

IN LOVING MEMORY OF  
Reb **Reuvein** ben Reb **Mordechai Yaakov HaKohen** ע"ה **Caplan**  
Passed away on 11 Tishrei, 5778  
ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

AND IN HONOR OF HIS WIFE - שתבלחט"א -  
Mrs. **Elka** bas **Raizel** שתחיל **Caplan**  
May she go from strength to strength  
in health, happiness, Torah and *mitzvot*.  
\* \* \*

IN LOVING MEMORY OF  
Reb **Ariel Leib** ben Reb **Chaim** ע"ה **Milner**  
Passed away on 27 Shevat, 5779  
ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

DEDICATED BY HIS CHILDREN שיחיו  
\* \* \*

IN LOVING MEMORY OF A DEAR FREIND  
Reb **Yosef Yisroel** ben Reb **Sholom** ע"ה **Rosner**  
Passed away on 7 Menachem-Av, 5777  
ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

DEDICATED BY HIS FRIENDS  
Mr. & Mrs. **Gershon** and **Leah** שיחיו **Wolf**  
Rabbi & Mrs. **Yosef Y.** and **Gittel Rochel** שיחיו **Shagalov**

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# ONCE UPON A CHASSID

The Wisdom and the Whimsy  
The Fire and the Joy

Stories, Anecdotes & Sayings  
translated and adopted from the writings of the  
Rebbes and Chassidim of Chabad Lubavitch  
*Arranged in conjunction with the 54 sections of the Torah*

By Yanki Tauber

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## THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE REDEMPTION

are presently standing ready to greet our righteous Redeemer [Moshiach]. This is particularly true now that we have reached the milestone of forty years<sup>8</sup> concerning which the Torah says, "G-d gave you a heart to know and eyes to see and ears to hear."<sup>9</sup> 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 אראנני - 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"<sup>10</sup> and that "this one is coming."<sup>11</sup> Accordingly we should prepare ourselves to greet him by increasing our observance of Torah and Mitzvos, **in consonance with the ruling of the Rambam**<sup>12</sup> (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)*

IN LOVING MEMORY OF  
Horav **Schneur Zalman Halevi** ע"ה  
ben Horav **Yitzchok Elchonon Halevi** ה"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  
ה. 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** שיחי  
**Shagalov**

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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.

## 12

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."<sup>1</sup> 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,"<sup>2</sup> and we now stand ready ("All of you stand ready") to greet our righteous Moshiach.<sup>3</sup>

\* \* \*

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,"<sup>4</sup> "as if they had that very day entered into Egypt."<sup>5</sup>

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

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 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.

1:17

ריח ניחח לה'

*A pleasing fragrance to G-d*

Regarding an animal offering the Torah says "a pleasing fragrance to G-d," and regarding a fowl offering the Torah also says "a pleasing fragrance to G-d." This comes to tell you that whether one offers much or offers little, it is pleasing to G-d - so long as one directs his heart to heaven...

Rashi's commentary

## Two Guests

One day, Rabbi Shmuel of Lubavitch said to his son Rabbi Sholom DovBer: "Today, two people came to see me. From one, I derived great pleasure; from the other, only aggravation.

"The first was Reb Eliyahu, a simple merchant from Abeleh, a small settlement near Lubavitch.<sup>1</sup> My conversation with Reb Eliyahu went as follows:

1. Abeleh was one of the hamlets that Rabbi Shmuel was trying to turn into a 'town'. At the time, a new anti-Jewish decree had been passed by the czarist government forbidding Jews to live in villages.

## Once Upon A Chassid

‘Reb Eliyahu, how are things with you?’

‘Thank G-d.’

‘How’s business?’

‘Thank G-d. But, Rebbe, my heart aches for Yosef of our village he simply has no success in anything. We raised a small sum between us and bought him a horse and wagon so that he could take some goods to the city, but the poor fellow has no luck. Always something happens: the axle cracks, the horse breaks a leg, and then the horse is stolen altogether. All *shlimazeldik* possibilities befall him. Oh, Rebbe, how can I help him?!’

