

ב"ה

תשורה



Wedding Celebration of
Yosef Chaim & Itty Hazdan

Wednesday, 10 Adar 5773

Preface

In honor of the wedding of our dear children, Yosef Chaim and Itty, we take pleasure in presenting eight letters that Rabbi Yisroel Zecharia Mendel Hazdan Z"l, (grandfather of the chosson) received from our Rabbeim on the subject of family purity.

We have also presented a historical context to these letters, including an account of the involvement of Rabbi Yisroel Hazdan Z"l, in various projects relating to strengthening family purity in general and the building of Mikva'os in particular in several cities in Europe and South Africa, as well as various letters and clippings on the subject.

Rabbi Dovid & Feige Hazdan - Rabbi Zalman & Sara Labkowski
Wednesday, 10 Adar 5773
Crown Heights

In 5667 (1907) Reb Yisroel was born to a Chabad family in the Chasidic town of Homel, Belarus. At the age of 3 he lost his father and was brought up by his uncle R' Zalman Hazdan. For his Bar Mitzvah, his uncle wanted to take him to the Rebbe Rasha"b in Rostov, but their trip was delayed because of the dangers in the region. Only months after the Rasha"b's Histalkus did they hear of the news. At the age of 17 he escaped to Poland and then to Latvia where he married his cousin Leah Hazdan.



Rabbi Yisroel Hazdan

Prior to the onset of World War II he was offered the opportunity to serve as a Rov and Shochet in Sweden. With the Brochos and encouragement of the Friedliker Rebbe,¹ he moved there and began his instrumental activities which included the strengthening of Taharas Hamishpocho.

In Sweden, he would travel through various towns providing the local Jewish communities with shiurim, as well as emotional, spiritual and physical support. He also participated in a project that supplied many Jews with visas to escape the Holocaust and was directly involved in assisting holocaust survivors with their physical and spiritual needs. His home was always open to these survivors, some of whom lived with his family for extended periods of time.²

While in Sweden, Reb Yisroel had the Zechus to serve and Shecht for the Friedliker Rebbe³. He also arranged the transfer of over 100 boxes of the Friedliker Rebbe's seforim from Russia to the US⁴.

In 5708 (1947), Reb Yisroel received a Brocho from the Friedliker Rebbe to move to South Africa where he was offered the position of Rov of the Jewish community in Warmbaths.

Shortly after his arrival in South Africa, his wife passed away—childless. Reb Yisroel found himself in a distant country. He had lost his entire family by the

¹ See pages 6-11

² See Lidingo by Chana Mantel, pg. 23

³ See Igros Kodesh MoHarayatz, volume 5, pg. 45

⁴ See ibid introduction, pages 18-19; Sifriyas Lubavitch, pages 118-119

hands of the Bolsheviks and the Nazis. But his circumstances did not deter him. He eventually remarried, built a family and continued to strengthen the local Jewish communities.

He was subsequently offered Rabonus in the much larger city of Bethlehem. He agreed to accept the position on condition that a Mikvah be constructed. Despite their initial agreement, the community subsequently reneged on its commitment. There was strong opposition from within the community, with members writing to the newspaper describing the Mikvah as "a useless and antiquated institution, probably patronized by one or two fanatics..."⁵ Despite the opposition he fought with determination to build the Mikvah.

Reb Yisroel wrote to the Rebbe about the difficulties and the Rebbe responded with tremendous brochos, to him and to all those involved in the project⁸. Reb Yisroel also received letters of support from the Chief Rabbis of Israel and South Africa⁹.

His inability to persuade the community to build the Mikvah resulted in his resignation.¹⁰ He returned to serve as the Rov of Warmbaths and eventually moved to Johannesburg where he served as the Rosh Hashochim while continuing to provide Shiurim and inspiration to the community.

Some 50 years later the Rebbe's Brochos have come to fruition with the building of a new Mikvah in the Houghton suburb of Johannesburg.¹¹

⁵ See page 17

⁸ See page 12-13

⁹ See pages 15, 16

¹⁰ See page 17

¹¹ See page 20

Malmö, Sweden - 5701
(27 October 1940)

"I take pleasure in hearing of... the establishment of lessons
in the laws of Family Purity... and above all, of the building
of a Mikvah in the City of Malmö..."



RABBI I. SCHNEERSOHN
OF LUBAWITZ
770 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn, N. Y.

יוסף יצחק שינאוורסקי
ליובאוויטש

בית, כ"ה תשרי, תש"א
ברוקלין.

שלום וברכה!

בתי, כ"ה תשרי, תש"א
ברוקלין.

