

The Jewish Weekly

WWII Dream Mission

By Rabbi Yerachmiel Tilles

They were the days of tension and fear. The Nazis were advancing step after step on their way to fulfill their insane ambition to conquer the whole world. They left death and incomprehensible atrocities behind everywhere they went. Millions of Jews had already been deported to the ovens. Jews in other countries were overcome with anxiety, dreading the possibility that their countries would also be conquered by the Germans.

In the spring of 1943 the "Two Hundred Days of Fear" began in Eretz Yisrael. The small Jewish settlement, which was already threatened by the Arabs, now found themselves in an even more ominous situation: the division of the German army in North Africa, under the command of Field Marshal Rommel, were advancing towards the Suez Canal. From there it would be easy to invade Eretz Yisrael.

Opposing the Nazis was the British army, under the command of General Montgomery. Everyone was expecting a big battle that could change the face of the world. In Egypt, the Arabs, under the protection of the German victories, had already begun to abuse the local Jews. In Eretz Yisrael the Arabs were rubbing their hands in excitement, gleefully imagining what they would do to the Jews, their hated enemies. The atmosphere of tension continued to increase like the heat of the desert towards midday.

One day Arab rioters entered the Jewish cemetery in the city Damanhur in Egypt. They approached the burial place of the tzadik (perfectly righteous Jew) Rabbi Ya'akov Abuhatzzeira, around which a prayer hall had been built. Inside stood a glorious Holy Ark, containing a Torah Scroll. The rioters destroyed everything that they could lay their hands on. In their crazed impudence, they took out the Torah Scroll, trampled and burned it, after which they set the whole building on fire.

At that time there lived in Jerusalem a holy Jew, Rabbi Yitzchak Alfiyah. That same night he had a dream. He beheld a Jew of refined and impressive appearance, dressed in the distinctive garment of a Moroccan Torah scholar. His whole being compelled respect.

Turning to Rabbi Yitzchak he said: "You are accustomed to pray at the grave sites of righteous men, why do you not come to me?"



Rabbi Yitzchak Alfiyah

In his dream Rabbi Yitzchak answered him: "Who are you, honored sir, and where is your resting place?"

"I am Ya'akov Abuhatzzeira."

"And where is your resting place?" repeated Rabbi Yitzchak.

"In Damanhur in Egypt", was the answer, and after a pause he added: "And now, go quickly to my grave; know that the saving of the Jewish People depends on you doing so!"

Rabbi Yitzchak awoke in panic, overcome by the astounding dream. He hurried to the synagogue Beth-El, and there shared the dream with his colleagues. Together they decided to go to the Commander of the British district to get a permit to travel to Egypt.

At first, the guards would not allow them entry to the Commander, but Rabbi Yitzchak insisted and refused to budge. Suddenly a high officer came out of the Commanders' office, and when he saw the Rabbi he asked the guards why is he standing outside. "There is a state of emergency", the guards explained, "People without invitation are not allowed in."

The officer turned around, went into the room of the Commander, and after a moment came out again and invited the Rabbi to enter. The Commander listened attentively to the request of Rabbi Yitzchak, then responded: "You want me to allow a minyan (a quorum of ten men) of Jews to go down to Egypt to prostrate yourselves on a grave? And you say that in that merit the Germans will retreat?!" asked the astounded Commander. "No civilian can enter Egypt! Only soldiers making their way to the front."

After pausing to reflect a moment, he said: "If you want I will allow just you to join the

It Once Happened...

soldiers. If the border police won't stop you on the way, you will be able to realize your dream."

Rabbi Yitzchak thanked him and returned to his friends, who tried to prevent him from making this trip. "You will be endangering your life!" they warned him, "Anyway, you will stand out in the company of the soldiers and the border police will stop you from going."

Rabbi Yitzchak told them decisively that he was not afraid, and the merit of the tzadikim would protect him. The next morning he took his tallit and tefilin and went to the train station.

While standing on the platform and looking around him, two officers approached him and asked his name. His heart started pounding... will they send him away? To his great surprise the two officers told him to accompany them and took him on the train to Egypt. They sat next to him all the way to Cairo. There they brought him to the Jewish quarter and quickly disappeared.

