



## 238 HOSTAGES - WHAT CAN I DO FOR THEM?

A fascinating lesson about physical captives, mental captivity, and the road to freedom.

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TEACHER'S MANUAL



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Shluchim of the Rebbe to Mumbai India

# Contents

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## A. Redeeming Captives in Jewish History.....6

When Abraham heard that his nephew, Lot, was kidnapped, he went to battle to free him (Source 1). When the Canaanites succeeded in taking a single Jewish maidservant captive, the Jewish people went to war to bring her back (Source 2). Rabbi Yehoshua paid a high price to release a Jewish boy from prison; the boy eventually became a great rabbi, Rabbi Yishmael ben Elisha. (Source 3)

## B. The Importance of the Mitzvah.....8

In one of the prophecies of the prophet Jeremiah, G-d tells him, “If the Jewish people ask where to go after the destruction of the Holy Temple, tell them that each person will go towards their suffering: Those to death, those to the sword, those to hunger, and those to captivity (Source 4). From the order in the verse, Rabbi Yochanan infers that captivity is the most severe of the list because captives suffer death, the sword, and hunger (Source 5). Maimonides rules that the mitzvah to redeem captives takes precedence over all other mitzvot (Source 6), and the Code of Jewish Law codifies this ruling, writing that every moment delayed in redeeming captives is tantamount to murder. (Source 7)

## C. Spiritual Effort for Captives.....10

At one of the post-wedding feasts of the Rebbe and the Rebbetzin, held about a year-and-a-half after they left Russia, the Previous Rebbe said: “A moment doesn’t go by when I do not think about the plight of the students in Russia, and when they do not think of me.” (Source 8). The Previous Rebbe continued with a Chassidic discourse in which he explained how to help the Jews behind the Iron Curtain. Fifty years later, in a discourse based on the Previous Rebbe’s discourse, the Rebbe began by citing the Talmud: “G-d did a kindness to the Jewish people by dispersing them among the nations.” (Source 9). The simple meaning is that being dispersed among many other nations is beneficial to the Jewish people because when they are killed in one place, they survive in another. The Previous Rebbe saw something deeper here: G-d did a favor to the Jews because when Jews cannot observe Torah and mitzvot in one place, in other places they are free to practice their religion. Their mitzvah observance helps their brethren and gives them the strength to persevere. The Rebbe added that not only does it give them the strength to risk their lives for mitzvot, it will cause the bondage to end, freeing them to observe the mitzvot in peace.

## D. Captives of the Mind.....15

Captivity isn’t only when captors refuse to let one leave, but also when one is held hostage by their negative inclination, for example, a person held “captive” by their career.

When another Jew acts correctly, meaning they are not held hostage by their own inclination, that very fact helps to support those who are struggling.

Just as every generation has its unique challenge, so does every individual. In the times of Menashe, for example, the greatest challenge was idolatry. Nowadays, we cannot fathom the desire to bow to a stone. When a person observes the mitzvot that are easy for them, they support another Jew for whom this particular mitzvah is difficult.

This is a third interpretation of the statement that “G-d did a kindness to the Jewish people by dispersing them among the nations.” G-d helped us by giving us all different inclinations, so that everyone has their own challenge, making it possible to support others in their challenges.

## E. Intergenerational and Intercommunal Support.....19

Spiritual captivity is not only at the hands of antisemitic regimes, or the negative inclination. There are also times when the Torah itself places us in a situation of captivity, for example: Certain mitzvot are only observed in the Holy Land; Jews outside the land cannot observe them. When Israeli communities observe these mitzvot, the Rebbe says, that affects the diaspora communities.

This idea also connects different generations. Mitzvot associated with the Holy Temple, and observed by Temple-era Jews, affect us today in exile.

Lesson for life: We are all connected. We are all part of one unified entity. My actions affect you and yours affect me. When I do a mitzvah I release positive, G-dly energy into the universe, which fills your space with positive energy.

When we fulfill a mitzvah that the hostages aren't able to fulfill, when we study the Torah they are not able to study, that sends them positive energy and strength. Firstly, it helps them be strong and optimistic, secondly, it causes that they should be released very soon.

In one of the challenging periods in recent history, the Rebbe spoke about how the mitzvah of mezuzah brings security to Jews worldwide, and not only to the inhabitants of that home. (Source 10)

# Introduction

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For time immemorial, the Jewish people have always fought to release their captives. Starting with Abraham, who went to save Lot, to Rabbi Yehoshua who freed a boy from prison, until this very day. The current situation in Israel brings the religious obligation to free captives to the front of our minds.

In this class, we will discuss various perspectives on this mitzvah: its history, importance, and spiritual application. We will learn about the bond between all segments of the Jewish people, and how strengthening our own observance supports our brethren in captivity.

## השיעור לפרשת ויצא

השיעור לפרשת ויצא:  
ממאמר ד"ה אמר ר' אושעיא תשל"ט,  
הוגה ויצא לאור בקונטרס י"ט כסלו תש"נ,  
מלוקט חלק ב' (הוצאה חדשה) עמ' עג ואילך  
[מלוקט חלק ד' (הוצאה ישנה) עמ' פט ואילך]

# A. Redeeming Captives in Jewish History

Redeeming captives is the most important mitzvah to the Jewish people, and we read about it from the beginning of our people's history. Let us survey several well-known accounts of Jews redeeming captives, and how they accomplished it.

## A Battle

### Source 1 Genesis 14:14-16

**Student's** pg. 3 Abraham heard that his nephew was taken captive and he assembled his charges, those who were born in his home, three hundred and eighteen of them, and he pursued [the captors] until Dan. He divided his men against them at night and smote them and pursued them until Chovah, which is to the north of Damascus. He brought back all the possessions and Lot his nephew and his possessions, and also the women and the people.

וַיִּשְׁמַע אַבְרָם כִּי נִשְׁבָּה אָחִיו,  
וַיֵּרָק אֶת חַנְיָכִיו יְלִידֵי בֵיתוֹ  
שְׁמֹנֶה עָשָׂר וּשְׁלֹשׁ מֵאוֹת וַיִּרְדְּף  
עַד דָּן. וַיַּחַלֵּק עֲלֵיהֶם לַיְלָה הוּא  
וַעֲבָדָיו וַיִּכְּסֵם וַיִּרְדְּפֵם עַד חֹבָה  
אֲשֶׁר מִשְׁמָאל לְדַמְשֶׁק. וַיָּשָׁב  
אֶת כָּל הָרֶכֶשׁ וְגַם אֶת לוֹט אָחִיו  
וְרֶכְשׁוֹ הַשֵּׁיב וְגַם אֶת הַנְּשִׂים  
וְאֶת הָעָם.

When Abraham heard that his nephew Lot was kidnapped, he immediately went to war and freed him.

### Source 2 Numbers 21:1-3

**Student's** pg. 3 The Canaanite king of Arad, who lived in the south, heard that Israel had come by the route of the spies, and he waged war against Israel and took a captive from them. Israel made a vow to G-d, and said, "If You deliver this nation into my hand, I will consecrate their cities."

