examples of how it affected me.

**Chitas** was a big stressor. I had a minute-to-minute daily schedule that I could not mess up. I had to say each word properly, so I could only do that at home, undisturbed. I had to understand every single word, I would be anxious until I finished Chitas, and then once I finished, I would be anxious that maybe I didn't do it right or I missed out on something.

**Rambam:** I would learn Rambam, and if there was any word that I didn't understand, I would write it down to ask someone to explain it to me later. This made me feel anxious all day, because it didn't feel as if I did it right, which to me equated to not having done it.

**Tanya:** I would read a few different commentaries, and again I would feel anxious if there was even one concept or idea that I didn't fully understand. I would have to ask someone to make sure I understood it.

**Tehillim:** I was taught that we have to say every word of Tehillim carefully and properly. To make sure this was done, I would say my daily Tehillim more than once, each time a drop differently - just in case. It took a lot of concentration and caused a lot of stress. I once missed out on a trip, sitting on the side because I had to finish my daily Tehillim in all the different versions. I came home pretty frustrated. At one point, I had this feeling that it was okay, I didn't have to repeat it so many times. This feeling lasted a few days, and I felt like the Rebbe had pulled me out of this situation.

**Mivtzaim:** Wherever you go, you have the opportunity to do mitvzaim. Whenever I went somewhere I made sure to have a few Neshek kits and the Sheva Mitzvos cards in a few different languages. Any person I passed by, I felt that I had to run after, ask them if they were Jewish and explain to them everything I was able to. The Rebbe says to spread the message of Moshiach, so I decided I needed

to make a card to add to the Neshek. It took a very long time with lots of discussions with teachers, classmates, rabbanim, and anyone willing to listen. The message had to be precise and accurate. What if I worded it wrong? What if someone didn't understand? What if it turned someone off? I was paranoid about doing the wrong thing, so it took almost a year until I was convinced to print it the way it was.

**Davening:** There was a point that on non-school days, I would wake up early with a strong feeling of anxiety that I needed to daven. I was never able to sleep in, and it was extremely stressful to make sure I also davened properly with all the right *kavanos*.

**Neggel Vasser:** I would wash my hands, then wash them again. And again, and again and again. I was worried that maybe I had missed a teensy spot, or maybe it didn't touch my whole hand at once. Sometimes I would repeat *neggel vasser* a lot of times, to ensure that I did it properly. Even after that, I would worry that maybe I didn't do it right.

**Tzedaka:** When I would make money, giving *maaser* was a whole saga. If a thought crossed my mind to donate it to a specific cause, and then another opportunity to give tzedaka came up, I felt that I couldn't "break my promise," even if it had just been a fleeting thought. I would scramble to find a piece of paper to write that I am not committing to giving anywhere specific until I get home. Eventually, a rav who understood the situation said that action is what counts - until you actually put the money in the pushka or give it to a specific organization, it doesn't make a difference what you thought in your head.

**Speaking Truthfully:** I always had to make sure that every word I said was accurate and precise. I couldn't check off 'I covered my elbows' on my checklist - just in case maybe for a split second my elbows had shown. If I was unsure whether something I said wasn't true, I would go back to each person that I had spoken

to, to make sure everyone heard and understood that maybe it wasn't true. If I felt that I had done something wrong to someone, I would apologize over and over to make sure that I was fully forgiven.

**Tznius:** I would say that tznius was probably the hardest area. Is it too clingy? Is it see-through? If I turn around, does it stay in place? I would add a lot of extra rules for myself in tznius, and I was pretty extreme. The seam on the bottom of the tights might get stretched out and see-through, so I sewed every pair of tights. Going shopping for clothing was a nightmare. For each item I would go back and forth, questioning and trying to decide if it was okay or not. I would change my mind pretty often, deciding that my skirt is okay, but then a minute later I would decide it's not okay. The anxiety that would follow was enough to make me not want to look at clothes for a long time. At some point, I couldn't get out of bed thinking about how hard tznius was. I felt ugly and had reached rock bottom. I couldn't take it anymore. That's what made me turn for help. I simply couldn't live life like this.



Up until that point, I took every halacha extremely literally and thought I was being frum. I didn't realize that it was not coming from a place of serving Hashem, rather it was coming from a different place, a place full of anxiety and panic.

Some people had noticed my extremes, but I would convince myself that I was 'higher,' and I shouldn't care what people think. I would do a lot of my rituals in private and was embarrassed to tell anyone about it, for fear of them making fun of me or trying to convince me to stop.

Finally, I spoke to a professional. It took me a long time to listen to what she had to say - she was telling me to do less! That couldn't be right! I would fluctuate between realizing that I had OCD and wanting to live normally, then

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go back to thinking that I had to do everything to the full extent that I was doing it. It was a lot of back-and-forth, convincing, and trying to retrain my brain. With much, much hard work, effort and time, I started slowly realizing the struggle I had been facing this whole time. This took a long time, and was a very hard process. I learned to differentiate between halacha and OCD. I learned to accept that I can only do what is in my ability to do. I learned to not have to feel the need to be extreme in every way. I learned to live life in a normal way. The first time I spoke to a rav who understood me, I felt like crying, because I never imagined that life doesn't actually have to be as complicated as it seemed.

