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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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

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

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23:4 | גר ותושב אנכי עמכם
A stranger-resident am I amongst you

The Traveler

Among the followers of Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov, founder of the chassidic movement, was a Jew who worked the land in a small farming village near Mezeritch. The founder of chassidism had a special empathy for these simple rural Jews, whom he held in high regard for their wholesomeness, integrity, and unequivocal faith in G-d. So whenever the above-mentioned villager would come to spend a Shabbos with his Rebbe, he would be accorded a most gracious and affectionate welcome.

At the conclusion of one such visit the Baal Shem Tov requested of him: "Please, on your way home, stop by Mezeritch. I want you to give my regards to one of my closest and most illustrious followers, the scholarly and pious Rabbi DovBer."

The villager was overjoyed to be of service to his beloved Rebbe. As soon as he arrived in Mezeritch he began to inquire after the great Rabbi DovBer, but no one seemed to know of a "great Rabbi DovBer" among the town's scholars and mystics. Finally, someone suggested that he try a certain "Reb Ber", an impoverished school-teacher who lived on the edge of town.

The villager was directed to an alley in the poorest section of town. Along both sides of the mud- and stench-filled lane stood row upon row of dilapidated hovels, leaning on one another for support. There he found the schoolteacher's 'house', an ancient, rickety hut with broken panes occupying the better half of its tiny windows. Inside, a scene of heart-rending poverty met his eye: a middle-aged man sat on a block of wood, at a 'table' consisting of a rough plank set upon other wooden blocks. Before him sat rows of *cheder* children on 'school benches' - also ingenious contraptions of planks and blocks. But the teacher's majestic face left no doubt in the villager's mind that he had indeed found his man.

Rabbi DovBer greeted his visitor warmly and begged his forgiveness - perhaps his guest could return later in the day, when he had finished teaching his students?

When the villager returned that evening, the hut's classroom 'furniture' had disappeared: the planks and blocks had now been rearranged as 'beds' for the teacher's children. Rabbi DovBer sat upon the lone remaining block, immersed in a book which he held in his hands.

Rabbi DovBer thanked his guest for bringing word from their Rebbe and invited him to sit, pointing to a table-turned-bed nearby. At this point, the villager could no longer contain himself; outraged at the crushing poverty about him, he burst out: "Rabbi DovBer, what can I say? How can you live like this?! I myself am far from wealthy,

but at least in my home you will find, thank G-d, the basic necessities: some chairs, a table, beds for the children..."

"Indeed?" said Rabbi DovBer. "But why don't I see ***your*** furniture? How do you manage without it?"

"What do you mean? Do you think that I *schlepp* my furniture along wherever I go? Listen, when I travel, I make do with what's available. But at home - a person's home is a different matter altogether!"

"But aren't we all travelers in this world?" said Rabbi DovBer gently. "At home? Oh yes... At home, it is a different matter altogether..."

Source:

Likkutei Dibburim [Collected Talks of Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Schneersohn], vol. 11*, pp. 416-428.

*. Correction: Vol. 2.

BESURAS HAGEULO
The Announcement Of The Redemption

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[This talk refers to the publication, and the Rebbe's subsequent distribution to men, women and children, of two special treatises by the Rebbe Rashab. The first, "Kuntres Eitz HaChaim," was written shortly after the Rebbe Rashab founded the Yeshivah Tomchei Temimim and appointed his son and successor, the Rebbe Rayatz, director. In "Kuntres Eitz HaChaim" he outlines the objective of the founding of the Yeshivah and what was expected from its students. The second treatise was a previously unpublished Chassidic discourse of the Rebbe Rashab.]

...One of the reasons for the publication of the special edition of *Kuntres Eitz HaChaim* and its distribution to all the men, women and children at the conclusion of the Rebbe Rashab's birthday on the 20th of MarCheshvan (which led into this erev Shabbos)... is to emphasize that all these words of the *Kuntres Eitz HaChaim* have retained their power and perfection (with even added force) through the leadership of his son and successor, my sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation, the "director" of the Yeshivah Tomchei Temimim. This is especially true since forty years after his passing "one can fathom the ideas of his teacher."[1]

Consequently, the service of the third generation (from the Rebbe Rashab), the generation of Redemption, has already been completed. Concerning this generation, it is said: "On the third day He will raise them up and we will live before Him."[2]

...May it be G-d's will that: the increased study of the teachings of Chassidus and its dissemination, along with an increase in the

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1. *Avodah Zara* 5b3)
2. *Hoshea* 6:2. See *Metzudas David* there.

study of the revealed parts of Torah;[3] the propagation of Torah and Judaism, including - and with special emphasis on - the establishment of new institutions; and the fortification and strengthening of the existing institutions of Torah, prayer (Divine service) and loving kindness - shall hasten and bring immediately the true and complete Redemption through our righteous Moshiach. Then, according to the Midrash, we will say specifically to the Patriarch Yitzchak, "That you are our father,"[4] and thus we will be called "Toldos Yitzchak - the offspring of Isaac."

The reference of the Redemption to Yitzchak gains added importance because of the connection to my sainted father-in- law, the leader of our generation - whose second (and final) name was Yitzchak, since already in his time he declared that all of our service was completed, including the "polishing of the buttons."[5] He therefore directed and empowered us to "stand ready all of you"[6] to greet our righteous Moshiach. How much more so is this true in our own day.