וַיִּשְׁמַע הַכְּנַעֲנִי מִלֶּךְ עָרֹד  
יָשָׁב הַנֶּגֶב כִּי בָא יִשְׂרָאֵל  
דֶּרֶךְ הָאֲתָרִים וַיִּלָּחֶם בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל  
וַיִּשְׁבֶּם מִמֶּנּוּ שְׁבִי. וַיִּדַּר יִשְׂרָאֵל  
נְדָר לַה' וַיֹּאמֶר: אִם נָתַן תְּתֵן  
אֶת הָעָם הַזֶּה בְּיַדִּי וְהִחַרְמֹתִי  
אֶת עָרֵיהֶם

G-d heard Israel's voice and delivered the Canaanites. Israel destroyed them and consecrated their cities, and called the place Chormah.

וַיִּשְׁמַע ה' בְּקוֹל יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּתֵּן  
אֶת הַכְּנַעֲנִי וַיִּחַרֶם אֶתְהֶם וְאֶת  
עָרֵיהֶם וַיִּקְרָא שֵׁם הַמָּקוֹם  
חֹרְמָה.

Rashi

**Took from them a captive:** A single maidservant.

וַיִּשְׁבֶּם מִמֶּנּוּ שְׁבִי. אֵינָהּ אֶלָּא  
שִׁפְחָה אַחַת

When the Canaanites succeeded in taking one maidservant hostage, the Jews didn't leave her; they went to war to bring her home.

## Much Wealth

### Source 3 Talmud Gittin 58a

**Student's** The rabbis taught: It happened once that Rabbi  
pg. 3 Yehoshua ben Chananya visited a large city in Rome. The people there told him about a young Jewish child in prison, with beautiful eyes and an attractive appearance, his curly hair arranged in locks. Rabbi Yehoshua went and stood by the entrance to the prison. He said, as if speaking to himself: "Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers?" (Isaiah 42:24). That child answered by reciting the continuation of the verse: "Did not G-d, He against Whom we have sinned, and in Whose ways they would not walk, neither were they obedient to His law?" Rabbi Yehoshua said: I am certain that, if given the opportunity, this child will issue halachic rulings in Israel, as he is already exceedingly wise. He said: I take an oath by the Temple service that I will not move from here until I ransom him for whatever sum of money they set for him. They said that he did not move from there until he ransomed him for a great sum of money, and not even a few days had passed when this child issued rulings in Jewish law in Israel. Who was this child? This was Rabbi Yishmael ben Elisha.

שָׁנוּ חֲכָמִים: מַעֲשֵׂה בְּרַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן  
חֲנִינְיָה שֶׁהָלַךְ לְכַרְךָ גְּדוֹל שְׁבְרוּמִי,  
אָמְרוּ לוֹ: יֵלֵד אֶחָד יֵשׁ בְּבֵית  
הָאֲסוּרִים, וְהוּא יָפֵה עֵינָיִם וְטוֹב  
רְאִי וְקוֹצוֹתָיו סְדוּרוֹת לוֹ תִּלְתְּלִים.  
הָלַךְ וְעָמַד עַל פֶּתַח בֵּית הָאֲסוּרִים,  
אָמַר כְּאֵלוֹ לְעַצְמוֹ: "מִי נָתַן לְמִשְׁפָּה  
יַעֲקֹב וְיִשְׂרָאֵל לְבַזְזִים?" עָנָה אוֹתוֹ  
יֵלֵד וְאָמַר אֶת הַמִּשְׁפָּה הַכְּתוּב: "הֲלֹא  
ה' זֶה חָטְאוּנוּ לוֹ וְלֹא אָבוֹ בְּדַרְכָּיו  
הָלוֹךְ וְלֹא שָׁמְעוּ בְּתוֹרָתוֹ". אָמַר  
רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ: מוֹבְטָחֵנִי בּוֹ שִׁיְהִיָּה  
מוֹרָה הוֹרָאָה בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל אִם יִתְּנוּ  
לוֹ אֶת הַהוֹדָמָנוֹת לְכָךְ, שֶׁהָרִי כָּכָר  
עֲתָה הוּא חָכֵם כָּל כָּךְ. וְנִשְׁבַּע:  
הָעֲבוּדָה (בְּעֲבוּדַת הַמִּקְדָּשׁ)!  
שְׂאִינִי זֶה מִכָּאן עַד שֶׁאֶפְדְּנוּ בְּכָל  
מָמוֹן שֶׁקוֹבְעִים עָלָיו. אָמְרוּ: לֹא  
זֶה מִשָּׁם עַד שֶׁפָּדְאוּ בְּמָמוֹן הַרְבֵּה,  
וְאֵכָן, לֹא הָיוּ יָמִים מוֹעֲטִין עַד  
שֶׁהוֹרָה הוֹרָאָה בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל. וּמִי הוּא  
זֶה? — רַבִּי יִשְׁמָעֵאל בֶּן אֵלִישָׁע.

# B. The Importance of the Mitzvah

## A Great Mitzvah

Jeremiah was the prophet at the destruction of the Holy Temple. For decades he prophesied, warning the Jews that if they would not improve their ways, the Temple would be destroyed and they would be exiled. Being a prophet isn't easy, certainly a prophet who foresees destruction. The people did not appreciate his words and frequently accused him of being a traitor, who seeks evil for his people. For a prophet of course, this isn't a choice. He must transmit G-d's message. That is what Jeremiah did, while he himself prayed and beseeched G-d to forgive His people and not bring the destruction.

After one of his prayers, G-d answered him that even if all the righteous people in the entire world pray, He will not forgive the Jewish people. G-d continued, saying that if the people ask where they will they go after the destruction, this should be his answer:

### Source 4 Jeremiah 15:1-2

Student's  
pg. 5

G-d said to me; even if Moses and Samuel were to stand before Me, I have no desire for this people, send them away from before My face and let them go forth.

It shall be if they say to you, "Where shall we go?" you shall say to them, "So said G-d: Such as are for death, to death, and such as are for the sword, to the sword, and such as are for famine, to famine, and such as are for captivity, to captivity."

From the order of the clauses in the verse, the Talmud infers that captivity is worse than all other suffering because it includes them all.

### Source 5 Talmud Baba Batra 8b

Student's  
pg. 5

Redeeming captives is a great mitzvah.

Rava said to Rabba bar Mari: From which verse do we derive the statement of the Sages, that redeeming captives is a great mitzvah? Rabba bar Mari said to him: As it is written: "It shall be if they say to you, 'Where shall we go?' you shall say to them, 'So said G-d: Such as are for death, to death, and such as are for the sword, to the sword, and such as are for famine, to famine, and such as are for captivity, to captivity'" .

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֵלַי: אִם יַעֲמִד מֹשֶׁה  
וְשָׂמוּאֵל לְפָנַי, אֵינִי נֹפֵשׂ אֶל הָעָם  
הַזֶּה, שְׁלַח מֵעַל פָּנָי וַיֵּצֵאוּ.

