**Background: (main article below)**

In a near miraculous occurrence, this past week on February 26th, over 20,000 women in over 100 Geula Gatherings around the world got together to daven for Geula. This type of gathering, created by women, is unprecedented, since Miriam leading the women in dance at Yitziat Mizraim. The whole purpose of these events were for women to come together, not just to cry out to Hashem, but to sing to Hashem in yearning for the Geula. When this idea came up, it was brought to Rav Chaim Kanievsky, who gave the movement his bracha and gave his instruction that the women should each recite the whole book of tehillim ten times. He understood that the women would be singing and dancing in the way of Miriam and he deemed the gatherings very good.

The Geula Gathering idea came out of Baltimore where a video of Rivka Malka Pearlman surfaced in which she is calling women together in unity to pray to Hashem at an event of February 26th. The video started circulating and people became very interested in attending. The only problem was that the video was from 2012, and this was January 2019! At the same time, Rivka Malka said, "I had gotten a Divine message that right now we are so close to the End of Days. Each of us has a piece of Miriam in her, Miriam the prophetess who God guided the women in Egypt. She was the midwife there. She helped them. She encouraged them to beautify themselves. She taught them to make tambourines in anticipation of leaving Egypt. We don’t have a Miriam, but we have the women, and each of us has a spark of Miriam inside, and if we collaborate, that would be the ultimate unity." So she put out a renewed call for the women to come together in these Geula Gatherings, to take place on February 26th- a mere month way- and hundreds of women signed up to organize events in their communities.

Three weeks before the event I checked in on the volunteer in Lakewood and she apologized that she was not able to get the support of enough women for her to put together the event. But following Rav Kanievsky's haskomah, on the event date there were over 800 women at the Lakewood event, with words from Rav Avraham Yitzchak Sorotzkin! All over the world there were evenings of joyous prayer for the Geula that have never happened in this magnitude before. The whole Geula Gathering event is under the guidance of Rav Moshe Weinberger of the Aish Kodesh Congregation in Woodmere, NY. It got blessings of encouragement from Rabbi Shmuel Rabinowitz, Rabbi Avraham Sutton, Rabbi Yitzchak Ginsburgh, Rabbi Doniel Katz, Rabbi Reuvan Feinstein, Rabbi Shmuel Eliyahu of Tzfat, and there was video message from Rebbetzin Yemim Mizrachi played at every Geula Gathering. The Brooklyn event was livestreamed by TorahAnytime.com and the whole event was co-sponsored by Ner Echad, Shabbat.com, Chazaq, and Torah Anytime. This project and any future Geula Gatherings will continue under the guidance of Rav Kanievsky and Rav Moshe Weinberger.

**Even Better Together:**

**Personal reflections on the recent “Geula Gatherings”**

*by Chumie Jacobson*

It was a seemingly random Thursday morning when my friend and colleague, Henya, called me and said “Chumie, have you heard about the Geula gatherings? On February 26, thousands of women all over the world will be gathering to daven, sing and dance, and praise Hashem in the ways of Miriam Haneviah in yearning for the Geula. Call my close friend Danielle Sarah in Baltimore. She’s working on this. It’s becoming really big and you need to get Ner Echad involved.”

This happens from time to time. I have the privilege of running Ner Echad, a worldwide unity organization for Jewish women, and we’re always looking for more ways to tell people about it. So, I’ll hear about an event, a retreat, a Shabbaton, etc., and I’ll offer to have Ner Echad join. Danielle Sarah put me in touch with Rivka Malka Perlman, a unique transformational coach and motivational speaker. She explained that the initiative had blossomed out of nowhere, as much of a surprise to her as anyone else. A 7-year-old video of her calling women to unite for an event on February 26**, 2012** in Baltimore had ended up on WhatsApp (undated) and women were responding to it now, asking if they too could have such events in their cities! In a couple of weeks, hundreds of women from all over were volunteering their time and talents to make this happen. “It’s time we finally unite” was the message I was hearing loud and clear.

