



# The Feast of **MOSHIACH**

*An Oasis of Calm*

**סעודת משיח**

A mystical Moshiach experience with suggested readings in which  
we discover how to experience the serenity of a future reality

 **Chabad.ORG**



As the final hours of Passover slip away, Jews in every part of the world celebrate the Feast of Moshiach (Moshiach's Seudah in Yiddish), a custom of the Baal Shem Tov and his students. Just as we enter Passover with a celebration of the liberation from Egypt, so we sign off with a celebration of a much greater liberation yet to come.

This rich and multifaceted custom was vigorously encouraged by the Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, of righteous memory who would personally expound each year at great length about the messianic spark inside each of us and how tapping into our unlimited potential to do but one more act of goodness holds the potential of global transformation.

Usually, many people gather for the feast, everyone sings, the rabbi talks a little, and everyone imbibes four cups of wine (or grape juice).

Whether you celebrate in a communal space or in our own homes — and thus continue to elevate and transform our personal abodes into sanctuaries of immense holiness in greater measure than ever before — we hope and pray that very soon we will merit the coming of Moshiach, when our entire world will know no more pain and suffering.

Not sure what to do?

Here's a suggested program, comprising four readings, each of which may be followed by a cup of wine.

## WHAT YOU WILL NEED TO PREPARE IN ADVANCE



- Enough wine or grape juice for each participant to drink four cups.
- Wine glasses.
- Matzah (ideally shmurah matzah).
- Kosher for Passover refreshments.
- Reading material (such as this booklet), printed before the onset of the holiday.
- (Since it is customary to sing the Hopp Cossack melody at this meal, you may want to practice in advance as well.)

