



# CHUKAT-BALAK

The Strength to Overcome Impossible Tasks

*When Faith Defies the Odds*

# PARSHAH OVERVIEW

## CHUKAT-BALAK

### **Chukat**

Moses is taught the laws of the red heifer, whose ashes purify a person who has been contaminated by contact with a dead body.

After forty years of journeying through the desert, the people of Israel arrive in the wilderness of Zin. Miriam dies, and the people thirst for water. G-d tells Moses to speak to a rock and command it to give water. Moses gets angry at the rebellious Israelites and strikes the stone. Water issues forth, but Moses is told by G-d that neither he nor Aaron will enter the Promised Land.

Aaron dies at Hor Hahar (Mount Hor) and is succeeded in the high priesthood by his son

Eleazar. Venomous snakes attack the Israelite camp after yet another eruption of discontent in which the people "speak against G-d and Moses": G-d tells Moses to place a brass serpent upon a high pole, and all who will gaze Heavenward will be healed. The people sing a song in honor of the miraculous well that provided them with water in the desert.

Moses leads the people in battles against the Emorite kings Sihon and Og (who seek to prevent Israel's passage through their territory) and conquers their lands, which lie east of the Jordan River.

### **Balak**

Balak, the king of Moab,

summons the prophet Balaam to curse the people of Israel. On the way, Balaam is berated by his donkey who sees, before Balaam does, the angel that G-d sends to block their way. Three times, from three different vantage points, Balaam attempts to pronounce his curses: each time, blessings issue forth instead. Balaam also prophesies on the end of days and the coming of Mashiach.

The people fall prey to the charms of the daughters of Moab and are enticed to worship the idol Pe'or. When a high-ranking Israelite official publicly takes a Midianite princess into a tent, Phineas kills them both, stopping the plague raging among the people.

## QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION

When you take on a commitment that is beyond your current abilities, what strengths can you call upon to help you feel confident and to succeed?

In the 1920s, the Soviet Union banned religion by closing synagogues, schools, and *mikva'ot*. They punished anyone who practiced, even turning neighbors and friends into informers.





The Frierdiker Rebbe fought to keep Judaism alive, despite danger and severe opposition from the Soviets.



The Soviets declared war on Chabad, any one involved was punished, imprisoned, sent to the Gulags, or executed.

# TEXT 1

Rabbi Naftali Tzvi  
Gottlieb, *Yahadut  
Hademama*, pp. 22–23

הִחְלִיטוּ לְלַחֹם בּוֹ בְּכָל הַכּוּחֹת וְהָאִמְצָעִים  
הַמְּשׁוּכָּלִים שֶׁעָמְדוּ לְרִשׁוּתָם. הֵם רָאוּ בּוֹ,  
וּבְשָׁלוּחָיו, הַסַּכָּנָה הַיְחִידָה אֲשֶׁר יֵשׁ  
לְהִלָּחֵם בָּהּ בְּכָל מַחִיר, וּבְכָל מְכּוֹנוֹת  
הַרְצָח שֶׁעָמְדוּ לְרִשׁוּתָם.

הִחְלִטְתֶּם שֶׁל רֹאשֵׁי הַשְּׁלִטוֹן הַיְתֵה נְחֻרְצָת,  
וְחָד מִשְׁמָעֵית. בָּאֵם יִתְּפֹס וְיִיעָצֵר  
שְׂגִיאוֹרְסָאנְסְקִי כְּלִשְׁהוּ, אַחַת דָּתוֹ לְהַעֲנִיֵּשׁ  
בְּעוֹנָשִׁים הַכִּי חֲמוּרִים, חִיסּוּל וְרִצָּח,  
מֵאָסְרִים וּמֵעֲצָרִים, מְכוֹת אַכְזָרִיּוֹת,  
חֲקִירוֹת וְעִינּוּיִים. עֲשָׂרוֹת שָׁנֹת מֵאָסֵר,  
וְהַגְלִיָּה לְמְקוֹמוֹת קְפוּאִים וּמְרוֹחֲקִים עַד  
אֲשֶׁר תֵּצֵא נְפִשָׁם.

They decided to wage war against Rabbi Schneersohn, utilizing all the sophisticated resources and brute strength at their command. They saw him and his emissaries as a singular danger that must be crushed at all costs, utilizing every murderous weapon they had.

The decision of the heads of government was resolute and final. Any “Schneeroshinski” caught in their web could expect the harshest sentences: liquidation, execution, imprisonment, cruel beatings, interrogation, and torture. Next, they could expect imprisonment or exile to forced labor camps in the distant, frozen Siberia for as many decades as it took for them to waste away and perish.