I explained to Rivka Malka that Ner Echad is all about uniting Jewish women of all backgrounds from all over the world. Ner Echad is a simple, automated, and powerful system which joins women together as partners in the Erev Shabbos Mitzvos of candle lighting, charity, and prayer. Initially, Rivka Malka responded that while it sounded like a beautiful idea, she wanted to keep the event focused on women only, not make it about any groups or organizations. But then she thought about it and said, “The truth is, I just love the unifying message Ner Echad brings to the world. It is so exemplary of Rebbetzin Batsheva Kanievsky, a”h, for whom Ner Echad is dedicated. Also, Rabbi Weinberger, shlita, from Aish Kodesh, who is supporting the Geula Gathering initiative, has been very emphatic that we must connect these events to Shabbos, so Ner Echad is actually the perfect conduit to carry on the tremendous unity that we’re fostering week after week. I love it. Let’s do it!”

Within minutes I was talking to Liz Schwartz, an interior decorator from the Five Towns, who, when I mentioned Ner Echad, told me that she’s a Baalas Teshuva and candle lighting with Ner Echad was one of the first things she took on. How moving! Liz was volunteering to help put together the videos for these events. We coordinated about how to incorporate Ner Echad so the women could learn about it and sign up to carry on this unity every week. Liz then quickly added me to two WhatsApp group chats of organizers and got me up to speed.

The next two weeks passed in a flurry of excited activity. I sent Liz the existing Ner Echad videos, plus, I made a “selfie” video discussing Ner Echad. I was floored by their willingness to include any of this. Normally, events are very protective of their ‘brand’. But I soon realized that I was dealing with a whole new level of *l’sheim shamayim*, greater than I had ever previously encountered. Being on the chat of organizers (“It’s Geula NOW”) was a non-stop 24-hour wellspring of inspiration. Every single day, a new person would join the chat and say, “We’ve decided to do an event in Berlin, who can send us what we need?” These messages were always answered in seconds by someone willing to help: “I will, what's your email address?”,

“Our community needs the tefillah booklet translated- anyone have that?” “I’ll find it for you.”

And that was another thing. Even though this was a very “woman-centric” movement, with women constantly posting about different meforshim and shiurim touting the power of women and our role in the messianic era, everything was run according to Daas Torah. Rabbi Moshe Weinberger, shlita, was the presiding Rabbi over the Geula Gatherings, providing constant feedback and guidance. There were many other Haskamos as well, including Rabbi Reuven Feinstein, shlita, Rabbi Shmuel Rabinowitz, shlita, Rabbi Avraham Sutton, shlita, Rabbi Doniel Katz, shlita, and Rabbi Shmuel Eliyahu, shlita.

The women were so excited when we got a video of Rabbi Pessin, shlita, approaching Rav Chaim Kanievsky, shlita, explaining how the women were gathering to sing and dance, just like the righteous women Miriam led, in yearning for the Geula. Rabbi Pessin explained to Rav Kanievsky that the Geula Gatherings had partnered with Ner Echad, the organization created in his wife's memory, and were seeking his blessing. Rav Kanievsky gave a bracha for the initiative and said that to hasten the Geula, women should complete Sefer Tehillim ten times. From the women’s reaction to receiving Rav Kanievsky’s bracha you’d think we’d won the lottery!

The level of comradery amongst these very diverse woman just totally warmed me. I ended up in private conversations with many of them, either helping them create a flyer for their city, arranging to get the Ner Echad Nishmas booklets delivered to them, or countless other little things, and I got to see the true cross section of amazing women I was dealing with. These were also extremely busy people! Most had jobs and children. Some were very young and some were grandmothers already, but everyone had so much shared passion. You’d think we were a long-standing club and we’d known each other forever. Here I was, in Brooklyn, chatting with women in Paris, Texas, San Francisco, Johannesburg, and Manchester. Some of these women seemed strictly ultra-orthodox (they had lots of questions about the Haskama of Rav Chaim, etc.), while others seemed more modern or just starting out on their Jewish journey. Nevertheless, all were equally yearning to unite with their Jewish sisters everywhere. All were earnestly looking to help one another pull off this incredible feat.