## THE PROGRAM

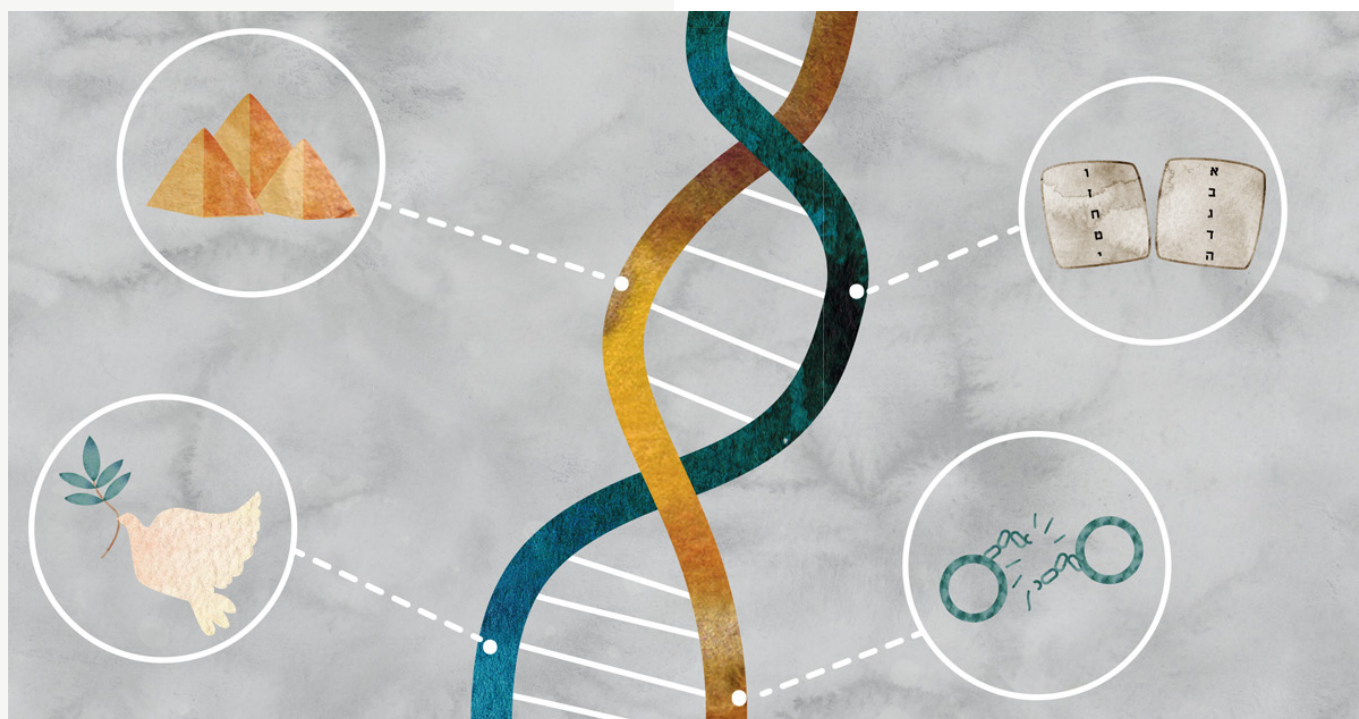


Pray the afternoon service on the final day of Passover earlier than usual, so you have enough time to set the table and wash for matzah well before sunset. The program is flexible, but we suggest you sing your favorite niggunim (Chassidic melodies) and read the following four articles, each one followed by a l'chaim over another (small) glass of wine or grape juice.

As you sip your l'chaims, bless all those in need of healing with a speedy recovery, accept mitzvah resolutions upon yourself, and pray for the arrival of the era Moshiach, which the world so desperately needs.

After night has fallen, don't forget to include the Passover inserts in Grace After Meals (and give the rabbi some time to repurchase your chametz before defrosting those bagels in the freezer).

Next Year In Jerusalem!





## Cup 1:



# A REFLECTION OF MOSHIACH

The eighth day of Pesach is traditionally associated with our hopes for the coming of Moshiach. For this reason, the *haftarah* read on that day contains many prophecies which refer to the era of the Redemption. Among the best-known of these: "The wolf will dwell with the lamb; the leopard will lie down with a young goat";<sup>1</sup> "He will raise a banner for the nations and gather in the exiles of Israel."<sup>2</sup>

About two hundred and fifty years ago, as the time for Moshiach drew closer, the Baal Shem Tov instituted a custom which underlines the connection between the Redemption and the eighth day of Pesach: on that day he would partake of Moshiach's Seudah, the festive meal of Moshiach.<sup>3</sup>

### TRANSFORMING THE BELIEF IN MOSHIACH INTO REALITY

Moshiach's Seudah is intended to deepen our awareness of Moshiach and enable us to integrate it into our thinking processes. The twelfth article of Rambam's thirteen principles of faith is "I believe with perfect faith in the coming of Moshiach. Even if he delays, I will wait every day for him to come."<sup>4</sup> Though all believing Jews accept this principle intellectually, for many the concept of Moshiach remains an abstraction. Partaking of Moshiach's Seudah reinforces our belief in this principle, translating our awareness of Moshiach into a meal, a physical experience which leads us to associate this concept with our flesh and blood.

The Baal Shem Tov's linking of our awareness of Moshiach to the physical is significant, because it prepares us for the revelations of the era of the





redemption. In that era, the G-dliness that is en clothed within the physical world will be overtly manifest. As the prophet Isaiah declared, “The glory of G-d will be revealed, and all flesh will see it together.”<sup>5</sup> At that time, “the glory of G-d” will permeate even the physical aspects of the world—“all flesh.”

Chassidut explains<sup>6</sup> that the preparations for a revelation must foreshadow the revelation itself. Since, in the era of the redemption, the revelation of G-dliness will find expression even in the physical world, it is fitting that our preparation for these revelations be associated with physical activities such as eating and drinking.

## TRANSFORMING THE WORLDLY

Moshiach’s Seudah, as mentioned above, is held on the eighth day of Pesach. The Torah originally commanded us to celebrate Pesach for seven days. When our people were exiled, however, a certain degree of doubt arose regarding the exact date on which the holidays should be celebrated. To solve the problem of determining the Jewish calendar in exile, our sages added an extra day to each festival. In other words, the eighth day of Pesach had been an ordinary day, but through the power endowed by the Torah, the Jewish people were able to transform it into a holy day.

When Moshiach comes, a similar transformation will occur throughout all of creation. Even the material and mundane aspects of the world will reveal G-dliness. Celebration of Moshiach’s Seudah on the eighth day of Pesach—once an ordinary day, now transformed—anticipates the kind of transformation that will characterize the era of the Redemption.

5. Isaiah 40:5.

6. Cf. *On the Essence of Chassidus*, ch. 4, p. 15.

## WHY THE BAAL SHEM TOV?

That the Baal Shem Tov originated the custom of Moshiach’s Seudah is particularly fitting. Once, in the course of his ascent to the heavenly realms on Rosh Hashanah,<sup>7</sup> the Baal Shem Tov encountered Moshiach and asked him, “When are you coming?” Moshiach replied, “When the wellsprings of your teachings spread outward.”