# TEXT 1

Rabbi Naftali Tzvi  
Gottlieb, *Yahadut  
Hademama*, pp. 22–23

מְלֵאכֵי הַמְשִׁחִית הָרְסוּ וְלֹא חָמְלוּ עַל כָּל  
הַטּוֹב וְהַיָּקָר. יְהוּדִים יְקָרִים, חֲסִידִים  
וְאַנְשֵׁי מַעֲשָׂה, רַבָּנִים וְצַדִּיקִים, טְהוֹרִים  
וְקַדוּשִׁים עוֹנֵוּ בְּכָל מִיָּנִי עֵינֹוּיִם. רַבִּים  
מֵהֶם לֹא יָכְלוּ עֲמוּד בְּכָל זֹאת, וְנִפְחוּ אֶת  
נְשְׁמוֹתֵיהֶם תוֹךְ כְּדֵי מֵהֲלָכֵי הַחֲקִירָה  
עֲצָמָה. רַבִּים הוּגְלוּ לְמַחֲנוֹת רַכּוּז לְתַקּוּפוֹת  
אֲרוּכּוֹת, בְּתַנָּאִים בְּלִמֵּי אֲנוּשִׁיִּים. וְחֲזְרוּ  
שִׁבְרֵי כָּלִי, חוֹלֵי גּוּף וְנַפְשׁ אֲשֶׁר אֵין בָּהֶם  
מְתוּם. וְרַבִּים אֲחֵרִים כָּרְעוּ וְנִפְּלוּ תַחַת  
מְשָׁאת יִסוּרֵיהֶם, וְהִשִּׁיבוּ אֶת נְשְׁמוֹתֵיהֶם  
הַמְּזוּכָּכוֹת וְהַטְּהוֹרוֹת, לְיוֹצְרָם, כְּאֲשֶׁר  
עִקְבוֹתֵיהֶם לֹא יְדוּעִים עַד עַצְם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה.

The angels of destruction eradicated families and communities with no compassion for anything sacred or cherished. Legions of precious Jews—scholars, rabbis, pious saints, and laypeople—were dragged off to indescribable tortures. Many could not withstand it, and their souls were snuffed out during the interrogations. Many were exiled to the subhuman conditions of Soviet concentration camps. Of these, some returned after many years as shattered potsherds, utterly broken in body and in spirit. Others collapsed under the burden and returned their refined, pure souls to their Maker. The whereabouts of their mortal remains are unknown to this day.

The Soviets arrested the  
Rebbe on false charges,  
and people risked  
everything to free him.



## QUESTION

Is it permissible to risk one's life to save another?



## TEXT 2

Rabbi Shlomo Yosef Zevin, *Talmudic Encyclopedia* 10, Entry for “*Hatzalat Nefashot* (Saving Lives),” pp. 348–349

אם חייב להכניס עצמו בספק ספנה בשביל הצלת חברו מספנה ודאית, נחלקו בדבר.

יש מהראשונים שכתבו שחייב להכניס עצמו בספק ספנה בשביל כף. ויש שהסבירו לפי שזה ודאי וזה ספק.

ויש חולקים וסוברים שבמקום שיש ספק ספנה לעצמו אינו חייב להציל חברו. ויש שהסבירו שהרי נאמר, "ונחי בהם" (ויקרא יח, ה), ולא שיבוא לידי ספק מיתה על ידי שיקיים מה שנאמר, "לא תעמוד על דם רעה" (ויקרא יט, טז).

The question of whether we may risk possible danger to life to save another from certain danger is a matter of dispute.

Some medieval Jewish scholars wrote that it is obligatory. This is because the other's certain danger prevails over our possible danger.

Some disagreed and ruled that we are not required to assume risk to life to save another. This is because the Torah tells us that the commandments are intended for us to “Live by them” (Leviticus 18:5). Thus, the commandment, “Do not stand by while your brother bleeds” (Leviticus 19:16) does not require us to assume a possible risk to life.

# TEXT 3

Talmud, Bava Metzi'a  
62a

שְׁנַיִם נִשְׁקָיו מְהֻלְכִין בְּדֶרֶךְ וּבִיד אֶחָד מֵהֶן קִיתוּן שֶׁל מַיִם, אִם שׁוֹתִין שְׁנֵיהֶם,  
מֵתִים. וְאִם שׁוֹתֵה אֶחָד מֵהֶן, מֵגִיעַ לְיִשׁוּב.

דָּרַשׁ בֶּן פֶּטוּרָא, "מוֹטָב שְׁיִשָּׁתוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם וְיָמוּתוּ, וְאַל יִרְאֶה אֶחָד מֵהֶם בְּמִיתָתוֹ שֶׁל  
חֲבִירוֹ".