Here’s the real kicker: We didn’t have to charge admission to the event! All the events were free of charge to those that attended. Everything was created out of thin air and miracles happened. Fortunately, people in various communities were excited to help by providing rental hall and/ or advertising space for free. Photography services were also donated. Women worked tirelessly to find sponsors to cover additional costs. Over and over again women reported how “it’s all just coming together, it’s unbelievable!” There were hurdles, yet the woman supported each other and provided endless chizuk and advice. Also fascinating were the various styles of events in the different communities. Some focused on the tambourines and the music playlist. Some focused solely on the davening. Many lined up their own speakers and entertainers in addition to the video presentation that was being played. Each brought their own flavor, but all had the same message: the time has come. It’s time to unite!

Those last few days leading up to the event were unbelievable. More and more cities were jumping on the bandwagon and there was so much left to do. At this point, I was also on the Whatsapp chat organizing the Marine Park, Brooklyn event, where Rivka Malka was going to be in attendance and TorahAnytime was providing the livestreaming. Two nights before the event, I was busy working on some last-minute flyers for cities that had just decided to join. My ten- year-old daughter Esther saw how busy I was and asked “Ma, are they going to be disappointed if the Geula doesn’t come on Tuesday?” Gulp. Hashem gave me the words, and they came right out without hesitation. “Esther, these events are about bringing the Geula *closer*. And one way or another, I’m sure that that is exactly what we are doing.” I also told her about the need for everyone to strive towards their personal Geula. We spoke about how everyone has their own trials and redemptions, how each of us can get lost in our own heads or stuck in our troubles, and how connection, true connection, can lift us out of that. I hoped that it was enough for her and told her she could come along and see for herself.

The day before the event, we got some pictures on the chat from the gathering in Moscow which had been held one day early due to scheduling issues. Seeing those women dancing with tambourines and davening the same tefilos was beyond inspiring. Women started posting links to articles that were being written all over about these events. Somehow, this had taken on a life of its own. We were all so excited to see it through. We were energized. We were ready. In the hours leading up to the event, we were treated to pictures and clips from the gatherings happening in earlier time zones. Hundreds of women gathered in Jerusalem across from the Kotel, davened at Kever Rochel, sang together in South Africa and Paris. It was awesome. This was building up to a peak of excitement on an international scale and we all felt it.

Finally, sitting at the event itself was surreal. There were stations set up for after the davening. Some events had challah baking, tambourine decorating, learning, and more. There was a vibe of comfortable happiness in the air, not typical of an “event.” I invited my sister in-law and my mother in-law to join us, and as my Esther and I were taking our seats my sister in-law looked around and asked, “So I’m trying to figure out, who is this crowd? Like, what ‘type’ is this?” I looked around and with deep satisfaction noticed that for the first time in my 10 years in Brooklyn, I didn't see a “crowd” or a “type” at all. It was just Jewish women. About 250 of them would be my best guess. 250 Jewish women yearning for the Geula. THAT’S. ALL.  Then came my mother in-law’s questions: “So, like, who is behind this? What organization is this? What’s it *for*?” No one. Everyone. For Geula. THAT’S. ALL.

The video came on. Positivity. Encouragement. Rivka Malka was all joy. Rabbanit Yemima Mizrachi reminded us of the power of prayer that women specifically have. Then I hid in my seat as my face appeared (way too large) on the screen talking about Ner Echad. “It’s super simple,” I heard myself say (oh dear, who *says* that on an event video?!). “You’ll get a name of a fellow member to have in mind each week and automatically donate one dollar all together.”  My phone started blowing up with texts. “Hey, I just saw you on TorahAnytime at the Geula gathering. My sister in Passaic texted me: “We have 150 women here, it’s so nice!” My mom in Boca Raton was sending pictures of 50 or so retirement-age ladies dancing with tambourines. My sister in Lakewood said, “There are at least 800 women here! In the 27 years I’ve lived in Lakewood I have \**never*\* been to an event like this. Who are all these women? What made them all come out here on a weeknight? Not for their school, not to daven due to a tragedy, not to raise money for an organization…. Just to come together and daven and sing- wow!”

