

Stories About Eretz Yisroel

Missiles and Miracles

In August of 1990, Saddam Hussein, brandishing threats to “burn” the Holy Land with his chemical warheads, marched the armies of Iraq into Kuwait. As the world reacted in alarm and fear, the Rebbe spread a message of confidence and trust.

The Rebbe quoted a centuries-old Midrashic passage which foretold with uncanny precision unfolding events. “In the year in which the Moshiach will be revealed,” the Midrash reads, “all the kings of the nations of the world will provoke one another... The king of Persia will provoke the king of Arabia, and the king of Arabia will go to Aram in order to seek counsel from them... And all the nations will be thrown into turmoil and will be terrified. Also Israel, too, will be thrown into turmoil and terror, and will cry: ‘Where shall we go? What shall we do?’ And G-d will say to them: ‘My children, do not fear! All that I have done, I have done only for your sake. Why are you afraid? Do not fear, for the time of your redemption has come...’”

In response to queries as to whether to leave Israel for safer havens, the Rebbe’s reply was clear and unequivocal: the Land of Israel is the safest place in the world. When asked about the gas-masks being distributed in Israel anticipation of chemical warfare, the Rebbe opined that they would prove

I Have Thousands of Only Children (*not the whole story*)

This story was related by someone who preferred to give only his first name – Yosef:

He met the Rebbe as a Bar Mitzva boy when the Rebbe spoke to him about baseball. The story continues here about Eretz Yisroel.

The next time I met the Rebbe was before the Six Day War in 1967.

At that time, I was working as an assistant to Arthur Goldberg, then the US representative to the United Nations.

One day in June, I got a phone call from my cousin about a very urgent matter. She told me about her precious only son, Avraham. He had become a Baal Teshuva and was

totally unnecessary. He also stated that the war would be over by Purim.

The failed attempts of the SCUD missiles to destroy Jewish life was nothing less than miraculous. As the missiles—each loaded with 600 pounds of explosives—rained down upon Tel Aviv, the terrified citizens, huddled in shelters and sealed rooms, listened in disbelief to the newsflashes. Buildings crowded with people were hit, yet virtually not a soul was harmed. “G-d threw down mattresses to cushion our falls, pushed walls out of our way,” declared one survivor.

On the day of Purim, traditionally a day of merry-making for the Jewish people, the war was officially declared over.

“Adequate attention is not being paid to these miracles,” said the Rebbe in public addresses in the weeks to follow. “The popular media throughout the world took note of the miraculous occurrences, yet there is a tendency to offer rationales and explanations. We must publicize that these are miracles that were performed by G-d!”

The Rebbe also stated that the events of the Gulf War are part of the miraculous prelude to the messianic era, a time when the divine essence of creation will be manifest and miracles will be commonplace.

learning in a Chabad Yeshiva in Israel. Now, with the threat of war escalating, she had sent him a ticket to come home. Avraham, however, refused, saying that the Rebbe said no Jews should leave Israel.

“I wrote to the Rebbe, explaining that Avraham is our only child, our whole life. He answered with one sentence. ‘G-d, Who never sleeps, watches the Jewish people.’ Tell me,” she asked, “How bad is it in Israel?”

I didn’t want to scare her. I just said, “Avraham has to come home. I’ll try to get into the Rebbe. I have ties with Arthur Goldberg that might give me some pull.”

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And indeed, the next evening I entered the Rebbe's room. "I was here once before, when I was 13," I told the Rebbe. The Rebbe smiled broadly, his beard whiter than before, but his piercing eyes still young.

"I want to make this a personal visit," I said, and then explained the plight of my cousin and her only son. The Rebbe's face became serious.

"I have thousands of only sons in Eretz Yisrael. If I tell them to remain there, it's because I'm sure nothing will happen to them. Tell your cousin she should be completely calm. G-d, Who doesn't sleep, watches the Jewish people everywhere and especially in Eretz Yisrael."

"Rebbe," I said, "with all due respect, I can't be calm. Maybe the Rebbe doesn't know, but I know the extent of the danger to Israel."

The Rebbe answered, "The land of Israel is in no danger. It stands before a great victory. This is a month of great goodness for the Jewish people."

The Rebbe continued, "I have a personal request. Tell Avraham's father that there is something he can do for the Jewish people – put on Tefillin every weekday. You too, should put on Tefillin every weekday. And when everything ends well, I would like to talk to you again."

I was left speechless. I don't know how long I stared at this man opposite me, awed by his fantastic strength and the great responsibility he was able to shoulder.

"Rebbe," I said, choking back tears, "as a Jew, I am proud that we have someone like you leading us. I thank you for the time you gave to me."

"Let's hear good tidings," the Rebbe ended.

As I was about to leave, the Rebbe smiled and asked, "By the way, do you still like baseball?"

Words cannot describe the trying days before the Six Day War.

The world held its breath as the war began.

The sudden victory found me, Arthur Goldberg and his assistant glued to the television. As we watched the soldiers running to the Western Wall to kiss the stones and Chief Rabbi Goren blowing the Shofar, we cried.

"Arthur," I said, "I thought the worst was going to happen. But there is one Jew who knew with certainty that victory was near." And I proceeded to tell him of my audience with the Rebbe.

As I had promised the Rebbe at our meeting before the war, I returned to 770. I expected an "I told you so" from the Rebbe. But that was far from what I got.

The Rebbe greeted me and then began, "This is a very great period for the Jewish people. Sometimes G-d makes a miracle for us, announcing as if with a Shofar to the whole world: 'These are My people, the Jewish people.' This is the way it was last week. At times, it is as if G-d hides Himself from His children, but at other times His goodness is open for all to see.

"G-d, Who created the whole world, gave the Jews Eretz Yisrael. For some time, a long time, He took it away from the Jews and gave it to other nations. Last week, G-d took Eretz Yisrael back from the nations and gave it to the Jews.

"No one should have any doubts that it was G-d Who did it all. It was done with miracles, great miracles. The whole world witnessed how Eretz Yisrael was surrounded by enemies on all sides and everyone was terrified. G-d made our enemies fall in the quickest of time and gave us our holiest places. But Jews have free choice, and two things must be dealt with immediately. No one should say, 'My might won the war.' It was not the army that brought the victory; the miracles came only from G-d Himself. This is what pertains to you, and this is why I asked you to come again.

"I know," the Rebbe continued, "the nature of the Jewish people, including those in power in Israel. I am suspicious that very soon they will send a proposal to Washington agreeing to give back the acquired territory. They don't understand. They didn't win any territory. G-d gave it to

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them as a present, through miracles. G-d gave them back their land. You must prevent any returning of territory.”

I told the Rebbe that it was not my department to agree or disagree with giving back land. But the Rebbe insisted that I tell the Israeli representatives I come in contact with what the Rebbe said. The Rebbe assured me that it was my right as a citizen to be able to do this.

“If they ask you where you get your certainty that this is so, tell them the story of the only child, and how his parents were in fear and how from this room he was promised his safety together with thousands of other only children.

“And if they ask how this room got its certainty, and on what basis, tell them that there is a Creator of the world Who decided to give back the land of Israel to the people of Israel, and if the Creator of the world gives a present, one is to hold it dear, protect it and not to look at how to get rid of it.”

My views were shaken. My whole perception of Judaism changed. I thought, “Lucky is the nation that has a man like the Lubavitcher Rebbe in its midst.”

I tried my best to perform the mission the Rebbe had given me. One day an Israeli in the United Nations approached me.

“I was at the Simchas Torah celebrations of the Rebbe yesterday. He sends you his regards and his thanks.” I knew I was doing something right.