אני יודע כי אתם יחד עם בני המשפחה
עומדים לתרום בעניין שבאמת
הוא צדקה גדולה ונכבדה.
אשר אתם יחד עם בני המשפחה
עומדים לתרום בעניין שבאמת
הוא צדקה גדולה ונכבדה.

שלום וברכה!
הרה"ק דברייתא דברייתא דברייתא
אשר אתם יחד עם בני המשפחה
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עומדים לתרום בעניין שבאמת
הוא צדקה גדולה ונכבדה.

"Please impart my blessings to all those who are
doing and assisting ... in the building of the Mikvah...
That Hashem will fulfill the requests of their hearts,
assisting them with their physical & spiritual needs."

RABBI I. SCHNEERSOHN
OF LUBAWITZ
770 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn, N. Y.

יוסף יצחק שינאוורסקי
ליובאוויטש

בית, כ"ה תשרי, תש"א
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עומדים לתרום בעניין שבאמת
הוא צדקה גדולה ונכבדה.

The following day

RABBI I. SCHNERSOHN
OF LUBAWITZ
770 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn, N. Y.
יִסְדֵּף יִצְחָק שְׁנִיאָוֹרְדְמַנְדֵּן
לִיבוב אר״ש
לִיבוב אר״ש

בִּיהַ״כּ, תַּשְׁר״ו, תַּש״א
בְּרוֹקְלִין

יָדִידֵי דו״ח אִיִּיא מוֹהַ״ר יִשְׂרָאֵל שׁ״שׁוֹ״ב
שְׁלוֹם וּבְרַכָּה!

בַּמַּכְתָּבִי לְקַהֲלַת פּאָלמַע הַמַּצּוּרָה
זוֹה הִנְנִי כּוֹתֵב שְׁהֵנִי שֶׁתְּהִי עִם לְצוּר
בְּנֵיךְ בֵּית הַטְּבִילִיָּה. יוֹאֵל נָא יָדִידֵי שׁ״שׁ
לְסוּר לַהֵם בְּשֵׁם סָמוּךְ קוֹאֲנֵן שׁ״עֵל
לֹד עֲשׂוּם שְׁקִלִים כְּפִי הַקְּרוֹס, וְיִיטֵב נָא
לְכַתּוֹב לִי מֵיֵד אֵיךְ לְפָרוֹעַ לְכַבּוֹדוֹ הַסָּמוּךְ
זוֹה אֵם לְשִׁלוֹחַ לָךְ שֶׁשֶּׁעַן עַל עֲשָׂרִים זְאֵלֵלָךְ
אוּ מְזוֹמְנִים אוּ לְסוּר לְמִי שְׁהוּא כֹּאן
אוּ לְשִׁלוֹחַ לָךְ בְּמַעֲוֹת מְדִינַתְּם.
בְּשֵׁם כ״ץ אֲדוֹנָיךְ שְׁלִיטָא
מוֹדֵיךְ ח. יִצְחָק

הַשֵּׁשׁ הַיּוֹמִי הַזֶּה
בְּאֵת הַיּוֹמִי הַזֶּה

לִיבוב אר״ש

Sweden - 5701

(28 November 1940)

RABBI I. SCHNERSOHN
OF LUBAWITZ
יִסְדֵּף יִצְחָק שְׁנִיאָוֹרְדְמַנְדֵּן
לִיבוב אר״ש

בִּיהַ״כּ, תַּשְׁר״ו, תַּשׁ״א
בְּרוֹקְלִין

יָדִידֵי הַמַּכְתָּב וְהַנְּעִלָה מוֹהַ״ר יִשְׂרָאֵל שׁ״שׁוֹ״ב
שְׁלוֹם וּבְרַכָּה!

