



The Feast of MOSHIACH

The Festival of the Future

סעודת משיח

A mystical Moshiach experience with suggested readings in which we explore the notion of the ingathering of Jews from all over the world

Hakhel Year | שנת הקהל

 **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.

In light of this year, 5783, being a Hakhel year, when Jews gather together to gain inspiration, share Torah, and revel in each other's company, our focus is on the theme of the ingathering of exiles, Jewish unity and how every single Jew is of utmost significance.

Here's a suggested program, comprising four readings related to our theme, each of which may be followed by a cup of wine or grape juice.

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.

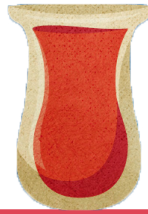
As you sip your l'chaims, bless all those in need of healing with a speedy recovery, accept mitzvah resolutions upon yourself, and pray for the arrival of the era Moshiach, which the world so desperately needs.

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 JEW IN CURACAO

• By Eli Groisman •

I grew up in Curacao, a Caribbean island that is part of the Netherlands Antilles. There were no Jewish schools on the island at the time, and I attended a Protestant school.

I had a very difficult time at school. Although I was brought up in a non-observant household, I stubbornly refused to participate in the religious services and classes that were part of the school curriculum. Non-Jewish students picked daily fights with me, and I even felt that my teachers and the school's principal were taking their side.

When I reached 7th grade, things were coming to a head. Life was not getting easier. On the contrary, fights were more prevalent than ever and more vicious. My relations with the school principal became more and more hostile. I started skipping school. I spent my days playing golf at the nearby golf club, returning to the school grounds in time to meet my father, who drove me home every day.

One day, the principal called my father into his office to find out why I had not been in school the past few weeks. Meeting me as usual that day after school hours, my father asked, "How was school today?" I replied, "The same as always." My father then asked me, "Did you go to school today? Last week? Two weeks ago?" Not wanting to lie, I admitted that I had not.

My father gave me a choice: either give in and do as all the other boys do, or leave school and go to work with him — and work hard — every day. I didn't need to think long. I walked into the principal's office, put my textbooks on the principal's desk, and ran back out to my father.

Warning letters started to arrive to our home stating the law that all minors must attend school. My family's relations with the community also began to sour as a result.

My father was terribly upset about my situation, but he didn't know any way out. One night he had a dream. He saw himself near the age of three, before his upshernish, sitting on his grandmother's lap. She was saying to him, "Liuvu (Russian for 'my love'), anytime you are in trouble, the one who can help you is the Lubavitcher Rebbe." This was the first time he had ever heard of the Rebbe.

The next morning my father went to his shul, a small, unobtrusive building near his home. He asked the caretaker to unlock the door for him and went over to the Aron HaKodesh (ark), poured his heart to G-d, and turned to leave. On a January day in 1984, Rabbi Moshe Kotlarsky, assistant to Rabbi Hodakov, the Rebbe's senior secretary, received a telephone call at home from Rabbi Hodakov. "Wash your hands," instructed Rabbi Hodakov, using a code term

clueing in Rabbi Kotlarsky that the Rebbe was on the line, listening. "The Rebbe wants you to go to Curacao immediately."

When the Rebbe tells a chassid to act, he does not ask questions; he acts. Rabbi Kotlarsky chose a traveling companion, Levi Krinsky, a 17-year-old yeshivah student, and both took the next flight to Curacao. Arriving at the airport and not knowing where to go or what to do there, they hailed a taxi, requesting to be taken to the synagogue.

Taxi drivers in Curacao are used to such requests, and they usually comply by driving to the largest synagogue on the island, renowned as the oldest synagogue in the Western Hemisphere, Mikvah Israel Emanuel. This synagogue, in which services are conducted only on Shabbat, functions also as a museum throughout the week. It boasts a unique feature: the floor is covered with white sand, possibly because its founders, who escaped the Inquisition, covered the steps leading to

their houses of prayer in Portugal with sand in order to hide the sound of their footsteps.

