Simon Ben Dror

Born in Sde – Nehemia

29-5-1951

Killed in Battle in Sinai

In the War of Atonement

6-10-1973

THE COCOA TOLD ME A STORY

 Many hundreds of years ago there were Indians in America. That was

 before Columbus discovered America. They have cocoa trees there.

 The cocoa is Inside a pod which is as big as a cucumber. They put the

 Cocoa in water. One day I went to America and then suddenly the cocoa ran up to me and asked me if I wanted to be cocoa like him and sit

in a pod. The Indians said I should put the cocoa in water. I told them that I had pity on the cocoa. After that I went back and said to Columbus

to go and discover America.

 Shimon.

POEM

Big and tall

De Gaulle,

He made a goal.

And then the cock crowed and called.

What did he call?

I too can do it all.

I too can make a goal

Like big and tall

De Gaulle

And eat a roll

And then I fall

Down near the wall.

Shimon

Climbing and going down the Arbel.

 When we left Kfar Hitim we went through an unpopulated area.

We went through the weeds and then sat down near the Lake

Of the Kinnereth and there we ate.

After we had finished eating we started to climb and Yossi

And I were ahead of the others all the time. Then we rested.

On the way up the hill we were amazed, because as long

As we went we did not see any cliff, but when we came to

the top we saw an enormous cliff lying a few steps before

us. We were overwhelmed. The whole valley of Ginossar was

there before us. The houses looked like matchboxes. There

we rested and Reuven wanted to make a photograph of us and

we sat down on the big stone. He took the picture. Then we got

up and went on a winding and twisting path untrodden by human

feet except for Arab shepherds leading their herds over those paths.

And we went on and on. Jehudith hurt herself on a grey thistle that was stuck in her coat and she fell.

After all these adventures we went on feeling very strong and secure and suddenly we saw our goal before us. We went for another five minutes and then we were in a narrow valley between two steep mountains that were like high walls on our right and our left. We sat

down and drank from Yael's water bottle.

 THE END

 Shimon

I THAMAR AND THE BULL

 Words: Shimon Ben Dror

 Melody: Shimon Ben-Dror

Said I thamar

from the village:

"I have got a bull

Grazing in the field

In the rain,

And he can also sing.

Do you want to buy my Bull?"

"Yes, Mr. I thamar.

But does he sing well?"

"Sure, he is a real singer.

And with his leg he kichs up any mountain.

Will you buy the bull?"

"No, Mr. I thamar".

 Shimon

Our dear river Jordon.

The source of this old river is on Mount Hermon. There the Banyas comes out of several springs. Then he meets the Dan and agrees to go with him, for the Dan does not like to go alone either. So they go together and suddenly they hear the rustle of water. At first they are frightened- but then they see the Hatzbani. The two of them say: "Come with us, dear Hatzbani, three are better than two." The Hatzbani says: "You wait here for one day and tomorrow I"ll tell you if I will go with you or not."

So the two of them went to sleep and from this the beautiful pool came into being. The next day the Hatzbani agreed to go with them. The three of them made a short trip and came to the lake of Kinnereth. They rested and went on and on and on, suddenly they started hurrying very much. People saw them and said: "The Jordon is in a great hurry." For that is how they called the three rivers after they had joined together. The Jordon went on till the Dead Sea and there poured itself out in it and till today the Jordon pours itself out in the Dead Sea.

 The Flood

When I came home, Mother said to me: "Go and look at the Banyas."

I went with Yossi and Gil and saw that the Banyas was rising. Then I went home and read and played. Suddenly Michael said: "I hear a tractor, people are being evacuated from their houses. " I jumped into my boots and Michael and I took the bicycle and then I saw what was going on. After some time I went again to look and saw that the water had already entered the houses of families Schabracq and Khakifa. The people took everything out. Again I went home and played for an hour and a half. The water was rising all the time and already flooding the big lawn. It had reached a height of 20 – 30 cm. Almost the whole Kibbutz was there. Almost the whole Kibbutz was there. We started to take our things up. Every 20 minutes I went to look at the water. It had already reached the road and then it stopped rising. That was about 8.30 Then I said: " I am sure the water will come to our house from the West."