בְּמַעֲוֹת לְכַתּוֹב מִיָּדוֹ גִּיחְוֹתוֹ הַיְּהוּדִי בְּכַתְּבֵי בְּכַתְּבֵי לְשִׁלוֹחַ
מִסְּלוֹת וְשִׁלוֹחַ דוֹגְמַת הַיְּהוּדִי, חוֹקֵם הַיְּהוּדִי וְיִאֲמַר בְּנֵים וְכִרְוֹת וְיִשׁ
אוּ לֹבֵם בּוֹרְחֵם וְיִשׁוּׁן לָהֶם אוּ מְכַוֵּם בְּיָדוֹת שִׁיבֹל
לְשִׁקוֹ בְּעִזְבוֹת הַיְּהוּדִי וְלִשְׁלוֹחַ אוּ קְבִיעוֹת הַיְּהוּדִי בְּרִיבִים.
אוּ מְשַׁעֲמֵם שׁוֹבִים לוֹ בְּחִיבֵים הַיְּהוּדִי שׁ״שׁוֹ״ב דְּבִרְעֵם לְקַבּוֹל
בְּרִיבֵים הַיְּהוּדִי עוֹלָם בְּחִיבֵים הַיְּהוּדִי עֲלֵים חוֹמֵם הַיְּהוּדִי כִּי
חִרְבַת שׁוֹרֵם בִּידֵי יָדֵיךְ חִרְבַת חוֹמֵם חוֹמֵם.
אוּ הַמַּשְׁקָה שֶׁשֶּׁם הַמַּשְׁקָה הַיְּהוּדִי בְּעִזְבוֹת הַיְּהוּדִי וְכִרְוֹתוֹת.
וְיִשׁ לְקוֹרֵת הַחִוּצוֹת שׁוֹבֵרֵם, וְהַיְּהוּדִי הַיְּהוּדִי בְּעִזְבוֹת הַיְּהוּדִי וְכִרְוֹתוֹת.
אוּ עֵי שֶׁשֶּׁם הַיְּהוּדִי וְיִשְׁוֹר עֵי הַמַּשְׁקָה בְּכִרְוֹתוֹת מִדֵּם שְׁמוֹת הַיְּהוּדִי
בְּכִרְוֹתוֹת הַיְּהוּדִי - אוּ הַיְּהוּדִי הַיְּהוּדִי בְּכִרְוֹתוֹת הַיְּהוּדִי וְכִרְוֹתוֹת כִּכֵּי
בְּכִרְוֹתוֹת - עוֹלָם אֲלוֹרוֹת בְּכִיבֵים עֲשִׂירוֹת בְּכִיבֵים שׁוֹרֵם הַיְּהוּדִי הַיְּהוּדִי
וְכִרְוֹתוֹת הַיְּהוּדִי הַיְּהוּדִי הַיְּהוּדִי הַיְּהוּדִי הַיְּהוּדִי הַיְּהוּדִי הַיְּהוּדִי הַיְּהוּדִי הַיְּהוּדִי
יוֹאֵל נָא לְסוּר אוּ בְּחִיבֵים הַיְּהוּדִי לְהַקְּרוֹס בְּחִרְבַת הַיְּהוּדִי
אוּ בְּכִיבֵים הַיְּהוּדִי הַיְּהוּדִי הַיְּהוּדִי הַיְּהוּדִי הַיְּהוּדִי הַיְּהוּדִי הַיְּהוּדִי הַיְּהוּדִי
חִרְבַת לָהֶם בְּנֵיךְ יָדִידֵי הַיְּהוּדִי הַיְּהוּדִי הַיְּהוּדִי הַיְּהוּדִי הַיְּהוּדִי הַיְּהוּדִי הַיְּהוּדִי
חִרְבַת לָהֶם בְּנֵיךְ יָדִידֵי הַיְּהוּדִי הַיְּהוּדִי הַיְּהוּדִי הַיְּהוּדִי הַיְּהוּדִי הַיְּהוּדִי הַיְּהוּדִי

הַשֵּׁשׁ הַיּוֹמִי הַזֶּה
בְּאֵת הַיּוֹמִי הַזֶּה

I took much pleasure from the fact that the women themselves, especially the young ones, are taking interest in encouraging their friends with regard to family purity...

I am participating... in the building of the Mikvah... please contribute the sum of \$20 in my name and immediately inform me how to send money to repay you...

Gothenburg, Sweden - 5708
(5 January 1948)

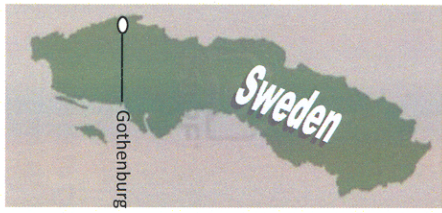
RABBI I. SCHNEERSON
OF LUBAVITZ
770 EASTERN PARKWAY
Brooklyn 13, N. Y.
Stucco 6-2918

ותפא יצקא שיאונדוהיי
ליובאוויטש
ב"ה כ"ג טבת תש"ח.
ברוקלין.

יידיי הונדנ וי"ח א"ח"ר א"ח"ר ישראל שי" עו"כ
שלום וברכה

בחסדך לאצטויטן אן ארדור בנין חקוה גנעטענר'ג
ב(חסדיה לניש'ם להוצאות טעקע לסקות בשוועדן
שלחה יל' היינט טלגרמה בחוכו דלקסן:
"בנעטה להאטיל תיכף בנידור חקוה גנעטענר'ג וסוכן אר' ישראל
בי"כ ע' החשבון 200 דולר ויעד 100 דולר לניש'ע חושים לסקות
ויו"ע"ן אומן חשלוה ח"כ טו."

