

LampLighter

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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

This Shabbat is called *Shabbat Hagadol*, "The Great Shabbat," because of a "great miracle" that occurred on this day. The Midrash relates that on this day--four days before the actual Exodus--the firstborn of Egypt, who constituted the religious and political elite of Egyptian society, demanded of Pharaoh that he free the Children of Israel. They even fought a war against Pharaoh's troops in an attempt to force the Israelites' liberation.

As a rule, important dates on the Jewish calendar are celebrated according to the day of the month: the Exodus is commemorated on the 15th of Nissan, the miracle of Chanukah on the 25th of Kislev, and so on. The war of the firstborn occurred on the 10th of Nissan, which on that year, was also the Shabbat before Passover. So why does the commemoration of this miracle follow the day of the week rather than the day of the month?

The answer to this question lies in another question: What was the miracle? The firstborn's rebellion did not achieve anything. We remained in Egypt until the 15th of Nissan, when the tenth and final plague finally forced Pharaoh to set us free. It was G-d who forced Pharaoh's hand, not the Egyptian firstborn. So what are we celebrating?

In truth, however, there are two types of miracles. The first type--which is the kind we usually imagine when we hear the word "miracle"--is about a result. There is a certain situation, and then something extraordinary happens to change it. A mortally ill person is miraculously healed. A desperately poor individual gets rich. An enslaved people is set free. And so on.

The second kind of miracle is about process rather than result. What happens is that the way things operate is transformed. The results may not be visible yet, but something very deep and fundamental has changed.

The second type of miracle may be less obvious and harder to appreciate, but it is infinitely greater. It doesn't just change what happened, but how things happen. It alters not a specific, incidental event, but the inner workings of the prevalent reality.

Such a miracle was the miracle of the "Great Shabbat." To reach down from heaven and smash the might of Egypt is one thing; but when Egypt itself--indeed, the most powerful stratum of Egyptian society--fights to liberate us from Egyptian slavery, that, in a way, is an even greater miracle than the Exodus itself.

The first type of miracle belongs to the month, which in the Jewish calendar follows the moon's rebirth from darkness every 29.5 days, and thus represents visible, radical change. The second miracle belongs to the weekly cycle, which represents the regular workings of nature. On the "Great Shabbat" we commemorate and re-experience the unique value of change from within, of change that affects not only the way things are but the very nature of reality.

(Based on the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe)

The Rebbe and Liberation

LIBERATION ON ALL FRONTS

By Rabbi Heschel Greenberg

The Rebbe's birthday on the 11th of Nissan coincides with the Festival of Passover, the Season of our Freedom.

It is therefore not surprising to find the thread of liberation run through the entire fabric of the Rebbe's philosophy and life.

For the Rebbe, liberation extends to helping those who are literally in prison even as it encompassed heroic efforts to liberate Jews from the former Soviet Union. But, above all, the Rebbe's life was dedicated to the coming of Moshiach and the ultimate Redemption of the Jewish people and the entire world from galut/exile.

All of these areas of liberation are more or less familiar to the Jewish people. Much less is known about the Rebbe's emphasis on liberating ourselves from our "galut pnimi"--"inner exile." And although the Rebbe placed such a great emphasis on the Mitzvah campaigns and outreach, he also devoted hundreds of his talks and published Chassidic discourses to the inner dynamics of the soul.

In the historic talk delivered on the 28th of Nissan 5751--eleven months before suffering a stroke--the Rebbe spoke of how he had done all he could to bring the Redemption. What is now needed, the Rebbe continued, was to extricate ourselves from our internal exile.

A person can enjoy freedom to practice Judaism and still be locked up in a spiritually debilitating prison who fails to unlock and unleash his or her spiritual potential. A Jew who has a galut/exile mentality is as much in need of liberation as the Jew in the Soviet Gulag or the inmate in a Western prison. Galut tainted and jaded ways of viewing life can be as debilitating as barbed wire and iron bars. Obviously, the physical suffering and oppression is much harsher and far more painful. But while their bodies were tortured, the souls of many a Jew in the Gulag could never be extinguished.