My point here is not to diagnose, give ideas, or confuse anyone. For the longest of time, I thought I was the only crazy one in the world who struggled with such things. It was extremely isolating and lonely and made it even harder. If any of the above resonated with you, know you are not alone. You don't have to continue this way. There is hope and there is help. Don't be afraid to reach out to someone. If I had read this a few years back, I may just have spoken up a bit faster.

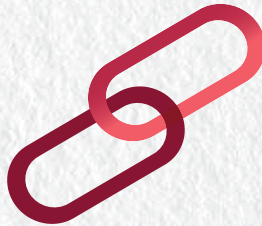
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A. SHEMLI

# THE SECOND HOUSEWIFE

— A SERIALIZED FAMILY DRAMA —  
SET IN THE SHTETL OF TWO CENTURIES AGO

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**RECAP:** *The Chassidim's shul burns down and the community council debates whether to rebuild it. Aidel lies in bed as per the doctor's instructions. Shmuel goes upstairs to eat dinner near her. An interesting discussion develops in connection with the names of the children they will have. Aidel hears Tzirel's story for the first time.*



**SHMUEL** stood outside the bathhouse, a towel over his shoulder. He twirled his wet peyos, shook his beard dry, as he listened to a fiery speech by Pinye the chazzan about the tremendous chutzpa even to ask that they renovate the Tailors' Shul. "The Chassidim are like leeches," he said angrily. "You give them shechita, you give them a melamed, you renovate their shul – but they'll always look down upon you because they naturally think they're better..."

Shmuel smiled, planning to respond, when someone tapped him on the shoulder. It was Yossel, breathing heavily after a fast run. "Tatte, come quickly!" Shmuel was alarmed. "Is everything all right?"

Yossel was still breathing heavily. "No, Baron von Sadislavski is waiting for you at home..."

"What?" Shmuel was shocked. "Now? Right before the start of Yom Tov?"

Yossel chuckled. "Apparently, his Jewish calendar is not up-to-date..."



Shmuel put his towel inside the bathhouse, just leaving it there. He can't come to the nobleman with a towel on his shoulder. "What did you do?" he asked as they ran home.

"We escorted him into the living room with all the honor and respect he deserved," he panted. "Zalman is keeping him somewhat occupied, Sophia is serving him a milchig meal, and we said that we are running to call you."

As he approached the house, he identified the magnificent wooden iron-rimmed carriage, canopied in bordeaux velvet and drawn by four white horses. "The summer carriage," he mumbled. He slowed his pace, catching his breath.

"Yossel," he asked a moment before entering. "Tell Pessia and all the daughters-in-law to remain in their apartments until they are called. Even Aidel should stay on the upper floor. She'll light candles after he leaves here." Shmuel came in, went up to the second floor, and entered the living room, beaming. "Baron von Sadislavski!" he held out his hands warmly, then gave a ceremonial bow. "To what do I owe this great honor?"

Von Sadislavski, a middle-aged stout Polish baron, whose curly wig flowed onto his shoulders, sat on the sofa near the table, daintily partaking in a tasty blintz stuffed with cheese and raisins.

"Shmuel," he smiled, "look how good fortune always accompanies me. If I'm already here for a surprise visit, it comes out on the tastiest of all holidays!" The baron gave a hearty laugh. "Can you imagine if I would have come to you on a fast day? Ha...ha...ha..."

Shmuel shuddered at the mere thought. He took a chair and also sat near the table. "I am certain that a breakfast in the baron's home costs far more than the delicacies that I can offer."

"Why do you say that, Shmuel?" he smiled. "The food isn't bad at all..."

A few minutes of silence. The baron finished his refreshments and wiped his mouth with an ironed cloth napkin placed at his side. "Well

done, Sophia!" a thought flashed in Shmuel's mind. "She thought of everything!" As if it had been planned in advance, Sophia came in, slightly embarrassed. She cleared the empty dishes on a tray and left.

"You have a beautiful house," the baron murmured, surveying the living room. "The stairs are a bit too narrow, and I would have given the lobby a bit more lighting, but on the whole, a very nice estate!"

"Thank G-d," Shmuel smiled. "I have been living here now for over twenty years – and very satisfied."

"It's rather quiet," the baron muttered. "Too quiet, I would say..."

"My children are already married," Shmuel shrugged his shoulders. "Each one in his own apartment..."

"And your wife?" the baron inquired. "What's with your new wife?"

Shmuel's eyes opened wide. "How does the honored baron know that I got married? I'm surprised!"

The baron laughed heartily. "You told me... You don't remember that we traveled together to deal with the ownership transfer on the late Pinchov's estate? In November? You were on pins and needles the whole time that we should sign already... When I got annoyed, you told me that you were getting married next week and you had to return that day..."