The goal of the Baal Shem Tov’s life was to prepare us for Moshiach, and the institution of Moshiach’s Seudah was part of that life’s work.

## THE CONTRIBUTION OF CHABAD

Like many other teachings of the Baal Shem Tov, the custom of conducting Moshiach’s Seudah was explained and widely disseminated by the successive rebbes of Chabad. Moreover, in 5666 (1906) the Rebbe Rashab (the fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe) added a new element to Moshiach’s Seudah: the drinking of four cups of wine.<sup>8</sup>

During the time of the Baal Shem Tov, the main ingredient of Moshiach’s Seudah was matzah. The tasteless flatness of matzah symbolizes selfless humility, a desire to transcend oneself. Wine, by contrast, is flavorful and pleasurable, and thus symbolizes the assertiveness of our individual personalities. Combining matzah and wine in Moshiach’s Seudah teaches us that self-transcendence does not require that we erase our personal identities. Self-transcendence may be accomplished within each individual’s nature. A person can retain his distinctive character and identity, yet dedicate his life to spreading G-dliness instead of pursuing personal fulfillment. Once

7. As related in a letter addressed by the Baal Shem Tov to his brother-in-law R. Gershon Kitover, describing his soul’s ascent on Rosh Hashanah 5507 [1746]. The letter was first published in *Ben Porat Yosef*, and appears in part in *Keter Shem Tov*, sec. 1.

8. See *Sefer ha-Sichot* 5698, p. 277.



he has fundamentally transformed his will, an individual can proceed to a more complete level of service of G-d in which his essential commitment permeates every aspect of his personality.

This innovation of the Rebbe Rashab exemplifies the comprehensive contribution of Chabad Chassidut to the legacy of the Baal Shem Tov. The Baal Shem Tov taught each Jew how to reveal his essential G-dly nature and thus rise above his personal identity. Chabad, an acronym for the Hebrew words *chochmah*, *binah* and *daat* ("wisdom, understanding and knowledge"), brings the Baal Shem Tov's teachings into the realm of the intellect, allowing them to be integrated and applied within each individual's personal framework.

## THE MISSION OF OUR GENERATION

Our generation has been charged with the responsibility of making all Jews aware of Moshiach—and this includes the custom of conducting Moshiach's Seudah. This mission is particularly relevant in our day, for the Jewish people have completed all the divine service necessary to enable Moshiach to come. As the

Previous Rebbe expressed it, "We have already polished the buttons."<sup>9</sup> Moshiach is waiting: "Here he stands behind our wall, watching through the windows, peering through the crevices."<sup>10</sup> The walls of exile are already crumbling, and now, in the immediate future, Moshiach will be revealed.

There are those who argue that speaking openly about the coming of Moshiach may alienate some people. The very opposite is true. We are living in the time directly preceding the age of Moshiach. The world is changing, and people are willing, even anxious, to hear about Moshiach. It is thus our duty to reach out and involve as many people as possible in the preparations for his coming.

These endeavors will escalate the fulfillment of the prophecies of the *haftorah* recited on the eighth day of Pesach: "A shoot will come forth from the stem of Yishai . . . , and the spirit of G-d will rest upon him"<sup>11</sup>—with the coming of Moshiach, speedily in our days.

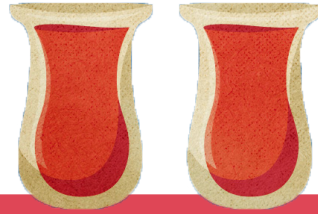
*Adapted from Likkutei Sichot, vol. 7, pp. 272–278, and the Rebbe's talks of the last day of Pesach 5722 [1962], from Timeless Patterns in Time (Sichos in English, 1993), by Rabbi Eliyahu Touger.*





# Cup 2:

## SLEEP DURING SIEGE



• By Aharon Loschak •

The capital city is besieged by a mighty and far superior army. The inhabitants are frightened. The invaders have pledged a swift campaign, bent on completely overpowering the population and obliterating the existing infrastructure.

A menacing convoy of infantry and artillery stretches for miles, promising untold horror. The commander in chief sends a message to the terror-stricken inhabitants, “Your leaders are deceiving you. You don’t stand a chance. Surrender now.”

No. This is not Ukraine 2022, rather Jerusalem, c. 548 B.C.E.