To be sure, living in a free country is one of the greatest blessings G-d has bestowed upon us. But the reason it is a blessing is because of its unlimited opportunities to realize our spiritual potential. Not taking advantage of this blessing is the equivalent of a freed prisoner who subjects himself to the same indignities of prison life.

The Rebbe went beyond advocating the need for us to get out of the self-imposed galut/prison. Even the tzadik who serves G-d with all his energy, the Rebbe explained, can also be in Mitzraim; Hebrew for Egypt, but it actually connotes the state of being confined. When a Jew allows himself or herself to stagnate and does not attempt to break out of the mould--albeit a good and holy mould--they are still within Mitzraim.

The Exodus from Egypt, in the Rebbe's world, entails the drive to break out of all boundaries; including the boundaries and parameters of goodness. The true meaning of Passover is not limited to "passing over", transcending and surmounting all of the obstacles in our path towards Sinai and Redemption. We must also rise above and go beyond the positive conventions and niches we carved out for ourselves, notwithstanding the fact that only a day earlier our actions were deemed noble and have elicited praise and admiration.

Liberating ourselves from ourselves encapsulates the Rebbe's thought and life; it is the essence of Passover and the ultimate Redemption.

THE REBBE PARADOX

By Rabbi Heschel Greenberg

The Rebbe is famous for many of his dazzling and profound accomplishments. His influence and inspiration has touched the lives of Jews of all backgrounds the world over. Many a Jewish leader has observed how never before in history has one individual impacted the lives of so many diverse people and in so many different ways. Never before has one Jewish leader connected directly or indirectly with as many Jews, on so many levels. The Rebbe addressed the needs of and reached out/in to the most assimilated Jew even as he has challenged the minds, hearts and actions of the most advanced and sophisticated Jewish scholars and leaders, motivating them to even greater accomplishments.

The Rebbe's message to all can perhaps be encapsulated in one short sentence: Get out of Mitzraim (boundaries or constraints)!

This message-which can be seen as the defining character of the Rebbe-will shed some light on one of the many enigmas of the Rebbe: his paradoxical approach that manifested itself in many areas.

In this essay, I will focus on one paradox that can be resolved in light of the Rebbe's obsession with getting us to break out of our Mitzraim, the constraints that limit our growth.

On the one hand, the Rebbe treasured even the slightest effort made by even-nay, especially-a child. The story is told of a child who wrote to the Rebbe of his resolution to get up a few minutes earlier to say his prayers before going on the school bus where it was hard for him to concentrate. The Rebbe wrote to this child that his bit of news was like "cold water on a weary soul." The Rebbe aides reported that up to that point the Rebbe was extremely sombre; carrying the burden of all the Jewish people's suffering on his shoulders. All of the attempts to bring joy to the Rebbe at that time were to no avail until he received this child's letter in which he conveyed his "insignificant" effort.

To the Rebbe it was not insignificant. The child broke out of his mould and

habit. He made a quantum leap, thereby unleashing unprecedented G-dly energies into the world. To the Rebbe that gesture allowed the Rebbe to reveal his inner joy because the Rebbe sensed the entire cosmos rejoicing because of that "small" gesture. The rebbe would frequently allude to the power contained within the atom. In spiritual terms, the Rebbe saw in that child's miniscule move an enormous spiritual, atomic explosion.

Another illustration of the Rebbe's profound appreciation for the apparently small gestures is the story of the Rebbe's response to the Israeli who was contemplating intermarriage: "I am jealous of you. You have a test and challenge that I can never have," the Rebbe replied to the startled Jew. The Rebbe did not play with words. The Rebbe realized that this Jew's passing of this one test was the ultimate in breaking out of Mitzraim. The Rebbe saw the potential of a cosmic force of liberation to be unleashed by the sacrifice of even one Jew.

Paradoxically, the Rebbe was never content with all the greatest achievements of others just as he was never content with his own monumental, unprecedented and unparalleled accomplishments in virtually every area of life.