נניח זנו' וחסדו'ם חו"ל ונעמו' להחזיק ולתחזק בש"ט חסעל'ם
חקדושים וחסדו'ם חו"ל ונעמו' להחזיק ולתחזק בש"ט חסעל'ם
אל חסעל ע'ם אר' אוס' יומר שחסדו'ם חו"ל ונעמו' להחזיק ולתחזק בש"ט חסעל'ם
בז'ת ונעמו' וסו' יצטרכו בחשלו'ם שוועד בנין ליו"ע חקוה בני' חקוה כ"פ חקוה כ"פ
שדורכי' מכתבו' וחסדו'ם על חשבון דה' א"ח א"ח חסדו'ם חו"ל ונעמו' להחזיק ולתחזק בש"ט חסעל'ם
חש'ת ח' בר' אור' ונעמו' ונעמו' ונעמו' ונעמו' ונעמו' ונעמו' ונעמו' ונעמו' ונעמו' ונעמו'
שהת' חסעלה מדי'תו ונעמו' ונעמו' ונעמו' ונעמו' ונעמו' ונעמו' ונעמו' ונעמו' ונעמו'
בנעסיוה ונר'והו'י'ו'ת' ח' א"ח ונעמו' ונעמו' ונעמו' ונעמו' ונעמו' ונעמו' ונעמו' ונעמו' ונעמו'



...I hereby request that you strengthen yourself and exert effort in these tasks ... Act quickly and ensure not to delay bringing this project to fruition not even ONE day more than necessary...

Please keep me informed...

Brooklyn ny ens12 34w 5/1 2359 via sverigeradio

nl1 = rabbi hazdan thunerberg 28 i stockholm
bevakoscho. lehasenchil teikef besidat hamikwa begoettesburg
umuchan ani lisch lioiack ekef al hacheschohn dollars 200
veoid dollars 100 linsiois hanoschim Lemihvois veyoidleini
oflan hamischloiaek hachi toiv

rabbi schneerson

ens12 28 i 280 100

TELEGRAM.

"Please immediately begin arranging the Mikvah in Gothenburg. I am prepared to immediately send \$200 and also an additional \$100 for travelling expenses..."

Bethlehem, South Africa - 5712
(2 December 1951)



Greetings and Blessings!

It was with great pleasure that I was informed of the decision to build a mikvah in your community and that construction will begin shortly on this worthy project.

It is unnecessary to explain the greatness of this matter, and how important Family Purity is in preserving the Jewish community, the family unit and indeed the physical and spiritual wellbeing of the parents and children. The efforts and expenses entailed in improving matters in this regard are insignificant relative to the great benefit and eternal joy that is provided to those who, as a result, will strengthen their adherence to Family Purity. Hashem acts in a manner of "Measure for measure" and may He provide blessings and success in all matters to those participating in this worthy project.

On the verse "G-d is the Mikvah of Israel" our sages explain that "just as a Mikvah purifies the impure so does G-D purify Israel". Based on the aforementioned statement that G-D's ways are "Measure for measure" we can be certain that by constructing a Mikvah to purify the impure, G-D in his mercy will purify us from our impurities and gather us to the Beis Hamikdash with the coming of Moshiach. Amen.

With blessings for success in communal and personal matters, both physically and spiritually.

(The Rebbe's signature)

P.S. Enclosed is a check for 18 Shekel as my participation in the building of the Mikvah.

RABBI MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON

Office Address:
Lubavitch, 770 EASTERN PARKWAY
BROOKLYN 13, N. Y.
HYedmh 3-9250

מוחמם טענדל שוין אורטאון

פיה'ג' כסלן ת'ת"ת
ברוקלין, נ.י.

עסקי' האצור חזית אי"א וכו'
התק'ר ביה' להם, ובראשם הרח"ט
החיה אי"א נוס' עזוס באצ' וכו'
מוחמ' ישראל מסל',
ד' ע'ל'תם יתיו.

שלוס וברכתו
בניוס נודק'ת' אש' החל'כו לבנוה מקוה בתום תת', ואשר
בקרוב יחיל'ו לגשם אה'תע'ן תעלה חזה בפועל.