וְהָיָה כִּי יֹאמְרוּ אֵלֶיךָ אָנָּה נֵצֵא,  
וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם כֹּה אָמַר ה', אֲשֶׁר  
לְמָוֹת לְמָוֹת, וְאֲשֶׁר לְחָרֵב לְחָרֵב,  
וְאֲשֶׁר לְרָעֵב לְרָעֵב, וְאֲשֶׁר לְשָׁבִי  
לְשָׁבִי.

פְּדִיּוֹן שְׁבוּיִים מִצְוָה רַבָּה הִיא.

אָמַר לוֹ רַבָּא לְרַבָּה בַּר מַרִּי: מִזֵּי  
דְּבַר זֶה שְׂאֵמְרוּ חֲכָמִים שְׂפָדִיּוֹן  
שְׁבוּיִים מִצְוָה רַבָּה הִיא? אָמַר לוֹ  
שְׂנַאֲמַר: "וְהָיָה כִּי יֹאמְרוּ אֵלֶיךָ  
אָנָּה נֵצֵא, וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם כֹּה אָמַר  
ה' אֲשֶׁר לְמָוֹת לְמָוֹת וְאֲשֶׁר לְחָרֵב  
לְחָרֵב וְאֲשֶׁר לְרָעֵב לְרָעֵב וְאֲשֶׁר  
לְשָׁבִי לְשָׁבִי"



And Rabbi Yochanan says: Whichever punishment is written later in this verse is more severe than the one before it.

Death by sword is worse than natural death, as the sword mutilates the body, while natural death does not mutilate it.

Famine is worse than the sword, as it causes extreme pain before death, while the sword does not.

Captivity is worse than all of them, as it includes all of them: famine, the sword, and death.

וְאָמַר ר' יוֹחָנָן: כָּל הַמֵּאָחַר בְּפָסוּק זֶה קָשָׁה מִחֲבֵרוֹ.

חָרַב קָשָׁה מִמָּוֶת רְגִיל – זֶה בְּמִיתַת חָרַב מִתְנַוֵּל, וְזֶה בְּמִיתַת רְגִילָה אֵינוֹ מִתְנַוֵּל.

רָעַב קָשָׁה מִחָרַב – זֶה מִצְטָעַר הַרְבֵּה קִדְּם לָכֵן, וְזֶה אֵינוֹ מִצְטָעַר.

שְׂבִי קָשָׁה מִכָּלֵם, שְׂכָלֵם נִמְצָאִים בּוֹ. שְׁהָרִי בְּשְׂבִי יֵשׁ רָעַב וְחָרַב וּמָוֶת.

## Precedence Over All Other Mitzvot

### Source 6 Maimonides' Mishneh Torah, Laws of Gifts to the Poor 8:10

Student's  
pg. 6

The redemption of captives receives priority over sustaining the poor and providing them with clothing. There is no greater mitzvah than the redemption of captives. For a captive is among those who are hungry, thirsty, and unclothed and is in mortal danger. People that pay no attention to the redemption of captives violate the negative commandments: "Do not harden your heart or close your hand", "Do not stand by when the blood of your neighbor is in danger", and "He shall not oppress him with exhausting work in your presence". They have also negated the observance of the positive commandments: "You shall certainly open up your hand to him", "And your brother shall live with you", "Love your neighbor as yourself", "Save those who are taken for death", and many other decrees of this nature. There is no mitzvah as great as the redemption of captives.

פְּדִיּוֹן שְׂבוּיִים קוֹדֵם לְפָרֻחַת עֲנִיִּים וְלִכְסוּתָן. וְאִין לָךְ מִצְוָה גְּדוּלָה כְּפְדִיּוֹן שְׂבוּיִים שֶׁהַשְּׂבוֹי הָרִי הוּא בְּכָלֵל הַרְעָבִים וְהַצְּמָאִים וְעָרוּמִים וְעוֹמֵד בְּסַכַּנַת נַפְשׁוֹת. וְהַמְעָלִים עֵינָיו מִפְּדִיּוֹן הָרִי זֶה עוֹבֵר עַל "לֹא תִאֲמָץ אֶת לִבְךָ וְלֹא תִקְפֹּץ אֶת יָדְךָ" וְעַל "לֹא תַעֲמֵד עַל דַּם רֵעֶךָ" וְעַל "לֹא יִרְדְּגוּ בְּפִרְךָ לְעֵינֶיךָ". וּבִטֵּל מִצְוֹת "פֶּתַח תִּפְתַּח אֶת יָדְךָ לִּי", וּמִצְוֹת "וְחִי אֲחִיךָ עִמָּךְ", "וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ כָּמוֹךָ", "וְהִצַּל לְנַחְתִּים לְפָנֶיךָ" וְהַרְבֵּה דְבָרִים כְּאֵלֶּה. וְאִין לָךְ מִצְוָה רַבָּה כְּפְדִיּוֹן שְׂבוּיִים.

### Source 7 Code of Jewish Law, Yoreh Deah 252:3

Student's  
pg. 6

Every avoidable moment's delay in redeeming captives is tantamount to bloodshed.

כָּל רִגְעַ שְׂמֵאָחַר לְפְדוּת הַשְּׂבוּיִים הֵיכֵן שְׂאֵפְשֵׁר לְהַקְדִּים הָרִי זֶה כְּאֵלֶּה שׁוֹפֵךְ דָּמִים.

*After surveying the importance of redeeming captives in Jewish history and Jewish law, we will see how we – ordinary folk who aren't commandos, government ministers, or diplomats – can fulfill it today.*

## C. Spiritual Effort for Captives

### **A Wedding in the Shadow of Captivity**

The Previous Rebbe, the father-in-law of The Rebbe, commenced his leadership in 1920, in Soviet Russia. This was at the the beginning of communism—equality for all—which demanded a war on religion, the “opium of the masses.” We cannot begin to describe the cruel persecution of Jews, with the objective of uprooting them from their heritage. The government closed the mikvahs and synagogues on various trumped-up charges. A primary method of implementing their plan was announcing mandatory government-school education, where children would be indoctrinated against their religion and their parents, and in favor of communist values.

The Previous Rebbe vowed to do everything possible to keep the Jewish spark burning in Soviet Russia. He sent his followers to establish an underground network of Jewish schools, mikvahs, and synagogues, thus resuscitating Russian Jewish life.

In 1927, he was arrested by the GPU (the predecessor to the KGB) and sentenced to death. After international pressure, the soviet government relented, commuted his sentence and then expelled him and his family from Russia. They went to Lavia, then Poland, and eventually the USA.

Wherever he went, thousands of Jews gathered to see him, this man of self-sacrifice who stood up to the Soviet evil. He remained in surreptitious contact with his followers in Russia and guided them in keeping up the Jewish underground and in encouraging others to keep the Jewish spark alive.

A year and a half after leaving Russia, the wedding of his daughter, Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, to The Rebbe was held in Warsaw. All the leading rabbis of the day were there, coming to rejoice with the Previous Rebbe.

Naturally, the festivities were accompanied by longing and prayers for the Chassidim who remained under communist rule, endangering their lives daily for the sake of Judaism.

