

IN HONOR OF

Mr. Elozor ben Esther Malka שיחי Plotke

On the occasion of his birthday, 24 Tevet

May he go from strength to strength
in health, happiness, Torah and *mitzvot*.

*

DEDICATED BY HIS WIFE

Mrs. Shoshana Bracha שיחי Plotke

and family שיחי Plotke

* * *

IN HONOR OF

Reb Yaakov ben Chava שיחי Greenberg

on the occasion of his birthday, 26 Tevet

May he go from strength to strength
in health, happiness, Torah and *mitzvot*.

*

DEDICATED BY HIS FRIENDS

Rabbi & Mrs. Yosef Yitzchok and Gittel Rochel שיחי Shagalov

* * *

IN HONOR OF

Menachem Mendel שיחי Wiener

On the occasion of his 12th birthday, 29 Tevet, 5777

AND IN HONOR OF HIS BROTHERS AND SISTERS שיחי Wiener

*

DEDICATED BY THEIR PARENTS

MR. & Mrs. Yitzchok Tzvi Hirsch and Miriam שיחי Wiener

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LIKKUTEI SICHOS

AN ANTHOLOGY OF TALKS

by the
Lubavitcher Rebbe
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

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DEDICATED BY
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LIKKUTEI SICHOS

AN ANTHOLOGY OF TALKS

RELATING TO THE WEEKLY SECTIONS OF THE TORAH AND
SPECIAL OCCASIONS IN THE JEWISH CALENDAR

by the

Lubavitcher Rebbe
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

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Volume II: *Shemot*

•

In English rendition
with Introduction and Notes
by
Jacob Immanuel Schochet

IN LOVING MEMORY OF OUR DEAR PARENTS

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Passed away on 14 Iyar - Pesach Sheini, 5735

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AND IN LOVING MEMORY OF OUR DEAR BROTHER

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Passed away on 14 Elul, 5750

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

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and families שיחיי

SHEMOT

שמות

A

I. 'Pharaoh charged all his people, saying: Every son that is born you shall cast into the river, and every daughter *techayun* (you shall sustain, keep them alive).'^a

This verse raises the following question:¹ Why did Pharaoh say that 'every daughter you shall sustain?' His sole concern was for all the boys to be cast into the river, while the fate of the girls did not seem to interest him.^b The wording of our verse, however, makes it appear that the concluding phrase, too, was a harsh decree.

The word *techayun* means precisely 'you shall sustain them, keep them alive.' Pharaoh ordered the Egyptians to cast Jewish children into the river in order to cause their physical death. The same Egyptians were also told by Pharaoh that those children who would remain physically alive (i.e., the girls) must be *sustained* by them, that is, raised in the Egyptian way of life — in order to kill their souls.

This explains the difference in the orders to the Jewish midwives and the Egyptians respectively: the Jewish midwives were simply told to leave the girls alone

already exists "a king from the House of Dovid, expert in the Torah and involved in mitzvos like Dovid his father... and he will compel all Israel to walk in [the ways of Torah], strengthen its breeches and fight the wars of G-d" - who is the "presumed Moshiach" [b'chezkas Moshiach] - there will already be immediately the "confirmed Moshiach" [Moshiach vadai], who "does all the above and succeeds, builds the Temple in its place and gathers the dispersed of Israel... He will then improve the whole world so that it serves G-d in unity,..."

(From the talk of Shabbos Parshas Shmos, 21 Teves 5752)

a. [Exodus 1:22]

1. See *Shemot Rabba* 1:18.

b. [Pharaoh's astrologers had told him that a Jewish woman would give birth to a boy who would eventually deliver Israel from Egypt (see Rashi on Exodus 1:16 and 22). His concern thus was only with the boys, and not the girls.]

And from "the days of your life" at this time and in this place, without any interruption whatsoever, G-d Forbid, (even if he is already older than seventy years, etc.) every Jew will go immediately - totally and completely, "Reuven and Shimon descended, Reuven and Shimon arose,"⁴ - into the continuation of "all the days of your life.," into the days of Moshiach and the eternal life that then will be.