לכונן לבאר גורל עני'ן זה, ועוד כס' העני'ן של סדרת המשפחה
נוג' בקיום קהלה בישראל, ואצ'ל בקיום מספחה, ואצ'ל בקיום בר'אור
הלות' ובר'אור הגש' של התורה ותולד'ים, אש' כל שחולות בהטבת המצב
זה וכל התוצאות הטובות בה, א'ן עול'ים בשם לעד תחולקת ח' נעליה
והאז'ר הנצח' הנשפ' על יד' זה אל' שתחזק ש'רת מרת משפחה ע'י'ת'
וסרת על חקביה סוד בגוד מרת, אש' כל משפחה'ים בספעל נעלה זה שש'ע' ליה'
תשי'ת ברכת ותצלחה בכל עני'י'תם החסיד'ים.

וי'דוע סוד'ל בסוף יומ' על חספוק, ישראל ת', אשר בה
מקוה מרת אה'תמא'ים אף חקביה מרת אה' ישראל, ועש'י תמיל סוד'ת של
חקביה מרת בגוד מרת, הנח' ע'י' בג'ין מקוה למת' אה' חספ'ים, סובסיד'ים אה'
אשר תשי'ת ברחס'ין יסח'רו'ן יסח'רו'ן ספל סומאח'ונ' וכו'ת קדש'ו קבץ נפוצות'ונ'.

בברכה תצלחה בעני'י'תם י"א
י"א
י"א

ניב'ו: מקוים מחמ'ת' בסך ת"י שקל,
בתור השתתפות' בהוצאות בני'ן חסד'ות.

Bethlehem, South Africa - 5714
(15 April 1954)

RABBI MENACHEM M. SCHNEENSON
Lubovitch

770 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn 13, N. Y.
Hydcah 3-8250

התאחדות ישראל

ליוניש

770 אסטון פארק

ברוקלין נ.י.

בית ישראל
ברוקלין

התאחדות ישראל
ברוקלין נ.י.

קלום וברוקלין

ביום שבת, י"ח ניסן תש"ד, לקבל מכתבך מר' נחמן בן
באור המאמר, וגם יצאנו מקומו המדויק, ונודע לנו
שישנו לשלש ימים עליו, ונודע לנו גם מקומו המדויק.

במקום כשאתה על הציון הקדוש של עם ישראל, אדוני
יצאנו להלכה נרגמת אויבך את זולתו ונתנו עתה, ויברך את
עירנו, ויברך את בנינו, וישלחו חתום, ונתנו נוסף על חתום חתום
בגנות ישראל, ויברך את כל צדקתך, ויברך את כל צדקתך
הרבה, ויברך את כל צדקתך, ויברך את כל צדקתך, ויברך את
בשעת מלחמה ומלחמה, ויברך את כל צדקתך, ויברך את
חובבים לשלום חתום, עליו.

ולקראת זמננו, ויברך את ישראל, ויברך את ישראל, ויברך את
לחם בשר ודבש, ויברך את ישראל, ויברך את ישראל, ויברך את
ככל דבר הטעם, ויברך את ישראל, ויברך את ישראל, ויברך את

ובימים ובשנים, ויברך את ישראל, ויברך את ישראל, ויברך את
מגלים ארצנו, ובגאולה תהיה חתום, עליו.

Handwritten signature

בברכה חתום

"The 18 Shekel that I sent as participation in the building of the
mikvah are to remain in your hands.

I hope that in time a Mikvah will be organized in Bethlehem
or at least somewhere else..."

Letter from the Chief Rabbi of Israel regarding the proposed Mikvah in
Bethlehem

Isaac Herzog M.A. D.LITT.
CHIEF RABBI OF THE HOLY LAND
JERUSALEM
6ht Jan. 1953.
Handwritten notes: 15/12 1953, 15/12 1953, 15/12 1953

To our dear Brethren
the Hebrew Congregation in Bethlehem,
South Africa.

Dear Friends,
It was with deep regret that I heard about the absence
of a Mikvah in your Congregation.

The laws of Niddah and 'Villah are vital and fundamen-
tal in our holy religion. They are partly based upon the
Torch shebeal Peh, the Oral Divine Law and no substitute for
the Mikvah constructed in accordance with those laws will do.

Whether there are many or few or none at all that keep
those laws, it is the sacred duty of the congregation in its
corporate capacity to have one built, if not for the present,
then for the future, if not for either, then for demonstrating
that in its corporate capacity, the congregation as such has
not given to our holy tradition a bill of divorce and
that in principle at least it is still attached to orthodox
Judaism.

Remember that Mikvah is a graver matter than even
Kashruth!