The story-one of many-that illustrates this point is told of a chasid who visited a Caribbean island where all of its Jewish inhabitants were gathered for a Jewishly inspirational and productive session. That is, all of the Jewish members of that island except for one who happened to be out of town. When the chasid submitted a report to the Rebbe about his

phenomenal accomplishments on that island, the Rebbe inquired as to when he was going to return to that island to meet that lone Jew and provide him with his spiritual needs.

Both of these "extremes"-cherishing even the minutest gesture of a child or of an assimilated Jew even as he was never content with the greatest accomplishments-derive from one fountain head. The Rebbe's life is all about a soul's desire to break out of the constraints imposed on it by our physical bodies, our animal soul's drives and the forces of galut/exile. This Rebbe's life's work is to remove the shackles of exile from every Jew-and every human being-by relentlessly inspiring us to do our part in getting out of our own internal and external exile.

For one person it might be a miniscule gesture while for another it might mean scaling yet a higher mountain. The common denominator is Yetziat Mitzraim-to get out of exile in all of its forms and incarnations.

THE REBBE ON RUSSIAN JEWRY

“Quiet Diplomacy” with Soviet Union

By Jacob Chic Hecht

I want to tell the most important story of my life. It is a story of the wisdom of the Rebbe.

I was elected to the United States Senate in 1982. A couple of years later, my brother, Martin Hecht, and nephew, Dr. Chaim Hecht, took me to



Brooklyn to meet the Rebbe at a farbrengen (a chassidic gathering). The Rebbe spoke to me and said "your top priority should be to get the Jews out of Russia." I replied that my late mother was an immigrant from Russia who had to flee with her family to escape death at the hands of the Russian Cossacks. "The key," the Rebbe said, was "quiet diplomacy." Please remember that the Cold War with Russia was still on.

About three years later, a very important vote came before the U.S. Senate. President Reagan needed my vote to break a tie. The vote was very important to the President. I had been a top supporter of President Reagan as I felt he was the best friend Israel has in the White House.

I met personally with President Reagan and told him of my decision to back him with my tie-breaking vote. I then asked if I might bring up a concern on my mind. President Reagan graciously agreed. I told President Reagan that my late mother was an immigrant from the Soviet Union, and only by the grace of G-d am I standing before you today in the United States Senate. I urged the President to place increased emphasis on the release of tens of thousands of Soviet Jews before the next summit conference. "Those who are allowed to leave the Soviet Union, Mr. President, should not be just elderly, but children, teenagers, doctors and scientists. All should be allowed the basic human right of freedom." President Reagan expressed tremendous concern.

I was President Reagan's last appointment before leaving for the Reykjavik, Iceland Conference which took place in early October 1986. At that meeting I presented President Reagan with a list of names of 1200 Soviet Jews who had applied to emigrate from Russia. I reminded the President that the numbers could reach in the millions, but this would be a start. I used "quiet diplomacy" as only the President, an aide, and myself were in the oval office.

President Reagan gave the list of 1200 names to Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev at the Reykjavik Conference and spoke of its importance. Within weeks a trickle of Jews began to leave Russia. Soon the trickle mushroomed into tens of thousands.

After President Reagan left office and I became Ambassador to the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, he and Mrs. Reagan came to the Bahamas to vacation. They invited my wife and me to a cocktail party for a few friends. I told the President what a wonderful service he did for the Jewish people in getting the Jews to leave Russia and I asked why he never mentioned the act in public. Mrs. Reagan said that Mr. Gorbachev told them that there were many around him that did not want the Jews to leave Russia and if we made it public, the exodus would stop. President Reagan used "quiet diplomacy" with Mr. Gorbachev.

The story continues with a human touch. My brother, Marty, who has had trouble with his feet, went to Scripps Clinic in La Jolla, California. He was assigned a doctor who referred him to a specialist. The specialist examined him and asked a question, "As your name is Hecht, would you know a Senator Hecht?" Marty said, "He is my brother." The doctor became very emotional and replied that I had saved his wife, mother and father-in-law. They were on the list and told to be at the airport at a certain time. They did not know what to expect. They boarded the plane and took off for Vienna. With what money they had, they sent a telegram of thanks to President Reagan. Since that time, I have met many more Jews that were on that list.