 Shimon Ben-Dror

 THE FLOOD (continued)

So ' I said and looked Westward, in the direction of the "Rafi-Park", and saw that the water was already flooding the house of family Pimental, so then I knew that it would go fast now. I sat on a chair, then went to sleep. At about eleven o'clock I woke up and fell out of bed and felt water on the floor. I went back to sleep. Later they woke me up and told me: "We are going to Kfar Gilead" but that is something else:

 Simon Ben-Dror (Fifth Grade)

Composition 18th of Adar

 My Huliot

Twenty years ago eight men and one woman came to build up a new settlement. The women remained in Netaim till a children's house would be set up. But the men did not know how many difficultles there would be. First of all Mrs. Malaria was living here-secondly the Arabs, and thirdly- a wilderness. But the surroundings attracted our chaverim so much that nothing could withhold them from coming here. They worked in the sweat of their brows for they knew that otherwise they would never succeed. The first cook was Yoram and he cooked real "delicacies". They planted a vegetable garden and to their great joy after half a year the women came with the children and the Kvutza grew and developed and prospered.

But then, after 7 years, bad days came, the days of the War of Independence. We got orders to evacuate the place. The entire non-fighting population was to go to Haifa. There, in the Gefen-street was a house that had belonged to Arabs. We lived there in very hard conditions. Also there were victims; one was Pinhas he fell when he went to save Menara. Another one was Rafi Reiss- he fell when he was a parachutist in the second World War. He went to save the Jews in the Exile. The war ended with our victory

When we came back from Haifa, we did not recognize the place. Thistles and thorns everywhere, they grow all over the place.

Today our Kvutza consists of people from 15 different countries. Gradually conditions become better and today it is impossible to imagine what there was 20 years ago. Our parents say: "Twenty years ago a wilderness was here……"

THE SONS IN THE KIBBUTZ

 (From the "Bulletin of the Communal

 High School of the Hula Valley")

The problem of the young generation in the kibbutz is perhaps the central problems of the kibbutz in general. The great number of sons leaving the kibbutz and the lack of communication between the adult kibbutz society and the younger generation – these are only certain aspects of the overall problem of the son in the Kibbutz.

 From his earliest days on a Kibbutz-child is educated towards the aim of staying there, and his becoming a member immediately after he has finished high school, without any hesitations, thoughts or questions, is regarded by the kibbutz as a son's normal development.

 It is the son's task to continue what has been begun, to find his place in the Kibbutz which is his home, and finally to carry the burden of this enterprise on his own shoulders. This "natural" process is fraught with serious problems- starting from the question of the young people who study out-side and get completely out of touch with the kibbutz, till the one of acceptance for membership and of the son's resistance against having to find his place in an already completed enterprise and against following obediently in his parents' footsteps.

 The lack of contact between the son studying outside and the kibbutz is the most serious of all the problems usually the children are educated in the kibbutz until the eighth grade, then they go and study in the communal high school, which is in another place. Most of the day he is not at home. When he comes home, he finds it almost impossible to be active with in the frame of the Kibbutz society. He creates for himself(or the kibbutz creates for him) a closed, firmly integrated social group, with little interest in what goes on in the kibbutz – and these two are bound to collide. Things like the using of cars without permission, breaking into all sorts of places, storerooms etc. (Seneca says "Every place that has a lock offers you the opportunity to break it open"), are a natural result of the son's alienation from his home-kibbutz.

 Another symptom of this alienation is the formation of a regional social group where the young generation finds itself more at home than in its own kibbutz- and this widens the gap. As long as they are in elementary school, children usually find complete identification with their kibbutz: this disappears to a great extent during the period of communal education in secondary school.

 Another factor has to be mentioned; social life in the kibbutz is mainly founded on work. Consequently the son who studies outside and does not work, who does not participate in this life of work, feels a stranger and cut-off from kibbutz-society.

 Another main cause of alienation is the communal high school. Education at home for all twelve grades would create a much stronger tie. An then comes army service: four years of living away from the kibbutz intensify the process of alienation still more.

 All this puts the holy axioma of the kibbutz son's destination: to continue on the way begun, on very shaky ground. But let us think for a moment- did the people who founded the kibbutz, come here with the intention to create a society that would go on existing for ever, or did they come to find for themselves a place to live? Hardy anyone came with the thought of future generations in their minds. The joy of creation belonged to the ones who began. They came to set up a kibbutz for themselves- not for us. Gradually, in the course of the years they became convinced that this way of life must endure for ever, and so naturally they educated their children towards continuation. And so now they come and force the task, the"mission" upon the son-to continue what they have begun. That is self-deceit! You created the place you wanted to live for yourselves. It is not destined for us. And if we stay in the kibbutz, we will build it after our fashion and not for our children and the generations after them.

