

IN HONOR OF
Mrs. **Elka** bas **Raizel** שתחילי **Caplan**
May she go from strength to strength
in health, happiness, Torah and mitzvot.

ONCE UPON A CHASSID

FESTIVALS

Stories and Anecdotes
told by the Lubavitcher Rebbe,
his predecessors, and their chassidim.
Arranged in conjunction with the festivals of the year.

By **Michoel Green**

Reprinted for Parshat Shemot, 5778
(Vol. 13)



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Vaad L'hafotzas Sichos

788 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, NY 11213
Tel. (718) 774-7200 - Fax. (718) 774-7494

5759 ♦ 1999

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THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE REDEMPTION

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)

IN LOVING MEMORY OF
Horav **Schneur Zalman Halevi** ע"ה
ben Horav **Yitzchok Elchonon Halevi** הי"ד
Shagalov
Passed away on 21 Tamuz, 5766
Reb **Dovid Asniel** ben Reb **Eliyahu** ע"ה
Ekman
Passed away on 5 Sivan - Erev Shavuot, 5765
Mrs. **Devora Rivka** bas Reb **Yosef Eliezer** ע"ה
Marenburg
Passed away on the second day
of Rosh Chodesh Adar, 5766
Reb **Yitzchok Moshe** (Ian)
ben Reb **Dovid Asniel** ע"ה
Ekman (Santiago, Chile)
Passed away on the 24th day of Shevat, 5769
ת. נ. צ. ג. ה.
AND IN HONOR OF
Mrs. **Esther Shaindel** bas **Fraidel Chedva** שתחיל'
Shagalov
DEDICATED BY
Rabbi & Mrs. **Yosef Y. and Gittel Rochel** שיחיי
Shagalov

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a Project of:

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Executive Director

Printed in the U.S.A.

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

No Questions, Please

In the early fifties the Lubavitcher Rebbe began a campaign to dispatch emissaries to every corner of the globe, to fight assimilation and promote Jewish values and observance. Straight out of Yeshiva and just married, the Rebbe sent his followers to remote places of the world where few if any observant Jews lived. At the time, the concept of outreach was quite revolutionary. Moreover, it was practically unheard of that a young religious couple should leave their insular community and all its conveniences – family and friends, readily available kosher food, Orthodox schools and synagogues – and instead reside in a spiritual wasteland of secular society. Nonetheless, the Rebbe expected his chassidim to make these sacrifices on behalf of their alienated brethren.

Initially this demand met with much hesitation. While many young people were eager and willing to stand up to the challenge, others demurred with a variety of considerations. One such couple, when solicited by the Rebbe to move to a far-off town, voiced their objections. The young man argued that he had intended to remain longer in *kolel*,¹ immersed in his studies. Furthermore, he continued, when

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.

1. Academy for all-day Torah study, financially supported by the community.

he mentioned the proposal to his parents and in-laws, they simply would not hear of it. The precept of “honoring thy parents” is a justified cause for concern, is it not? At a subsequent gathering the Rebbe addressed these issues, and prefaced with a story:

* * *

Every Friday evening, shortly before twilight, the saintly Arizal² had a unique ritual. During this most spiritual and serene time, he would walk outdoors, accompanied by his disciples, and “greet the Shabbat bride” in the field. On one such occasion, the Arizal was in an unusually elated mood. Out in the field he turned to his entourage and exclaimed: “Let us proceed to Jerusalem together and greet the holy Shabbat there!”

His followers were startled; traveling is forbidden on the Sabbath, and only several minutes remained before sundown. It was humanly impossible to arrive in the Holy City, a distance of hundreds of miles away, within these short moments. Now, the Arizal’s students were well familiar with their master’s wondrous ways – if he intended to greet the Sabbath in Jerusalem, he certainly would do so. The *tzaddik* was capable of instantly transporting them via supernatural means. Though enticed by their Rebbe’s proposal, some of them paused hesitantly. They did not relish the idea of spending the Shabbat away from home, aban-

2. Rabbi Yitzchok Luria, seventeenth century Kabbalist.

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.

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.

doning their families without prior notice. "Let us first go request our wives' consent," they replied.

Upon hearing their response, the Arizal became gravely serious. "You have just forfeited the opportunity to merit instant Redemption," he declared with a solemn gaze.

"In that case," the bewildered disciples rejoined, "we shall readily go with you!" Yet their pleas were all in vain, for it was too late. The gates of Heaven were only open at that auspicious moment, had they all heeded the Arizal's words without any hesitation. Since they faltered, the Jewish people were to remain in exile for centuries to come.

* * *

Upon completing his story, the Rebbe commented:

This episode is somewhat puzzling. After all, what is so terrible about wanting to inform their spouses of their changed plans? Marital harmony is a Halachic obligation, especially with regard to the Sabbath! Indeed, for this very reason our Sages enjoined that a candle be kindled in every Jewish home on Friday before nightfall³ – to prevent the possible discord that could erupt in the household should anyone stumble in the dark.

3. Talmud, *Shabbos* 23b; *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim* 263:3; *Magen Avraham* *ibid*.

Once Upon A Chassid

The answer is self-evident: when one receives an instruction from his Rebbe, there is no need for ambivalence. This is not the way to bring Moshiach. Rather one must obey, with unwavering certainty that his Rebbe's directive is perfectly consistent with the Code of Jewish Law. All the other concerns, albeit valid, are simply irrelevant. If the Arizal bid his disciples to proceed to Jerusalem, they ought to have complied at once.

These emissaries have been given the rare opportunity to set out and conquer the world with Torah and mitzvos. They are the fortunate individuals who will verily bring about the long-awaited Redemption. Accordingly, now is not the time to confer with one's parents or in-laws. Likewise all other considerations, however justified, must be disregarded. A soldier must follow his instructions despite all odds, and this is precisely how the war will be won. Indeed, as a result of such conduct, the emissaries and their families will be showered with abundant blessings, in both the material and spiritual sense.

Source:

Told by the Lubavitcher Rebbe on Shabbos Parshas Shemini, 1958.

BESURAS HAGEULO The Announcement Of The Redemption

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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,

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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