Shmuel's face turned red. "That's right," he said, placing his hand on his forehead. "That's how it was... Your Grace's memory has gotten sharper over the years..."

Zalman entered the room, placing a bottle of Polish vodka and two crystal goblets on the table. "Thank you, Zalman," Shmuel said.

"Your lame assistant," the baron smiled after Zalman closed the door. "Your right-hand man, eh?" Shmuel nodded his head. Through the arched window, he could see the sun setting. When would he get to the point already?

“So, what is with your wife? Will we be privileged to see her? To bless the two of you together?” he queried.

“Unfortunately not,” Shmuel grimaced, as if he was sorry, which he wasn’t. “She fell a week ago and is confined to her bed. She simply took a tumble down some stairs.”

“*Ach*,” the baron wrung his hands. “What bad luck. I told you that the stairs are a bit too narrow and you need a bit more light in the lobby. And how is she?”

“Bandaged, restricted to her bed according to the doctor’s instructions,” he sighed. “We’re waiting for it to pass...” He didn’t get into the details.

A long minute of silence passed between them. The baron stretched his legs under the table, poured himself half a glass of vodka, and leaned back serenely.

“You haven’t asked why I came?” he smiled, after he emptied the glass’ contents down his throat.

Shmuel smiled with surprise. “I’m still deeply moved by this honor, Your Grace. Such a sudden visit doesn’t happen every day!”

“This perhaps will explain to you how important this matter is to me,” the baron responded firmly, as he used the sofa’s two handles to straighten himself. Shmuel realizes that now they will start talking business.

“I’m now coming from Kiev, and I have a golden opportunity to purchase the old Russian’s entire estate, the one that borders against mine. We’re talking about an estate of immense proportions, which will triple my land area.”

“It will also increase His Grace’s chances in the senate election!” Shmuel said enthusiastically, watching the last rays of sunlight. The minyan in the downstairs Beis Medrash had already begun. The sound of people davening made its way into the living room.

“I was in the bank in Kiev, and I received approval in principle for a loan – but I need

guarantors.” The baron gave him a serious look. “Can you sign as a guarantor for me, Shmuel?”

“How much money are we talking about?” Shmuel inquired. About seven minutes. That was the amount of time he had left to talk about money matters, to think about them, to sign... Hurry, hurry!...

The baron took a pile of papers from off the chair near him and placed it before Shmuel. Shmuel looked through them quickly. Fifty thousand rubles? That’s a huge amount! How long does he have to pay it off? Five years? Ten thousand a year...

“I’ll be able to cover the debt...” the baron reassured him. He placed his pudgy hand on Shmuel’s arm. “This is a guarantee that you won’t even feel, and you won’t be signing alone either...”

“Very well, Your Grace,” Shmuel decided. “But I have just another two minutes to sign. After that, the Jewish holiday will commence and it will be forbidden for me to touch a quill and ink for the next two days.”

The baron started laughing, really laughing, for the whole two minutes. Shmuel smiled with embarrassment as he loosened his grip on his chair.

Yom Tov had begun.

He couldn’t sign now anyway.

He just wanted to finish the visit with a smile. The baron is an extremely influential man, and it would be a pity to destroy the good relations he had with him.

“You are a good and principled man,” the baron managed to say when he finished laughing. “You agreed so quickly so that you could sign before the holiday began. I need many more people as principled as you around me.”

After taking a long breath, and then another minute spent playing with the foot of his goblet, rolling it the length of the table, he added: “I won’t take advantage of you. Take half an hour, an hour, two hours as far as I’m concerned. Go

over the contract in detail, consult with your Zalman, and then decide if you agree. I need your signature at the bank in Kiev in another two months with documents confirming your level of income.”

Shmuel was quiet for a long moment, totally surprised.

“I know that it’s forbidden for Jews to go in there,” the baron groaned in response to Shmuel’s silence. “But we can work that out, can’t we?” he said with a wink.

Shmuel didn’t touch the contract. He continued to remain silent for several more minutes, fidgeting with his tzitzis, lowering his gaze.

The baron waited patiently, far more than he usually did. Shmuel lifted his blue eyes and gave a serious look at his guest. “I’m not changing my mind, I’d be delighted to sign as a guarantor for the baron’s loan.” Once the baron realized that he hadn’t finished, he let him continue. “Furthermore, it’s so important to me that the baron’s influence in the senate grows that I would look for another guarantor myself. The main thing is that the deal should go through.” He looked down again, holding his tzitzis as if it was a railing. “However, I cannot leave Lubianka until November. I’ll sign here for as much as you ask.”

He looked up again, staring at the baron.

“What do you mean that you can’t leave Lubianka?” The baron was stunned. “Who’s forbidding you?”

“The halacha, Jewish law, Your Grace,” he answered quietly. “The halacha forbids a husband from leaving his wife for the first year of their marriage.”

“Can’t you bring her with you to Kiev according to...your religion?” The baron sounded very anxious.