The davening started. Someone had composed stirring background music specifically for this night. We read from our prepared booklet. We cried out. “Hashem, we have gathered. We have united. We have yearned and we are ready!” There was palpable connection to every woman around the world who is doing this same thing, at this same moment. With one united message, we raised our voices as one. When we finished with a resounding SHEMA YISROEL HASHEM ELOKEINU HASHEM ECHAD, my daughter, with the tefilah booklet covering her face, cried. She cried in a way that the older, jaded women among us only wished we could. She cried for all of us. After that, energized on our “connection high,” we rotated around the room to the different booths and activities. Then we sang and danced. I danced with my daughter as if I were fifteen years younger. The special evening culminated with an intimate kumzitz on the floor. This is not me. I am a grown up. I don’t sit on the floor and sing, much less put my hands around strangers and sway. But there I was, as if there was never a more obvious thing to do.

Before leaving, I told Rivka Malka that my sister in Lakewood had told me that since there was such a large group at her location, the entire Tehillim was completed ten times in under 7 minutes. Rivka Malka looked like she was going to cry with joy. I nearly cried telling her.

The next morning, I woke up to see that women from every corner of the globe had signed up for Ner Echad. More pictures and reports came flooding in. So many event leaders telling us, with flushed excitement, that they’d gotten a far bigger turnout than expected. Someone started putting together the numbers. Over an estimated 20,000 women had gathered.

Two days after the event, Shoshana Steiner from Baltimore said, “this entire thing sprouted and became a worldwide event in just 33 days. Rabbi Akiva’s 24,000 students died over a period of 33 days due to not treating each other with proper respect. And in these 33 days of unprecedented love and kindness, an estimated 24,000 (if you include the live streaming) women united to bring the Geula. Could this be a Tikun? We cannot know, but the Koach of Achdus that every woman put forth to create the multitude of beautiful international events certainly shows us what we can do when we unite.

Since then new initiatives have sprung up – a gathering of children is being formed. The inspiration continues to grow. I reflect on how late on the night of the event, after coming home, my ten year old sleepily mumbled ““Ma, thank you for bringing me. This was the most special, meaningful night of my life. And don’t worry, those weren't sad tears, they were meaningful tears.”  I tucked her decorated tambourine under her arm. I worried she was thinking “But did we bring the Geula?” I think of how earnestly she cried. How joyfully she danced. Oh sweetie, if you only knew the Geula we brought!

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To join Ner Echad, connecting in our untied candle lighting Mitzvos each week, visit [www.nerechad.org](http://www.nerechad.org) or call 844-NER-ECHAD

To sign up for information about future Geula Gathering events, register at [www.geulagatherings.com](http://www.geulagatherings.com)

List of cities that had officially registered their Geula Gatherings:

1. Afiki Golan,
2. Antwerp, Belgium
3. Atlanta, GA
4. Baltimore, MD
5. Basel, Switzerland
6. Berlin , Germany
7. Bet Lechem, Israel
8. Boca Raton
9. Brooklyn (flatbush) , Ny
10. Brooklyn (Boro park) , NY
11. Brussels, BE
12. Chaifa, Israel
13. Chicago, IL
14. Cincinnati, Ohio
15. Cleveland, Ohio
16. Coral Springs Florida
17. Crown heights , Ny
18. Deerfield Beach Century Village, Florida
19. Eugene, Oregon
20. Fort Lauderdale
21. Gibraltar , Gibraltar
22. Glendale (Milwaukee), Wisconsin
23. Gothenburg , Sweden
24. Gush etzion, Istadl
25. Har Tzion, Jerusalem, Israel
26. Houston, Texas
27. Jerusalem
28. Johannesburg, gautang
29. Kever Dovid Hamelech
30. Kever Rochel
31. Kiryat Sefer,
32. Kfar chabad
33. Modiin Illit, Israel
34. Karnei Shomron, IL
35. Katzin, IL
36. Kiryat Shmuel, Haifa
37. Kfar Saba, IL
38. Lakewood, NJ
39. Las Vegas, NV
40. Lawrence , NY
41. London , UK
42. Los Angeles, CA
43. Maaleh Adumim, Israel
44. Manchester, United Kingdom
45. Memphis, TN
46. Miami
47. Monsey, New York
48. Montreal, Quebec
49. Morristown, NJ
50. Moscow, Russia
51. Paris, France
52. Passaic/Clifton, NJ
53. Pheonix
54. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
55. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
56. Queens , NY
57. Raanana , Israel
58. Rehovot, IL
59. RBS aleph, Israel
60. Riverdale, NY
61. Rockville/ Silver Spring, MD
62. San Antonio, TX
63. San Francisco, Ca
64. Scottsdale , Arizona
65. Sherman Oaks, California
66. South Bend, IN
67. St. Georges, Grenada
68. St. Kilda East, Victoria, Australia
69. Staten Island, NY
70. Swampscott, MA
71. Tiveria, Israel
72. Toronto, Ontario
73. Tucson, AZ
74. Tzfat, Israel
75. Vanderbijlpark, South Africa
76. Ventura, California
77. Woodmere, NY
78. Yad Binyamin, Israel