Confident that my words inspired by grave anxiety
for our sacred Judaism, will find an echo in your hearts,
I am, with kindest regards,
Sincerely yours,

Isaac Halevi Herzog
CHIEF RABBI OF ISRAEL

Letter from the Chief Rabbi of South Africa regarding the proposed Mikvah in Bethlehem

מכתב מראשית

United Hebrew Congregation of Johannesburg

P.O. Box No. 2183
PHONE No. 44-3033

SECRETARY'S OFFICE:
GREAT SYNAGOGUE CHAMBERS
181ST STREET ENTRANCE,

JOHANNESBURG,
26th. March, 1963.

ALL COMMUNICATIONS TO BE ADDRESSED
TO THE SECRETARY

Rabbi I. Hazdan,
24, Nude Street,
Bethlehem,
O.F.S.

My dear Rabbi Hazdan,

Mr. Kaplan, the President of your Congregation has been to see me, and has informed me of the decision which has been taken in Bethlehem with regard to the proposed erection of a Mikvah.

I should like to take this opportunity of congratulating you most warmly and sincerely on this important stand which you have taken on a question of such vital importance to Judaism and to the sanctity of Jewish married life. It is a pity that in South Africa we were to show the same energy and determination in such matters; the position of orthodox in this community would be greatly improved, and I invoke God's blessing upon you.

I understand that as a result of the decision of the general meeting not to proceed with the plan, you have tendered your resignation to the congregation. It is just what I expected from a person of your high principles; and I cannot see how you could have acted otherwise since this decision is a denial of one of the holiest aspects of Jewish life.

In the normal way I could only have urged you to adhere to your decision, but after my conversation with Mr. Kaplan, I feel that I am entitled to ask you to reconsider it providing certain assurances, which Mr. Kaplan has given me, that he is desisting, and I have no doubt they will. Mr. Kaplan informs me that he is drawing up a petition to be signed by members of the congregation expressing their regret at the attitude taken up towards this and providing for a record of the resolution which was passed, when in addition to this I am informed that the congregation bye-laws provide for a Mikvah. I feel after your careful consideration that providing these steps are taken, it is your duty to remain in Bethlehem and continue to work for the consummation of your ideal. Any help which I can give you will be readily forthcoming.

With kind regards and best wishes,

Yours sincerely,
L. PASTERNAK
L. PASTERNAK,
OFFICE MANAGER

Letter of support for Rabbi Hazdan and the Mikvah. Newspaper clipping of opposition to its construction.

We, the undersigned members of the Bethlehem Hebrew Congregation deplore the action of the members at the meeting held on the 18th instant, regret the unpleasant atmosphere created, in rejecting the guidance of our spiritual leader. We agree to give Rabbi Hazdan permission to build a ritualarium and to utilize the ground required for same, as requested by him at the meeting referred to above.

Signed

[Handwritten signatures]

Opposed To Mikvah For Bethlehem

Sir—There is a movement afoot in our town to build a Mikvah.

I would like to know whether our spiritual leader has nothing more important to think about and to introduce than the building of a Mikvah.

Can he find no better means of uplifting the Jewish Spirit?

In these distressing times, when Israel is crying out for help, when every shilling is needed to feed, clothe and shelter suffering remnants of our people, a project is propagated to build a useless and antiquated institution, probably patronised by one or two isolated fanatics.

The booklet circulated as a means of propaganda is an insult and slur on the modern woman's intelligence.

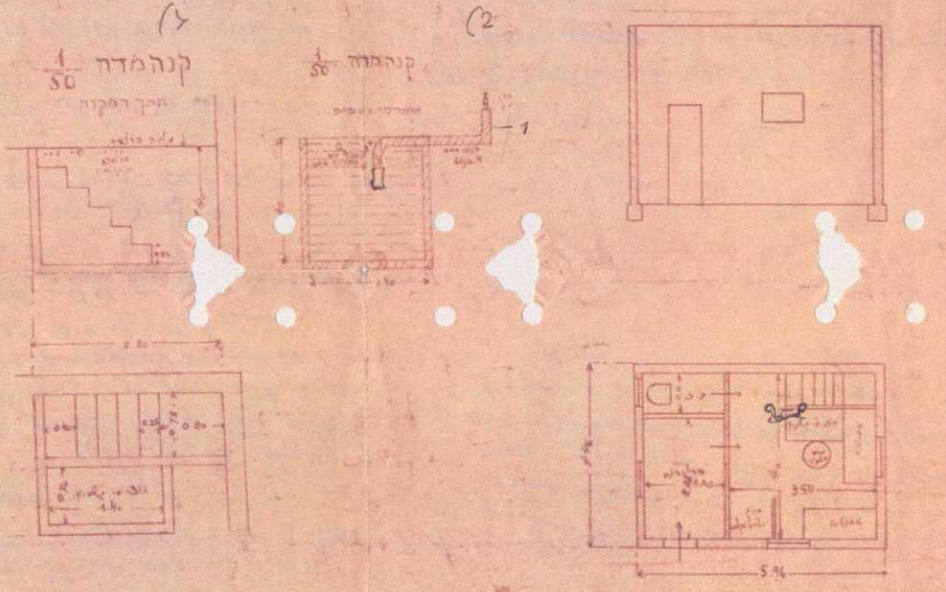
May I suggest that our congregation send the few pious ones for ritual immersion to Johannesburg. I feel sure that it will be more profitable in the long run than the erection of a Mikvah, and that our spiritual leader concentrates on finer, nobler and more important aspects of perpetuating our great heritage.