 Therefore, prior to the question "What is the future of the kibbutz?" we must ask: "Must there be a future to the kibbutz at all?".

 In addition to these problems there is the one called "the revolt of youth", which is usually regarded as the main problem of the young generation. That is not so however. The common argument is that the second generation's unwillingness to continue in the way of their parents springs from the wish to start something new and to rebel against conventions.

 But in my opinion this unwillingness is caused by other things: the son's alienation from the kibbutz and the poorly justified demand for continuation from the founders.

 All these factors manifest themselves jointly in the specific dilemma- acceptance for membership, before or after the army? In our kibbutz it is customary to accept the boys and girls as members before they go into the army; that is purely automatic act and the voting in the general meeting is just ridiculous.

 Membership before the army is a mere fiction. The son is accepted as a "member with equal rights and duties.", whereas there is practically nothing that binds him to the kibbutz and he will soon go into the army for three or four years anyway.

 The new membership does not mark a turningpoint; It is neither the end of the period of alienation nor the beginning of the formation of an organic, natural bond with the Kibbutz.

This formal acceptance, which has no real significance whatsoever, lowers the value of the kibbutz. The son who has just finished school, has as a rule neither an idea of life outside nor of that of the kibbutz and so he is unable to figure out whether it is his destination to "continue the work" or to go and live somewhere else.

 Becoming a member after military service is much more realistic. Then the young man has already a certain notion of life outside as well as if life in the kibbutz and so his membership is not an automatic situation,but occurs after many hesitations and questions, both from his own side as well as from the side of the kibbutz.

 The claim that acceptance before the army is the natural continuation of the son's life in the Kibbutz does not apply, for this "natural continuation" is not real- anyhow, much less real than a true continuation which comes with acceptance after the army.

 Shimon(12th grade)

Tuesday night.

Mood: Satisfactory.

 Good evening to us!

 I promised you a lot of stories for today and I really have First of all this: Today I got a letter, not from you but from Sde Boker, from Noam. Although he did not sign it, there is no doubt that it is from him. For instance a passage like this (pity I can't send you the whole letter, it's really something special.):

 "Subject: My present occupation, i.e. the organization of a big trip for all the "Shnat-Sherut"\* people in all the different places.

According to rumors that reached our ears, you people suffer severely from strenuous work and therefore in need of recuperation and vacation.

So it has been decided by the Knights of the Round Table, headed by King Arthur, that I organize a trip, camouflaged as a trip in which all the Shnat-Sherut people will participate. Some of the wise men asked: "What will be the place of destination?" Then King Arthur rose up, silenced the assembly, kicked his wife in the behind and slowly spoke the magic word: SINAI !" And the whole gathering rose up and said: "So be it, we shall do as thou hast told us".

And the King's scribes rose up etc. etc.

\*Year of work in a young kibbutz, obligatory for every boy and girl after finishing high school.

In short, for all its Noam-ish style, this letter presents an idea unprecedented in its absurdity, namely that we,i.e. I, must organize a trip to Sinai for all the Shnat-Sherut people! In principle I agree, but there is one delicate problem which the designer of the plan did not solve, to wit: the dough. For "no dough, no go". Like our wiseforefathers said in their time, and the same goes for us: Who will sign the cheque? That is the question.

September 1971.

Today I wanted to go and check the route for the trip of the children on Friday, from Kfar-Harev to Sussita. So yesterday night I inquired if there was anybody who had already made that route once. I knew the area was heavily mined, but, but on the other hand Michael had made the trip so that there is a way, only I did not know exactly where. Everyone whom I asked said that he did not know the route, only that it was full of mines and dangerous. In the end I decided to go alone and find the way myself; I was advised to take a gun with me so I would not just be yelled at without any reason. I went to the girl on night duty in the children's houses and told her to ask one of the night guards to leave me his gun in the morning. It so happened that all the security people were there and they brainwashed me for half an hour, telling me that it was

Impossible to go there without a mine chart and and even then it would it would be pretty dangerous considering that mines had been washed away in the last winters and that the slopes of the Sussita too were mined. I decided to get up at 8 o'clock the next morning and phone home and ask if they have a permit from the army and mine charts, and if not- they would have to go to regional headquarters and ask for a permit and charts. Well, you know me- eight o'clock! I got up at twelve as usual.