Shmuel shook his head. “If it were just me, that would be different. However, I will not endanger her life!”

“So, I’m supposed to wait until you celebrate your wedding anniversary?” he raised his voice. “Someone will get the land before I do, I can’t wait until November, Shmuel! This is a one-time opportunity and I have to grab it quickly! What, did I just happen to come to you unannounced?” The baron was very upset.

Shmuel shrugged her shoulders. “Or find a way to sign the contract here.”

The baron sighed. He stood up, looking for his cane. “That won’t happen. The bank there is extremely stubborn. You know this just as well as I do.”

Shmuel also got on his feet. “Apparently, Heaven has decreed that I have not been chosen to come to Your Grace’s aid,” he sighed.

“You’re fortunate that I saw how you were ready to sign on a fifty-thousand-ruble loan without even checking the contract – just to avoid violating the sanctity of your holiday. Otherwise, I would have thought that you were trying to be evasive.”

“I’m not, G-d is my witness!” Shmuel placed his hand on his heart.

“I know, Shmuel,” the baron replied. “And this will force me now to look for some swindler, who will squeeze the life out of me to give me his unreliable signature...” Disappointed, he slowly and dejectedly went down the stairs and got into his carriage. Shmuel silently followed him. As the baron took his seat, he called out: “If the halacha changes or you get divorced, you know where I live!”

Shmuel smiled, waving his hand at the departing coach. He watched it until it disappeared from sight.

Afterwards, Shmuel quickly made his way up to the third floor. “Good Yom Tov, Aidel!” he blessed her with shining eyes. “Come, let’s accept the Torah!” ■

*To be continued...*

IN ROME BE A ROMAN



The article “Being Different: From Shame to Pride” (*The Chassidische Vibe* #1391) was so called for! We’re shluchim in a community with many other from Jews who are not Chabad Chassidim and we struggle with this issue as our daughters grow older. I especially appreciated the final point (“When in Rome act like a Roman”) about conforming to local custom when it doesn’t contradict Torah and Chassidische values. Sometimes our children are embarrassed by our car not because it has a Moshiach bumper sticker, but because it’s all banged up.

I know this from experience: When we decided to give up our old jalopy and began leasing a minivan like all the other families on the block, my high-school-aged daughter suddenly felt so much more pride in being a Lubavitcher and even made sure we got a new Moshiach bumper sticker for our shiny minivan...

Keep up the good work!

**A Florida Shlucha**

OF SHEITELS AND HATS

In the children’s story in issue #1382, an illustration depicted a woman wearing a hat over her sheitel. I’d like to bring it to the attention of the editors and the readers that the Rebbe said several times that women should not wear a hat on top of the sheitel.

In 5718 (1958) Mrs. Zelda Nemes and her husband had a yechidus with the Rebbe. At the time, it was the custom among some religious women to wear a partial wig (a “fall”) covered with a kerchief. At the time the Rebbe had been campaigning that married women should cover their hair with a full sheitel. When the Rebbe saw my mother he said to her, “*Ah halber sheitel iz azoi vi a halbe gezunt* — half a sheitel is like half health. For wearing a sheitel one is promised health, parnassa and nachas from the children and grandchildren.” (Here’s My Story #196; see Leket Shikchas HaPeah by Rabbi S.B. Wolpo p. 63).

Additionally, the Rebbe said in a yechidus in 5732 (1972): “When a woman wears a hat on top of her sheitel, other women will assume that she is not wearing a sheitel. The proof is: why would she be wearing a double covering, a sheitel and a hat? They will therefore think that the hair under the hat is not a sheitel. Thus, they will assume that such behavior is appropriate, and it is enough to wear a hat on top of the hair.” (Teshura Blum-Slavin 5755 pg. 21; translated in *A Chassidische Derher* Shevat 5783 p. 30)

**Mrs. Mindy Zalmanov  
Crown Heights**



BY LEORA NADTOCHY – FROM THE TZADDIKSTORY.ORG COLLECTION

## THE 21 MILLION DOLLAR MIRACLE

My name is Rabbi Shlomo Cunin, and I'm a Shliach of the Lubavitcher Rebbe in California.

The story I'm about to tell is pretty unbelievable. Sometimes, even I have a hard time believing it! But I want to share it with you, because you just might learn something from it.

Have you ever heard the word "debt?" It's a word adults use often. Debt is when people owe something, usually, money, either to a bank, a business, or a person.

Because of the work I did on my shlichus, like building schools, shuls, and summer camps, all of a sudden, I realized I'd gone into debt... serious debt. How much debt? Well, turns out, I owed 40 different banks a total of 18 million dollars.

I'm sure you're wondering, how on earth could something like that happen? Well, I'll explain.

You see, before my wife and I moved out to California in 1965, we had a private meeting with the Lubavitcher Rebbe, who told us we should "conquer all of California." I took those words very seriously.

After moving, we got right to work building our community, and quickly, we moved forward to start new communities, all across the state of California. Soon, people all over the state knew about Chabad and the work we were doing .