עַד שֶׁבָּא רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא וְלִימַד, "וְחַי אַחִיךָ עִמָּךְ", חַיִּיךָ קוֹדְמִים לְחַיֵּי חֲבִירֶךָ".

Two people are traveling and one has a jug of water. If they share the jug, both will die. If one drinks the water, that person alone will survive and reach civilization.

Ben Petora taught, "It is better that both drink and perish rather than one watch his fellow die."

Then Rabbi Akiva arrived and taught, "The Torah declares, 'And your brother must live *with you*' (Leviticus 25:36). Your survival comes ahead of your fellow's survival."

## ANSWER

We must save others, but not at the cost of our own lives or when success is unlikely, yet some still chose to risk their lives anyway.



## QUESTIONS

1. Why were they permitted to assume such danger if Jewish law forbids it?
2. What did they do to deserve such astounding miracles?
3. How did they succeed? Not a single person was harmed in this effort?



Miraculously, the Rebbe was freed within a month. He immediately shared a teaching from the Tehilim;

# TEXT 4A

Psalms 118:7

ה' לִי בְעֶזְרִי, וְאֲנִי אֶרְאֶה בְּשׁוֹנְאֵי.

G-d is for me with those who help me, and I will see [the downfall] of my enemies.

## TEXT 4B

Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak  
Schneerson, *Sefer  
Hamaamarim* 5687, p.  
201

הִנֵּה לְשׁוֹן הַפְּסוּק אֵין לוֹ הַבְּנָה כָּלֵל לְכַאוּרָה. דִּהְיֵה, בְּהַשְׁקָפָה רֵאשׁוּנָה מִשְׁמַע שְׁהָאָדָם יִשׁ  
לוֹ עוֹזְרִים רַבִּים וְהַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, הוּא עִמָּהֶם. וְהַאֲמַת הוּא אֲשֶׁר אֵין עוֹד מִלְּבָדוֹ, וְרַק  
הוּא לְבָדוֹ, הוּא יִתְבָּרַךְ הַבּוֹרָא מְהֵנוּה וּמְחִיָּה אֶת הָאָדָם, וְעוֹזֵר לוֹ בְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר לוֹ.

וּכְמוֹ שֶׁכָּתַב הַרְמַב"ם, "יְסוּד הַיְסוּדוֹת וְעִמּוּד הַתְּכֻמוֹת, לִידַע שֶׁיֵּשׁ שָׁם מְצוּי רֵאשׁוֹן  
מִמְצִיא כָּל נִמְצָא. וְכֹל הַנִּמְצָאִים מִשְׁמִים וְאֶרֶץ וּמָה שֶׁיִּבְיָיֵהֶם, לֹא נִמְצָאוּ אֶלָּא מֵאֲמִיתַת  
הַמְצָאוֹ" (הַלְכוֹת יְסוּדֵי הַתּוֹרָה א, א).

The language in this passage appears to make no sense. At first glance, it sounds like it's saying that a person has many helpers, and G-d is one of them. But the truth is that there is no one but G-d; He alone exists. He creates, vivifies, and animates us and helps us with all that we need.

As Maimonides wrote, "The foundation of all foundations and the pillar of all wisdom is to know that there is a primary being that brings all of existence into existence. All that exists in the Heavens and the earth, and between them, only exists from the truth of His being" (*Mishneh Torah*, Laws of the Fundamentals of the Torah 1:1).

## QUESTION

At first, it sounds like David is grouping G-d with other humans, but if G-d is with us, why mention anyone else?

# TEXT 5A

Rabbi Menachem  
Mendel of Lubavitch,  
*Derech Mitzvotcha*,  
pp. 5B–6A

וַיּוֹבֵן עַל דְּרָדָּךְ מְשָׁל. כְּשֶׁרוֹצִים לְמַלְאוֹת  
מִחֲבֵית גְּדוֹלָה מְלִיאָה מֵיִם כְּלִים רַבִּים מְאֹד,  
קִטְנִים בְּיֹתֵר, וְשְׁעוֹשִׂים צִנּוּרוֹת הַרְבֵּה מְאֹד,  
וְכָל צִנּוּר מְצוּמָצֵם כְּפִי מִדַּת הַכְּלִי לְבַד. עַל  
כֵּן, מִמֵּילָא יִחֻלַּק הַשֶּׁפַע לְרַבּוּי כְּלִים קִטְנִים  
בְּיֹתֵר מִהַ נְשִׁילָא הִיָּה בְּאֶפְשָׁרִי לַעֲשׂוֹת כֵּן  
מִהֲחֲבֵית עֲצָמָה. אֲלָא הִיָּה שׁוֹטֵף בְּבַת אַחַת.