### **Source 8** Adapted from Sefer Hasichot 5789, 19 Kislev

During one of the post-wedding celebrations, the Previous Rebbe said:

**Student's**  
pg. 7

**L'chaim to the yeshiva students in Russia! What should we wish them? That we must be more united? That is obvious; not a moment passes that I don't think of them and they think of me. [Let us wish] that G-d should remove all the darkness.**

The Rebbe then instructed that a telegram be sent to several cities in Russia.

The writer asked. “How should I sign?”

"לחיים – לחיי התמימים ברוסיה. מה נאחל? שאנו צריכים להיות מאחדים? זה הרי ברור, אין שניה שאני לא חושב עליהם והם עלי. אלא שהקב"ה יעזר שיירדו כל ההצלמות וכיו"ב."

לאחר מכן צוה הרבי לשלח מברק למספר ערים ברוסיה.

שאל אותו הכותב: איך להתם?

The Rebbe answered, “If I sign in my name, mercy upon them (a recipient of a letter from “Schneersohn” would be harshly punished).” Write “Rostvenik” (Russian for "relative").

The Rebbe continued: The Chassidim are my brothers, and the yeshiva students are literally my brothers, from the same mother and father.

אָמַר הַרְבֵּי: בְּאֵם נִחַתָּם אֶת שְׁמִי, זֶה תִּהְיֶה רַחֲמָנוּת עֲלֵיהֶם (מִי שֶׁיִּקְבֹּל מִבְּרֵךְ מֵהַרְבֵּי שְׁנֵי אֲוֵרָה, יִטְפַּל בְּחֶמְדָּה עַל יְדֵי הַשְּׁלֹטָנוֹת). אֲלֵא תִכְתֹּב רֵאדֶסְטוֹוֶעֶנִיק. (=קְרוֹב מִשְׁפָּחָה)

וְהַמְשִׁיךְ הַרְבֵּי לֹמַר: הַחֲסִידִים הֵם אַחִים שְׁלִי, וְתַמִּימִים הֵם מִמֶּשׁ אַחִים מֵאֵב אַחַד וְאֵמָּא אַחַת.

The Rebbe then recited a Chassidic discourse, explaining how to help the Chassidim behind the Iron Curtain.

Fifty years later, the Rebbe marked his fiftieth wedding anniversary and recited a discourse based on his father-in-law’s discourse. In this class, we will learn a part of The Rebbe’s discourse.

## Source 9 Talmud Bavli, Pesachim 87:2

Student's  
pg. 7

Rabbi Oshaya said, what is the meaning of the verse “The righteous acts of restoring open cities [Hebrew: *pirzono*] in Israel?” G-d did a kindness to the Jewish people by dispersing [Hebrew: *pizran*] them among the nations.

אָמַר רַבִּי אוֹשְׁעַיָּא, מַהוּ שְׁכַתוֹב: "צְדָקָת פִּרְזוֹנוֹ בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל", צְדָקָה עֲשָׂה הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁפִּזְרָן לְבֵין הָאוּמוֹת

Rashi

**Did a kindness by dispersing:** It would be impossible to annihilate them all at once.

צְדָקָה עֲשָׂה שֶׁפִּזְרָן: שְׁלֵא הָיָה יְכוּלִין לְכַלּוֹתָם יְחַד

The simple explanation of this saying is that it was a kindness to disperse the Jewish people among all the nations; like this, if they are killed in one place, they will survive in another place, thus remaining eternally.

As we see throughout history, when the Holocaust was in one part of the world, the Jews in America and other countries were saved. The same happened during the expulsion from Spain, Jews in other parts of the world were saved, and so on.

## >> The Rebbe

### Moral Support

Student's  
pg. 8

The Rebbe Rayatz explains that there is a positive aspect to the Jewish people being spread out in various countries.

וּמֵבָאָר כְּבוֹד קְדוּשַׁת מוֹרֵי וְחֻמֵי אֲדָמוֹר בְּמֵאמְרוֹ דְּבוֹר הַמִּתְחִיל זֶה [שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר בִּי"ט כְּסֵלֹ תֵרַפ"ט בְּסֻעוּדָה], שֶׁעַל יְדֵי שִׁישְׂרָאֵל מִפְּזָרִים בְּכִמָּה מְדִינוֹת,

It can happen that the Jews in one country are oppressed and not allowed to study Torah and observe mitzvot. Some mitzvot maybe cannot be observed even if people are willing to risk their lives for them—for example, if the government doesn't allow the Four Kinds to be brought into the country for Sukkot, then the mitzvah simply cannot be observed, regardless of how much one is willing to sacrifice for it. When Jews in other countries study Torah and observe mitzvot they give the Jews that are under oppression strength and fortitude to study Torah and observe mitzvot.

הִנֵּה גַם כְּשֶׁבְּמִדְיָנָה אַחַת דּוֹחֲקִים וְלוֹחֲצִים אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאִין נוֹתְנִים לָהֶם לְלַמֵּד תּוֹרָה וּלְקַיֵּם מִצְוֹת, וְעַד שְׂבַכְמָה מִצְוֹת הֵם אָנוּסִים מִמֶּשׁ שְׂאִין לָהֶם אֶפְשָׁרוֹת כָּלֵל לְקַיֵּם אוֹתָם אֲפֵלוּ עַל יְדֵי מְסִירוֹת נֶפֶשׁ [וּלְדַגְמָא, כְּשֵׁישׁ גִּזְרַת הַמְּלָכוֹת שְׁלֵא לְהַכְנִיס לְהַמְדִּינָה ד' מִיָּנִים, שְׂאִין גַּם עַל יְדֵי מְסִירוֹת נֶפֶשׁ אִי אֶפְשָׁר לְקַיֵּם הַמִּצְוָה], הִנֵּה עַל יְדֵי שִׁישְׂרָאֵל הַנִּמְצָאִים בְּשָׂאֵר הַמְדִּינוֹת עוֹסְקִים בְּתוֹרָה וּמִצְוֹת, הֵם נוֹתְנִים כֹּחַ וְעֹז גַּם לְאֵלוּ הַנִּמְצָאִים בְּמָקוֹם שֵׁישׁ שָׂם גִּזְרוֹת, שְׂיֻכְלוּ לְלַמֵּד תּוֹרָה וּלְקַיֵּם מִצְוֹת.

*The Rebbe Rayatz gave a deeper interpretation to the aforementioned saying of the sages. G-d's dispersion of the Jewish people among the nations was a positive act because this means that when Jews in one place are oppressed and not able to observe mitzvot freely, Jews in a different place are free to observe mitzvot. The fact that Jews in a free country observe mitzvot empowers those Jews living under oppression to be able to observe mitzvot as well.*

## Support Leads to Freedom

Student's  
pg. 8

The effect of this support is gradual. First the oppressed Jews will be able to observe mitzvot when they are willing to risk their lives for them (as there is an opinion that people are allowed to risk their lives even for the observance of mitzvot where we are told that self-sacrifice is not warranted). The next step will be that the oppressed Jews will no longer have to risk their lives for mitzvah observance. The final stage will be that they will have no impediments at all and will be completely free to observe mitzvot in an expansive manner, as the sages teach, “a person that observes the Torah in poverty will eventually observe it in wealth.”