There were many smaller Geula Gatherings that popped up around the world that did not register their event with the official Gathering, but still happened, including Brazil (as mentioned in the article).

Also: Quotes from event coordinators around the world:

**Antwerp, Belgium**

“We are a small women’s club but are very happy and proud that we could join this BIG event. About 50 women heard our weekly Parsha Shiur, saw the video, sang together the Tehillim and ended with dancing. Our event brought many types and ages of Jewish women together.”

**Baltimore, MD**

“As we danced round and round the ballroom shaking tambourines and glow sticks, hugging and holding hands, the energy was palpable. The previous hour, prayer, psalms and songs ignited a sense of unity with the over 20,000 women all over the world. No one wanted to leave. Surely the redemption is closer!”

**Basel, Switzerland**

“We watched the video, sang, Davened together and said Tehillim and spoke about what the Geula means to each and every one of us”

**Boca Raton, Florida**

“It was a stormy night but nonetheless about 50 ladies came together to be inspired by the beautiful videos, snack on delicious treats, and then *DANCE* with our tambourines in joyous unity!  Several of the women were moved to stand and address the gathering with their personal stories of what the Geula means to them.”

**Haifa, Israel**“We are a tiny English-Speaking community so it was small, but the evening was so incredibly beautiful. We spoke about Geula, shared our own personal Geula stories, sang Shir HaMaalot together, watched the inspiring video presentation and danced with our tambourines. The highlight of the evening...if all that wasn’t enough...was when we each filled out a card and shared our Hebrew names and what we want someone to daven for us about. We then exchanged cards and for 40 days are following up with a WhatsApp group and davening for our sisters from the bottoms of our hearts. This was truly a life changing evening!!”

**Lakewood NJ--Over 800 women and girls**

“Music is the vehicle of *Ruach HaKodesh*, and this spiritual vehicle was a big focus of this gathering. The event was graced with moving songs which came from the heart, thus entering the hearts of all who attended. The spiritual achievements were unprecedented - the entire *sefer* *Tehillim* was recited over 10x within a span of minutes! In addition, several more *Perakim* were recited in unison with much feeling.

The positivity and sense of unity that enveloped the audience was like a sunrise after a stormy night - so much good can come about with *Achdus* and a no-strings-attached yearning for Hashem’s presence in our lives. The warm, upbeat atmosphere and tremendous outpouring of *Ayin Tovah* at this event created a powerful wave of optimism and joy.”

**Maaleh Adumim, Israel**

“Breathing meditation to connect to Hashem plus songs led by Sarah Spielman, mini-shiur from Rivkah Adler and Tehillim, plus prayer jar, where everyone filled in a note with their Hebrew name and what they would like us to daven for and we swapped them out with everyone to pray for each other. Women were so glad that they came, lots of positive feedback!”