Some time in late 1972, the Rebbe asked us to build 71 new mosdos, or educational centers, in honor of his 71st birthday. I committed to taking on 10 percent of that number, which

meant I needed to open another seven schools or Chabad Houses.

A year later, I reported to the Rebbe that we'd opened twelve instead of the seven I'd originally planned on.

We were doing so many great and incredible things! The problem was, great and incredible things aren't cheap. We owed a lot of money to the bank.

After a while, the banks started asking us to start paying them back... but we couldn't. Eventually, they prepared the foreclosure process, which meant they were going to start selling our buildings to take the money as payment for everything we owed them. They told us it would happen very soon. It was a very difficult time for us. It was sad to think that all the things we'd worked so hard to build were so close to falling apart.

Then one day, I found myself at a Yud Gimmel Nissan Farbrengen in 770, listening to the Rebbe speak.

It was a special day. It was the yahrtzeit of the Tzemach Tzedek, the third Lubavitcher Rebbe, and the day the Rebbe Maharash became the fourth Lubavitcher Rebbe in the Tzemach Tzedek's place. And so, naturally, the Rebbe was talking about this.

But here's the thing. The Rebbe spoke about me, too. The Rebbe said the Rebbe Maharash's most famous saying is "l'chatchila ariber," or "first go over." This basically means that when

we do something and a challenge comes our way, we shouldn't take baby steps and try to go around or under it. We should jump right over it, taking big steps to reach our goal in the best possible way! In fact, the reason Hashem places that challenge in our way in the first place is so we can jump over it. We should be excited, and be confident we can do it! Take a leap of faith, and jump over our problems.

And that was how I saw my Shlichus in California!

But then the Rebbe said that some people don't understand these words, and act in a way that's above and beyond our world. They jump too high. "For example," the Rebbe said, "borrowing too much money for kedusha - so much that there would be no way, even through a miracle, that the money could be paid back."

That was when I realized the Rebbe was speaking about me. "Therefore, it must be clear that the saying, l'chatchila ariber, needs to be done within our world." In other words, a person can't jump too high and still expect to hit the ground safely.

After hearing this, I was embarrassed. I felt so badly about what I'd done.

But the Rebbe was quick to make me feel better. He said, "Since he was trying to do the right thing, using all that money for tzedaka, Hashem will surely help him pay his debts and more, and he should be blessed. But from now on, he needs to know that l'chatchila ariber should be done in a way that works in our world." These were the Rebbe's words, and I knew they were to me, along with a bracha.

The Rebbe also spoke about how I should continue working in a way of l'chatchila ariber, jumping into projects with the same excitement and confidence, as long as I didn't do anything crazy!

When I went home to California, I faced the difficult feelings of knowing I'd made a big mistake, but I was sure the Rebbe's bracha would come true. I would be alright in the end. If the Rebbe had said it, it would happen. But how?

I woke up the next morning and got ready for my day. My plan was simple: ask random





people if they had \$18,000,000 lying around for me. That was how sure I was that the Rebbe's bracha would come true!

"Excuse me," I would ask, "Do you have 18 million dollars?"

But of course, nobody ever said yes. If 18 million dollars was a common thing to have, I would have never gotten into debt in the first place. And things kept getting worse!

The bank began threatening to take away even more buildings, and we were dealing with too many problems at the Chabad House. It was all very overwhelming - and very scary.

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Then one day, I heard a knock on the door. I was exhausted after a very long day, and I wasn't able to get up to open the door. That was how tired I was! But they just kept knocking. So, finally, with my last bit of strength, I pushed myself to stand up and open the door.

There stood a man who had eaten at our Shabbos table recently.

"Rabbi," he said. "My life has been so terribly sad. I lost my wife and my only daughter. Getting up in the morning for another day without them was too painful. It was so hard for me." I felt awful for this poor man. I was going through a hard time too, but at least I didn't have to do it alone.

Then, he said, "But then I came to your house for Shabbos! Everything you said helped so much. I was happy for the first time in a long time. I finally felt okay about myself and my life! I didn't feel alone anymore. All thanks to you!" he told me, tears rushing down his face.

"Rabbi, I want to give you a donation, to thank you!" My heart stopped for a moment. "Don't worry Rabbi, I'll arrange everything with your bank."

Could this really be the miracle I was waiting for? I thought to myself. I was so certain about the Rebbe's bracha!

But it wasn't meant to be. He wasn't actually able to give me a donation. I'd been so excited, but now, I was so disappointed. I was back to the beginning. I had no idea how I would pay off this gigantic debt. But my emuna in the Rebbe's bracha never weakened. I knew it would come true, one way or another.

I'd be davening Shacharis in my tallis and tefillin, while phones rang around me, different banks trying to reach me every day. But I'd just keep dancing and davening to the niggun, "Sheyiboneh Beis HaMikdash," and the victory niggun, "Napoleon's March." I made sure to be b'simcha, even through this extremely hard time.