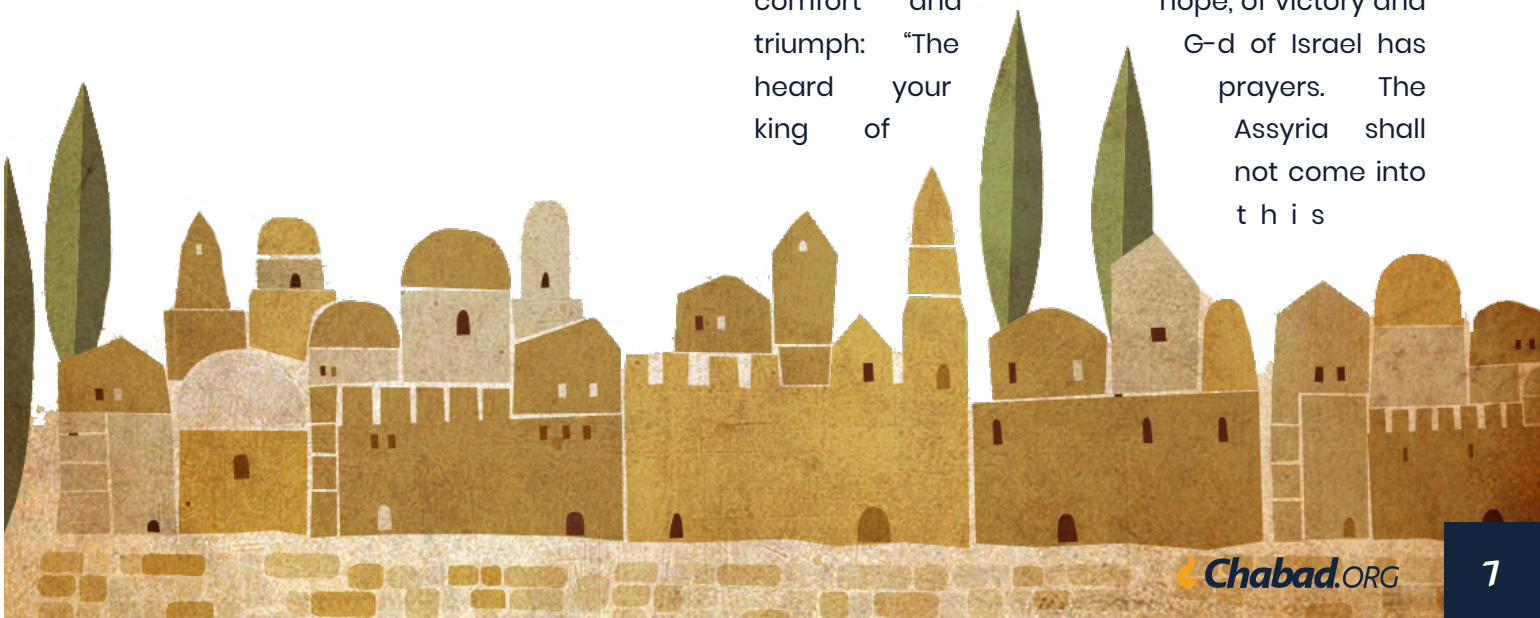
It is the dramatic story of Hezekiah and Sennacherib, told in the Prophets, and—most importantly for us—read aloud in *shul* as the *haftarah* for the final day of Passover.

### THAT NIGHT, THE KING ROLLED

King Hezekiah ruled the Jewish kingdom from its capital, Jerusalem. After many successful campaigns across the region, the mighty Assyrian King Sennacherib had laid siege to the Jewish stronghold. A mighty warrior, Sennacherib is remembered to this day as one of the greatest kings of ancient history, and with his army of nearly three million soldiers, the Jews inside the city walls were terrified.

It was the night of Passover. Instead of the joyous, festive air, a spirit of mourning washed over the city. Even the righteous King Hezekiah donned sackcloth as one in grief, and all anyone could do was pray for a miracle.

Amid this incredible tension, the Prophet Isaiah appears to Hezekiah with a message of comfort and hope, of victory and triumph: “The G-d of Israel has heard your prayers. The Assyria shall not come into this







city, nor shoot an arrow there. The way he came, the same way he shall return. For G-d Himself will defend this city and save it.”

What does Hezekiah do next? The Midrash tells us a remarkable thing:

Hezekiah stood up and said, “I lack the capability to pursue them, nor do I have the energy to sing to G-d. Rather, I will go to sleep, and You, G-d, will do what needs to be done.”<sup>1</sup>

Think about that. Here’s a leader of a nation under fire, the specter of death hanging over their heads. A gargantuan army surrounds the town, ominously rattling their sabers. And what does he do?

