

Bringing the Farbrengen Home

WARM BLOOD

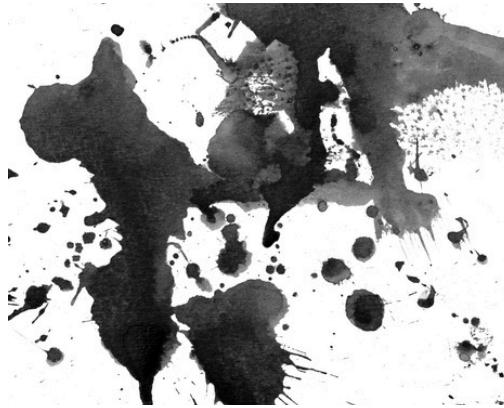
by Rabbi Yossy Gordon
Executive Vice President
Chabad on Campus International

I love to read the Rebbe's letters that have been published over the last several decades. One can get a powerful and moving glimpse into how the Rebbe was counseling, encouraging and motivating at every opportunity.

Check out this postscript from a letter dated 18 Tishrei, 5717 (1956):

P.S. This that you write about the Jew from Bulgaria who is waiting to see miracles and wonders, and then... [will start to observe Torah & Mitzvot]: Tell him that if he examines his own past he will see many miracles and wonders, providing he doesn't want to fool himself. Why does he need to test the Master of the World to bring him, G-d forbid, back to a state of hardship and danger [just] in order to save him again? It is understood the great fright he would have to endure [again] until the deliverance, when he has already had such a situation and was saved! It is his evil inclination misleading him so that he doesn't fulfill the will of the Creator of the world.

May it be [G-d's] will that words from [my] heart enter [his] heart and that he go in the upright path of the Torah, our Torah of life which is good for him, not only materially but spiritually as well. This alone that I am writing about a Jew whom I have never seen who at one time was in danger and was saved, this too should suffice for him [as a wonder] so that immediately he should start donning Tefillin, eating kosher, keeping Shabbos etc.




May it be [G-d's will] that you share good news in this. Apparently, the man from Bulgaria had a choice. He could recognize and feel fortunate due to the miracle of his survival considering his earlier situation or he could remain angry and upset.

In this week's Torah portion, Parshas Va'eira, we read about the beginning of the Ten Plagues visited on Egypt that ultimately led to our Exodus. The first plague was that the water of the Nile River, the source of sustenance to Egyptian life and their false deity, miraculously turned to blood.

The Rebbe comments: Blood is warmth. (That is the meaning of the expression "hot-blooded"). Besides punishing Egypt by turning the Nile River to blood, G-d Almighty was sending a message to the enslaved Jews. His message was that in order to go out of any sort of bondage, be it physical or spiritual in nature, one must bring the warmth of holiness into one's life. One cannot just explain away everything to nature or randomness. One must recognize the presence of G-d Almighty in one's life, which makes warm one up to living a sanctified and holy existence.

Friends, we live in freedom and enjoy so many good things. We now have a choice. We could feel entitled and be nonchalant. Alternatively, let us embrace our good fortune by recognizing every gift we have from our

Creator, be it large or small. Thank G-d for my computer that allows me to write to you today!

May G-d guard our brethren in Israel and the world over from harm and send us Moshiach speedily. May He protect the armed forces of Israel and the United States wherever they may be. Shabbat Shalom! L'Chaim!! Chazak!!! 

Just Me שו"ת A Question

Q: What is special about the month of Shevat?

A: On Rosh Chodesh Shevat, a little more than a month before he passed away, Moshe Rabbeinu began translating the Torah into 70 languages. Even though everyone at the time spoke Hebrew, Moshe was ensuring that the Torah would be accessible to all.

Also, the word Shevat can stand for the Hebrew express *Shenishma Besurot Tovot*, that we should be blessed to share good tidings. There's more!

Q: Who wrote the Haggadah?

A: Although much of the Haggadah is from the Mishna in the 10th chapter of Pesachim, it is unclear who compiled the Haggadah as we know it. The earliest Haggadah appears in the Siddur of Rav Amram Gaon (d.875) and Rav Saadya Gaon (d.942), i.e., the period of the Geonim.

Hayom Yom

27 Teves

The Alter Rebbe said: Jewish physical matter is spiritual. G-d gives us material bounty for us to transform into something spiritual. When occasionally it is not so at the moment (G-d has not provided the material wealth), then we must give G-d whatever we can, even a "pauper's offering," and then He gives generously.