וּמִן הַקָּל אֶל הַכָּבֵד, בְּתַחֲלָה שְׂיֻכְלוּ לְקַיֵּם אֶת הַמִּצְוֹת עַל יְדֵי מְסִירוֹת נֶפֶשׁ עַל כָּל פָּנִים [וְכִידוּעַ שֵׁישׁ דְּעָה בְּפוֹסְקִים שְׂגָם בְּהַמִּצְוֹת שְׁעֲלֵיהֶם אָמְרוּ יַעֲבֹר וְאֵל יִהְרַג רְשָׁאִי לְקַדֵּשׁ אֶת הַשֵּׁם וּלְמַסַּר עַצְמוֹ], וְעַד שְׂאַחַר כֵּן לֹא יִצְטָרְכוּ לְמְסִירוֹת נֶפֶשׁ כָּלֵל, וְעַד שְׁלֵא יִהְיוּ לָהֶם נְסִיוֹנוֹת וְאֲפֵלוּ לֹא מְנִיעוֹת וְעֹכּוּבִים, כִּי יֵצְאוּ לְחֵרוֹת וְיֻכְלוּ לְעַסֵּק בְּתוֹרָה וּמִצְוֹת מִתּוֹךְ הִרְחָבָה, כְּמֵאֲמַר רַבּוֹתֵינוּ זְכוֹרֵנוֹם לְבִרְכָה כָּל הַמְקוֹמִים אֶת הַתּוֹרָה מֵעַנִּי סוֹפוּ לְקִיָּמָה מֵעַשָׂר.

*The Rebbe adds an important point. The mitzvah observance of Jews in free countries doesn't just encourage the oppressed Jews and give them the strength to have self-sacrifice for mitzvot, it even causes the oppression to eventually end.*

## **We are all one body**

How does it work? Why do the actions of the Jews in one place affect Jews in another place?

*In the discourse, the Rebbe explains this using deep Chassidic concepts, and we'll try to break it down and summarize it.*

*All Jews are part of one nation, part of one destiny. As parts of one organic entity, any action by any part affects the whole.*

*For example, all limbs are part of the same body, one entity. Therefore, the health of one limb directly affects the other limbs. In medicine, when treating a sick limb there are two approaches: One focuses on treating the specific issues and symptoms, while the other focuses on improving the body's health as a whole, thereby strengthening the affected limb as well (Hayom Yom).*

*The Jewish people are the same way. As parts of a single whole, when we strengthen the healthy limbs, the other limbs benefit as well. Thus, when Jews around the world strengthen their Torah study and mitzvah observance, even the Jew under communist repression is strengthened.*

## **We will not forget you!**

Another point worth mentioning is regarding the emotional aspect:

*Let's return to the story we began with, when the Previous Rebbe was exiled from Russia with his family and left his Chassidim behind. Eighteen years later, after the Holocaust, a small crack opened in the Iron Curtain and thousands of Chassidim succeeded in escaping the USSR via Poland and then to Israel or the U.S. After a certain point, the escape route was closed off by the authorities and many chassidim remained behind, isolated. The isolation was unbearable, it cut apart friends and split families. Wives were cut off from their husbands and children were separated from their parents.*

*During those years, the Rebbe and his Chassidim did not forget their fellow Chassidim in Russia even for a moment. They prayed for them, did mitzvot for them, composed songs in their honor, and lived with them in their hearts and minds.*

*In those years, the Rebbe would send undercover agents from the U.S. to Russia to meet the Chassidim, pass on messages to them, and help them wherever possible. They brought tefillin, mezuzahs, and even kosher hotdogs.*

*One of the first of these agents was Binyamin Katz, a young Chassid with a phenomenal memory, who put himself in great danger there. Memory was crucial, written lists would be incriminating if seen by the KGB, so all messages to the Rebbe had to be memorized.*

*One of his more remarkable encounters was with Yosef Mochkin and Michel Vishetzki, two students who had been separated from family members who had fled Russia in 1947. These young men were also on the KGB's most-wanted list.*

*Somehow, they survived the decades there and were eventually reunited with their families.*

*When Binyamin Katz met them in hiding - endangering both parties - he passed on the messages from the Rebbe and from their families, and they passed on information about the Chassidim in Russia. Before the end of the meeting, they asked him, painfully: "Tell us, do the Chassidim there think about us?"*

*This is what he answered:*

*"I do not know what is in the heart of every Chassid, but one thing is certain: the Rebbe is constantly thinking about you and does not allow the others to forget either." He told them what the Rebbe had said at the recent Shavuot gathering: "We are all sitting together and nobody said Lechaim for the Jews of Russia?!" He also told them how the Rebbe often sang in tears: "Save your nation and have **mercy** on your inheritance (instead of "bless", the original word in the verse)" and everyone would tearfully join in.*

*Yosef Mochkin and Michel Vishetzki listened emotionally to these words and began crying. They embraced him, and with these words they left into the darkness of the night.*

*When they finally left Russia, they said that the knowledge that the Rebbe and Chassidim on the other side of the world were thinking about them and praying for them gave them the strength to survive.*

*When Jews outside Russia learned Torah and did mitzvot for the Jews inside Russia, and had them always on their minds, the Jews inside Russia drew strength and encouragement.*



## D. Captives of the Mind

After explaining the mitzvah of redeeming captives in the spiritual sense, and encouraging the Chassidim to strengthen their Torah study and mitzvah observance, the Rebbe discussed personal redemption. He explained that there are also soul captives, which can be anyone. Even in such captivity, we must help those around us who are held captive by their inclinations.

### >> The Rebbe

#### Internal Captivity

**Student's** Since the Torah is eternal, applying in every place and at every time, it is clear that the “kindness” in being dispersed is also relevant to places where there are no restrictions on mitzvah observance.

pg. 9

וְהִנֵּה כִּינּוֹן שֶׁהַתּוֹרָה הִיא נִצְחִית בְּכָל עֵת  
וְזָמַן וּבְכָל מְקוֹם, מוּבָן שֶׁצְדָקָה זוֹ הִיא  
גַּם בְּמִקְוֵמוֹת שֶׁאֵין שָׁם גְּזֵרוֹת עַל תּוֹרָה  
וּמִצְוֹת.

Until now we have explained the Divine kindness of dispersion only under circumstances of oppression. The simple meaning is that when Jews are killed in one place, they survive in another place. The deeper interpretation is that when Jews are restricted from freely observing mitzvot in one place, the Jews in other countries can provide them with encouragement and assistance by observing mitzvot.

But what about times and places where there are no restrictions on Torah and mitzvot? How is the dispersion of the Jewish people a “kindness” under such circumstances?