He goes to sleep!

How could he? Was he not at least a wee bit anxious? Was there really nothing on his heart such that he was able to simply roll over? How does that even make sense? The world’s largest army is right outside your window, for heaven’s sake!

The answer is quite simple: Hezekiah believed. For real. All he needed to hear was that G-d promised everything would be OK, and that was enough. “If

G-d was going to come through, what’s there to worry about? Why should I lose even a moment of sleep?” Hezekiah thought to himself. “Let Him handle the mess, and I’ll carry on with whatever I was doing.”

Snore.

How did G-d respond?

The Midrash continues:

G-d replied, “Indeed, I will do it.” And so it was: “And it came to pass on that night that an angel of G-d went out and slew 185,000 of the camp of Assyria. And they arose in the morning, and behold they were all dead corpses. And Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, left and went away.”<sup>2</sup>

### BE LIKE HEZEKIAH: AN OASIS OF CALM

Hezekiah’s attitude is why we read this story on the final day of Pesach, when we turn our focus from the Exodus of the past to the Redemption of the future.

1. Midrash Eichah Rabbah 4:15.

2. II Kings 19:35-36.

In this context, Hezekiah's story is vital. If we could only replicate even a fraction of his attitude, our lives would be a whole lot easier, healthier, and happier.

You see, what he did for Hezekiah, G-d does for us too. G-d promises us that Moshiach will come, and what's more, we are told that he can come at any moment—even right now!

If we only believed in that promise like Hezekiah did ... wow! Can you imagine what life would be like?

Think about it: Sure Hezekiah did all he could, bolstering the city's fortifications, cutting off the enemy's water supply, and praying to G-d. But then, he rolled over in the face of millions of trained soldiers committed to his murder.

You probably don't have trained killers threatening your life, but there are elements threatening to upend your sense of security. Who in modern society doesn't suffer from anxiety of some sort? Whether

it's worries about financial security, troubles with relationships and family, or consistent pressure from untended mental and/or emotional stress, we are currently experiencing a pandemic not only of viral nature, but of acute internal discord.

Take a page from Hezekiah's playbook. G-d has promised a better future, a completely alternate reality where none of that pressure exists. And the amazing thing is that it could literally happen right now. So why fret when in the next moment it will all be gone?

As you eat the *matzah* and drink the four cups of wine at the Moshiach's Meal on this final day of Pesach, be like Hezekiah and carve out an oasis of calm in your life. You have G-d's promise, so after you have done all that you can, roll over and sleep peacefully.

*This essay is based on Torat Menachem, vol. 33, pp. 349-353. Sichot Kodesh 5732 vol. 2, pp. 157-158.*





## Cup 3:



# CELEBRATE IN ADVANCE

• By Eliyahu and Malka Touger •

It was not the lure of a new frontier that brought the Schochet family from Europe to Canada in the summer of 1951. Rabbi Dov Yehudah Schochet had been a distinguished rabbi in Holland. Nevertheless, as his children grew, his concern for their education led him to immigrate to Toronto, where they could benefit from the city's growing Torah community.

The Toronto community was quick to appreciate Rabbi Schochet's unique gifts, and he had little difficulty finding a rabbinical post. As their home became an address for Jewish activity, their integration into the new city became easier. There were, nevertheless, considerable hardships during those first few years, such as a lack of laundry facilities and telephone.

On Thursday, Nov. 2, 1951, the Schochet's toddler daughter, Amina, had somehow crawled into a huge kettle of boiling laundry water and burned herself severely. The child was rushed to the hospital and placed in intensive care. She had suffered heavy burns on her entire body and her condition was nearly fatal. The child was put in a full-body cast, and told the family that there was no hope for her life.

From the hospital, Rabbi Schochet called "770." To his surprise, the Rebbe himself came on the line. He listened patiently as Rabbi Schochet described the situation and requested a blessing and then diverted the conversation to Rabbi Schochet's rabbinic duties.

The Rebbe then requested that they prepare a generous *kiddush* on Shabbat expressing their gratitude for G-d's providence.

This encouraging message stood in direct opposition to the grim forecasts predicted by the doctors, who explained that Shabbat, which was the third day since the accident, was critical since they would then begin to know whether the baby's internal organs had been damaged beyond repair.

However, the Schochets were optimistic. "It was a very joyous *kiddush*," recalls Rabbi Dovid Schochet.