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Months turned into years, and no help came my way. My debts were growing bigger and bigger, and the bank continued the process of starting to take away properties, creating serious problems for our Chabad House.

Each and every day, the yetzer hara tried to bring me down. He tried to steal my simcha. But even though it wasn't easy, I stayed strong in my bitachon, and I kept singing. I knew well that the Rebbe had made a promise he would keep.

One day, I remember sitting at my desk, when an important looking man walked in.

I invited him to take a seat, and he spoke. "Good afternoon. I work at one of the country's best banks. I give money to schools around the world. I heard about the problems you're dealing with. I want to help you."

Now, I'd been offered help in the past, and that hadn't ended well, so I wasn't sure if I believed him.

I asked people about him, to see if he was, in fact, who he'd said he was, and it turned out he was a very wealthy Jewish man who held a very important job at a number one bank.

"Rabbi Shlomo, you have nothing to worry about!" he told me. "From now on, I'll be responsible for the money part of your work, and you can just focus on the spiritual part."

I still wasn't sure if I believed him. It seemed too good to be true! But, with time, people started visiting to check our bank accounts and fill out forms. It was all very official. I began to understand a miracle was about to happen, and I thanked Hashem a whole lot!

I even brought this man to join me at a farbrengen in 770! It was on Purim, and because I'd brought such an important guest, he and I were seated right behind the Rebbe. I'd never sat there before so it was very special for me, I knew I'd have to introduce this man to the Rebbe so he could get a bracha. He was about to donate \$18,000,000, after all! That's a really big mitzva!

Between the Rebbe speaking and the niggunim, I took the time to talk to the Rebbe, I knew I had to, I was the Rebbe's Shliach! So I did it. I went over to the Rebbe, introduced the wealthy man, and waited to hear the Rebbe's bracha.

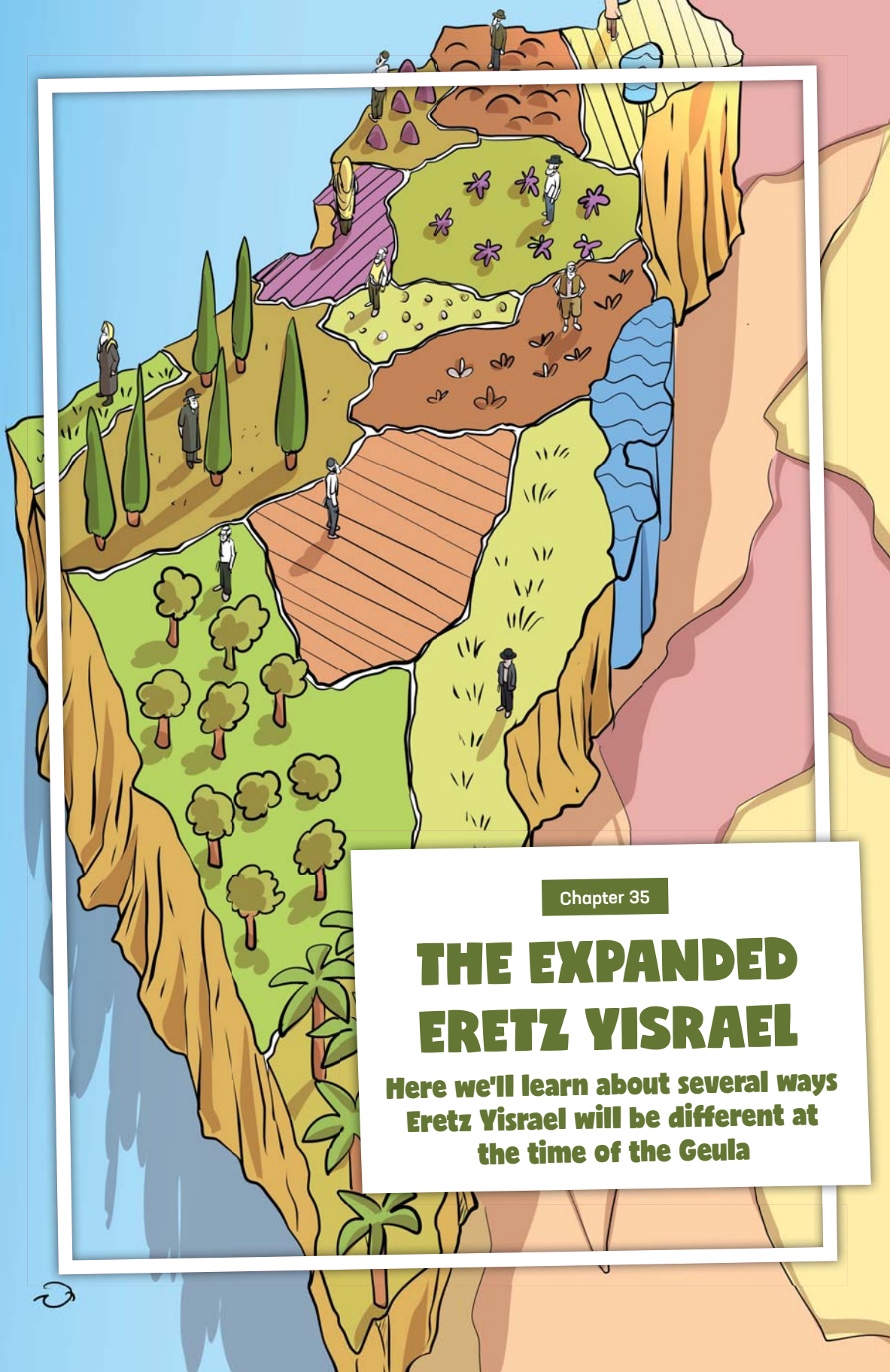
"May you have a peaceful life," the Rebbe said.