וְהִנֵּה בְּאֵמַת הַגַּם שֶׁהַצִּנּוּר גָּרַם צְמֻצוּם הַמַּיִם,  
מְכַל מְקוֹם, אֵינּוּ אֲלָא כְּלִי לַעֲבוֹר בּוֹ הַמַּיִם  
עֲצָמָן, אוֹתָן שֶׁבְּחֵבֵית. וְעַד־יִין לֹא נִפְרְדּוּ  
מִמְקוֹרָם, כִּי הַקִּילּוֹחַ מְחַבְּרָן. וְלֹא שֶׁהַצִּנּוּר  
מְהַנֶּה מַיִם מְצוּמָצֵמִים אַחֲרֵי־ם, וְזֶה פְּשׁוּט . . .

וְגַם בְּאֵמַת הָרִי גַם גּוּף הַכְּלִים . . . עֲצָמָן  
הַמְעַלִּימִים, אֵינּוּ נִקְרָא הָעֵלֶם כְּלָל בְּאֵמַת  
אֲצִלוֹ יִתְבָּרֵךְ, שֶׁהָרִי הֵם נִמְשָׁכִים וְנִתְהוּיִם  
מִמֶּנּוּ יִתְבָּרֵךְ.

This may be understood by way of analogy. If you want to fill many small jars from a large water bucket, you must first attach many small pipes, each tailored to the size of the small jars. When you tilt the bucket, the flow will automatically be distributed to the many miniature jars, something that was impossible to do from the bucket itself. If you tried that, it would flood everything in a single gush.

Though the conduit pipes constrict the water flow, the constricted flow is not created in them. They are merely conduits through which water passes from the large bucket. And even as it passes, the constricted flow remains connected to the large bucket; the flow connects them. This is obvious. . . .

The truth is that even the pipes . . . that constrain the flow have no power to constrict G-d, for they are created by and come from G-d Himself.

## ANSWER

David grouped us with G-d since He channels His infinite power through us, allowing us to be His helpers in this world.

## TEXT 5B

Rabbi Avraham ibn  
Ezra, Psalms 118:7

אִינְנוֹ אֹמֵר כִּי הַשֵּׁם יְהִי אֶחָד מֵעֹזְרָי, בַּר  
הוּא כְּנֶגֶד כָּל הָעֹזְרִים . . . שֶׁהַשֵּׁם יַעֲזֹר  
עֹזְרָיו.

King David didn't say that G-d is one of his helpers, but that G-d is the equivalent of all the helpers . . . for He enables the helpers to help.

Those who rely on themselves can't risk danger, since anything could happen.

Those who act as G-d's conduits don't feel that risk since G-d is working through them.



## TEXT 5C

Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak  
Schneersohn, *Sefer  
Hamaamarim* 5687, p.  
208

וְאִזְ הִנֵּה, "ה' לִי בְּעֹזְרָי" (תְּהִלִּים קי"ח, ז).  
דְּגַם בְּהַעֲוֹזְרִים יִהְיֶה גִילּוּי שֵׁם ה'.

Under such conditions, "G-d is for me with those who help me" (Psalms 118:7). The Divine Presence is palpable within the helpers.

# TEXT 6

Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Kings and Their Wars 7:15

וּמֵאַחַר שֶׁיִכְנָס בְּקִשְׁרֵי הַמְּלָחָמָה יִשְׁעַן  
עַל מְקוֹנֵה יִשְׂרָאֵל וּמוֹשִׁיעוֹ בְּעֵת צָרָה.  
וַיֵּדַע שֶׁעַל יְחִוּד הַשֵּׁם הוּא עוֹשֶׂה  
מְלָחָמָה. וַיִּשִׂים נַפְשׁוֹ בְּכַפּוֹ, וְלֹא יִירָא  
וְלֹא יִפְחָד. וְלֹא יַחְשֹׁב לֹא בְּאִשְׁתּוֹ וְלֹא  
בְּבָנָיו, אֲלָא יִמְחָה זְכוֹרוֹנָם מִלְּבוֹ, וַיִּפְנֶה  
מִכָּל דְּבַר לְמְלָחָמָה . . .

וְכָל הַנִּלְחָם בְּכָל לְבוֹ בְּלֹא פַחַד וְתַהֲיֶיהָ  
כְּוֹנֵתוֹ לְקִדְּשׁ אֶת הַשֵּׁם בְּלִבָּד, מִבְּטָח לוֹ  
שֶׁלֹּא יִמָּצָא גִזְק וְלֹא תִגְיַעֵהוּ רָעָה.  
וַיִּבְנֶה לוֹ בַּיִת נְכוֹן בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל, וַיִּזְכֶּה לוֹ  
וּלְבָנָיו עַד עוֹלָם, וַיִּזְכֶּה לְחַיֵּי הָעוֹלָם  
הַבָּא.