That afternoon, word arrived that the child's kidneys were functioning. There was hope.

Days went by with the family maintaining telephone contact with the hospital from a nearby store.

In the early hours of Sunday, Dec. 1, Amina's second birthday, a police vehicle stopped in front of the Schochet home. The officer who knocked at the door had a grave expression on his face. "We were requested to inform you that your daughter's condition has taken a sharp turn for the worse. She is now dying," he said.

"It was very, very sad to look at her," recalled her elder sister, Shulamis Bechhofer. "Her cheeks were sunken in, and there were black shadows around her eyes, which were big and sad."

Rabbi Schochet immediately contacted the Rebbe's office and described the desperate situation. The Rebbe's response was most unexpected. "Nonsense! The child is not in danger and will regain her health," the Rebbe said. And once again, the girl clung to life, amazing the doctors.

This continued for several months.

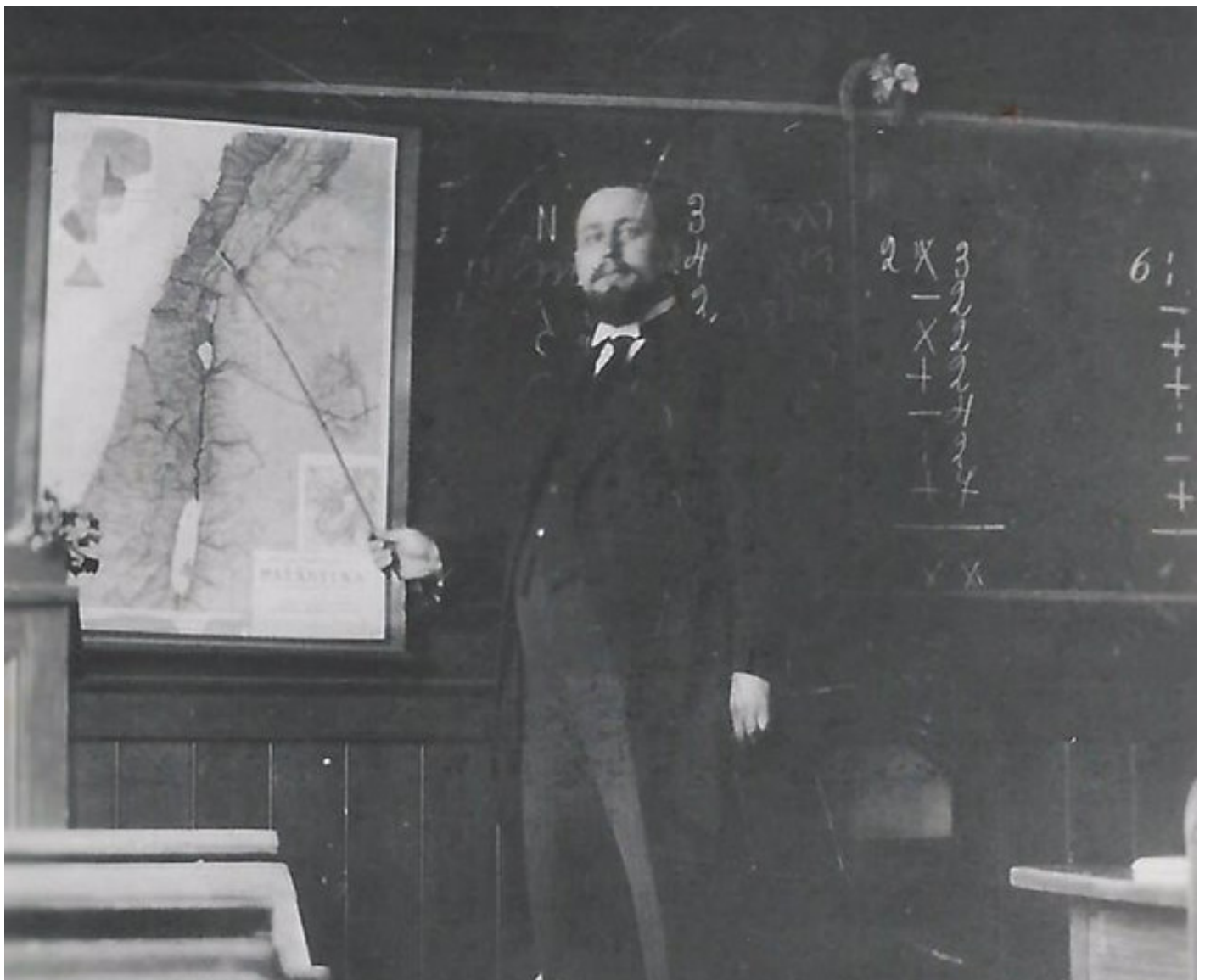
At one time, things took a turn for the worse, and the Rebbe instructed the father to protest loudly against the hospital staff, blaming them for causing the deterioration in the child's condition.