Rabbi Yitzchak entered the synagogue "Keter Torah", where he was received by the scholars with great surprise. They couldn't believe that the famous scholar from Jerusalem succeeded in coming to Cairo in these chaotic times. When they heard about the dream, they hurriedly gathered food and arranged a large delegation consisting of tens of Jews to pray together at the burial site of Rabbi Ya'akov Abuhatzzeira.

For three consecutive days Rabbi Yitzchak and his companions prayed and studied Torah in the burnt study hall next to the grave of Rabbi Ya'akov. On the third night one of the scholars went outside and to his astonishment discovered that the city of Damanhur was completely lit up, in contradiction to the blackout orders of the military command. Soon it became known that it was in celebration of the good news from the battle field: the British army was victorious and had defeated Rommel's forces.

When Rabbi Yitzchak returned to Jerusalem he hastened to write a beautiful Torah Scroll in gratitude for the success of his mission, which after some time was brought to the study hall at the resting place of Rabbi Ya'akov Abuhatzzeira.

Reprinted from an email of KabbalaOnline.org.



Y-GRAPHICS

Shabbat Times - Parshat Va'eira

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat	Motzei Shabbat ר"ת
Jerusalem	4:10	5:26	6:04
Tel Aviv	4:24	5:27	
Haifa	4:13	5:25	
Be'er Sheva	4:29	5:29	



The Rebbe and Napoleon

By Rabbi Sholom D. Avtzon

Anticipating Napoleon's evil designs to attack and conquer Russia, Rabbi Shneur Zalman (the first Rebbe of Chabad-Lubavitch, known as the Alter Rebbe), instructed his family to be ready to flee at a moment's notice.

The famous Chabad spiritual mentor, Rav Shmuel Gronem, noted: "The Alter Rebbe said, 'Napoleon is a very powerful evil force, and I fear that I will have to have self-sacrifice in order to humble him.'"

Secretly the Alter Rebbe instructed his Chassidim to spy against Napoleon's army. The Alter Rebbe wanted nothing less than a total collapse of Napoleon's power.

In his eyes, the French leader was the greatest threat to the heart and soul of Judaism. Behind his abolishing the economic and social restrictions that oppressed the Jews (which swayed some of the Rebbe's colleagues to support Napoleon against Russia) was a veil hiding his true intentions. What Napoleon wanted to accomplish with his revolution was a refusal to accept any authority, which in turn would weaken religious adherence.

For this reason, the Alter Rebbe refused to live in Napoleon's conquered domain for even a short period of time. When he heard of the approach of the French army he fled with his entire family, assisted by the Russian forces.

The Alter Rebbe insisted that every possession of his be removed from his house, no matter how insignificant; he then gave instructions that his house be burned down. Some say that the Alter Rebbe had reason to believe that Napoleon engaged in sorcery, and so he took stringent precautions that none of his things would fall into Napoleon's hands.

The rapid advance of Napoleon's army made it impossible for the Alter Rebbe to rest, and he was forced to constantly be on the run. His hope was to reach the Jewish community of Poltava before Rosh Hashana.

In his diary, the Alter Rebbe's son and successor, Reb Dovber, wrote: "On the eve of Rosh Hashana my father, the Alter Rebbe, confided to me, 'I am extremely pained and worried about the battle of Mazaik [known as the battle of Borodino], since the enemy is becoming stronger, and I believe he [Napoleon] is also going to conquer Moscow.' He then wept bitterly, with tears streaming down his face."

"On Rosh Hashana, my father again called me to him and happily told me the sweet and comforting news: 'Today, during my prayers, I had a vision that the tide has changed for the better and our side will win. Although Napoleon will capture Moscow, he will eventually lose the war. This is what was written today in Heaven.'"

With the rout of Napoleon's army, the Alter Rebbe could proceed toward Poltava. On Friday, the eighth of Tevet, the entourage arrived in the city of Piena. As soon as he arrived there the Alter Rebbe changed his plans. He began organizing a relief campaign to aid all Jews who had been affected by the war, sending out emissaries to raise funds and organize and coordinate efforts.