**Student's** We can understand the relevance based on a teaching of the Rebbe Rayatz about the mitzvah of redeeming captives, explaining how this concept exists on a spiritual plane as well. A captive in the physical sense is an imprisoned person who cannot leave a certain place. In the spiritual sense this refers to people who are in the captivity of their negative inclination. For example, a businessperson whose mind is occupied by worrying and disturbing thoughts about their financial affairs - such a person is a “captive” of their paralyzing thoughts and cannot break free of them. This captivity can even rise to the legal status of compulsion, as Maimonides writes, “his negative inclination overpowered him.”

pg. 9

וַיּוּבֵן זֶה עַל פִּי מָה שֶׁכָּתַב כְּבוֹד קִדְשֵׁנוּ  
מִדְּבַר וְחָמֵי אֲדָמוֹר בְּעֵינֵי מִצְוֹת פְּדִיּוֹן  
שְׁבוּיִים שֶׁיִּשְׁנָה גַם בְּרוֹחַנִּיּוֹת. שֶׁכְּמוֹ  
שֶׁהַשְּׁבוּי בְּגִשְׁמִיּוֹת (הַיּוֹשֵׁב בְּמֵאֶסֶר)  
אֵינוֹ יָכוֹל לְצֵאת מִשָּׁם, עַל דֶּרֶךְ זֶה הוּא  
גַּם בְּרוֹחַנִּיּוֹת, שֶׁלְּפַעְמִים הָאָדָם שְׁבוּי  
רַחֲמָנָא לְצֵלוֹ בְּיַדֵּי יִצְרוֹ [וְעַל דֶּרֶךְ בְּעֵלֵי  
עֲסָקִים הַטְּרוּדִים וּמְטָרְדִים בְּיִתְרָה  
בְּטָרוּדוֹת עֲסָקִיהֶם, שֶׁהֵם קְשׁוּרִים  
(שְׁבוּיִים) בְּהַמְחָשְׁבוֹת הַמְּבַלְבְּלוֹת וְאֵינָם  
יְכוֹלִים לְצֵאת מֵהֶם], וְעַד שֶׁלְּפַעְמִים  
הוּא כְּמוֹ אָנוּס וּבְלִשׁוֹן הַרְמַב"ם (בְּנוֹגֵעַ  
לְהִלְכָה) יִצְרוֹ הוּא שֶׁתִּקְפוּ.

A captive isn't just a person restrained, not allowed to leave. It can also be a person held captive by their negative inclination. People sometimes act self-destructively. For example, a person who is so consumed by his business that he has no time left for his wife and children, destroying his family life. Or a person so consumed by work that their health is negatively affected. When their family or doctor try to appraise them of the situation and tell them to stop, it doesn't help, they can't help themselves. They are captives.

## Everyone Has Their Own Challenges

**Student's**  
pg. 9 This is where we find the “kindness” of dispersion even as we live in free countries. When a Jew is held “captive” by their negative inclination they can't free themselves, “a prisoner can't free themselves from captivity.” They can, however, be helped by another Jew who isn't a “captive” in this regard.

וְזֶהוּ עֲנִינוּ הַצְדָּקָה עַל יְדֵי שְׁפִזְרוֹ לְבֵינֵי  
הָאֲמוֹת גַּם בְּנוֹגַע לְמְקוֹמוֹת הַרְנוּחָה,  
דְּכֹאֲשֶׁר מִי שֶׁהוּא מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל שְׁבוּי בְיַדֵּי  
יְצָרוֹ רַחֲמָנָא לְצַלוֹ (בְּנוֹגַע לְעֲנִינֵי פְרָטִי),  
יְצִיאָתוֹ מִהַשְּׁבִיָּה הִיא [לֹא בְכַח עֲצָמוֹ,  
כִּינּוֹן שְׂאִין חֲבוּשׁ מִתִּיר עֲצָמוֹ, כִּי אִם]  
עַל יְדֵי יְהוּדֵי שְׂאִינֵנוּ נִתּוֹן בַּשְּׁבִיָּה בְּנוֹגַע  
לְעֲנִינֵי זֶה.

Actively working to influence “captive” people is not the only way to free them. These “captives” can also be freed indirectly. When another person serves as a role model of a person free of their negative inclination, striking the proper balance between work and family, making a living and caring for their own spiritual needs, this helps people struggling in this area by giving them an example to learn from.

**Student's**  
pg. 10 This can be done even by a person who is themselves a “captive” in the hands of their negative inclination in a different respect. Since this person is free in some areas of life, they can serve as a positive example in those areas. Every individual has different struggles.

וְהִינּוּ, דְגַם כְּאֲשֶׁר גַּם הַפּוֹדֶה אוֹתוֹ  
מִהַשְּׁבִיָּה הוּא שְׁבוּי בְיַדֵּי יְצָרוֹ, וְעַד שֶׁהוּא  
כְּמוֹ אָנוּס (יְצָרוֹ הוּא שְׁתַּקְפוֹ) בְּנוֹגַע  
לְמִצְוָה אַחֶרֶת, מִכָּל מְקוֹם, כִּינּוֹן שְׁבִיָּנוֹגַע  
לְכַמְּהָ וְכַמְּהָ מִצְוֹת אֵינֵנוּ שְׁבוּי בְיַדֵּי יְצָרוֹ,  
כִּי הַתְּנַגְדוֹת הַיְצָר הֵרַע אֶצֶל כָּל אֶחָד הִיא  
בְּעֶקֶר בְּעֲנִינֵי אַחֵר.

It doesn't matter that you aren't perfect and have your own areas of “captivity” in your life. If you are free in one area, you can help a captive in that area and provide them with the encouragement and strength they need to free themselves.

For example, let's take an extremely stingy person who can't give any money to charity, and doesn't even spoil his own children. When he sees a friend or neighbor acting generously, their example can inspire him to free himself of his problem.

This same stingy person may be living a freer life in a different area. He may be eating a healthy and



balanced diet, while the generous fellow has a very unhealthy diet. In the realm of proper diet the miser can teach and inspire the generous person to change their unhealthy lifestyle.

Student's  
pg. 10

Every era in history has its specific spiritual purpose. The strongest temptations and opposition of the negative inclinations are focused on preventing this purpose from being realized. This is why the challenges of each generation are different. For example, during the generation of Menasseh king of Israel the temptation of idol worship was especially powerful, but in subsequent generations the inclination to idol worship was eliminated. Similarly, every individual Jew has their personal mission in life, and the strongest temptations and opposition of the negative inclinations are focused on this issue.