Evidently, the Rebbe sensed Rabbi Schochet's hesitation, for he repeated his instruction once again.

Rabbi Schochet mustered up the courage to confront the hospital staff with resolute determination. Although he was not fluent in English, he was a tall man with a commanding presence, and the doctors agreed to review his daughter's treatment carefully. To everyone's horror, it was discovered that an error in her treatment had caused unnecessary complications, and had endangered the child's life. The dosage was corrected and the little girl recovered.

Since then, she has merited to tell the story to her 16 children and many, many grandchildren.

*Adapted from To Know and To Care, by Rabbi Eliyahu and Malka Touger (Sichos in English, 1993), with additional information from interviews conducted by JEM (Jewish Educational Media).*





## Cup 4:



# A MOSHIACH MEDITATION

• By Tzvi Freeman •

You are sitting at your Passover Holiday table, perhaps surrounded by family and friends, perhaps just you and your lonesome. It's easy to fall into thoughts of all the troubles of today's world.

But those thoughts don't fix anything. Neither does speaking about them accomplish much. Except to get us more down.

But here's a thought that can accomplish a lot. A thought that can pick you up, and even has the power to pick up the whole world--since, as the Chassidic masters explain, you hold the balance of the entire world within your heart.

Like Kohelet wrote, "G-d even put the world in each of their hearts."

So imagine a world yet to come. Visualize it. Put yourself inside it. Breathe it in. Then prepare to watch it unfold in reality.

This world yet to come is not a quiet world. It's a very busy world. But it is a harmonious world.

Because it is a world that reflects its Creator in every way. And the best way a creation can express the oneness of its Creator is with beautiful, diverse and busy harmony.

Imagine being an integral part of that harmony. In everything you do, in everything you examine, in everything you engage yourself, you discover a wondrous depth, a deep pleasure and joy that

yells out, "Only a Grand Artisan of infinite wisdom, before Whom all possibilities lie open and nothing is impossible could have made such a world!"

The gentle warmth of the morning sun. The rustle of leaves in the wind. The droplets of rain that caress your cheek. The throbbing of your own heart.

Each experience of life makes you want to sing. Each new discovery of wonder makes you want to dance--with friends, with strangers, with any creature that can breathe.

Where there is harmony, there is peace.

Not the sort of peace where everything is still and silent. Not a steady rhythm or an endless pattern. But a harmony that takes you ever deeper and yet deeper in discovery, to higher and yet more sublime pleasure, to wider and yet more expansive consciousness.

You close your eyes at night in astonishment at the wisdom you have gained that day. And you open them at dawn to greet a whole new world you have never known before.

Every day, a new wonder, every moment, a new unfolding of beauty. In every tree, in every cloud, in every blade of grass. In every encounter, in every activity, in every accomplishment.

Is it a life of self-discovery? Of course. But more than that. It is a life of self-transcendence.

At each point that you discover yourself, you say, "But I am not that. I am much more than that, way beyond!"

And then you find yourself discovering a whole new level of your own being.

It is a life of discovering others. Because that is the greatest discovery of a human being in this world—that there are others who see an entirely different world, with different colors, different sounds, different dimensions.

And it is such a pleasure to jump out of yourself and see the world as they do. And then to come back and appreciate so much more the world that was chosen for you alone.

It is a world where no one would imagine hurting another creature. Where no one would imagine damaging the fine-tuning of their environment, but only to improve upon it, perfecting this divine garden each day, pruning it, culturing it, fostering its beauty, unfolding its latent

potentials, bringing it to a whole new level again and again.

A world where two meet and discover new harmonies, many come together and discover new forms of beauty, the whole world joins together in the act of the discovery of G-d, an endless knowledge, forever thrilling and pleasurable.

A crowd is approaching, young people, old people, wise people, simple people, singing together in joy, a voice that shakes the heavens above your head and resonates within the earth at your feet.

