

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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IN LOVING MEMORY OF
 Horav **Schneur Zalman Halevi** עי"ה
 ben Horav **Yitzchok Elchonon Halevi** הי"ד
Shagalov
 Passed away on 21 Tamuz, 5766
 Reb **Dovid Asniel** ben Reb **Eliyahu** עי"ה
Ekman
 Passed away on 5 Sivan - Erev Shavuot, 5765
 Mrs. **Devora Rivka** bas Reb **Yosef Eliezer** עי"ה
Marenburg
 Passed away on the second day
 of Rosh Chodesh Adar, 5766
 Reb **Yitzchok Moshe** (Ian)
 ben Reb **Dovid Asniel** עי"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** שתח'ל
Shagalov
DEDICATED BY
 Rabbi & Mrs. **Yosef Y.** and **Gittel Rochel** שיחי
Shagalov

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11:21

ההלך על ארבע

All that walk on four...

When Rabbi Shmuel of Lubavitch was a child of seven, he asked his father: "Why does man walk upright, while animals walk on all fours?" Rabbi Menachem Mendel replied: "This is a kindness from G-d to man: although man treads upon the material earth, he sees the sublime heaven. Not so those who crawl on four, who see only the mundane."

The Rebbe's New Clothes

On Passover of 5703,¹ Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok of Lubavitch related the following incident from his childhood years:

For the Passover festival of 5650² - I was several months short of my tenth birthday at the time - a new suit of clothes was made up for me, together with a brand new pair of shoes.

In Lubavitch, the preparations for the festival were conducted in a meticulous and thorough manner. On the day

1. 1943.

2. 1890.

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before Passover, a strict procedure was followed: first, all *chametz*³ was searched out and eradicated from the yard, chicken coop, and stable. The servant Reb Mendel was busy with this for a good part of the night before and followed up with a double-check in the morning. Then, the chametz was burned, after which we would go immerse ourselves in the *mikveh*, dress for the festival, and bake the special *matzas mitzvah*⁴ for the seder. Finally, there were always the last-minute preparations to be taken care of.

Among these final odds and ends was a job entrusted to me: to remove the seals from the wine bottles (especially those with wording on them⁵) and to partially pull out the corks. The latter was a most challenging task, for one had to take care that the metal of the corkscrew should not come in contact with the wine.

That year, I was busy at my appointed task in my father's room. I went about my work with great caution, careful not to dirty my new suit and - most importantly - not to dull the shine on my spanking new shoes.

My father noticed what was uppermost in my mind and said to me: "Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi cites the fol-

3. Leavened substances.

4. The pascal lamb was offered in the Holy Temple on the afternoon before the beginning of the festival. Hence the custom of baking the matzoh to be eaten during the *seder* at this time.

5. To tear through a word is tantamount to 'erasing,' an act forbidden on the Shabbos or the festivals.

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lowing metaphor: a great nobleman sits at a table laden with all sorts of gourmet dishes and delicacies. Under the table lies a dog, gnawing at a bone. Now, how seemly would it be were the nobleman to climb down from his chair and join the dog under the table to chew on a luscious bone?!"

My father's words so affected me that I was ashamed to even look at my new clothes.

"This is education," concluded Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok.

Source:

Told by Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Schneerson on Simchat Torah 1936.

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The Announcement Of The Redemption

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"As in the days of your going forth from Egypt I will show him miracles."¹

Everyone can clearly see how the miracles of the Exodus from Egypt are reflected now in the victory of these days - both in the substance of the victory and in the time when it came, specifically - in the auspicious days of the month of Nissan.

...Still before the holiday of Pesach - was the "striking of Egypt through their firstborn."² That is, the "first born" of the nations of the world³ (including the country of Egypt and her neighboring Arab countries) - according to the resolution of their representatives in the "United Nations" - waged war and struck "Mitzrayim" [Egypt], an enemy of the Jews. The name "Mitzrayim" comes from the word for⁴ an "oppressor" of Israel, G-d forbid.

And on the day of Purim this year - "a year when I will show him wonders" - was the victory (as the nations of the world announced) and his downfall, in a manner of "to strike," etc., (not "to kill") and specifically through non-Jews ("their first born") who reprimanded and humiliated him, forcing him to regret his actions until then.

He was forced to acknowledge and accept and fulfill all the

1. *Michah* 7:15

2. *Tehillim* (Psalms) 136:10. And see *Midrash Tehillim* there. *Rashi and Metzudos Dovid* there.

3. And all the kingdoms are designated by the name *Mitzrayim* (*Bereishis Rabba* chapter 16:4).

4. *Bereishis Rabba* there.

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commands, instructions and requirements that were given to him by "their first born": to free some of the prisoners of war and also to comply with the other things they demanded of him.