The Divine Seed Within

Letter to the Children

by Rabbi Shaul Wertheimer

Rochel was 9-years-old when she was separated from her parents, Yaakov and Rivkah Kleinman.

It was 1941, and in response to the advances of the Nazi army, the Soviet Union set out to evacuate all children from Leningrad.

Rochel was sent alone to Omsk, Siberia, at the junction of the northern and southern branches of the Trans-Siberian Railway. Her siblings, Fania, 13, and Zalman, 8, remained together.

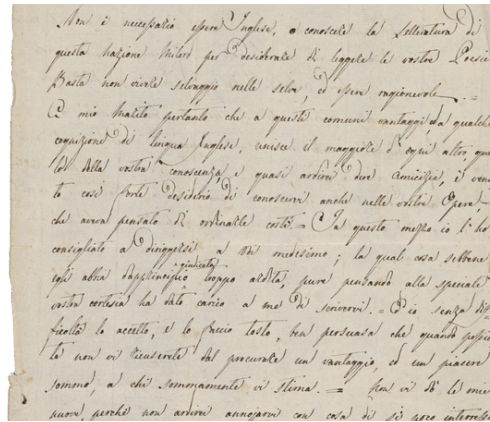
Before Leningrad was put under siege, Yaakov met up with his sister Ita; they each promised to take care of the other's children, in the event one of them passed away.

Yaakov and Rivkah eventually died of starvation while Leningrad was under siege.

After the war, Ita (widowed from her husband Moshe), was living with her in-laws, Rabbi Nachum and Miriam Sosonkin, in Samarkand, Uzbekistan. Through a series of miraculous events, she was able to reunite her nieces and nephew, raising them in the Sosonkin home.

Eventually, the siblings moved to Israel.

Zalman became a painter; two of his paintings grace the walls of our home.



In 1954, Rochel married Rabbi Refael Zamir, and worked as a kindergarten teacher. She taught and supervised in numerous schools throughout the Holy Land, and authored a two-volume compendium of halacha and stories about the holidays called *Chagei Yisrael u'Moadav*.

In the winter of 1965, Rochel gathered some drawings made by her blossoming students, packaged them up, included her own letter, and mailed them to the Rebbe.

I was intrigued when I noted that the Rebbe's response is not addressed to Mrs. Rochel Zamir, but to "Yeladim Yekarim," precious children. Precious, indeed.

"I was filled with joy to receive your pictures," writes the Rebbe, commenting that the children's drawings featured boys and girls, trees and flowers.

"I want to let you know how much my father-in-law [i.e., the Previous Rebbe] cherished and loved every Jewish boy and girl, and how concerned he was with the education and wellness of young children, wherever they may be.

"In every boy and girl he saw a young sapling that would grow into a beautiful fruit-bearing tree, producing wonderful fruits. But this growth is up to the desire and determination of each boy and girl.

"The analogy for this growth is a tree. When one plants a seed or a tender sapling, one must protect it from weeds and other hazards, providing it with sufficient water and so forth, until it is able to grow into a tree with good fruits.

"And the very same applies to every boy and girl, to whom G-d has referred as, 'a shoot of my planting, My handiwork, in which to glory' (Isaiah 60:21).

"The Creator has planted within you a holy soul, a piece of G-d Above, and it is incumbent upon you to protect this Divine 'seed' from hazardous weeds; that is, from less-than-suitable friends.

"You must also make sure to provide sufficient water – and a reference to water refers only to the study of Torah (Bava Kamma 17a) – and to perform the Mitzvos that bring life to those who fulfill them.

"Then G-d will surely give and give again His blessings for your success to be 'trees' that produce praiseworthy fruits, to the joy of your parents and teachers, and to the pride and glory of our nation, the People of Israel."

In his words to these precious children, the Rebbe models what he writes. The tenderness of life, the treasure of life, the wonder of life.

Rabbi Zamir passed away on the 18th of Nissan 5781. Mrs. Rochel Zamir passed away on the 22nd of Teives 5781 (2021). They were not blessed with (biological) children.

**מָה הֵן פְּרוֹתֵינוּ שֶׁל צְדִיק?
מִצּוֹת וּמַעֲשִׂים טוֹבִים.
בְּרֵאשִׁית רַבָּה ל, ו**

*The real progeny of righteous
people are their good deeds.
Bereishis Rabbah 30:6*

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Refuah Shleimah

Yehudah Leib ben Manya

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