The Rebbe's advice and instructions on using "quiet diplomacy" resulted in the saving of hundreds of thousands of lives and a stronger Israel where the majority immigrated.



WHAT IS FREEDOM?

By Yanki Tauber

On the first night of Passover, we are commanded to relate the miracles and wonders that were performed for our forefathers in Egypt, as it is written, "Remember this day, on which you went out of Egypt".

What is freedom? When pressed to define this most basic human need and aspiration, we usually find ourselves explaining what freedom is not. Freedom is not slavery, it is not confinement, it is not inhibition. But is that all there is to freedom - the absence of subjugation? Or is there a positive/dynamic aspect to the state of freedom?

The same could be asked about another much desired and little understood state: rest. Rest is not movement, not toil, not creating; but what is it? Is it merely the negation of activity, or is rest itself an active pursuit?

The Torah implies that it is indeed active. In the second chapter of Genesis we read that "G-d concluded, on the seventh day, the work that He had done; and He rested on the seventh day from all the work that He had done."

But if G-d rested on the seventh day, why does the verse say that He concluded His work on the seventh day?

Our sages explain: on the seventh day G-d created the final and culminating element of His creation - element of rest. "What was the world lacking?"

Rest.

With the onset of Shabbat came rest." Rest is an existent phenomenon, a creation, and not merely the absence of work. "Work" is the movement from self outward, the projection of one's creative powers to effect changes on one's environment; "rest" is the endeavour to focus inward, to withdraw to the quintessential core of one's being.

For six days G-d projected outward, creating a universe that is "outside" and distinct of Himself. On the seventh day of creation He rested - He



shifted His focus inward, drawing creation back into His omnipresent being.

Thus Shabbat is a "holy" day, a day of heightened spiritual sensitivity; a day on which the created reality more deeply identifies with its supernal source. The same applies, on the human level, to our weekly implementation of the Divine cycle of creation in our own lives. Six days a week we project outward, developing and perfecting G-d's world.

On Shabbat, we actualize our partnership with G-d in creation by resting: by delving into the inner essence of our own souls and of the soul of creation.

So Shabbat is not a day of inactivity, but a day devoted to the activity of rest. A day in which we endeavour to seek our own spiritual centre, to better attune ourselves to the self that is one with the divine essence of all. True, the laws of Shabbat are replete with forbidden activities - in order to rest, one must cease to outwardly project; but the prohibition against work is only one aspect of the phenomenon of rest.

We can thus find a conceptual correlation between the defining characteristic of Shabbat and that of Passover. On Passover, as on Shabbat, we are empowered to experience a state that, on the surface, seems to have no intrinsic content of its own, being only the negation of something else. But just as Shabbat rest is more than the absence of toil, so, too, the freedom of Passover is a dynamic freedom, not merely the absence of bondage.

Freedom is commonly perceived as the removal of all external constraints

on a person's development and self-expression. Freedom is the natural state of man, this line of reasoning implies; free him of all outside forces that limit and inhibit him, and you have a free human being.

Passover embodies a far more ambitious freedom. The exodus from Egypt, which marked the end of Israel's subjugation to their Egyptian enslavers, was but the first step of a seven-week journey, a forty-nine step climb in the conquest and transcendence of self that culminated in our receiving the Torah at Mount Sinai on the festival of Shavuot. Nor does Shavuot represent the final realization of freedom: at Sinai, we were granted the potential and challenge to attain yet a deeper dimension of liberty and self-transcendence.

Thus Shavuot is the only festival that has no calendar date - the Torah designates it not as a certain day of a certain month (as it does all other festivals) but as the day that follows a seven-week count from the festival of Passover. This is to emphasize that Shavuot is an outgrowth of Passover - that the significance of the Exodus came to light only on the day we stood at Sinai. As G-d tells Moshe at the onset of his mission to liberate the Jewish people, "This is your sign that I have sent you: when you take this nation out of Egypt, you shall serve G-d at this mountain."