Once a soldier enters the throes of battle, he should rely on G-d in times of need. He should know that he is fighting for the sake of the oneness of G-d's name. Therefore, he should place his life in His hands and show no fright or fear. He should not think about his wife or children. He should wipe their memory from his heart and focus exclusively on the war.

Those who fight with all their heart, without fear, with the sole intention of sanctifying G-d's name, can be assured that they will find no harm, nor will bad overtake them. They will build a proper family in Israel and gather merit for themselves and their children forever. They will also merit eternal life in the World to Come.



The people in the Rebbe's campaign acted as G-d's helpers. They couldn't rest until he was freed, and with faith that G-d would free him, they did whatever had to be done.

# TEXT 7A

Rabbi Chanoch  
Glitzenshtein, *Sefer  
Hatoldos Admur  
HaRayatz* 3, p. 96

באותו ערב נשלחו מברקים אל קאלינין  
נשיא המדינה, אל ריקוב ראש  
הממשלה, ואל הנגלה הג.פ.א.  
במוסקבה.

כן הודיעו למרכזים היהודיים ברוסיה,  
חרקוב, מינסק, וכדומה. ובקשו לאסוף  
חתימות של מאות אלפי יהודים ברחבי  
רוסיה, ושל מוסדות וחברות יהודיות  
ברוסיה, על כתב בקשה מיוחד לשלטון  
הסובייטי, בו יערבו ליחסו הלא־אלי של  
הרבני כלפי השלטון, וכי נקי הוא מכל  
אשמה של פעילות קונטרריבוליהציונית.

הפיטיציה על מאות אלפי חתימותיה  
תדרוש: שחררו את הרבני . . .

The very evening [of the Rebbe's arrest], telegrams were sent to the Head of State, Mikhail Kalinin; to the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the Russian SFSR, Alexei Rykov; and to senior leadership at the KGB headquarters in Moscow.

The committee also informed all Jewish communities in Russia, including those in Kharkiv and Minsk. They asked them to gather hundreds of thousands of signatures from Jews across the USSR, as well as from Jewish institutions and societies in Russia, for a special petition to the Soviet leadership. These signatories would attest to the Rebbe's loyalty to the Soviet regime and to his innocence against all accusations of counterrevolutionary activity.

The petition, signed by hundreds of thousands, would demand one thing: Liberate the Rebbe. . . .

# TEXT 7A

Rabbi Chanoch  
Glitzenshtein, *Sefer  
Hatoldos Admur  
HaRayatz* 3, p. 96

רַבָּנִים גָּזְרוּ עַל תַּעֲנִית צִיבוּר. בְּכָל מְקוֹם  
צָמּוּ הַיהוּדִים בְּיָמֵי שְׁנֵי וַחֲמִישֵׁי שָׁל  
שְׁבוּעַת הַמְּאָסָר הָרִאשׁוֹן. בְּתֵי הַכְּנֻסוֹת,  
בְּתֵי הַמְדָרָשׁ וְהַמְגֻנָּיִם, הָיוּ מְלֵאִים עַד  
אָפֶס מְקוֹם. כָּל יוֹם אָמְרוּ תְהִלִּים תוֹךְ  
דְּמַעוֹת וְתַחֲנוּנִים. הָיָה זֶה כְּיוֹם כִּיפּוּר  
אָרוּךְ בִּיְהוּדוֹת הָרוֹסִית.

Rabbis decreed public fast days. Throughout the Soviet Union, Jews fasted on the Monday and Thursday of the weeks the Rebbe was imprisoned. Synagogues, study halls, and private prayer gatherings were filled beyond capacity. Each day, Psalms were chanted with much crying and pleading. It was a long Yom Kippur for Soviet Jewry.



At that time, supporting the Rebbe was extremely dangerous; one could be imprisoned. Yet Jews from all backgrounds acted without hesitation.

# TEXT 7B

Rabbi Chanoch  
Glitzenshtein, *ibid.*, p.  
206

מְשַׁלְחֹת יְהוּדִיּוֹת מְמָרְכָזֵי הַיִּשׁוּב בְּרוֹסְיָה  
בְּקִשׁוֹ לְהִתְרַאוֹת עִם רֹאשׁ הַגָּ.פּ.א.ו. הַכֹּל  
רוֹסִית, מְנֻזְשֵׁינְסְקִי, בְּעֵנֵן הַרְבֵּי. אִךְ הוּא  
הִשִּׁיב אֶת פְּנֵיהֶם רִיקָם . . .