This taxi driver, however, took Rabbi Kotlarsky not to Mikvah Israel Emanuel but to a small, neighborhood shul. As the taxi pulled up to the door, Rabbi Kotlarsky saw a man leaving the building. Thinking that this man would be a convenient source of information about the local Jewish community, he approached him and said: "We were sent here by the Lubavitcher Rebbe. We want to get to know the Jewish people here. We are staying at the Plaza Hotel. Can you come with us and tell us about the local community?" The man, who was none other than my father, just walking out of the shul, nearly fainted.

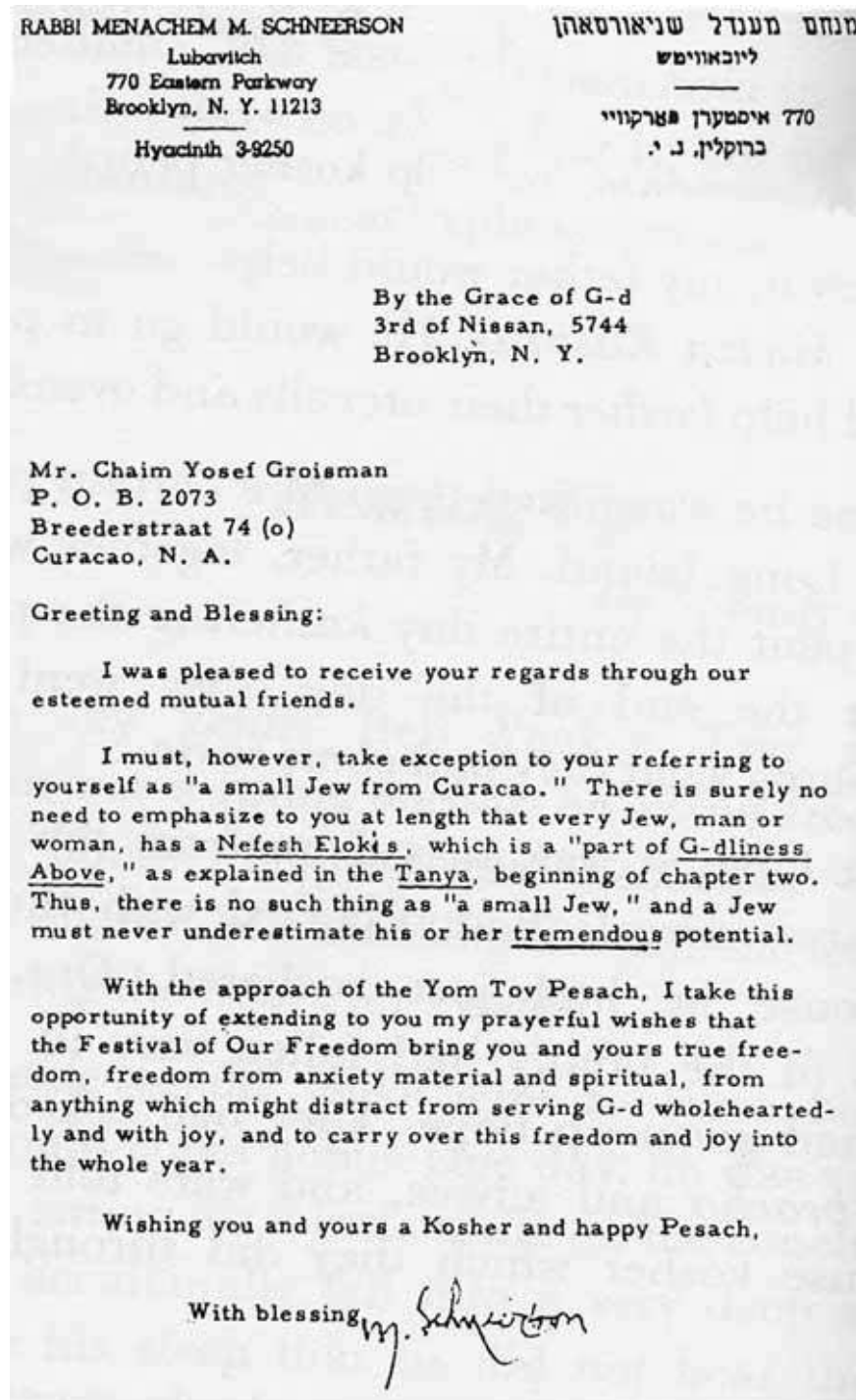
My father told Rabbi Kotlarsky about our family's plight, and introduced me to him. My first question to Rabbi Kotlarsky was: "Are you allowed to defend yourself if someone comes up and punches you?" I had formed an impression from the movies and TV shows I had