Standing before Pharaoh, Moses did not merely demand, in the name of G-d, that he "Let My people go," but "Let My people go, that they may serve Me." What is the significance of this liberating "service"? It means that man, no matter how free of external constraints, is a finite creature, ever subject to the limits of his own nature and character. That to attain true freedom he must therefore transcend his humanity - his emotional, intellectual, even spiritual self - and access the "spark of G-dliness" that is his infinite, supra-human self.

The Torah, G-d's blueprint for life on earth, outlines the observances and practices that enable us realize our divine essence in our daily lives.

The day we left the borders of Egypt we were "free" in the conventional sense - no longer could an alien taskmaster dictate what we must or may not do.

We then proceeded to also free ourselves of the alien influences that constrained us from within the pagan habits and mind-set that centuries of subjection to the depraved culture of Egypt had imposed on us, and our own inborn negative inclinations. Then, at Sinai, we were empowered to strive for yet a deeper dimension of freedom - a freedom that is not the negation of adversarial forces and influences, but the surmounting of our own, positive psychic and behavioural patterns.

There is nothing negative about our human potential; but we are capable of more, of raising our achievements to a level in relation to which yesterday's "liberated" self is limited and subjective. Thus our sages have said: "In every generation a person must see him-self as if he has himself come out from Mitzrayim (Egypt)." The Hebrew word for "Egypt," Mitzrayim, means "boundaries," and the endeavour to free ourselves from yesterday's boundaries is a perpetual one.

For freedom is more than the drive to escape foreign and negative inhibitors: no matter how free of them we are, we remain defined by the boundaries of self and self-definition. Freedom is the incessant drive to "Passover" these boundaries, to draw on our divine, infinite potential to constantly overreach what we are.

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 the 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 travelling 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, neighbourhood 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.

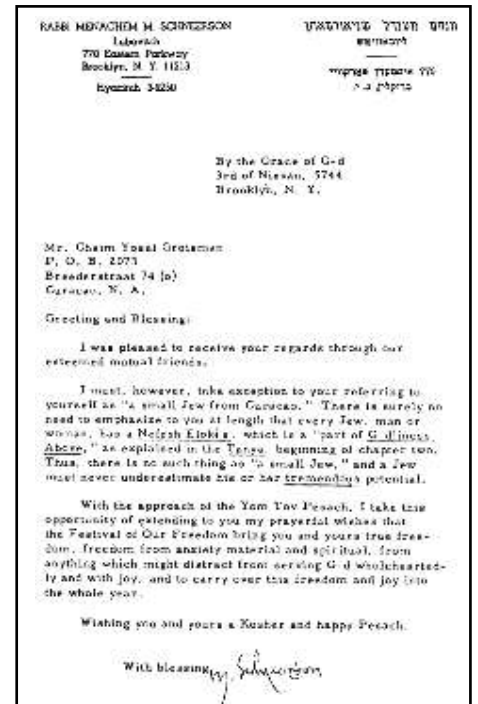
My father told Rabbi Kotlarsky about our family's plight, and introduced me

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.

(Below is a letter my father received from the Rebbe shortly after this story:)



Postscript: Members of the Curacao Jewish community have written that the state of Jewish life on the island has much improved in the more than twenty years since the events described in this account, with a flourishing Hebrew school and other community services.

THE REBBE REACHING OUT TO INCARCERATED JEWS

One week before Chanukah 1979, a well-known and distinguished Rabbi active in outreach in South Africa named Rabbi Shabsi Katz (of blessed memory) was entering the Lubavitcher Rebbe's office for Yechidut.

[A private audience with the Rebbe is called Yechidut by the Chassidim because it awakens and activates even the deepest of the five levels of the Jewish soul called Yechida.]

Most of what the Rebbe said was personal but at one point he asked Rabbi Katz if he knew anything about the condition of the Jewish prisoners in the South Africa penal system. Rabbi Katz did. He often visited prisons to help the prisoners. He

answered:

"The conditions there are in many ways inferior to those in the U.S. but the South Africans do have respect for the Jewish holidays and allow the prisoners to observe them."