And afterwards, the continuation was - in the month of Nissan, and within it - in the days of Pesach, "the time of our freedom" - that their "first born" in the United Nations prolonged his censure and disgrace.

During the days of Purim and immediately afterwards it still wasn't known what the continuation would be, how far he would be shamed and penalized, how strong he would remain, how much he would have to acknowledge and repay, and if he would accept all this or if it would be done through others. Afterwards, in the days of the month of Nissan, in the days of Pesach - their "first born" came out with a strong reprimand, a conclusive resolution and strong demands (in addition to the previous instructions) how Saddam should conduct himself, and also, to show and assure he would fulfill them: he should free the captives, return what he took, and pay for the losses and damages that he had caused until now (and also for what he did earlier).

And in the course of the month, through the last days of the month, the miracle increased even further - that he agreed to everything without any resistance or war, until he revealed money and property which he had hidden (and until now it wasn't known he had).

...Another example of the events of these final times in which we see wonders and miracles - is the exodus of many Jews from that country,⁵ which is like the Exodus from Egypt:

After many years of a completely opposite manner of conduct,

5. *[That is, Russia. Translator's note.]*

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in which Jews were not allowed to leave - specifically in this year and in the previous year did the country open its gates to let out the Jews [so that] they should go to the Holy Land (and even if, for whatever reason there may be, some of them are detained in another country for a short while (in the United States or Australia, etc.) soon they will move (with a complete desire and with joy and a glad heart) to the Holy Land, together with their families).

And the miracle has increased until the country itself assists them to leave, as was the case in the Exodus from Egypt, whose goal was to go to the Holy Land (And I shall bring you to the land, etc.⁶). This miracle also includes assistance from the treasures of "Egypt" (as mentioned above); these treasures have been used to such an extent that a portion of them - and also money from other nations - comes to the Jewish people, our brothers the children of Israel who just went out (and are going out now), in the "exodus from Mitzrayim." Their departure from "Mitzrayim" (a name derived from the word for distress and confinement⁷), from that country is similar to how it was in the Exodus from Egypt the first time, for then "they despoiled Egypt,"⁸ until even what they didn't ask for they gave them,⁹ including treasured items.¹⁰

...And may it be His will that G-d should help every Jew that he should have "eyes to see and (automatically) ears to hear," and "a heart to know,"¹¹ to see "the great trials that **your eyes** saw, the signs and those great wonders,"¹² the revealed miracles that occur every day.

6. *Vaeira* 6:8.

7. See *Torah Or*, *Vaeira* 57:2 and further. *Beshallach* 64:1-2. *Yisro* 71:3 and further. And in many places.

8. *Bo* 12:36.

9. The explanation of *Rashi* there, from the *Mechilta* on the verse.

10. See *Shmos Rabba* chapter 14:3. And other sources.

11. *Tavo* 29:3.

12. *Ibid*, 2.

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Particularly since we have already been more than "forty years,"¹³ in the desert of the nations (of exile), in a situation of "(forty years) I quarreled with the generation,"¹⁴ and we are ready to come to "they shall enter my resting place,"¹⁵ in the Holy Land and Jerusalem,¹⁶ to the extent of Shalem, a complete rest - with the true and complete Redemption.

It is understood that the Jewish people are already prepared and already have "a heart to know and eyes to see and ears to hear" (just as it was in the fortieth year after the exodus from Egypt, and that as in the days of your going forth from the land of Egypt I will show him miracles).

(From the talk of Tuesday evening, Parshas Shimini, 26 Nissan 5751)

13. It should be noted that forty years have passed since the departure of His Honored Holiness, My sainted father-in-law, the Rebbe, in the year 5710, as mentioned many times.

14. *Tehillim* (Psalms) 95:10.

15. *Ibid*, 11.

16. The explanation of *Rashi* there.

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From what has been said previously about emphasizing the subject of Redemption (especially) at this time - emerges the absolutely incredible: **how is it possible that notwithstanding all these things - we have not yet accomplished the coming of our righteous Moshiach in actual reality?!... something completely beyond comprehension!**

Equally incredible - that when ten (and many times ten) Jews gather together, and in a worthy time with regard to Redemption, and nevertheless, they don't create an uproar to cause the coming of Moshiach immediately and instantly, and it's not inconceivable to them, G-d forbid, that Moshiach won't come this night, and also tomorrow our righteous Moshiach won't come and also the day after tomorrow our righteous Moshiach won't come, G-d forbid!

Also, when they cry, "Ad Mosai" [Until when will we remain in exile] - it's because they were told to. If they meant it and desired it and cried **sincerely**, with absolute certainty Moshiach would have already come!

What more can I do so that all the children of Israel should create an uproar and cry sincerely and cause Moshiach to come in reality, since all that was done until now, **has had no effect**, and the proof is, that we find ourselves still in exile, and most essentially - an inner exile in Divine service.

The only thing I am able to do - is to turn the matter [over] to you: **do everything in your ability** - things that are in the nature of lights of Tohu, but, in vessels of Tikun¹ - **to actually bring our righteous Moshiach immediately, instantly, in reality.**

1. *[Tohu is the primordial world of chaos; Tikun is the world of order that follows it. Translator's note.]*

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And may it be His will that ultimately ten Jews will be found who are "obstinate" enough to obligate themselves to move G-d, and certainly G-d will be moved - as it is written,² "Because it is a stiff-necked people (to their benefit,³ and therefore) You will pardon our iniquity and our sin and take us for Your inheritance" - to actually bring the true and complete Redemption immediately, instantly, in reality.

In order to hasten and speed the Redemption even more through my actions - I will increase and give to each and every one of you *shlichus-mitzvah*⁴ to give to *tzedekah* [charity], for "great is *tzedekah* since it draws near the Redemption."⁵

I have done my part; from now on, you do all that you can.

And may it be G-d's Will that there will be found among you one, two, three that will devise a plan what to do and how to do it, and most essentially - that it will produce the true and complete Redemption in actual reality, with joy and a glad heart.

(From the talk of Friday evening and the eve of the holy Shabbos Parshas Shmini, 28 Nissan, 5751)

2. *Tissa* 34:9.

3. See *Shmos Rabba*, end of chapter 42.

4. [*Shlichus-mitzvah* literally means the mission or assignment which performs a *mitzvah*. It is customary to give someone who is leaving on a journey *tzedekah* for an institution (of his choice) at his destination. He thus becomes a "shliach" or emissary with the assignment of delivering *tzedekah* elsewhere. The Talmud states that an individual who travels to perform a *mitzvah* (as opposed to reasons of business or pleasure) is protected by the merit of that *mitzvah*.
Translator's note]

5. *Bava Basra* 10:1. And see *Tanya* chapter 37.

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*[This talk was given on Parshas Shemini. The year in which this sicha (talk) was delivered, the Parshas Shemini was read a total of eight (Shemini) times. There is a well-known Chassidic adage, which the Rebbe quotes, that a year in which Shemini is read shemini (eight) times will be a fat (shemini) year. (The word for 'fat,' shemen, has the same root as the word for 'eight,' shemini.) The Rebbe **then** proceeded in this vein, that, indeed the year 5751 was a distinguished and a fat year. Translator's note.]*

The principle accomplishment of this year - which the Jewish people have designated and named "It will be a year of miracles I will show him"¹ - is that it is a year distinguished for being "fat" and filled with wonders and miracles from G-d, visible to everyone. This accomplishment also serves as a preparation for the wonders and miracles of the complete and true Redemption, coming imminently, "as in the days of your going forth from the land of Egypt I will show you miracles"² - as mentioned and emphasized many times during the year.

* * *

This Shabbos is the Sefirah of *Malchus sh'b'Gvurah*,³ a revelation of King Moshiach within the severity of exile, and also

1. *[see Number 14 of this volume, note 2a, for an explanation of the acronym. Translator's note.]*

2. *Michah 7:15.*

3. *[There are seven "emotional" Sefiros (emanations of G-dliness). These "character traits" such as kindness, severity or discipline, harmony, etc. are reflected in the individual's personality. Each of these also includes all the others. (There is a kindness within kindness, a discipline within kindness, etc.) The forty-nine days of the Omer counted between Passover and Shavuot reflect the forty-nine "combinations." Accordingly, the Shabbos when this talk was given was the day of "Kingship in Severity." Translator's note.]*

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Shabbos Parshas Shemini⁴... which is particularly connected with our righteous Moshiach - since the "kinor⁵ of the days of Moshiach" is made of "eight strings."⁶ This leads directly to nine and then ten, which is holy⁷ - that is, the perfection of ten achieved in the true and complete Redemption ("upon a ten-stringed instrument"⁸), "a kinor of ten strings"⁹ (which is higher than a kinor of eight strings).

The connection should be further emphasized since the birthday of the Rebbe MaHaRash¹⁰ occurs right at the beginning of the month of Iyar, on the second of Iyar. It is well known that his directive and inspiration was *m'l'chatchila ariber* [Literally, "from the start, go above."].¹¹ The Rebbe MaHaRash was the sixth generation (from the Baal Shem Tov), "double the force of three which represents a well-grounded and established idea";¹² that leads to the seventh generation, the eighth generation, until this generation - the ninth generation (a tripled presumption),¹³ which

4. [*"Shemini" means eight. Translator's note.*]

5. [*A "kinor" is a stringed instrument. It usually has seven strings. Translator's note.*]

6. *Arachin* 13:2. And note there.

7. [*See Vayikra 27:32. Translator's note.*]

8. *Tehillim* (Psalms) 92:4.

9. *Mishneh* and *Baraita*, end of *Kidushin*.

10. [*The Rebbe MaHaRash (Moreinu HaRav Shmuel) was the fourth Lubavitcher Rebbe. Translator's note.*]

11. *Igros Kodesh of the Previous Rebbe*, volume 1, letter 617.

12. [*In Jewish law, something that occurs three times establishes its claim and is thereafter presumed to be the status quo. When the Baal Shem Tov introduced Chassidism, many questioned its legitimacy as well as its claim to be the teachings that would bring Redemption. As the Rebbe MaHaRash was the sixth generation from the Baal Shem Tov, and in each generation Chassidism flourished and grew stronger, its validity and the truth of its claim regarding Redemption were doubly established. Translator's note.*]

13. [*That is, having doubly established the truth of Chassidism, what follows are three more generations. Since every three generations validates the claim, as it were, after nine generations the presumption that the "spreading of the wellsprings of Chassidus" will bring Moshiach - and that the wellsprings have in*

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becomes the immediate preparation - without any interruption at all - for the tenth generation which is holy in the true and complete Redemption.

In all of this¹⁴ everyone receives further strength from the extension of Moshe¹⁵ in our generation, my sainted father-in-law, the Rebbe, the leader of our generation, particularly since today we read Torah in his synagogue... From this house of prayer the strength will also reach those outside this house, until the whole world, including the farthest corner (physically and spiritually) of the world. There will then be a fulfillment of "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations,"¹⁶ together with "gather the dispersed of Israel, I will yet gather others to him [Israel] beside those of him that are gathered."¹⁷

A reflection of this has been fulfilled in these times (the year of miracles and the year I will show him wonders), namely "the gathering of the dispersed of Israel" from that country¹⁸ without limitations (not as it was previously, when in order to leave one needed a special connection and a special request), and they are coming to the land of Israel, also without limitations (not as it was previously, as is well-known). This is one of the revelations beyond

fact been spread - has triple the strength. Translator's note]

14. *[The Rebbe has just explained that the increasing strength of the wellsprings of Chassidus means that in fact we have reached a generation (the ninth) that makes the imminence of Redemption a certainty. The additional strength referred to in this paragraph is the strength to prepare for the coming Redemption through the activities of and association with the Previous Rebbe. Translator's note]*

15. *Zohar Chadash III: 273a. Tikunei Zohar 469. And see Tanya chapter 44 (63:1). [A reference to the concept that the leader of each generation has a spark of the soul of Moses. Therefore the leader of each generation is also considered the Moses of that generation. Translator's note.]*

16. *Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 56:7.*

17. *Ibid 56:8.*

18. *[i.e., the Soviet Union. Translator's note.]*

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measure or limit during the end of the time of exile.

Simply put:

All Jews, men, women and even children, have the responsibility to increase their efforts to bring our righteous Moshiach in actual reality!

Therefore it's obvious there's no place for relying on others or imposing the work on someone else instead of doing it one's self - but this is the task **of every man and woman**; everyone must themselves do their job, "to serve my Maker"¹⁹ (for the sake of which "I was created"¹⁹), and certainly one has the ability (since "I do not ask except according to their ability"²⁰).

What this duty consists of is also simple: increasing one's Torah and mitzvos. This means learning both the open aspects of the Torah and the inner aspects of the Torah²¹ and performing the mitzvos with distinction... All of this should be done with an intense anticipation and desire for the Redemption²² - "I anxiously await his coming every day."²³ As we say every day in the prayers: "May our eyes behold Your return to Zion in mercy" and (on

19. *Mishneh and Baraita*, end of *Kidushin*.

20. *Bamidbar Rabbah* 12:3.

21. [*Generally speaking, Chassidus teaches that the Torah has two dimensions: an open, revealed part consisting of the laws and customs themselves, and the rules for analyzing, deriving and applying them as, for example, the study of Talmud; and a hidden, inner dimension consisting of the mystical reasons and spiritual meaning of the laws as, for example, the study of Kabbalah and Chassidus. Translator's note.*]

22. In the words of our Sages - "Did you anticipate salvation" (end of Shabbos 31a). See Rambam, *Laws of Kings*, beginning of chapter 11: "Anyone who doesn't believe in him (in the King Moshiach) or anyone who doesn't anxiously anticipate his coming, etc." See *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 30, p. 182-3. And see there for cross references.

23. The text of "Ani Maamin". See *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 23, p. 394.

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weekdays) - "Speedily cause the scion of David Your servant to flourish." This has been mentioned many times.

(From the talk of Shabbos Parshas Shmini, the blessing of the month and the eve of the month of Iyar, 5751)

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** שתחי' **Caplan**

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

* * *

IN LOVING MEMORY OF

Mrs. **Chana** (Carrie) bas Reb **Meir** ע"ה **Greenberg**

Passed away on 9 Sivan, 5781

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

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