Yours, etc.,
DISGUSTED
Bethlehem.

[Handwritten signatures and notes]

תכנית בית טבילה בשביל מושבה

קנהמדה $\frac{1}{100}$



Architectural sketches and notes

מתחמים המים והקנים

שארפ המקנה הוא אמה וא אמה בצורה
 צ' אמות. האמה אני מטון והטון אישט'ס
 היא 63 סמ.
 העוקר במקנה זו הן אני מן המא ט'ס
 כמו ה ומקנה אני המסג (נ').

השפין צ'ט (הקנה) ה' המים שמקניסם א' המקנה
 הנשים מקנה, פקק צ'מיה, באמטן א' ארצ' מי
 ששמים ומים א' המקנה. (ש' המ' מקנה כמנה
 ע' סאה ה' מים שאמ' מוסיק' ז'מין כמנים).
 כניסת המים המאזנים א' ארצ' מי-ששמים (ראש
 המקנה "ק'): פקק צ'נוכ' מ' (1) היוכפ' אמק' ומים
 צ'כ' 10 סמ.

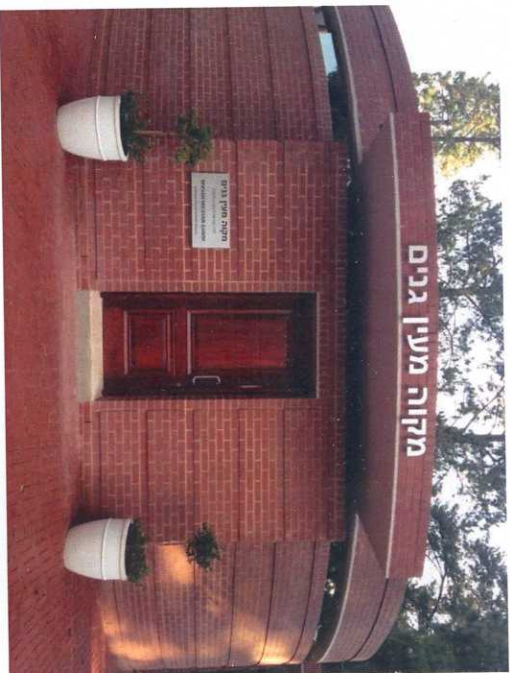
כניסת המים מארצ' מי-ששמים א' המקנה פקק
 מנה בצורה 1/40 סמ.
 כניסת המים המקנה צ'מנה צ'מנה 10 סמ
 נק' צ'מנה מקנה כמנה. פקק (מוסיק' מים מים
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 המים המים פקק המ' א' סאה. וא' א'
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 צ'מ' א' נ'מ' נ'מ', מ'ן ט'מ' פקק המ'מ'
 אין מ'מ' א' (מ'מ' מ'מ').

"פקק המקנה המ' ס'מ' המ' פ'מ' כ' המ' מ'מ'
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Johannesburg, South Africa - 5773
Mikvah Mayan Ganim



THE STORY OF MIKVAH MAYAN GANIM

By Rabbi David Hazdan.

Three years ago, nine years since the relocation of our shul from Currie Street, a dynamic group of young ladies, together with my wife Feige, was leading the cause to build a mikvah. Their sincerity and passion highlighted the rapid growth that had taken place in our shul since its opening. The idea of a mikvah at the Great Park seemed to be an impossible dream, yet it was a feat that was definitely worth tackling.

The first mikvah meeting was finally scheduled for the 5th of April 2009. It was the earliest date that our mikvah committee and the architect could get together. We looked at the

corresponding Jewish date: it was Yudd Aleph Nissan 5769, the anniversary of the birth of the Lubavitcher Rebbe. We embraced the divine providence of the timing of our first meeting, as a significant connection to the Rebbe and to the fulfillment of his mission to intensify Yiddishkeit in our corner of the world.