In the evening I decided to call after all and then it turned out that the army had obligingly forbidden the trip for security reasons, so I needn't lose one or two legs (they had really succeeded in frightening me, those chaps who were sitting with the girl on night duty!).So instead they will now go down from Khorazim to the Oshar .Mountain and swim in Lake Kinnereth. That's that. That is what has kept me busy for most of the last two days besides ordinary work. Oh, listen how I disgraced myself on the tractor last Sunday- such a thing has never happened to me yet. After work for one hour I was already in such a state that I fell asleep standing(!), so I got down and slept in the field on the clumps of earth(the field had been ploughed) for about an hour. I slept like an elephant. I felt like a fakir. And that was after I had slept all the way in the bus. And that too helped only for half an hour maximum. After that I couldn't keep my eyes open any more. I stopped the tractor for a "10 minutes nap" which lasted three quarters of an hour and was interrupted by Chuchu's coming.

Monday, 7.6

" Richard Nixon is the easiest man to get along with in the whole world".

 (Patricia Nixon, his wife)

Michall my darling, how are you? This ballpoint writes beautifully, it's a real pleasure the way the letters flow. There is a queer chap here who sleeps in the room next to the electronics technician. He is from Haifa where he had work and money and he left everything and came here to work as a volunteer in the factory, without a salary, without the living conditions of the members. He is really strange, not only because he left everything and came here, but also on account of his behavior. For instance: He was sitting here for about one hour and during that time he asked me at least three times what my name was and every time again he told me that his name was Hagai. Five minutes ago he came here again to say that my transistor radio does not bother him at all(!) and to ask me once more what my name was. I told him and again he stated that he was Hagai. I think I will really learn that name of his in the end. It's Hagai or something like that, I believe…..

Wednesday, 9.6.71

Hello!

……….In any case today I am really awake and fresh, my weapon (the ballpoint) is in my hand and I am ready to charge down on these lines and fill them with letters and words that together will make up a work of art probably so boring as to make anybody sick.

 Why all the fuss? You will ask(and rightly so); I tell you, yesterday I wrote a letter, remember? And I wrote it in a state of exhaustion of the fourth degree, that is, I wrote it almost sleeping, and there are even people who claim that I snored in between lines(but I think that's an infamous lie, completely disregarding the fact that I don't snore). It is natural and even obvious that much nonsense found its way into that letter. Yesterday night I remember vaguely that I had written you a letter and that I had even put it into the mailbox; I did not remember what I had written, only that there was a lot of nonsense in it, especially towards the end. So what I want to say is that, if you have taken the letter seriously, please stop doing so and don't accuse me of writing you nonsense, for this was written in a moment of weakness and mental exhaustion. Period.

 For the rest – tout vat tres bien,

 Madame la Marquise,

 No more news to tell

 (Shakespeare, Macbeth)

Did I tell you about the crazy nut who is here? If so, allright. He is really crazy. Listen. Late one evening, I think it was the day before yesterday, during one of the first morning watches, about 3 a.m. ,we were suddenly woken up by light gunfire in the middle of the Kibbutz area. I also woke up and went to the window. I did not see any terrorists, so I went back

to sleep. After a while the shooting stopped and everything was quiet.

In the morning things became clear and it turned out that,a few chaps just did not feel like sleeping. They decided to make a bonfire of planks and crates and among other things they also put a box of ammunition in the fire and it exploded. That woke the whole kibbutz up which was exactly what they intended, fro they wanted some more kids so they could play soccer(at three in the morning!). The kids came to play and who pops up from his hiding place if not our friend Hagai? He steps into

The field,stops the game and tells them that he is a soccer trainer and that he is going to train them now(at three in the morning?) That was really funny.

Since it is quiet now here and I have time, I want to write to you about the record of John Lennon which I heard last Sabbat. I was really impressed by it. I wanted to tell you about it on Shabbat, but somehow didn't manage in the end. The record is not new at all, it came out in October '70, i.e. almost a year ago, but it is not very well known, understandably so. These are not songs that will make the hitparade,

although some of them, quiet ones, are really very beautiful, if only from the musical point of view. I cannot exactly say what impressed me so much about them, I think it is chiefly his frankness, his straightforward-

ness. The album is very personal, many songs are about himself and about Yoko, about his childhood, his father and mother( I read a biography of the Beatles some time ago, the book was in Mavo-Hamma and Oded bought it to Huliot; I think that if one has not read the biography, one can hardly understand the songs because they are so very personal.)