seen about the Holocaust that Jews were weak and did not fight back when attacked. Rabbi Kotlarsky responded, "You make sure that you defend yourself, and do such damage that they won't come back to you!" I thought this Rabbi was cool.

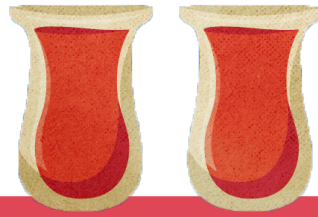
Rabbi Kotlarsky invited me to go to New York and attend Camp Gan Israel in the Catskills that summer, and later to Yeshivah that started in September. This was the answer to my prayers, and I accepted the offer immediately.

I would like to thank the Rebbe for caring for me and my family. We should all take his example on how one should care for a fellow Jew. It doesn't have to be a Jew in far-off Curacao; it could be someone right around the corner. Surely, by following the Rebbe's example we will all merit the revelation of Moshiach.



When Moshiach comes, we will all look back at our erstwhile homes, recognizing that there was purpose in our being there, and that our presence there contributed to the global tidal wave of goodness that is Moshiach.

Cup 2:



HOW MOSES SAVED EGYPTIAN CIVILIZATION

• By Tzvi Freeman •

You can find Ramesses II today in a museum, in a history book, or a college course. There he lies, a perfectly still mummy, long dead and terribly irrelevant.

There is one place, however, where you can find him alive and kicking: At a Passover Seder. So alive, people are still celebrating their escape from his clutches.

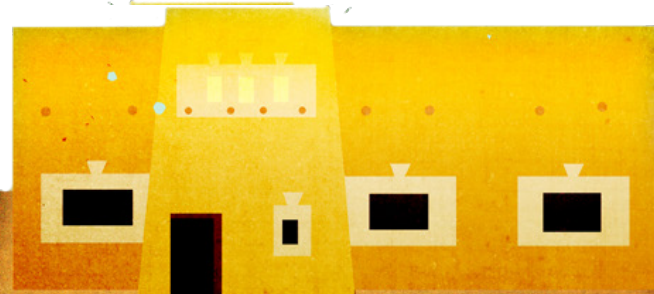
Let's start with his language. In the books of Exodus and Numbers, linguists count 381 instances of words borrowed from Ancient Egyptian, with 450 more throughout the rest of the Hebrew Bible. Words for such common items as a cup, a pole, a box, linen, as well as standard measurements. The suffixes of several of these words indicate that they could only have been from the era leading up to Ramesses II, precisely where tradition would place the Exodus.¹

1. Benjamin Noonan, Egyptian Loanwords as Evidence for the Authenticity of the

Tradition is quite candid about these borrowings. The Midrash of Rabbi Tanchuma notes that the first word of the Ten Commandments is

Exodus and Wilderness Traditions, chapter three of Did I Not Bring Israel Out of Egypt, Penn State University Press 2016.

Noonan also notes that a survey of other cultures in the same region, such as Ammon and Moab, indicates negligible amounts of Egyptian loanwords—clear evidence that the Hebrews were there in Egypt and brought these words with them.



an Egyptian loanword: *Anochi* is a Hebraized adaptation of the Egyptian *Anuch*, meaning “I.”