On the day preceding the meeting, we shared that day's Hayom Yom:

"On the subject of the campaign to popularize the observance of Taharas Hamishpacha in your community, ponder this deeply: let us imagine that G-d were to give you the opportunity to save a Jewish community from extinction (G-d forbid); you would

certainly be willing to risk your life for this and you would thank and praise Him for His great kindness in offering you an opportunity of such enormous merit. The same then holds true to an even greater degree with regard to the campaign for Taharas Hamishpacha; it is an endeavour which literally saves lives."

The timing of the start of our journey was filled with potency and meaning.

I was unable to attend the meeting as I was in Durban on a Torah Academy school trip. In the early hours of Sunday morning, I received a call from our son who had arrived home for Pesach. He had spent the night organizing the many letters that my father, Reb Yisroel Hazdan Z"l, had received from the Rebbe.

My son came across correspondence from the Rebbe regarding a proposed mikvah in the small town of Bethlehem, South Africa, where my father had been appointed as Rov. The Rebbe included \$18 as his contribution to the Bethlehem Mikvah Project.

Although the community had agreed to my father's precondition that they build a mikvah, they had subsequently reversed the decision. There had been mounting opposition to the Bethlehem Mikvah. The South African Jewish newspaper included a letter lambasting the ridiculous proposal to build a "useless and antiquated institution probably patronized by one or two isolated fanatics."

The Bethlehem community wrote to the Chief Rabbi of South Africa, Rabbi Louis Rabinowitz, as well as to the Chief Rabbi of Israel, Rabbi Isaac Hertzog, to establish whether a mikvah was in fact a necessary requirement for their Jewish community. Both chief rabbis wrote powerful letters of support and motivation for the Bethlehem Mikvah.

It was the content of a subsequent letter from the Rebbe that my son passionately wanted to discuss. The Rebbe wrote, "The 18 dollars that I sent as participation in building a mikvah are to remain in your hands, since I hope that in time a mikvah will be organized in Bethlehem, or at least somewhere else. Then the aforementioned sum will be included in the expenses."

Shortly after the community's decision to abort the mikvah project, my father left his position in Bethlehem.

The words of the Rebbe: "... in Bethlehem or at least somewhere else" seemed to have relevance to our new Great Park mikvah project. The \$18 had been received but had not been used to build the mikvah in Bethlehem. A generation later it was coming to fruition at Great Park in Johannesburg.

Having returned to Johannesburg on Sunday afternoon, our family sat at the dinner table and reread the Rebbe's letter - "... or at least somewhere else." We read the words over and over.

I looked down to the bottom of the letter. The Rebbe concluded with the words: "With the festival of Pesach approaching... Wishing you a chag kosher v'sameach..." We looked at each other in amazement. Pesach was to begin that Wednesday night

I looked up at the date on which the Rebbe wrote the letter in 5714/1954. It was written on the 12th of Nissan, on the morrow of the very day that our Great Park mikvah project was born – 55 years earlier.

As the Great Park mikvah was nearing completion, we began discussing a name. Wendy Zinman, one of the driving forces behind our Great Park mikvah, approached me at the end of a Shabbat Kiddush. She spoke with gentle strength –her voice soft but resolute.

"We embarked on this project just after the Jewish world reeled from the horrific events in Mumbai. In the face of tragic loss of life, we were determined to intensify, to grow, to add holiness and sanctity to our community through the building of our mikvah. Gavi and Rivky lost their lives whilst adding holiness to Am Yisroel. Would it not be appropriate that our mikvah – dedicated to adding holiness to Am Yisroel- be named to honor their selfless dedication?"

Chassidus explains what it means to be "alive". True life must be eternal. We are only truly alive when we

connect to that which is eternal.
"V'Atem hadveikim B'Hashem Elokechem - chayim kulchem hayom -
And you, who cleave to Hashem your G-d, are all alive today."

A mikvah is designed so that a pool of regular water touches a pool of specially gathered pure living water and is thereby transformed. The regular water then becomes an extension of the living 'pure water' by virtue of the connection.

Such is the case with every mitzvah that we perform. In one moment of connection to Hashem's Eternal Truth, we transform a limited human being into an extension of the Omnipotent; a finite moment into eternity.

With grateful thanks to our tenacious project coordinator Tyrone Zinman, our Mikvah has been built to the highest halachic requirements, and to meet the standards of the most luxurious spa. It has an extra-large foyer which will be used to teach groups of women and senior high school girls about the significance of family purity and to introduce them to a magnificent mikvah.

Our community is blessed with a new mikvah, in a gorgeous forest setting alongside our shul. It has threaded connections through time, through people and through space. It has touched and accessed the eternal bonds of Am Yisroel.