No one could foresee the rapid deterioration of the Alter Rebbe's health. As the Rebbe for many thousands of Chassidim; the Alter Rebbe finally paid the heavy price of worrying about the sufferings of the Jewish community. The difficult traveling conditions (especially for someone of advanced years) in an unusually cold winter and his anguish in general about Napoleon's influence and effect on the Jewish nation. On Monday, the 18th of Tevet, he became bedridden.

Five days later, on Saturday night, the eve of the 24th of Tevet, he wrote a note stating that one of the main purposes of a soul's descent into this world (in addition to Torah study) is to do a favor for another Jew in whatever way possible. A short while after writing this he passed away.

Rabbi Dovber noted that in one of the greatest acts of self-sacrifice, the Alter Rebbe put his own life in mortal danger against the evil ways of Napoleon.

Indeed, the Alter Rebbe's ill-fated prophecy about Napoleon came to be, for the humbled last remnants of Napoleon's army retreated from Russia at the exact time of the Alter Rebbe's passing.

Shortly before his passing, the Alter Rebbe said: "Anyone who will hold on to my door handle, I will do him a favor in this world and the World to Come."

The third Rebbe of Chabad Lubavitch, the Tzemach Tzedek, explained that "my door handle" does not merely mean studying the Chassidic teachings of the Alter Rebbe, but also practicing Ahavat Yisrael (love of a fellow Jew) - in this manner one must also follow the Alter Rebbe.

Reprinted from an email of Lchaimweekly.org.

Editor's Note: Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, the Alter Rebbe of Chabad, ז"ל's 209th Yahrzeit was Tuesday, 24th Tevet – December 28th of this year



In Parshat Va'eira, on the eve of the redemption of our people, we have a long list of genealogical information presented to us, starting with the tribes of Reuven, Shimon and Levi. And then the Torah stops. What about the rest of the tribes and their members?

Rashi gives two Perushim (explanations). In the first commentary, he tells us that actually, this is a passage which provides the background for Moshe and Aharon. They were members of the tribe of Levi, so once we get to Levi, we can carry on with the details of the Exodus. However, if that is the case, why do we need details of Reuven and Shimon, as well?

Therefore, Rashi suggests a second explanation and he says *הם מפני שחשובים הם*, these three tribes are mentioned to let us know that 'they are important'. And we would have thought otherwise. And that is because, these are the three – Reuven, Shimon and Levi – who were heavily criticized by Yaakov, just before he passed away.

Reuven, because he interfered with the bed of his father Yaakov. Shimon and Levi because of their sin in the city of Shechem. Therefore, nobody should think at the time of the גאולה, of the redemption, that there are three tribes less important than the others because of the sins of their ancestors. Quite the contrary, says Rashi, all the members of these tribes are mentioned in order that we should know, they are equally important.

The Hebrew word for important is חשוב, coming from חשב, which means 'to think', teaching us that the entire notion of importance is a figment of our imagination.

Hashem never calls anybody חשוב, 'important', that is only a term that we use. Throughout Tenach, there are adjectives used for the way in which Hashem describes people, such as צדיק, 'righteous', טוב, 'good'.

Consequently, from Reuven, Shimon and Levi being the only tribes to be mentioned in this way here, we learn that everyone in our eyes should be important. And let's leave judgement in the Hands of G-d.

May we all be blessed to see everyone as equal and let's pray for our soldiers and healthcare professionals, and Chevra Kadisha members worldwide, for peace and for those who need healing, shidduchim, children and parnassah and may we be blessed to have the most awesome, gorgeous, beautiful, peaceful, healthy, amazing, relaxed, spiritual and sweet Shabbat and Chodesh Tov.

The Jewish Weekly's PARSHA FACTS

NO MITZVOT IN THIS PARSHA

NUMBER OF PESUKIM: 121
NUMBER OF WORDS: 1748
NUMBER OF LETTERS: 6701

HAFTORA:
Yechezkel 28:25 - 29:21

Shabbat Mevarchim Chodesh Shvat.
Rosh Chodesh is Monday, Jan. 3, 2022.

ווארא

If you would like to help keep The Jewish Weekly being published, or to subscribe or dedicate an issue please email editor@thejewweekly.org to help continue our weekly publication.