What about technology and culture?

Well, in their sojourn through the Sinai peninsula, the Israelites were instructed to construct a modular, dismountable, portable tabernacle. The design appears quite ingenious even today—a wooden framework, gold-plated, fitted together with tenons, external and internal rods, grounded and capped with socket joints.

The tapestry and furnishings were also elaborate, intricate, and luxurious.

Obviously, such intricate work required skilled and experienced craftsmanship. But then, what were they Israelites occupied in before leaving Egypt? They were “building storage cities for Pharaoh.”

So we find “every man whose heart inspired him”² applying those same skills he learned while crafting the palaces of the pharaohs to fashion a sanctuary for the one invisible G-d of heaven and earth, while the “wise-hearted women”³ are spinning yarn and goat-hair—and perhaps taking part in the tapestries and embroidery as well.

Yet some will ask: What is ancient Egypt doing in our holy books and sacred spaces? Wouldn't you expect a divine teaching to be taught exclusively within the purity of a divine language?

SIGNS TO CARRY MEANING

Two hundred years before Carl Jung and his students composed *Man and His Symbols*, Rabbi Dov Ber, the Magid of Mezritch (18th century Ukraine), delved deep into the mystery of metaphor and the human subconscious. Indeed, Jung is quoted as stating that “the Chasidic Rabbi Ber from Mezritch, whom they called the Great Magid,” anticipated his entire psychology.⁴

So that when the Magid looked at the Exodus narrative, he saw in it the appropriation

2. Exodus 36:21.

3. Exodus 36:25.

4. Jung received knowledge of the Great Magid from a student and colleague, Erich Neumann. Neumann was fascinated with Martin Buber's retelling of Chassidic lore. He came to believe that Chassidism held the key to the resolution of the Jewish spiritual crisis and the “re-rooting” of the Jews. After emigrating to what was then Palestine, he penned two volumes entitled *The Roots of Jewish Consciousness*. Volume one is subtitled *Revelation and Apocalypse*. Volume two is subtitled *Hasidism*. Both were translated and published only recently.



of Egyptian culture by none other than G-d Himself. He saw that especially in these lines:

G-d said to Moses, “Go to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his servants in order that I may put these signs (“*otot*”) of Mine within his midst, and in order that you tell into the ears of your child and your child’s child 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 G-d.”⁵

If you don't see what the Magid sees, that's understandable. It's lost in translation. As we all know, you can't translate a language into another language and expect to see the same thing because you can't translate a culture into another culture.

The Hebrew word *ot* (*otot* or *otiot* in plural) is a case in point. Despite the popularity of the above translation, *ot* does not correspond to *sign* in English, or to any other word. It has its own meaning within the context of its own language which exists within a certain culture and way of thinking that defines the Jewish people from Ancient Israel until today, in its various permutations.

Which is actually what an *ot* is all about. An *ot* is anything that carries and conveys the significant meanings that are rooted within the unique collective consciousness of a society and culture.

For example, the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet are called *otiot*, because you can assemble them into words and sentences that convey ideas, perspectives, and emotions from one person's inner self to another's.

A tradition, a commemoration, or a communal ritual is also an *ot*, carrying meaning and significance from one generation to the next. An event, an animal, or even a rock might also be an *ot*, if it carried with itself some reminder from the past or some indication of something beyond.

In English, we call these signs, symbols, or tokens, but none of these words entirely captures the flavor of the word *ot*. In Hebrew, we say that you, along with every other person on the planet, have your own *otiot*—meaning roughly, the way you express your inner person. Then there are the *otiot* of each nation, as it speaks to itself and knows itself. The symbology, the culture, the language, and the nuance of expression that only the insider understands.

It is our *otiot* that allow us to master our environment to a degree inconceivable for any other creature on the planet. Indeed, there is nothing of the human world that is constructed by any individual alone or without the *otiot* of language that hold us together. As we build words and sentences, so we build the world we inhabit.