[שְׁכֵמוֹ שְׂבָכָל זְמַן יֵשׁ עֲבוּדָה מִיַּחַד הַשִּׁיכָת  
בְּיִתְרָה לְזְמַן זֶה, וְעַקֵּר הַפְּתוּיִים וְהַתְּנַגְדוֹת  
שֶׁל הַיֵּצֵר הָרַע הֵם לְמַנְעַ עֲבוּדָה זוֹ, שֶׁלֹּכֵן  
הַנְּסִיווֹת שֶׁבְּדוֹר אֶחָד שׁוֹנִים מִהַנְּסִיווֹת  
בְּדוֹרוֹת אֲחֵרִים [וְכֵמוֹ בְּזְמַנּוֹ שֶׁל מְנַשֶּׁה  
שָׂאזְ הָיָה שׁוֹלֵט הַיֵּצֵר שֶׁל עֲבוּדָה זָרָה מָה  
שָׂאִין כֹּן בְּהַדּוּרוֹת שֶׁלְאַחֲרָיו, עַל אַחַת כַּמָּה  
וְכַמָּה אַחֲרֵי שֶׁקִּטְלוּהוּ לַיֵּצֵר שֶׁל עֲבוּדָה  
זָרָה], עַל דֶּרֶךְ זֶה הוּא גַם בְּזְמַן אֶחָד גּוֹפֵא,  
שֶׁלְכָל אֶחָד מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל יֵשׁ עֲנִיָּן מִיַּחַד (מִצְוָה  
אוּ מִנְהַג וְכִיּוֹצֵא בְּזֶה) שְׁנוּגָע אֵלָיו בְּיִתְרָה,  
כִּדְּוֵעַ בְּבִאוֹר מֵאֲמַר רַבּוֹתֵינוּ זְכוֹרִים  
לְבִרְכָה "אֲבִיךָ, בְּמָה הָיָה זֶהִיר בְּיִתְרָה?",  
וְעַקֵּר הַפְּתוּיִים וְהַתְּנַגְדוֹת שֶׁל הַיֵּצֵר הָרַע  
שֶׁלֵּוּ הֵם בְּנוֹגָע לְעִנְיָן זֶה].

Every individual has different challenges, just like every generation has its unique challenges. For example, the greatest challenge in the generation of Manasseh was the temptation for idol worship, the attraction was so strong that people simply couldn't stop themselves. Yet in our times, we can't even understand why anyone would want to worship a rock. In the previous generation the greatest religious challenge for many people was the perceived conflict between science and religion. But nowadays it is increasingly clear that there is no contradiction between the two. Within a generation as well, different people have different challenges. Some people find the mitzvah of charity a great challenge, others find it very difficult to attend synagogue on Shabbat. A person's challenges are an indication of their life mission - where we struggle is where our purpose lies.

Student's  
pg. 10

By observing the mitzvot that our negative inclination doesn't resist so strongly, we redeem from captivity those people whose negative inclination holds them captive with regard to those mitzvot.

וְעַל יְדֵי שְׂמֻקִּים אֶת הַמִּצְוֹת שֶׁאִין יֵצְרוּ  
לוֹחֵם כְּנֻגְדָם (כָּל כֵּן), הוּא פּוֹדֶה מִהַשְּׁבִיָּה  
אֶת זֶה שֶׁיֵּצְרוּ תִקְפוּ בְּמִצְוֹת אֵלוֹ.

When a person observes the mitzvot that he doesn't face resistance for, he provides support for those people that struggle greatly with those same mitzvot.

## Dispersed Among Different Challenges

Student's  
pg.10

The “kindness” G-d did for us by dispersing us among the nations is by giving us the ability to “redeem captives” in the spiritual sense. Redeeming captives is the highest form of charity and is the greatest mitzvah of all. By G-d dispersing us among the nations, among different types of negative inclinations, we are able to perform charity with each other, redeeming people from “captivity.”

וְזֶהוּ צְדָקָה עֲשֵׂה הַקַּב"ה בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל שְׁפִזְרוֹן  
לְבֵין הָאֻמוֹת, שְׁפִדְיוֹן שְׁבוּיִים הוּא צְדָקָה  
הַכִּי נַעֲלִית, וְכַמְבֹאֵר בַּמֶּאמָר הַנ"ל שְׁבִמְצוֹת  
צְדָקָה פְדִיוֹן שְׁבוּיִים הוּא קֶדֶם לְכָל דְבָר  
וְאִין מְצוּה גְדוּלָה כְּפִדְיוֹן שְׁבוּיִים, וְעַל  
יְדֵי שְׁפִזְרוֹן לְבֵין הָאֻמוֹת, שְׂיִצְרוּ שֶׁל אֶחָד  
שׁוֹנָה מִיִּצְרוּ שֶׁל הַשְּׂנִי, עַל יְדֵי זֶה מִתְקַיְּמָת  
הַצְדָקָה שֶׁל פְדִיוֹן שְׁבוּיִים, כַּנ"ל.

*This is the third interpretation of the teaching “G-d did a kindness to the Jewish people by dispersing them among the nations.” G-d did us a kindness by dispersing us among different negative inclinations, giving each person distinct challenges. This enables each Jew to support their fellow in their challenges.*

# E. Intergenerational and Intercommunal Support

After explaining the deeper meaning of redeeming captives and its eternal interpersonal relevance, the Rebbe continues to explain how the concept of redeeming captives also has intercommunal and intergenerational meaning.

## >> The Rebbe

### The Jews of the Holy Land Support the Diaspora

Student's  
pg. 12

The assistance one person's Torah and mitzvot provides for their fellow is not only when the fellow is forcibly prevented from observing a particular mitzvah by government decree or the force of the negative inclination. The assistance is also relevant when Torah law renders it impossible for a person to observe a particular mitzvah. An example of this is Jews who are living outside of the Land of Israel, and are unable to observe the mitzvot that only apply in the Land of Israel. The fact that all Jews around the world are a single entity means that when the Jews in the Land of Israel observe the Israel-specific mitzvot, it is beneficial for the Jews living in the Diaspora as well.

According to Torah law there are some mitzvot that can only be observed in the Land of Israel, such as *shemittah*, the sabbatical year. Jews that live outside Israel have no way of fulfilling these mitzvot. The Rebbe says that when Jews in Israel fulfill these mitzvot it benefits and gives merit to the Jews outside of Israel who are unable to do so.

וְהָיָה עֵינֵינוּ הַנ"ל (שְׁהַעֲסֹק בְּתוֹרָה וּמִצְוֹת  
שֶׁל אֶחָד נוֹתֵן כַּח וְעַז גַּם לְשֵׁנִי) הוּא לֹא  
רַק כְּשֶׁהָאִנֶּס (בְּנוֹגֵעַ לְאִיזוֹ מִצְוָה) הוּא  
מִפְּנֵי גְזֵרַת הַמְּלָכוֹת אוֹ מִפְּנֵי שְׂיָצָרוֹ הוּא  
שֶׁתִּקְפוּ, אֲלֵא גַם כְּשֶׁהָאִנֶּס הוּא מִפְּנֵי שֶׁעַל  
פִּי תוֹרָה אֵי אֶפְשָׁר לְקַיֵּם מִצְוָה זוֹ, וְכִמוֹ  
יִשְׂרָאֵל הַנִּמְצָאִים בְּחוּץ לְאֶרֶץ שְׂעַל פִּי  
תוֹרָה אֵי אֶפְשָׁר לָהֶם לְקַיֵּם אֶת הַמִּצְוֹת  
הַתְּלוּיֹת בְּאֶרֶץ, הִנֵּה מְצַד זֶה שֶׁכָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל  
שֶׁכָּל הַמְּקוֹמוֹת הֵם מְצִיאֹת אַחַת, הֵרִי  
עַל יְדֵי זֶה שֶׁבְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הַנִּמְצָאִים בְּאֶרֶץ  
יִשְׂרָאֵל מְקַיְּמִים אֶת הַמִּצְוֹת הַתְּלוּיֹת  
בְּאֶרֶץ, זֶה מוֹעִיל זֶה גַם עֲבוּר בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל  
הַנִּמְצָאִים בְּחוּץ לְאֶרֶץ.