Practically, this means that the Divine service of the Jewish people now must be "to bring about the days of Moshiach." We must reveal that the situation of "coming to Egypt" in exile is in truth a situation of the "Redemption of Israel." [This is achieved] through his preparation of himself and others for the situation of "the days of Moshiach."

The above includes (particularly in conjunction with the day of passing of the Rambam⁵) strengthening and increasing the study of the Rambam's *Mishneh Torah*, especially the Laws of King Moshiach,⁶ in the last two chapters of the "Laws of Kings" which conclude the *Mishneh Torah*.

In addition to one's own study of this, one should also influence other Jews around him (men, women and children) in a manner of "raising many disciples,"⁷ and many more will see and emulate them.

May it be G-d's Will, that through the resolution itself will come imminently and immediately the reward, the actual fulfillment of the Rambam's words at the conclusion of his work,⁸ that after there

'If it be a girl *vechyah* (let her live),'^c as opposed to *techayun*. Pharaoh hoped that this would make it easier for them to carry out his order to kill the boys.

Moreover, since the Torah mentions both decrees together in the same verse, this indicates that 'every daughter *techayun*' is a decree no less harsh than 'every son that is born you shall cast into the river.' To destroy the soul is as harsh as killing the body, in fact worse — for spiritual death is worse than physical death.²

II. The decree of 'every daughter *techayun*,' to raise Jewish children in the ways and practices of Egypt, is already alluded to in the first decree of 'every son . . . you shall cast into the river.'

The Nile was a nature-idol of Egypt. The Egyptians worshipped the Nile for the simple reason that it is the very source of their livelihood. For there is no rainfall in Egypt, and the Nile provides the essential irrigation for their fields.^d

'Cast the children into the river' has two implications: (a) The physical *galut* of Egypt — to destroy the Jewish body; (b) the spiritual *galut* of Egypt — casting Israel into the idolatry and hedonism of Egypt, to destroy their souls. For a river is a body of water — the symbol of pleasure (as water causes the growth of all kinds of enjoyments).³

c. [Exodus 1:16]

2. *Derech Chayim*, ch. 1. See also [Sifre and] Rashi on Deuteronomy 23:9 [as well as *Rabba* and *Tanchuma* on Numbers 25:17]: 'To cause a person to sin is worse than to kill him; [for he who kills him does so only as regards *this* world (but leaves him his share in the world to come), while he who causes him to sin puts him out of this world and the world to come].'

d. [See *Shemot Rabba* and Rashi on Exodus 7:17]

3. *Tanya*, ch. 1 [based on R. Chaim Vital, *Sha'arey Kedushah* I:2, see there].

4. *Vayikra Rabba*, chapter 32:5. See there for cross references.

5. [The Rambam passed away on 20 Teves. Translator's note.]

6. This is how it is titled in the Venice edition of 5284 and 5310.

7. *Avos*, chapter 1, Mishneh 1.

8. *Laws of Kings*, end of chapter 11.

III. The *galut* of Egypt is the root of all subsequent exiles.⁴ Thus it follows that the harsh decrees of the Egyptian *galut* are prevalent in every subsequent *galut* — including our own, present one.

Today, too, there is a 'Pharaoh, King of Egypt.' That is, there is a prevailing spirit and pressure of society to (a) throw Jewish children into the sea of the customs and practices of the *galut*-environment, for these children to become immersed and drowned in that sea, on the assumption that this would provide their livelihood; and (b) 'to immure Jewish children in the walls and buildings of Pitam and Raamses'^e — that is, to involve them in those matters that are the basic characteristics and pursuits of that society.

We must realize that any strategies of 'Come let us deal cunningly with *Him* — i.e., with their G-d's derive from 'Pharaoh, the king of Egypt' whose sole objective is that there not remain, Heaven forbid, a single remnant and survivor of Judaism, of Jewish souls, and thus inevitably of Jewish lives.

Thus we must oppose such decrees with all our might, and raise our children in the true spirit of historical Israel.

IV. Practically speaking: When it comes to educating children one need not and may not immerse them in the 'Nile,' i.e., the national idolatry. One may not drown the children in 'career-seeking.' The only road to true life is a

We have already mentioned many times the words of my sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation, that aside from the fact that already "all the appointed times have passed,"¹ the Jewish people have already done teshuvah and already everything is completed, even including "polishing the buttons." We only need G-d to open the eyes of the Jewish people so that they should see that the true and complete Redemption already exists, and we are sitting already by the prepared table at the festive meal of Livyosan, Shor HaBor,² etc.