Reb Eliyahu emitted a deep sigh and burst into tears: ‘Rebbe! Please help him!’

“I said to Reb Eliyahu: ‘But indeed, there is much that you can do for him. When a Jew participates in the sorrow of his fellow and prays for him, he banishes all negative decrees.’

“I then took a coin from my pocket. ‘I want to be your partner,’ I said. ‘May the Almighty grant that you be privileged to be of assistance to a fellow Jew and may your efforts meet with success.’

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So the Rebbe invested much effort to promote as many settlements as possible to the status of ‘town.’

## THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE REDEMPTION

king"<sup>11</sup> has acquired an exclusively **positive** connotation, one that is **visibly and manifestly good, even to eyes of flesh**. In the words of our sages:<sup>12</sup> The Holy One Blessed be He says to Israel, "My children have no fear. All that I have done<sup>13</sup> I have done exclusively for you... the time of your Redemption has arrived."

The emphasis of this generation - particularly this year, the year designated as "It shall be a year of wonders I will show him" - should be placed on the concept of G-d's support of those who have fallen,<sup>14</sup> to strengthen and encourage the Jewish people, emphasizing particularly the support and encouragement acquired through faith in the coming of Moshiach and the implicit trust that "behold he (our righteous Moshiach) is coming."<sup>15</sup> This should be accompanied with enhanced preparation for his arrival by way of teshuvah [repentance, return] and observance of Torah and mitzvos. In the words of the pronouncement of my sainted father-in-law - the leader of our generation: "immediate Teshuvah, immediate Redemption."<sup>16</sup> "Return, O, Israel, unto G-d your G-d; prepare yourselves and your family to greet our righteous Moshiach, who shall arrive soon, in the most literal sense."<sup>17</sup>

*(From the talks of Shabbos Parshas Vayechi  
(and Asara b'Teves, may it be transformed into joy) 5751)*

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11. *Yechezkal* 24:2.

12. *Yalkut Shimoni, Yeshayahu* 499.

13. This includes the efforts of the Babylonian King, who is merely an ax in the hands of the one who chops with it. [i.e. He is G-d's instrument.]

14. [The phrase סומך נופלים - "supports the falling" - is similar to the expression mentioned before - סמך מלך בבל - the Babylonian King besieged," which the Rebbe interpreted in a positive vein to mean that "he supported." Translator's note.]

15. *Shir HaShirim* 2:8. See *Shir HaShirim Rabbah* on this verse (2:8(b)).

16. In his *Igros Kodesh*, vol. 5, end of p. 361 ff., 377 ff., 408 ff. and in other places.

17. *Hayom Yom* - 15 Teves.

were previously a perfectly wicked person, she is betrothed, for perhaps he had a thought of teshuvah."

Considering the above, it is with utmost certainty that our righteous Moshiach must arrive **here and now, immediately, [mamosh] in the most literal sense.**

Now, this exercise of finding merit<sup>7</sup> in and of itself should suffice to bring about the Redemption. Moreover, in addition to the finding of merit, the imminence of Moshiach's arrival constitutes a **definitive ruling issued by many rabbis and halachic authorities.** Further, since Torah "is not in heaven,"<sup>8</sup> this ruling issued by the earthly courts "obligates," so to speak, and affords a unique privilege to, the heavenly courts. **And so it will be confirmed!**

\* \* \*

In our day and age, after G-d has vented His rage with the destruction of the Holy Temple, and after all of "our deeds and actions throughout the duration of exile,"<sup>9</sup> and after all the decrees of oppression and persecution - may Hashem, indeed, shield us and protect us from them - the Jewish people have endured throughout the protracted and arduous final exile, particularly the Holocaust of the very last generation, the process of refinement and purification has, without any doubt, been achieved in full, "enough and even too much." Consequently, the [current<sup>10</sup>] "siege of the Babylonian

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7. [i.e., that we have already passed all the deadlines as well as satisfying the condition of Teshuvah. Translator's note.]