מְשַׁקֵּל רַב נֹדֵעַ לְהִשְׁפַּדְלוֹתָהּ שֶׁל גְּבֻרַת  
פִּישְׁקוֹבָה, יוֹשֶׁבֶת רֹאשׁ הַצֶּלֶב הָאָדוּם  
בְּרוֹסְיָה, שֶׁהִשְׁקִיעָה מְאֻמְצִים רַבִּים בְּעֵנֵן.  
גְּבֻרַת פִּישְׁקוֹבָה פְּנָתָה אֶל רִיקוּב וְאֶל  
מְנֻזְשֵׁינְסְקִי וְדָרְשָׁה לְהוֹצִיא אֶת הַרְבֵּי  
לְחַפְּשֵׁי.

הָיוּ גַם קוֹמוּנִיסְטִים חֲשׁוּבִים, יְהוּדִים וְלֹא  
יְהוּדִים, שֶׁהִצְטָרְפוּ לְפַעֲלוֹת זֶה לְשִׁחְרוּר  
שֶׁל הַרְבֵּי.

Delegations from central Jewish communities across the USSR sought meetings with the head of the KGB, Vyacheslav Menzhinsky. However, he turned them all down. . . .

The heroic efforts of famed [humanitarian and human rights activist] Mrs. Yekaterina Pavlovna Peshkova, chairwoman of the Russian Red Cross [and first wife of the famous Russian writer, Maxim Gorky], were invaluable. She appealed to the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the Russian SFSR, Alexei Rykov; and to the head of the KGB, Vyacheslav Menzhinsky, demanding that they liberate the Rebbe.

Many vital members of the Communist Party, Jewish and non-Jewish alike, joined the campaign for the Rebbe's liberation.

# TEXT 7B

Rabbi Chanoch  
Glitzenshtein, *ibid.*, p.  
206

הנועד המוסקבאי להצלת הרבי שיתף עמו  
עסקנים יהודיים מערי רוסייה הגדולות.  
עסקנים יהודיים חשובים מחרקוב, קיוב,  
מינסק, ויטבסק ועוד באו למוסקבה  
והשתתפו בישיבות הנועד לשחרור הרבי.  
הפעילות והשתדלנות לשחרור הרבי  
הופעלה במקרץ ובמאמץ רב. אף ביחוד  
טרחה גברת פישקובה. ולזכותה יש לומר  
שהיא לקחה על עצמה את החלק הארי  
של העבודה. לבסוף הוכתרה פעילות  
מאומצת זו בהצלחה.

The Moscow committee for the Rebbe's liberation recruited Jewish activists from all the large metropolises across the Soviet Union. Well-known Jewish activists from Kharkiv, Kyiv, Minsk, Vitebsk, and other places came to Moscow and joined the committee. The campaign and the tasks were carried out vigorously and relentlessly. Mrs. Peshkova, who assumed the lion's share of the work, stood out among the petitioners. In the end, this monumental effort was crowned with success.

Even top Soviet officials risked their freedom, and with great effort, the Rebbe was freed after nine days.



# TEXT 8

The Rebbe, Rabbi  
Menachem Mendel  
Schneerson, *Likutei  
Sichot* 28, pp. 152–153

אין דעם פאל איז געשטאנען בגלוי (על ידי אמירת  
המאמר) אז דאס איז בלויז דער עזר פון "הוא לבדו  
הוא". און דער ענגן האט זיך אויסגעדריקט בגלוי  
ביי די "עוזרים" גופא. די אלע וואס האבן זיך  
משתדל געווען פארן רבי'ן, האבן דאס ניט געטאן  
מיט אן אויסגערעכנטן חשבון און סיכויים שכלליים.  
נאר יעדערער פון זיי האט זיך מוסר נפש געווען  
און זיך ניט גערעכנט מיט קיין שום זאך. מ'איז  
געגאנגען אויף אלע ספנות דיקע וועגן, אפֿשר וועט  
מען על כל פנים פארלייכטערן דעם מאָסר, אָדער  
אפילו צוהעלפן צו דער גאולה.

און דעריבער האט דא זייער מציאות ניט תופס  
מקום געווען. און אין זייערע פעולות האט זיך  
געקענט ארויסזאגן בגלוי אז דאס איז ניט זייער  
עזר, נאר דאס איז פון "הוא לבדו הוא", דאס טוט  
דער אויבערשטער.

It was clear (and made so through the  
previous Rebbe's teaching on the day of his  
release) that only G-d secured the Rebbe's  
release. This was expressed through the  
attitude of the helpers. Everyone who worked  
for the Rebbe's liberation made no logical  
calculations about their odds of success. They  
threw themselves into the project with utter  
self-sacrifice. They never hesitated. They took  
the most dangerous paths on the off chance  
they might lighten the Rebbe's sentence or  
even hasten his liberation.

They acted like they weren't even there. One  
could sense that these were not their efforts.  
G-d, Who is alone, was operating through  
them.