Therefore it's understood... in this generation and at this time, after every requirement has been accomplished (as mentioned above), one has the complete assurance in the Torah that there will certainly be "(You will remember the day of your exodus from the land of Egypt) all the days of your life... to bring about the days of Moshiach."³

There is no need for any interruption, G-d Forbid, between "all the days of your life" and "the days of Moshiach" (which has been the situation for the Jewish people in all the generations **before** our generation). Rather, "all the days of your life" for every Jew, living physically as a soul in a body, includes in the simple sense (also) "the days of Moshiach." This is without an interruption, since the Redemption is actually coming imminently and immediately at this instant and in this place (even if the condition is one of night, "coming to Egypt"). Thus the last moment of exile and the very last instant of exile become the first moment and the very first instant of Redemption.

4. *Bereishit Rabba* 16:4; *Likutei Torah* of R. Isaac Luria, sect. Teitze; 'Kol Dodi-5709', sect. 1 [*Sefer Hamaamarim* 5709, p. 107].

e. [The Egyptians forced the Israelites to immure their children to make up for any deficiencies in bricks; see *Eliyahu Rabba* ch. 7; *Sanhedrin* 111a; *Pirkei deR. Eliezer* ch. 48.]

5. *Shemot Rabba* 1:5; *Sota* 11a [on Exodus 1:10 where it does not say 'let us deal cunningly with *them*' (i.e., the Israelites), but with *Him* — i.e. the Savior of Israel, G-d].

1. *Sanhedrin* 97b.

2. See *Bava Basra* 74b ff. *Pesachim* 119b and in other places.

3. *Brochos* 12b.

that we have already concluded all matters of Divine service and are presently standing ready to greet our righteous Redeemer [Moshiach]. This is particularly true now that we have reached the milestone of forty years⁸ concerning which the Torah says, "G-d gave you a heart to know and eyes to see and ears to hear."⁹ Additionally, we are now situated in the fifty first year [5751], which in Hebrew forms the acrostic (It shall be a year of) wonders which I will show him [נפלאות אראנו - Niflaos Avenu].

The Jewish people should, therefore, be encouraged and their spirits uplifted by declaring that G-d says daily, and literally, anew, that, "**I have indeed remembered you,**" and that your righteous Moshiach "stands behind the wall"¹⁰ and that "this one is coming."¹¹ Accordingly we should prepare ourselves to greet him by increasing our observance of Torah and Mitzvos, **in consonance with the ruling of the Rambam**¹² (whose anniversary of passing is the 20th of Teves, the night after this Sabbath), that through "one Mitzvah, one can favorably alter the balance for oneself and for the entire world, causing oneself and them salvation and deliverance."

(From the talks of Shabbos Parshas Shemos, 19 Teves 5751)

like Moses." See also *Zohar* 3:273a. *Tikkunei Zohar* 69 (112, beginning of side a. 114, beginning of side a). *Tanya* chapter 44. *Ibid. Iggeres HaKodesh*, elucidation of sec. 27, end.

8. [I.e., forty years since the passing of the Previous Rebbe, a milestone which enables us to fully realize the intention and depth of the teachings that were said forty years earlier. - Translator's note.]

9. *Tavo* 29:3 [Moses said this to the Jewish people who were about to enter into the Promised Land, explaining that they were now capable of realizing that which they were taught by G-d forty years earlier. Translator's note.]

10. *Shir HaShirim* 2:9.

11. *Ibid* 8. See *Shir HaShirim Rabbah* on this verse (ch. 2:8(b)).

12. *Hilchos Teshuvah* 3:4.

complete education in our Torah, which is the 'Torah of life.'

There is no point in looking at other parents whose children appear well-provi ed for — one with a home and another with a car; one a doctor and another a lawyer, or at the very least a shoe-polisher — and to think that by sending a child to a yeshivah he will grow up to be an idler and unpractical person, unable even to polish shoes for not knowing how to hold a brush.