Indeed, when the Genesis narrative describes how G-d blew into Adam of His own breath “and the human being became a living soul,” the classic translation of Onkelos reads that as “the human being became a speaking spirit.” With *otiot*, the human being becomes *imitatio Dei*—in the image of G-d, a creator and master of his own world.

5. Exodus 10:1-2.

RETURNING LANGUAGE TO ITS ORIGIN

From where does this astonishing power of *otiot* emerge? The traditional narrative, upon which the Maggid bases his commentary, is that the universe is itself generated by a primordial form of *otiot*, intentional iterations of a wholly transcendent Creator. The complexity of the human network provides a kind of antenna for these primal iterations of sentience to re-emerge on a different plane, inducting them into the context of human life. Only that now they are words in translation, profoundly out of context, and therefore no longer capable of generating actual existence and life.

Instead, it is upon these *otiot* that civilizations are built, empires reign, and societies organize themselves into their idiosyncratic structures. Ancient Egypt, as well, was a construct of its symbols, language, culture...its *otiot*. It was the seat of esoteric knowledge and hi-tech at its time, a strikingly rich culture and advanced civilization that continues to fascinate and mystify us to this day.

But it was oppressive. If society had remained within the rigid hierarchical structure of ancient Egypt, with its cult of secret knowledge and divine right of its pharaohs, humanity would be enslaved forever, and the notion of progress and a better world would never emerge.

How did such oppression and corruption occur out of divine *otiot*? Because, as understood from the teachings of the great kabbalist, Rabbi Yitzchak Luria (16th century Tzfat), along the route of translation from divine origin to human devices, the *otiot* lost their original context and rearranged themselves so that their meaning became distorted and lost—somewhat akin to an encrypted file that arrives in your email

without its decoding key. Signal becomes noise, and the picture can get ugly. As it did in ancient Egyptian culture.

Here is the teaching of the Magid, as transcribed by his students and in rough translation:

The Holy One desired to extract all the divine sparks that had fallen into Egypt through the primordial shattering. These were all the wasted talk of Pharaoh and of Egypt, their *otiot*, etc. How would this extraction occur? By bringing these words and these *otiot* into the Torah and rearranging them in the context of holiness. This would be their purification.

So this is the meaning of “In order that I may place these *otiot* of Mine.” These are the *otiot* of the shattering that needed to be arranged within the Torah.⁶

And that was the purpose of planting the souls of Israel in Egypt for 210 years—as an investment, a means to rescue these sparks and *otiot*.⁷

The destiny of these souls was intimately entangled with the redemption of these lost sparks.⁸ Only once the sparks were released through the ten plagues could the Jewish people become a nation, receive the Torah, and truly be free.

To paraphrase, G-d said, “These are my *otiot*, fallen, shattered, and corrupted. And now I will redeem them. I will make signs and wonders so that the *otiot* of this civilization will be preserved forever within the holiness of My Torah. And once these *otiot* have been rescued, returned to their place and transformed from darkness into light, then My children can be redeemed.”

6. Ohr Torah, beginning of parshat Bo.

7. Bati Legani 5743, s’if 8.

8. Tanya, chapter 37.

That is what G-d is telling Moses here, that, yes, it would be simple to force Pharaoh's hand at this point, and indeed much earlier. But that is not the point. The objective is to rescue these signs, these *otot*, the “wasted *otiot* of Egypt,” and induct them into Torah, reconnecting them with their divine origin. And along with the *otiot* came the gold, silver, bronze, and fine garments of Egypt, along with the skills and crafts we learned while working in their land. That became a *mishkan*, a sanctuary for the divine presence among the Children of Israel.

TORAH TO HEAL THE WORLD

It seems then that our original question bespeaks a misconception of Torah.

Torah is not an alien voice from beyond beckoning us to abandon the suffering of our earthly realm and rise towards a higher, more sublime and divine world. Rather, Torah is a voice of healing, of repair, of reconnection. It says, “There is no need to leave your place, for G-d is everywhere. Stay where you are, and reveal that it is all truly divine—every culture, every work of art, every beautiful song, every magnificent structure created by humankind contains within it My divine voice.”