# TEXT 8

The Rebbe, Rabbi  
Menachem Mendel  
Schneerson, *Likutei  
Sichot* 28, pp. 152–153

ובמילא איז פארשטאנדיק בפשטות, פארנוואס  
דאס האט קיינעם ניט געשאדט באיזה אופן ש'הוא  
(אפילו ניט שפעטער). וויבאלד אז דאס איז דער  
עזר פון "הוא לבדו הוא", פון "אמיתת המצאו",  
איז דאך ניט שייך אז עפעס זאל דארטן קענען  
אנרירן. נאכמער, מען דארף גאר ניט אנקומען צו  
א "נס" דאס זאל ניט שאטן. ס'איז על פי טבע  
אוממעגלעך צו אנרירן דעם "אמיתת המצאו".

קומט אויס, אז מ'האט זיך (לאמיתתו של דבר)  
אפילו ניט אריינגעשטעלט אין א "מקום סכנה"  
(וואו מען דארף אנקומען צו א נס גדול צו ניצל  
ווערן דערפון). ווייל דאס האט געטאן בגלוי  
"אמיתת המצאו" (נאר דאס איז געווען דורך  
פלוגי ופלוגי כו'). אזוי אז מלכתחילה איז ניטא  
קיין ארט אז דאס זאל אימיצן שאטן באיזה אופן  
ש'הוא. אין דעם פאל איז אזוי די טבע הדברים.

In this light, it makes perfect sense that no one  
was harmed in any way (not even after the  
liberation). Since this was the work of the  
"Primary Being," G-d, Who stands alone, there  
was never any danger. No power can touch G-d.  
Moreover, there was no need for a miracle to  
protect them, for it is naturally impossible to  
harm the "Primary Being."

Accordingly, they were literally never in danger  
(and never required a miracle to save them)  
because this was openly G-d's initiative (through  
the people who stepped up). There was no  
possibility of anyone being harmed in any way  
by this effort. In this case, this was the natural  
way of things.

## ANSWERS

1. They acted as G-d's conduits with complete self-sacrifice, so personal risk didn't apply.
2. The success came from G-d working through them; therefore it wasn't a miracle. It was natural.
3. Since G-d was in control, the helpers were never truly in danger.

OPTIONAL

**QUESTION**

Were the activists rewarded for their efforts?

**ANSWER**

Yes, even though G-d saved the Rebbe, those who acted as His channels were still recognized.

OPTIONAL

## TEXT 9

Talmud, Bava Kama  
92b

אָמַר לִיָּהּ רַבָּא לְרַבָּה בַּר מָרִי, מִנָּא הָא מִיִּלְתָּא דְאָמְרִי אִינְשֵׁי: חֲמָרָא לְמָרִיָּה,  
טִיבוּתָא לְשָׂקִיָּיָהּ?

אָמַר לִיָּהּ, דְּכַתִּיב, "וְסִמַּכְתָּ אֶת יָדְךָ עָלָיו . . . לְמַעַן יִשְׁמָעוּן וַיִּרְאוּן כָּל עַדְתֵּי בְנֵי  
יִשְׂרָאֵל" (בְּמִדְבָּר כֹּז, יח; כ). וְכַתִּיב, "וַיִּהְיוּשָׁע בֶּן נֹון מְלֵא רוּחַ חֲכָמָה, כִּי סָמַךְ  
מֹשֶׁה אֶת יָדָיו עָלָיו, וַיִּשְׁמָעוּ אֵלָיו כָּל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְגו'" (דְּבָרִים לַד, ט).

Rava asked Rabah, the son of Mari, "What is the source of the common saying, 'The wine belongs to the host, but gratitude goes to the waiter'?"

He replied: The Torah states, "And you [Moses] should lean your hands upon him [Joshua] . . . so that the entire community of Israel will hear and see" (Numbers 27:18, 20). And it's written, "And Joshua the son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom for Moses leaned his hands upon him, and all the Children of Israel listened to him" (Deuteronomy 34:9).

OPTIONAL

## TEXT 10

Rabbi Menachem  
Mendel of Lubavitch,  
*Derech Mitzvotcha*,  
p. 6b

חֲמֻרָא לְמָרָא וְטִיבוּתָא לְשָׂקִיָּיה שְׁנֵאֲמַר, "כִּי  
סָמַךְ מֹשֶׁה" (דְּבָרִים לַד, ט).  
הֵיִינוּ כִּי אָדָם בְּלִבָּד הוּא בְּעַל בְּחִירָה.