I think John Lennon is the first of the four to have grown up and to be able to see reality with open eyes. For example the song "God" which is the most important one for understanding Lennon's outlook on life. Here it goes:

 God is a concept

 By which we measure

 Our pain

 I'll say it again

 God is a concept

 By which we measure

 Our pain

 I don't believe in magic

 I don't believe in I ching

 I don't believe in the Bible

 I don't believe in Tarot

 I don't believe in Hitler

 I don't believe in Jesus

 I don't believe in Buddha

 I don't believe in Mantra

 I don't believe in Gita

 I don't believe in Yoga

 I don't believe in Kings

 I don't believe in Elvis

 I don't believe in Zimmerman(Bob Dylan)

 I don't believe in the Beatles

 I just believe in me

 Yoko and me

 And that's reality

 The dream is over

 What can I say

 The dream is over

 Yesterday

 I was the dreamweaver

 But now I'm reborn

 I was the walrus

 But now I'm John

 And so dear friends

 You just have to carry on

 The dream is over

That's it, more or less. I don't remember all the words exactly. It is clear that he talks about the Beatles. That period is over and done with. And he says so in a painfully clear way, while McCarthy goes on playing the fool like a child and singing his sweet songs, and George Harrison, with all due respect to his exceptionally beautiful music, goes on singing in the same old style of the Beatles, as if nothing had ever happened. Lennon has the courage and sincerity to say I simply: "The dream is ended. I am reborn." It is true that all of them seek themselves, each his own individuality, but Lennon is the only one who has found it. Now he turns mainly to social protest songs, like "Isolation", "Middle Class Hero",

"I found out", and to very simple love songs("Love," "Here I am") and that is a very good and very beautiful combination. You can see that in the song "God" where he says: everything is a lousy mess, society is degenerate, the world is rotten, what remains is just you and me, just simple love, that is the only real thing, and that is what gives an optimistic tone to his songs. For example the song "Hold on"

Hold on John

Hold on John, John hold on

It's gonna be alright

You gonna win the fight

Hold on Yoko, Yoko hold on

It's gonna be alright

You gonna make the flight

When you're by yourself

And there's no one else

You just tell yourself

To hold on

Hold on world, world hold on

It's gonna be alright

You gonna see the light

When you're one

Really one

You get things done

Like they never be done

So hold on, hold on

The third kind is the kind of songs we have never heard from the Beatles, the ones on his childhood, on his father and mother. These are mostly sad, for he had a very difficult childhood.('Goodbye, my Mummy's dead"). The music of these songs is extraordinary, I think. Many people think the music is bad. I can understand that, it is extreme, full of disso-

Nants and changing rhythms, it is really very special and wild. There is no consistent, definite style. Frequently we find the style that he developed with the "Plastic Ono Band", like for example in the songs "Cold Turkey"

Or "Strength for the masses, i.e. very heavy rhythm and intensive use of

Felters. On the other hand you can suddenly find a protest song which could easily have come from Bob Dylan some 10 years ago("Middle Class Hero") or quiet songs that remind you of the quiet period of the Beatles and of the personal style of Lennon since "Love, here I am" or Mixed styles ("God", "Isolation").

I don't know if you will like it, these things are very personal with everybody. Either you like it or you don't. I was completely thrilled by it,

By the feeling of personal contact with him; his openness, his sincerity and quietness impressed me deeply.

January 1971.

……….First of all something not so important but nice.

We had finished work. It was raining and cold and I was dirty with grease. I was standing in the doorway and taking off my shoes. Suddenly

(really suddenly, in a second- that happens sometimes), in a flash I saw that it is beautiful here. You understand? No, of course not.

 So I 'll explain: on the Lake of Kinnereth there was fog, a heavy grey fog. The sky was grey and so were the mountains; and against that grey background there were those black poles put up in white barrels, which was the Army's Hanuka-candleholder, there was supposed to shine over the whole valley. All this together was fantastically beautiful. Not 'beautiful' in the way of those romantic, colored sunsets or like an anemone or a soft red rose which is beautiful but ordinary and garnish. This was a silent mysterious beauty, not sharp and not so obvious: the grey with the black and white which are both soft and hard at the same time. Beautiful. Then it came to me that I really need a camera. That a camera is of vital importance. So many beautiful things here get lost. Really, one must take pictures here. Only you have to know how to catch these things. You need an eye for that. And a good camera.