"What about Chanukah?" asked the Rebbe. "Do they allow the prisoners to light Chanukah candles?"

"No," Rabbi Katz answered. "That is a problem. In fact I began working on it last year with no results. It's too late to do anything for this year because Chanukah is only a few days away but as soon as I get home I'll work on it for next year. I'll have to arrange a meeting with the."

"But what about this year?" the Rebbe interrupted.

Rabbi Katz was just beginning to shrug his shoulders as though to say it was impossible when the Rebbe continued.

"When you leave my room, go to the front office and ask one of the secretaries to use the phone. Call the official in charge of the prisons in South Africa and ask for permission for Chanukah lighting.....this year."

"But Rebbe," Rabbi Katz tried to protest, "it is now four in the morning over there and the chief of the jails is a very high official. He used to be a general in the army. I can't call him now! He'll be furious. I'll do it first thing in the morning."

But the Rebbe didn't agree.

"Chassidim do not compromise with the truth. Not only that but when the general sees that you called him at such an hour, he will realize the importance of the matter."

The Yechidut ended, Rabbi Katz left the Rebbe's room went to the office, asked for permission, and lifted the phone. He realized that he dare not think even one normal thought or he wouldn't go through with it.

He didn't have the general's phone number so he called his secretary there, got the number, and requested that she call the general first and prepare him.

He opened a book of Tehillim (Psalms), read for a few minutes, closed his eyes for a second, said a prayer.....and dialed.

The General answered. The Rabbi spoke apologetically.

"Hello General, this is Rabbi Shabsi Katz. Excuse the hour but it is urgent."

Surprisingly, the general spoke in a pleasant and friendly tone. "Yes. Hello, Rabbi. Oh, no problem. How are you? Yes, how can I be of help? It must be important."

Rabbi Katz felt that a miracle was occurring here and continued. "Err....I am now in New York by the Lubavitcher Rebbe who is concerned about the Jewish prisoners in South Africa."



"Yes?" the general was interested.

"The Rebbe wants the Jewish prisoners to light Chanukah candles. He knows that if they celebrate Chanukah in such a dark place as prison, it will put light, hope, and joy into their lives."

The general was impressed. He actually thanked the Rabbi for waking him and concluded:

"Rabbi, tomorrow is my day off but I won't take a vacation. I will send letters to all the jails in South Africa ordering that all prisoners be allowed to light their menorahs. Is that all right?"

Rabbi Katz thanked the general profusely and hung up.

Early the next morning he stood beaming with joy at the entrance of the Rebbe's headquarters at 770 Eastern Parkway, and when the Rebbe arrived, he gave him the good news.

The Rebbe smiled, thanked him for the news, and asked him to come to his office after the morning prayers.

Now, this was very unusual to say the least. Every instant of the Rebbe's time was precious (for example, the Rebbe received and answered more letters daily than any man in the world, even the president of the U.S.A.) and rarely did the Rebbe make such a request.

So, an hour later Rabbi Katz was again standing before the Rebbe figuring that the Rebbe wanted to thank him. But it wasn't so.....there was yet another mission!

"Do you know" the Rebbe said seriously, "that New York is the only state in America that does not allow its prisoners to light Chanukah menorahs? I want you to contact the head of the prisons here and tell him that you just received permission for the prisoners in South Africa to light menorahs and there is no reason why it should be forbidden here."

"But Rebbe," Rabbi Katz protested, "I don't know anyone in New York. At

least in South Africa I vaguely knew someone, but not here."

"This is no problem," answered the Rebbe. "Go to Rabbi Yaakov Yehuda Hecht and ask him for help. He knows everyone."

Again Rabbi Katz left the Rebbe's office for another seemingly impossible task. He located Rabbi Hecht, told him what he wanted but Rabbi Hecht solemnly replied.

"Sorry, nothing is open today. Maybe tomorrow I can help but today it's impossible. No one is in their offices."

But when Rabbi Katz told him the entire story, Rabbi Hecht picked up the phone and started calling one person after another until, at about the tenth call, he raised his eyebrows and smiled.