In each land where Jews arrive, they assimilate those elements of the local culture that do not conflict with Torah and bring them into Torah. In their everyday activities, in their interactions with the rest of the population, in their study of Torah, in their celebration of its holidays—in all this and more, they return the lost *otiot* of creation to their original context.⁹

Each of us has our particular lost *otiot* which our soul has come to this world to rescue. For one, they may be in the world of commerce, for another in some form of music that can uplift the soul, for another in drama, or technology, or in the sciences, or in some other profession or hobby.

By now, it's hard to imagine a land or nation where Torah has not had its impact. We have gathered all the sparks necessary, and now it is time for G-d to take us out of this final exile along with all His lost sparks, and along with all the inhabitants of the world.

The world will be the way it was meant to be, and we will know we have done our part in its creation.

9. Sefer Hasichot 5752, pp. 174-186.



Cup 3:



YOU MATTER

• By Aharon Loschak •

Norman Borlaug was a biologist and agricultural scientist who is credited with saving millions of lives through his work in developing special wheat varieties.

In the 1940s, Borlaug began working in Mexico as part of a program to improve wheat yields and help feed the country's growing population. Borlaug and his team were eventually able to develop high-yield, disease-resistant varieties that could grow in assorted conditions. These varieties were then introduced to farmers in other parts of the world, including India and Pakistan, where they helped transform agriculture and improve food security.

Borlaug's work is credited with helping to prevent famines in several countries and is estimated to have saved millions of lives. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1970 for his contributions to global food security. In a 1997 article in *The Atlantic*, "Forgotten Benefactor of Humanity," Gregg Easterbrook claims that the "form of agriculture that Borlaug preaches may have prevented a billion deaths."

It's not every day that what began as a small experiment in a forgotten field somewhere will yield results that eventually save a billion lives. But it *is* every day that the small things

we do, the people we touch, have an outsized impact—far more than we often know.

"HE SHALL GATHER THE LOST OF ISRAEL"

In the *haftarah* read on the final day of Passover, the prophet Isaiah speaks glowingly of the future Redemption. One of the events he describes is the Ingathering of Exiles—that moment when G-d will return every Jew to the land of Israel:

And it shall come to pass that on that day, G-d shall . . . acquire the rest of His people, that will remain from Assyria and from Egypt . . . And He shall gather the lost of Israel, and the scattered ones of Judah He shall gather from the four corners of the earth.¹

It's an exciting prospect. Imagine: every Jew, no matter where they live, no matter how remote or disconnected, will be whooshed away in a flash and brought to the Messianic utopia. How incredible will that be!

But what does that have to do with me and you right now? What will happen in the future is

1. Isaiah 11:11–12.

lovely, but what are we to make of that today, in New York, Johannesburg, Malmo, and Lima?

NO JEW LEFT BEHIND

Here's a thought: If you pause and think about this idea for even half a second, it's quite odd. Why, after all, would G-d bother to gather every single Jew? In another verse, Isaiah movingly describes how, "You shall be gathered one by one, O children of Israel"—as if G-d will sweep the globe and personally pluck out every last member of the tribe. But why? What would be so bad if Moshe in the Appalachian Mountains or Naomi in Patagonia were left behind?

The simple answer is: Yes! It would be terrible. In G-d's eyes, every single Jewish person is integral to the redemptive process. If it's not literally every member, Redemption cannot and will not take place. It's as simple as that.

"I will handpick each of you, one by one, and bring you back home" sends forth a dramatic message: you matter. Regardless of how trivial, insignificant, or remote you may think you are, you still matter. When the day of our nation's long-awaited Redemption arrives, the entire process will hang in the balance until G-d knocks on your cabin, plucks you out and brings you back to the Promised Land.