**Manchester, United Kingdom**

“It was an extremely busy week in our community but nonetheless we had an amazing turnout of about 350 - 400 women. It was a huge mix of different crowds, all coming together so beautifully. Rebbetzin Levy spoke and gave a beautiful example of a King who had to send away his spoiled son to make him a better man. After a while the King reaches out to the son, who had forgotten his father, and asked him “What can I do for you?” The son asked for new boots to help him work in the field… Why didn’t he ask to just take him back home to the palace! Rebbetzin Levy told us that tonight we are not Davening for any specific cause or Yeshua - we are Davening to come home to HaShem. It was a true re-awakening of our inner yearning for Geula. We then had someone playing the piano as we sang some Tehillim and Tefillos.  We could feel the Shechina in the room. After that we all got up and danced as if the Geula is already happening, thanking HaShem for the future miracles. We danced in one enormous circle, uniting us all together.  It was truly very moving and special.”

**Paris, France**

“Our event was amazing, Bichlal how it was organized, just big open miracles. I even today can’t believe “it happened” Everything with no budget: the hall, the singer, the photographer, the cakes and pastries, for no cost…We had B”H between 150 and 200 people.  We davened, said Tehillim, an explanation of how to prepare for the coming of Moshiach. Than started the music and dances. The involvement of the people yearning for the Geula was wonderful.”

**Rehovot, Israel**

“We organized in only 3 days and had a small group.  But the simcha was electric and the dancing was out of this world. We began with a talk about Tefillah and then said the Tefillah l’Geulah together. We watched the video with the Hebrew subtitles.  Then we played music and danced with tambourines for almost an hour, helping to bring Geula through Bitachon in Hashem, unity, and emulating the circle dancing of Miriam.”

**Riverdale, Bronx, NY**

“Baruch Hashem our Geula event in Riverdale had close to 100 women and finished sefer Tehillim 10 times in under 3 hours.  Women from Washington Heights and the Upper West Side joined us as well. I'm speechless. I can’t think of the right words to say other than it can only be Hashem.

*Here is what I shared at our event, in our Shul which is under construction, but was transformed to royalty for the gathering:*

“As you see we are under construction. I would like you to take that imagery of a construction site and think about how so many of us and those we care about are going through so much pain and challenges in our lives and feel knocked down. We think back and the home where Hashem's presence rests, the holy Beis Hamikdash is destroyed and it’s so hard some days to take our next step. But as you look around this room that has been transformed royally filled with beautiful tablecloths, stunning flowers, beautiful platters, plates, napkins cups and delectable food, beautiful decorations of tambourines reminding us of Miriam and her bitachon in believing in the redemption; we need to try to transcend all the pain and remember one idea to try to carry us through the rest of this painful Galus. WE ARE ROYALTY!! WE ARE DAUGHTERS OF A KING AND THAT MEANS WE ARE PRINCESSES.  We all have to walk out of this room tonight and try to have a new mindset. No matter how much pain we feel from feeling knocked down and sometimes it feels as if it’s coming from every direction remember YOU are ROYALTY. We are Hashem's ambassadors. We need to show the world who our Father is!! We need to shine that light out to the world and feel it inside ourselves. May Hashem bring the Geula now so the whole world will know Him and crown Him king.” *-*

**San Antonio, Texas**

“Our event had 22 women, as we are a small community, but it was amazing and beautiful. The ladies came and our Rebbetzin shared a beautiful lesson on Geula and we read Tehillim and danced and played the tambourines. It was such joy and Simcha. Baruch HaShem!”

**St. George’s, Grenada, West Indies**

“Our Geula gathering was small but so powerful, Baruch Hashem! We were 7 women total, but many ages and communities were represented at our event.

In order to reach each woman at her own level, we did an exercise about using our personal strengths to bring about a personal Geula and the Geula Shleimah. Ahavat Yisrael was a big focus in this exercise. We finished with Tehillim and singing to express our yearning for Geula. There was so much love, unity, and simcha at our small gathering. “

**Toronto, Ontario, Canada**

“We started our night with Tehillim being read by Rebbetzins from all communities. Gift bags were given to over 450 women in attendance. We had a live DJ and a choir of 9 women who sang so beautifully while all the ladies wrapped their arms around their neighbours - We danced for about 2 hours afterwards! Was such a powerful evening. We had a beautiful mix of all ladies from Toronto - from Conservative, Modern Orthodox, Litvish, Chabad, Chassidish, and not yet Frum. It was so, so special to be together under one roof, dancing and davening with one another!”