"Hello commissioner? Hey, am I lucky to get you! Rabbi Hecht here. How are you? How's the wife and kids? Thank G-d! Oh me? Thank G-d, I'm fine! Listen, I have a very important Rabbi from South Africa that has to talk to you!" And he handed the phone to Rabbi Katz.

The results were unbelievable. First of all it "just so happened" that they caught the commissioner in a good mood. And most important, he was really impressed. "Well," he said, "if in South Africa where there are so few Jews they light Menorahs then for sure we have to let them do it here. Rabbi, I promise you that from this Chanukah on every Jewish prisoner here can light candles!"

Rabbi Katz thanked the commissioner and Rabbi Hecht and ran back to 770 to inform the Rebbe of the second miracle.

He caught the Rebbe just exiting his room for the afternoon Mincha prayer and motioned that he had succeeded. Again the Rebbe requested to see him in private after the prayer.

Rabbi Katz was almost getting used to the unusual but this time the Rebbe had a different message; he wanted to reward Rabbi Katz with a gift. At first

the Rabbi refused but finally he agreed: "I want a Tanya (important Chassidic book) from the Rebbe as a Bar Mitzvah present for my son."

The Rebbe told him to go again to the front office where there were waiting four gifts: A Tanya translated into English for his son, a regular Tanya for himself, a Chabad book called "Challenge" for the general in South Africa, and another called Aishet Chiel for the general's wife.

When Rabbi Katz returned to South Africa, the first thing he did was call the general to thank him for his help and to tell him that he had gifts from the Rebbe that he would bring him tomorrow.

But before he could finish his sentence the general announced, over the protests of the Rabbi, that he would be at the Rabbi's house to get the gifts in a few minutes. And, sure enough, shortly thereafter the general was knocking on Rabbi Katz's door.

He shook the Rabbi's hand and explained his haste. "When a man sits in New York and thinks about people on the other side of the world he never saw before in order to make them happy with Chanukah candles, well.....that is what I call a true leader. And when a leader like that sends me something, I want to see it as soon as possible!"



THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

Do not follow the ways of Egypt where you once lived, nor of Canaan, where I will be bringing you. Do not follow any of their customs. (Lev. 18:3)

This verse is not exhorting us concerning transgressions; those are detailed later. Rather, it is informing us concerning the actions and deeds which are permitted; they must be performed in a different manner from the non-Jewish people in Egypt and Canaan. Even our eating and sleeping should be done in a Jewish way. (Sifte Emet)

And here, the child asks. (from the Hagada)

Said Rabbi Aaron of Karlin, in the name of his father, Rabbi Asher of Stolin: "Here," on the night of the seder, every Jewish child may request of his Father in Heaven anything he wishes, and he will receive extra strength and vitality for all of his needs. (Beit Aharon)

This is the bread of affliction. (Hagada)

Before the Seder actually begins, an announcement is made: "All who are hungry - let them come and eat." Jews are responsible for one another, and we cannot be truly free if even one of our brothers is not. It is our duty to find that one Jew and invite him to partake of our Seder meal. Once this is done, we can together relate the tale of our liberation and begin our journey to freedom. (Likutei Sichot)

Not just one has risen to destroy us. (Hagada)

Who has risen to destroy us? "Not just one," i.e., the lack of unity and love of one Jew toward another. This is the source of all of our woes. (Sfat Emet)

If He had given us the Torah and not brought us into the Land of Israel - it would have been enough for us. (Hagada)

The opposite of the above verse from the well-known Dayeinu prayer, however, is not true. It would not have sufficed had G-d brought us into Israel but not given us the Torah. The Land of Israel without the Torah would not have been enough. (Sefer Hadarush)

A WORD from the Director.

This week, Chabad Chassidim and Jews throughout the world will be celebrating the day of Yud-Aleph Nissan (the 11th of Nissan) as the Rebbe's birthday.

Everything that happens is by Divine Providence. This is certainly true with an event that involves a great Jewish leader. It is thus fortuitous that the Rebbe's birthday occurs within a week of Passover and the Shabbat that precedes Passover-Shabbat HaHagadol.