What? I thought to myself. That doesn't sound right. That can't be the Rebbe's bracha to someone about to donate such an enormous amount of money, someone who would do such a tremendous mitzva, helping me pay off all my debts! I realized something was wrong, so I left the farbrengen with him, and returned on my own. I immediately felt much better.

At my next meeting with the bank that was going to give us the \$18,000,000, while discussing the amount they were going to give, the secretary looked confused and said, "Donation?! It's a loan! You'll be borrowing the money!"

That was it. Those words almost made me faint. I didn't want a loan! I didn't want to borrow any more money from anyone else! Now I understood why the Rebbe's response at the farbrengen wasn't as positive as I expected. This man was not going to be the shliach to help bring about our miracle.

**To be continued**



Chapter 35

## **THE EXPANDED ERETZ YISRAEL**

**Here we'll learn about several ways  
Eretz Yisrael will be different at  
the time of the Geula**

*In the previous chapter, we learned how Hashem will gather all the Jewish people from around the world to Eretz Yisrael. In this chapter, we will learn about Eretz Yisrael in the Geula, which will be different in several respects from what it is today and even what was before galus.*

## ► THE EXPANSION OF ERETZ YISRAEL

The Medrash says that in the Geula, the holiness of Eretz Yisrael will spread over the entire world (and the holiness of Yerushalayim will spread throughout the area of Eretz Yisrael now). There will also be an area in the world that will be called “Eretz Yisrael.” This area will be around the same area as Eretz Yisrael today, but not exactly. We will soon explain why.

When Hashem promised Eretz Yisrael to Avrohom Avinu, it included ten lands on which ten nations lived. The seven nations are: Canaani, Chitti, Emori, Perizi, Chivi, Yevusi and Girgashi. Another three are: Keini, Kenizi, Kadmoni.

Although Hashem gave Avrohom all these lands at the time of the promise, they still were not openly his, but in the hands of the nations. It was only many years later, in the time of Yehoshua, that the Jewish people conquered the lands of the seven nations and since then, these lands openly became Eretz Yisrael. The other three lands were not yet conquered by the Jewish people and until today, they are waiting to be openly transferred to the possession of the Jewish people.

It's like a big present that your parents bought for you for your birthday. The gift is already in the house or maybe, even on the shelf over your bed, but it's not yet your birthday, so you didn't get it yet. In the same way, the Jewish people already got the land from Hashem but the time had not yet come for them to live there.

This is the first and main change regarding Eretz Yisrael in the Geula. Eretz Yisrael will expand and we will get all of it, not only the lands of the seven nations but also the lands of the other three nations.

By the way, in earlier chapters we learned that Hashem commanded that when Eretz Yisrael expands, that three additional cities of refuge should be set aside, in addition to the six that Moshe already prepared. These new cities of refuge will be added to the new part of Eretz Yisrael, the cities of Keini, Kenizi, Kadmoni.

## ► THE AVODAS HA'MOCHIN AND THE AVODAS HA'MIDDOS

These two parts of Eretz Yisrael, the lands of the seven nations and the lands of the three nations, allude to spiritual aspects of a Jew's avodas Hashem.

Every Jew's soul has two parts, one part is called “mochin,” the power of intellect and understanding, and the other part is called “middos,” the emotions. The mochin are divided into three: chochma, bina, daas, while the middos are divided into seven: chesed, gevura, tiferes, netzach, hod, yesod, malchus. We won't get into the meaning of each of these powers but in order to understand our subject, it's important to know there are three mochin and seven middos.

The lands of the three nations allude to the three mochin, while the lands of the seven nations allude to the seven middos. A Jew's job in galus is to modify and refine his middos. A Jew needs to work hard so that his middos and feelings (for example, the emotion of

love, the emotion of anger, the emotion of arrogance) be transformed to holiness and be in line with Hashem's will. This is called "avodas ha'middos."

There is another avoda, "avoas ha'mochin." The goal of this avoda is to change the mochin, a person's intellect and understanding, so they unite with the chochma of Hashem, the Torah, so they too, are holy.