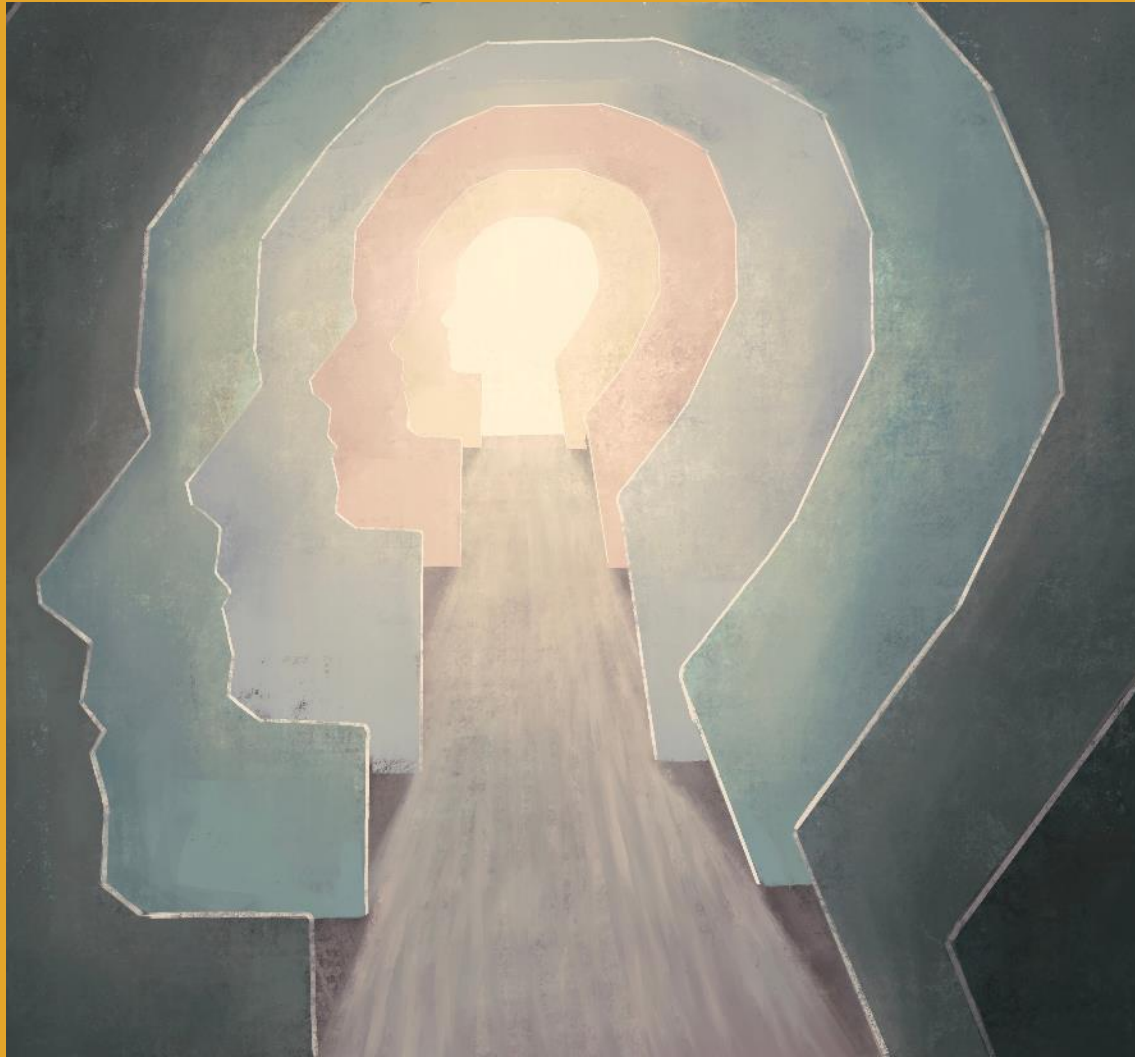
[The Talmud states] "The wine belongs to the host, but gratitude goes to the waiter, for it is written, 'Moses leaned his hands, etc.' (Deuteronomy 34:9)."

This is because humans have free choice.

OPTIONAL

You're rewarded not just for being a channel, but for choosing freely to step up and act.





When a task feels too big,  
don't try to do it alone.  
Let G-d work through  
you. With this conviction,  
things will work out.

## KEY POINTS

1. We are obligated to save people in danger. The exception is when our intervention would place us in danger.
2. Sometimes we become aware that we're not acting on our own power, but that G-d is working through us. We're mere channels.
3. At such times, we throw ourselves into the work without regard for personal safety or calculating the odds of success. We grasp at every straw, and we succeed.
4. When operating this way, there are no restrictions on what we may or may not do. We can take any risk and wade into certain danger to help those in need.
5. This is because only humans can be in danger; G-d is never in danger. If we become pure conduits for G-d, there is no danger in the first place.