YOU MATTER TOO MUCH TO BE LEFT BEHIND

The message of the Ingathering of Exiles, for all of us, right here and right now, is that we matter, and very much so. You may think you're on a remote island

and whatever you do has no consequence, but G-d begs to differ.

Remember the prophet's clarion call: "You shall be gathered one by one, O children of Israel." That includes you. Yes, tiny little you. Everyone else in the world will have to wait until you're ready to come along. And then, you'll wait for the next person.

Go ahead and feel good about yourself, good about the fact that G-d is ready to put the entire project on hold until you're on board. And then go and spread the word.

Do you know another Jew living nearby? Do you have a Jewish friend who also thinks they're the only one on their hilltop, island, or neighborhood? Let them know that they're special in G-d's eye, and that the future Redemption will come only when they sign up.

And while we're at it, why not sign them up now? Tell them about a mitzvah, a unique opportunity to connect with the G-d Who believes in them so much. Offer them the chance to study a Torah idea, to put on *tefillin*, to make a blessing over food, to light Shabbat candles, to pray. Any of the above is a gateway, a thread that connects us with G-d Who bestows each of us with meaning, purpose, and endless value.

The future Redemption knocks at our door every day. And it's telling me, you, and everyone else, "You're too important to be left behind."



Cup 4:



THE MAGGID AND THE MAN WITHOUT MATZAH

• By Hillel Baron •

The evening before Passover is a busy one. Besides the countless tasks needed to prepare for the joyous Passover holiday, that evening is the time when Jews all over search their homes for any remnants of leaven (*chametz*), which are carefully collected and burned the next morning.

On that night, the great Rabbi Dov Ber, the Maggid of Mezrich, would typically pray the evening service quickly so he could begin the great mitzvah of cleansing his home of *chametz* as soon as possible.

One year though, he prayed with great fervor for several hours, almost like it was Yom Kippur. Afterward he secluded himself in his room for a long time deep in thought.

The Maggid's students were perplexed and waited anxiously for the Maggid to leave his room to perform the mitzvah of the night. Finally, some of the closest students ventured to knock on his door to ask: "Rebbe, what is happening? It is already well past midnight!"

The Rebbe then answered, "It is not good; the Heavens are holding me back from doing the search."

Several hours later there the Maggid finally came out of his room and announced: "There is a Jew in our area who does not have matzah for Passover, and I cannot search for *chametz* until we find him and take care of him!"

The *chassidim* immediately organized groups and began a thorough search of the city. Alas, they returned empty-handed, having not found a single Jewish person without matzah.

The Rebbe was quiet for a while and then replied: "I cannot do the search until you find that Jew! Look far and wide, even outside the city."

Finally, they succeeded. Two Chassidim had made their way to a tiny village and found the only Jew in the hamlet. When they woke him up and asked if he had matzah he let out a great sigh and told them his story.

A tailor by trade, he would save his extra money to give to those in need. Every year before Pesach, he would come to the city and contribute a respectable sum to the Maggid to distribute among the needy, and he would personally also distribute funds to help others obtain their needs for the holiday.

This year though, he was bedridden for many months and all his savings disappeared, to the extent that it was already the eve of Passover and he had absolutely nothing with which to celebrate Pesach, not even matzah.

Much to his surprise, the *chassidim* began laughing with relief and insisted that he come with them to the Maggid.

As soon as the tailor arrived, the Maggid gave him a warm welcome and handed him a large

sum of money to buy holiday provisions for himself and to distribute to others as was his custom. Then at long last and with great joy, the Maggid proceeded to perform the search for *chametz* together with his students!

There are many acts that can contribute to hastening Mosiach's arrival. Expressing genuine care and concern for others, something we will do naturally in the era of Moshiach, is one way in which we can live on a Moshiach plane, anticipating the goodness yet to come.





Compiled by: **Menachem Posner**

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

Design & Layout by: **Shneur Cortez**

© Copyright Chabad.org, all rights reserved.

 **Chabad.ORG**