As we said, during galus, a Jew's job is mainly the avodas ha'middos. Although we also serve Hashem with our mind in that we learn Torah and understand it with our intellect, the goal is mainly for the mochin to change the middos. The mochin themselves are very hard to change and make holy. This is a lofty avoda which does not pertain much

in galus. In the Geula, our mochin will also change and become fully holy. Then, the avodas ha'mochin will be an avoda unto itself (and not just to change the middos).

This is why, so far, the Jewish people were only given the land of the seven nations, which allude to the seven middos, because until this galus is over, we mainly work with the middos. The lands of the three nations will be given to the Jewish people in the Geula, since then it will be possible to change the mochin and transform them to holiness.

Our times, the end of galus and on the threshold of the Geula, are different than the galus that preceded this. The Rebbe says that since, very soon, we will go to the Geula and get all ten lands, there needs to be, already

## STORY TIME TO CONTROL THE MIND

During the war between France, led by Napoleon, and Russia, under Czar Alexander, the Alter Rebbe supported Russia.

One day, the Alter Rebbe called for his Chassid, R Moshe Meizlich, and sent him to spy in the French camp. R' Moshe was a big talmid chacham and knew six languages. When he offered his aid to the French, they were thrilled and they made him their chief translator.

R' Moshe was able to convey very important military information to the Russian army which helped the Russians repel a big French attack. The French were furious and searched for the one who revealed the secret to their enemies.

One day, R' Moshe was at headquarters when Napoleon himself suddenly appeared. Napoleon went right over to R' Moshe and declared, "You are a Russian spy!" He then immediately placed his hand over R' Moshe's heart to see whether his heart was pounding, which would be expected of someone accused of such a serious crime.

R' Moshe's heart showed no sign of agitation. "I'm not a spy," he said calmly. "I work here translating documents." Napoleon was convinced by R' Moshe's calmness and left.

Later, the Chassidim asked R' Moshe how he had been able to stay undisturbed in such a frightening situation. R' Moshe said, "This is what the Rebbe always taught us, to have the mind control the heart!"

now, avodas Hashem not only to change the middos but also the mochin.

This special avoda entails learning Torah in-depth, connecting our physical intellect with G-dliness, not in order to change the middos but to learn and fill the mochin with G-dliness. This avoda happens primarily through learning a lot of Torah, especially Chassidus, and especially inyanei Moshiach and Geula. Through learning, a person's intellect unites with the Torah which he understands, and the intellect itself changes and becomes holy.

### ► THE DIVISION OF THE LAND IN THE GEULA

When the Jewish people conquered the land in the time of Yehoshua, the land was divided among the tribes with each tribe (except for Levi) receiving one portion. The details are written in Sefer Yehoshua. Today, this division is not that meaningful since we don't have all the tribes today and people don't know which tribe they belong to.

In the true and complete Geula, when all Jews will gather in Eretz Yisrael and Moshiach will lead us, Moshiach will tell each of us which tribe we are from. The settling of the land will revert to the division among the tribes. However, the division of the land in the Geula won't be exactly like the first division. There will be some changes.

### ► AMONG WHOM WILL THE LAND BE DIVIDED?

As mentioned, in the first division of the land, the land was divided into twelve with Levi not receiving a portion. Yosef received two portions since this tribe is divided into two, Menashe and Efraim.

Levi did not receive a portion because that

is what G-d commanded. The reason is that Levi is particularly holy, removed from the ways of the world, and it is not fitting that they have a portion in the land like the other tribes. Levi is more involved in spiritual service of Hashem, and not in the material (instead, Levi received forty-eight cities throughout Eretz Yisrael).

In the future, the first change will be that Levi will also receive a portion in the land, while Efraim and Menashe will get one portion. In addition, there will be a portion designated for Moshiach.

It turns out that in Yemos HaMoshiach, the land won't be divided into twelve but into thirteen. The Rebbe explains that Levi will receive his portion within the three additional lands.

### ► DIVIDED BY HASHEM HIMSELF

Another difference between the first division and the division in the Geula is who will oversee the division. The first division was by lottery, as Hashem commanded, as well as by Elozor the Kohen who announced the division according to what he saw on the Urim v'Tumim. In the future, the division will be by Hashem Himself.

The final difference is the type of land each tribe will get. In the first division, each tribe received a portion of the land that was different than the others. One got a mountainous area, another got fields, a third got different types of fields, etc. In the future, the portion of each tribe will include all types of land.

These two differences are connected. Since the division will be by Hashem Himself, who is one, and to whom all the different types are one, therefore, the division will be in a way where there is no limitation and each tribe will receive all the types of land there are.



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בְּכֹל דּוֹר וָדוֹר חַיֵּיב אָדָם לִרְאוֹת אֶת עַצְמוֹ כְּאִלּוּ הוּא יֵצֵא מִמִּצְרַיִם.

In every generation one must look upon himself as if he personally had gone out of Egypt. (Gemara, Pesachim 116b)

We were saved from Mitzrayim, that wicked land,  
Directly by Hashem's strong and mighty hand.  
I know it will happen again in our days;  
This endless golus is only a phase.  
I have confidence in Hashem's salvation,  
He will redeem His special nation.



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