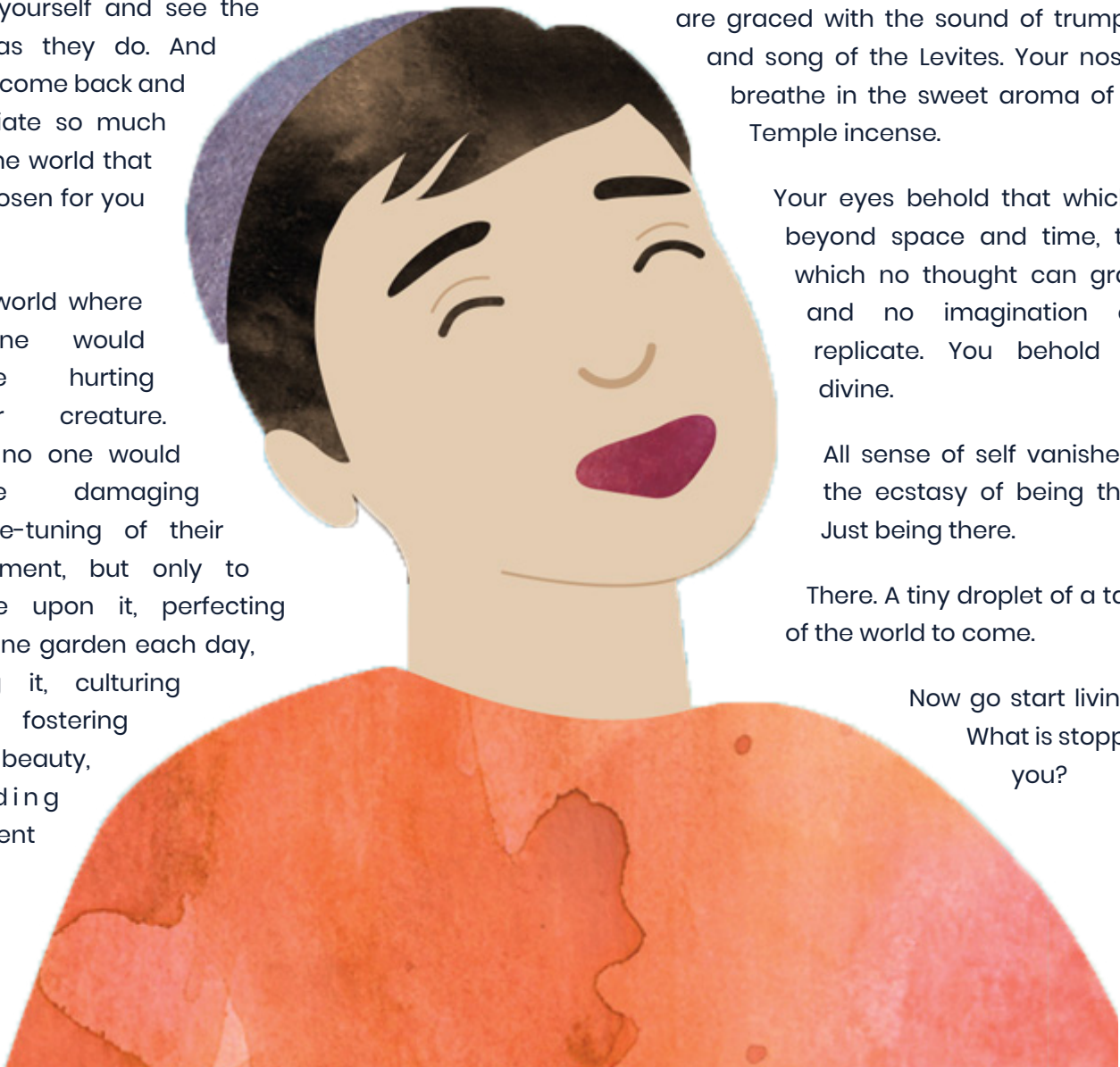
You are swept in amongst them. Together, you all rise up to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. Your bare feet tread upon the marble floor. Your ears are graced with the sound of trumpets and song of the Levites. Your nostrils breathe in the sweet aroma of the Temple incense.

Your eyes behold that which is beyond space and time, that which no thought can grasp, and no imagination can replicate. You behold the divine.

All sense of self vanishes in the ecstasy of being there. Just being there.

There. A tiny droplet of a taste of the world to come.

Now go start living it.  
What is stopping you?





Compiled by: **Menachem Posner**

Art by: **Sefira Ross & Rivka Korf**

Design & Layout by: **Shneor Cortez**

© Copyright Chabad.org, all rights reserved.