In truth, it is the Almighty who sustains and provides for all. When we fulfill His will, 'and these [words of Torah] you shall teach diligently to your children, and you shall converse in them when you dwell in your house and when you go on your way, and when you lie down and when you rise,'^f then He will fulfill our requests of Him for both ourselves and our children.

Children must be entrusted only to teachers who are themselves animated by our Torah, the Torah of life, and who follow the principle of 'and you shall live *by them*'^g— i.e., by the *mitzvot* of the Torah. These teachers, in turn, are to educate the children in the way of life dictated by Torah and *mitzvot*. This is the only way to save our own children, and through them the whole of the Jewish nation.

V. The Egyptian *galut*, as stated, was the precedent and source for all the subsequent exiles, and thus its decrees are prevalent even now. The same applies to the redemption, as it is said, 'As in the days of your coming out of the land of Egypt I shall show [the people] marvelous things':⁶ the forthcoming redemption will be

f. [Deuteronomy 6:7]

g. [Leviticus 18:5: You shall keep My ordinances and My judgments, which if man does them he shall live by them, I am the Eternal.]

6. *Micha* 7:15

BESURAS HAGEULO The Announcement Of The Redemption

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analogous to the redemption from Egypt. This means that the aspects and preparations which will bring about the forthcoming redemption are to be similar to those which brought about the redemption from Egypt.

Of that first redemption it is said that 'by virtue of the righteous women of that generation our ancestors were freed from Egypt.'⁷ What was the special virtue of those women? They raised a generation of Jews! They reacted to Pharaoh's decree to throw every new-born son into the river by arguing that no attention should be paid to it.⁸ If there is a Divine command, it alone must be heeded without calculating possible eventualities. By virtue of these righteous women our ancestors were freed from Egypt.

Today, too, in every country and especially in America, one must not pay attention to the mundane pursuits of the environment and the eventualities of the future. Children must be raised according to the way ordained by the Almighty, and He will surely provide for both the children and their parents.

It is precisely by ignoring Pharaoh's decree that we save our own children and will speedily bring about the general redemption for the Jewish people as a whole through our righteous Messiah.

(Adapted from the Sichot of Pessach 5712 and Pessach 5714)

7. *Sotah* 11b

8. *Sotah* 12a

[Amram, the father of Moses, was the leader of his generation. When he saw Pharaoh's decree, he reasoned that any procreation would be in vain as the children would be killed anyway. Thus he divorced his wife and all others followed suit. His daughter Miriam then argued with him that the Divine precept to be fruitful and multiply is a definite reality, and thus must be heeded without calculating on any eventualities which are merely possibilities. Amram and the others then took their wives back, giving birth to a whole generation which included Moses who delivered Israel from Egypt.]

All of the signs mentioned by our sages indicate that we are currently situated **at the very end of the period of exile**. We have "passed all the deadlines."¹ We have also performed Teshuvah [repentance, return, a prerequisite for Redemption]. Indeed, my sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation, declared (several decades ago) that we have already concluded all the service [necessary for Redemption], including the "polishing of the buttons,"² and we now stand ready ("All of you stand ready") to greet our righteous Moshiach.³

* * *

Despite the difficult and protracted final exile, which has lasted more than 1,900 years (in stark contrast to the duration of the Egyptian bondage which lasted 210 years), the nature of "the Children of **Israel**" has essentially **transcended exile**. Thus, every additional moment we remain in exile is a form "having **now come** into Egypt,"⁴ "as if they had that very day entered into Egypt."⁵

The Jewish people, therefore, stand with firm faith and conviction that G-d will immediately fulfill his promise that "I have indeed remembered you"⁶ by bringing the genuine and complete Redemption, especially when hearing from the Moses of our generation,⁷ my sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation,

1. *Sanhedrin* 97b.

2. Talk of Simchas Torah, 5689.

3. Cf. *Hayom Yom*, among others, 15 Teves.

4. *Shemos* 1:1.

5. *Shemos Rabbah*, beginning of our Parsha (8:14), *Tanchuma*, loc. cit. 3.

6. *Shemos* 3:16.

7. See *Bereishis Rabbah* 56:7: "There is no generation in which there is none