8. Netzavim, 30:12. See Bava Metzia 59b.

9. Tanya, beginning of chapter 37.

10. [The Hebrew term Samach, which means "besieged," can also be rendered "supported." This talk was delivered on the fast day Asara b'Teves (the Tenth of the month of Teves), the anniversary of the siege of Jerusalem by the Babylonian king. The Rebbe here is alluding to the threats of the modern day Babylonian dictator, which are actually the events which serve as preludes to the Redemption. Translator's note.]

‘Rebbe, you want me for a partner!?’ cried Reb Eliyahu, trembling from head to foot. ‘Do you know what I am? I am the “coarse substance”<sup>2</sup> which the Tanya speaks of, whose only rectification is to be crushed...’

“And my second guest? The esteemed chassid Rabbi Eliezer of Plotzk, author of the work Mishnat Eliezer, was also in Lubavitch today.

‘How are things?’ I asked.

‘Thank G-d. I give an in-depth class in Talmud to the young men, and they learn well. On Shabbos they meditate and pray long after the congregation has concluded. They study the teachings of chassidism...’

‘What of their character traits?’ I interjected.

‘Well... You know how it is with the children of the rich...’

“I said to him: ‘The fault is their mentor’s, not theirs. The foundation of education and guidance is the imparting of a good character. Not to teach the book but to teach the person.

‘As soon as you return home I want you to establish a free loan fund. Every one of these young men should contribute half of his dowry.’

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2. “Chomer hagas.”



## Once Upon A Chassid

‘But Rebbe,’ protested Rabbi Eliezer, ‘I will never prevail upon them to do this!’

‘If I say so, you will manage. Tell the young men that when they give, they are not giving what is theirs, and if they do not give, they will not have what to give. I hope that on your next visit you will bring me better tidings.’”

When the Rebbe finished telling his son about these two encounters, he remarked: “Had I given in to the desire of my G-dly Soul,<sup>3</sup> I would have grabbed Reb Eliyahu Abelehr and covered his face with kisses...”

### Source:

Sefer Hasichos 5705 (Talks of Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok of Lubavitch 1944-45), P. 95.

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3. See *Strength In Numbers* on vol. II pg. 35 and footnote 5 on page 35.

## BESURAS HAGEULO The Announcement Of The Redemption

### 11

With respect to Gideon, we find that: "In his days<sup>1</sup> the Jewish people were in distress. The Holy One, Blessed be He, sought a person who would find merit in them. When He found Gideon to be meritorious, because he found merit in them, an angel immediately appeared to him, as it says: "And the angel of G-d appeared to him and said to him, 'Go with this power, with **the power of the merit you have found in my children.**" "Said the Holy One, Blessed be He, it is within your capacity to find a defense for Israel. **In your merit they shall be redeemed.**"<sup>2</sup>

...The merit which will hasten the Redemption is the following:

Even in the Talmudic era it has been said that "all the deadlines have passed."<sup>3</sup> Certainly now that we have endured a lengthy and arduous exile, the duration of which has exceeded 1,900 years, **and he has still not arrived...** And in regard to Teshuvah ("It depends only on Teshuvah<sup>3</sup>) [repentance, return, a prerequisite for Redemption], they have already done Teshuvah. Indeed, there is no Jewish person who has not entertained a thought of Teshuvah, (not just once, but) several times in the course of his lifetime. This [thought of Teshuvah] can transform "instantaneously"<sup>4</sup> a perfectly wicked person into a perfectly righteous individual, in accordance with the Talmudic ruling<sup>5</sup> that one who would betroth a woman "stipulating that I am a (perfectly<sup>6</sup>) righteous individual, even if he

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1. *Tanchuma, Shoftim 4.*

2. *Yalkut Shimoni, Shoftim 62.*

3. *Sanhedrin 97b.*

4. *Zohar I, 129, end side a.*

5. *Kiddushin 49b. Rambam, Hilchos Ishus, 8:5. Tur, Shulchan Aruch, Even HoEzer, 38:31.*

6. Based on the version cited on *Or Zarua 112.*