The Rebbe's approach to leadership was two pronged. He was concerned for their physical welfare and agonized over the plight of Soviet Jewry, the security of Israel and the physical needs of hundreds of thousands of individuals who sought his guidance and blessing. In short, the Rebbe did everything in his power to ease the pain of so many and liberate the Jewish people from their individualized form of bondage.

The Rebbe was also in the forefront of liberating the Jewish people in the spiritual sense as well. The Rebbe succeeded in educating and inspiring countless Jews in the area of Jewish knowledge and experience. But even more impressive is his success in transforming the Jew from a minor in the Jewish sense of the word into a gadol, a full fledged and mature adult in terms of his or her Jewish life. The Rebbe was not content to just teach; the Rebbe exposed us to our own G-d given potential and inspired us to actualize it. The Rebbe insisted that we stand on our own two feet. "Rather than cultivate followers," Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, chief Rabbi of England observed, "the Rebbe cultivated leaders."

If a Jew can be likened to Shabbat because of the intrinsic holiness he or she possesses, the Rebbe transformed the Shabbat Jew into a Shabbat HaGadol Jew; a mature and independent Jew who is capable of illuminating the world with the light of Torah and Mitzvot.

When we lift our cups to say Lechaim this Yud Aleph Nissan let us pray for the realization of the Rebbe's greatest passion; the coming of Moshiach and the final Redemption, at which time we will experience the ultimate, universal and perpetual Shabbat Hagadol.

Have a Kosher and Happy Passover!

J.I. Gutnick

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

PARSHAS ACHAREI – PESACH
12, 15-16 NISSAN • 16,19-20 APRIL

FRIDAY NIGHT: CANDLE LIGHTING: 5:37 PM
MINCHA: 5:45 PM
KABBOLAS SHABBOS-MAARIV: 6:15 PM

SHABBOS DAY: SHACHARIS: 10:00 AM
LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA: 9:33 AM
MINCHA: 5:30 PM
SHABBOS ENDS: 6:33 PM

SUNDAY: SHACHRIS: 9:15 AM
MINCHA: 5:40 PM
MAARIV: 6:25 PM

MONDAY • 18 APRIL • EVE OF PESACH
EAT CHOMETZ UNTIL: 10:29 AM
BURN CHOMETZ BY: 11:24 AM
CANDLE LIGHTING: 5:33 PM
MINCHA: 5:45 PM
MAARIV: 6:40 PM

TUESDAY • 19 APRIL • 1ST DAY OF PESACH:
SHACHARIS: 10:00 AM
MINCHA: 5:40 PM
MAARIV: 6:30PM
LIGHT CANDLES AFTER: 6:29 PM

WEDNESDAY • 20 APRIL • 2ND DAY OF PESACH:
SHACHARIS: 10:00 AM
MINCHA: 5:40 PM
YOM TOV ENDS: 6:28 PM

CHOL HAMOED: THUR - FRI
SHACHARIS: SUN-FRI: 9:15 AM
MINCHA: 5:35 PM
MAARIV: 6:20 PM

CANDLE LIGHTING: 15,18,19 APRIL 2011



BEGINS			ENDS	
15th	18th	19th	16th	20th
5:37	5:33	6:29	MELBOURNE	6:33
5:35	5:31	6:26	ADELAIDE	6:25
5:14	5:11	6:03	BRISBANE	6:02
6:24	6:22	7:12	DARWIN	7:11
5:12	5:09	6:01	GOLD COAST	6:04
5:39	5:35	6:29	PERTH	6:28
5:16	5:12	6:06	SYDNEY	6:10
5:23	5:19	6:14	CANBERRA	6:18
5:24	5:20	6:18	LAUNCESTON	6:22
5:39	5:35	6:30	AUCKLAND	6:34
5:34	5:29	6:27	WELLINGTON	6:32

For the 19th one should light after the given time from a pre-existing flame only.

Dedicated to the beloved, revered leader of World Jewry

The Lubavitcher Rebbe

יצוקללה'ה נבג"מ א"ע

May he succeed in imploring the Almighty to redeem His people speedily in our days.