### The Temple Generations Assist the Exiled

Student's  
pg. 12

There are also mitzvot that can only be performed during the Temple era. Today, even the Jews living in the Land of Israel are unable to observe them. But because all Jews in all times are a single entity, the fulfillment of the Temple-dependent mitzvot by the Jewish people in the Temple era benefits the Jews of the exile era.

וְעַל דֶּרֶךְ זֶה בְּכָל־לוֹת זְמַן הַגְּלוּת שְׂאֵי אֶפְשָׁר  
(גַּם לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הַנִּמְצָאִים בְּאֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל)  
לְקַיֵּם מִצְוֹת הַתְּלוּיֹת בְּזְמַן שֶׁבֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ הָיָה  
קַיֵּם, הִנֵּה מְצַד זֶה שֶׁכָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁכָּל הַזְּמַנִּים  
הֵם מְצִיאֹת אַחַת, הִנֵּה הַמִּצְוֹת הַתְּלוּיֹת  
בְּזְמַן הַבַּיִת שֶׁקִּיְמוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל אַז, מוֹעִילִים גַּם  
לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁבְּזְמַן הַגְּלוּת, כִּיּוֹן שֶׁכָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל  
שֶׁבְּמִשְׁךְ כָּל הַדּוֹרוֹת הֵם צְבוּר אֶחָד.

*We can give an example of this phenomenon from a husband and wife. The Torah has mitzvot that are male specific, and mitzvot that are female specific.*

*Chassidic teachings explain that a husband and wife are one unit, so the husband's observance of male-specific mitzvot counts for his wife as well, and the wife's observance of the female-specific mitzvot counts for her husband.*

*We have learned today that this is not only true regarding a married couple, but also for the Jewish people as a whole. It even crosses boundaries of generations and locations. The mitzvah observance of Jews in a specific time and place impacts and benefits Jews in different times and places.*

*First, some established facts (based on Kabbalah, Chassidic teachings and science):*

*We are all connected.*

*We are all part of a unified whole.*

*We all matter.*

*My actions affect you, and yours affect me.*

*When I do a mitzvah I send positive, (Divine!) energy into the cosmos, which consequently fills your space with positive energy.*

*When I resist a negative impulse or challenge myself beyond my usual comfort zone, energetically I assist another person to do the same.*

*Today, every Jew everywhere—along with many of our non-Jewish friends—is praying and hoping that the hostages be freed. All we want is for the children to be reunited with their parents, for the adults to be reunited with their families, and for the Jewish people to see and sense G-d's salvation.*

*“To redeem captives” is an actual mitzvah. Sadly, “captives” have long been a part of history, and Jewish law outlines the directives of the mitzvah to redeem them. Putting efforts and funds towards redeeming a captive takes precedence over other community needs and all other charitable causes.*

*But what can you and I do about it?*

*We aren't diplomats and we aren't soldiers.*

*How can we participate in this mitzvah of redeeming the hostages?*

*Chassidic thought explains that since we are all interconnected, when we do the mitzvot that the hostages aren't able to do, and when we study Torah, that sends them positive energy. It keeps them strong and optimistic and will ultimately bring them to freedom.*

## Mezuzot Provide Security

During a difficult period the Rebbe spoke about the mitzvah of mezuzah. The Rebbe explained that a mezuzah provides protection to the Jewish people all over the world, not just for the residents of the house it is attached to.

### Source 10 Open Letter of The Rebbe dated Elul 1, 5736 (excerpts)

Student's  
pg. 128

At this time every Jewish home is in special need of security. True security comes from G-d, as the verse states "G-d protects a city."

G-d also gave, as a specific instrument of protection for our homes, the mitzvah of mezuzah.

All of the Jewish people are a single edifice, and responsible for each other. As a result, in addition to providing Divine protection for the specific house it is attached to, every kosher mezuzah on any Jewish door contributes to the security of all Jews everywhere.

Every Jewish woman is the mainstay of her house, and every Jewish girl is a future mainstay. They therefore have the unique merit to promote the mitzvah of mezuzah so that every door in their homes that requires a mezuzah should have one, and the same for the doors in the homes of their neighbors and acquaintances.

*All Jews are a single entity and are responsible for each other. So when a Jew somewhere in the world places a mezuzah on his door he isn't only adding to the security of his home, he is also contributing to the security of Jews that don't have a mezuzah. When Jews in New York and Paris place mezuzot on their doors they are contributing protection to the residents of Israel's south and the soldiers who are risking their lives to protect us.*

בְּתִקְוָפָה זֶה זְקוּק כָּל בַּיִת יְהוּדִי בְּאֶפְסוֹן  
מִיְחָד לְשִׁמְרָה. הַשְּׁמִירָה הָאֲמִתִּית  
הִיא, כְּפִתוּב: "ה' יִשְׁמָר עִיר."

נוֹסֵף לְכָךְ נָתַן הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא סִגְלָה  
מִיְחָד לְשִׁמְרַת הַבַּיִת, וְהִיא מְצוּת  
מְזוּזָה

יֵשׁ גַּם לְזֵכֶר, שֶׁמֵּאַחַר שֶׁכָּל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל  
הֵם "קוֹמָה אַחַת" וְהֵם "עֲרָבִים זֶה בְּזֶה"  
מְהֵרָה הַמְּזוּזָה שֶׁמִּירָה אֱלוֹקִית לֹא רַק  
לְבַיִת וּלְכָל אֲשֶׁר בְּתוֹכוֹ, אֲלָא שֶׁכָּל  
מְזוּזָה כְּשֶׁרָה הַנוֹסֶפֶת אֵי-שֵׁם בְּדִלֵת  
יְהוּדִית – מְחַזְקֶת אֶת בְּטָחוֹנָם שֶׁל כָּל  
בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּכָל מְקוֹם שֶׁהֵם.

וּבְהַתְחַשֵּׁב בְּעֵבֶר שֶׁכָּל אִשָּׁה יְהוּדִית  
הִיא "עֲקֻרַת הַבַּיִת", וְכָל בַּת יִשְׂרָאֵל  
הִיא עֲקֻרַת הַבַּיִת בְּעֵתִיד – יֵשׁ לָהֶן  
זְכוּת מִיְחָדָת, בְּעֵנֵן הַמְּזוּזָה, לְהַשְׁתַּדֵּל  
שֶׁתִּהְיֶה מְזוּזָה כְּשֶׁרָה לֹא רַק בְּבֵיתוֹן בְּכָל  
פֶּתַח הַחַיִּב בָּהּ, אֲלָא גַם בְּבֵתִי שֶׁכְּנִיָּהוּן  
וּמְכִירֵיהֶן וּבְכָל בַּיִת בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל