# 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** 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. ב. ה.**

**And in honor of**
Mrs. **Esther Shaindel** bas **Fraidel Chedva** שתחי׳
**Shagalov**

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Rabbi & Mrs. **Yosef Y.** and **Gittel Rochel** שיחיו
**Shagalov**

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12:17 | לך לך
*The Section of Lech- Lecha*

# *Living with the Times*

*In 5701[1], Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok of Lubavitch related an experience that took place over 50 years earlier, when he was a child of eleven:*

It was early in the morning of the Shabbos in which the Torah portion of *Lech-Lecha* is read, before the morning prayers, when I entered my father's room. I found him sitting at his table in very high spirits, reviewing the Torah reading of the week. Tears were streaming from his eyes. I was very confused, for I was unable to understand how the two - an elated mood and tears - came together. But I did not dare to ask.

That Shabbos, as every Shabbos, father prayed till late. As was his custom during winter Shabbos, he made *kiddush* after praying and then went to pray *mincha*. After *mincha*, shortly before sunset, he sat down to the Shabbos meal.

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1. 1940.

After Shabbos, father would test me on what I had studied during the week and on the *mishnayos*[2] I had reviewed by heart. If he was satisfied, he would present with a gift: either a story, whose moral he would point out and explain, or a manuscript of a *maamer* (discourse of chassidic teaching). This was our arrangement in the winter of 5651[3]

The same took place the evening following that Shabbos *Lech- Lecha*. Father tested me and then gave me the discourse '*Ner Chanukah* 5643' as a gift. I very much wanted to know why father had been weeping, yet in such an elevated mood, when reviewing the Torah portion that morning. I stood there in confusion, unable to decide whether I should ask or not.

Father noticed my confusion said to me: "Why do you stand there like that? If you wish to say something, say it..." I decided to ask.

Father answered me, "Those were tears of joy

He explained: "Once in the early years of his leadership, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi told his chassidim, 'One must live with the times.'

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2 . The *Mishnah* is a summary of Torah law, compiled in the 4th century by Rabbi Yehudah HaNassi, which forms the crux of the Talmud. As a child, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok memorized hundreds of chapters of *mishnah* as part of the daily schedule and curriculum set down by his father. See *A boy and a Calf vol.II pg.* 160.

3. (1890-1891).

"The younger chassidim asked their elders what the Rebbe's statement meant. The elder chassidim discussed the matter between themselves. (Years later, Rabbi Schneur Zalman's son and successor, Rabbi DovBer, would elaborate on this saying in his unique style of *binah* - a broad, comprehensive treatment of his father's nuggets of wisdom. But when Rabbi Schneur Zalman first said these words, even the great chassidim struggled to understand their meaning.) Finally, Rabbi Schneur Zalman's brother, Rabbi Yehudah Leib, explained what the Rebbe meant.

"'*One must live with the times*' means that every day one should 'live with' and experience in one's own life the Torah portion of the week and the specific section of the week's portion which is connected to that day.[4]

"The Rebbe's chassidim, young and old, would study the daily section of the *Chumash*[5] with Rashi's commentary. The Rebbe was telling them: One must *live with* the times. One must not only learn the daily portion, but actually experience it in one's own life.

"The portion of *Breishis*," continued my father, "is a

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4. Each weekly portion is subdivided into seven sections, one for each of the seven individuals who are called to the Torah in the course of the weekly public reading in the synagogue on Shabbos. From the days of Rabbi Schneur Zalman, it has been the custom among Chabad chassidim to study one of these sub-sections each day of the week.

5. The Five Books of Moses.

happy portion. G-d is creating universes and creatures and is satisfied 'that it is good.'[6] However, the ending, which describes the corruption of humanity and G-d's 'regret' at its creation, is not so pleasant. Still in all, it is generally a happy Torah portion and in all Jewish communities there is joy and delight - we have begun the Torah anew.

"With the next week's reading, *Noach*, comes the flood. It is a depressing week, but with a happy ending - Abraham our father is born.

"But the truly joyous week," father concluded, explaining his mood that morning, "is *Lech-Lecha*. ***Every day of the week we live our lives together with Abraham.***

"Together with Abraham, the first to sacrifice his self to bring the message of G-dillies to the world; together with Abraham, who bequeathed his self-sacrifice for Torah and *mitzvos* as an inheritance to each and every Jew."

**Source:**

Sefer Hasichos 5702 (The Talks of Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok of Lubavitch, 1941-42) p. 29.

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6. Genesis 1:4,10,12,18,21,25,31.

# BESURAS HAGEULO
# The Announcement Of The Redemption

## 45

It should be noted once again (as I have said many times) **that the Rabbis** must publicize the legal decree that "**all the appointed times have passed**."[1] In regard to *teshuva*,[2] *teshuvah* has already been done and all aspects of Divine service have already been completed. All that remains now is **the true and complete Redemption in actual reality**.

There is nothing more to wait for, since all aspects of Divine service have already been concluded and *teshuvah* has already been done, **and it depends only on the coming of Moshiach himself**. The statement of the Gemara that "It depends only on **teshuvah**" was [required] earlier, but now that teshuvah has already been done it depends only **on the coming of Moshiach himself**. All that is necessary is for Moshiach to come in actual reality and [for us to] "point with his finger and say this is the one,"[3] this is our righteous Moshiach.

One should immediately "point with his finger and say this is the one." I have repeated and emphasized many times that not only will the Redemption eventually come, but **the Redemption already stands on the threshold**. It waits for every man and woman of Israel to open the door and pull the Redemption into the room!!

*(At the visit of the Rav and Gaon, Mordechai Eliyahu,*
*6 Cheshvan 5752)*

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1. *Sanhedrin* 97b.

2. As the Gemora continues: "it [the coming of Moshiach] depends only on teshuva."

3. See *Ta'anis* at the end. *Shmos Rabba*, end of chapter 23. Rashi's explanation of *Beshalach* 15:2.

# 46

As mentioned several times, "all the appointed times"[1] have already concluded, and my sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation, has announced that *teshuvah* has already been done and we have also "polished the buttons." Therefore according to all the signs, our generation is the last generation of exile and automatically the first generation of Redemption. What this time requires is that one should prepare **in reality** to "Get you out of your land... to the land I will show you," imminently and immediately.

…Particularly in our generation, the last generation of exile and the first generation of Redemption, there should be a special emphasis on the Divine service of "Get you out of your land... to the land I will show you," and the acquisition of all ten lands.[2] This must be reflected primarily in an increase in Torah study, which foreshadows this service. This needs to be not only with his three intellectual faculties as they are connected to his emotional character traits, but also in the essence of the three intellectual faculties. What this means specifically is an increase in the study of the inner teachings of the Torah (with intellectual explanations[3]), including the subject of Redemption and our righteous Moshiach.

*(From the talk of Shabbos Parshas Lech Lecha,*
*11 MarCheshvan 5752)*

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1. *Sanhedrin* 97b.

2. [The land of Israel originally comprised the land of the seven nations; these correspond to the seven emotional attributes. In the Age of Redemption, the Torah promised us that we will acquire an additional three lands; these correspond to the three intellectual faculties. Translator's note.]

3. See also the talk of 8 Cheshvan of this year.

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