The relationship between the future Redemption and Yitzchak becomes even more significant when we consider the recent developments involving the "offspring of Yishmael" (discussed in the conclusion of this week's Torah portion). Generally speaking, conflicts among nations - any nation - constitute one of the signs of Redemption. As our sages said:[7] "If you see nations provoking one another, anticipate the footsteps of Moshiach." Involvement of the "descendants of Yishmael" in the conflict magnifies the connection

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3. *[As indeed several matters of the revealed part of Torah can be found in this additional discourse of the Rebbe Rashab which was recently discovered and distributed. Translator's note.]*

4. *Yeshayahu* 63:16. Shabbos 89b.

5. Talk of Simchas Torah 5689.

6. His *Igros Kodesh*, vol. IV, beg. p. 279.

7. *Bereishis Rabba*, 42:4. *Midrash Lekach Tov, Lech Lecha* 14:1.

to Moshiach, as specified in the Yalkut Shimoni:[8] "The year in which the King Moshiach will be revealed... the king of Persia will be in conflict with the Arabian king... All the nations of the world will be in turmoil and terror." (Indeed, we have clearly seen how confused and disoriented the nations of the world were, not knowing how to react, groping for solutions, etc.) And G-d says to Israel, "My children do not fear. Whatever I have done, I have done only for your sake... the time for your Redemption has arrived." The Yalkut then continues: "The King Moshiach... will stand on the roof of the Beis HaMikdash[9] and proclaim to Israel: "Humble ones, the time for your Redemption has arrived." As was, and continues, to be proclaimed, especially most recently.

(From the talk of Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sarah,
22 Mar-Cheshvan, 5751)

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8. *Yeshayahu* 499.

9. Note the emphasis of the Midrash that "he will stand on the roof of the Beis HaMikdash" - the roof being a part of the Temple which was not sanctified (Pesachim 85, end b. Rambam, Hilchos Beis HeBechirah 6:7). It may be suggested that this alludes to the fact that the announcement "Humble ones, the time for your Redemption has arrived," comes from the diaspora which has not been sanctified with the holiness of Eretz Yisrael, analogous to the distinction between the roof of the Beis HaMikdash and the Beis HaMikdash itself.

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In our days we have completed all the requisite actions and Divine service, in all the details symbolized by the "hundred years," the "twenty years," and the "seven years" associated with the age of the Matriarch Sarah's passing, years which like Sarah's were all equally good.[1]

This is consistent with the words of my sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation, that we have already polished the buttons[2] and we therefore stand ready[3] to receive our righteous Moshiach.

More particularly, since then several decades have elapsed, during which time the Jewish people have cried out "*ad mosai* - how long must we remain in exile!" (which must also have a limit)

May it thus be G-d's Will -- that the true and complete Redemption, through our righteous Moshiach, will occur immediately.

(From the Ma'amar "Vayihyu Chayei Sarah, 5751" -
Sefer HaMa'amarim melukat, vol. V p. 60)

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1. *[The age of Sarah is presented in the Torah (Bereishis 23:1): "The life of Sarah was a hundred years, twenty years and seven years." The Rebbe explains in his discourse how these three time periods of Sarah's life relate to different aspects of her soul which were permeated with Divinity and goodness. The same is true of the cumulative service of the Jewish people; it is complete not only in a general and peripheral manner, but it has penetrated into the inner dynamics of the Jewish nation's character, represented by the numbers hundred, twenty and seven. See the original discourse for the elaboration of these concepts. Translator's note.]*
2. Talk of Simchas Torah, 5689.
3. See *Igros Kodesh Admor MaHaRayatz, vol. IV*, beg p. 279.

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The most recent innovation in the work of *shlichus*[*] is: **to receive our righteous Moshiach in the true and complete Redemption**. Indeed, the preparation for the coming of our righteous Moshiach is the most all encompassing aspect of Judaism and includes all the other points and details of the work of shlichus.

As has already been said many times, according to the declaration of our Sages of blessed memory[1] "all the appointed times have passed." According to my sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation, that teshuvah has already been done, to the extent that all aspects of Divine service have already been completed (even "polishing the buttons"[2]), and we therefore stand ready to greet our righteous Moshiach. The work of *shlichus* must be to prepare in reality to **actually** greet our righteous Moshiach.

Thus the goal of today's international convention of *shluchim*[3] is: to produce good resolutions of how to accomplish the special *shlichus* of these times: greeting our righteous Moshiach.

...It was already mentioned earlier that my sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation, had declared that already all aspects of Divine service have already ended and we stand prepared ("stand all of you prepared") to greet our righteous Moshiach.

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* *["Shlichus" comes from the word "to send." Thus a "Shliach" is an emissary or messenger and "shlichus" is the mission or purpose for which he is sent. The term "shlichus" here refers to the goal of Chassidism in general, and Chabad in particular, to spread the wellsprings of Torah, increase observance of mitzvos and be a resource for one's fellow Jew, materially and spiritually. Translator's note.]*

1. *Sanhedrin* 97b.
2. See the talk of Simchas Torah 5689.
3. *["Shluchim" is the plural of "Shliach," hence it means "emissaries." Translator's note.]*

THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE REDEMPTION

We also see (as mentioned many times) that many of the signs of the Redemption have been fulfilled in the events of the world, beginning with the sign (in *Yalkut Shimoni*[4]) that "the time for your Redemption has arrived" when "the nations incite one another."[5] This has taken place particularly in the Arab countries.

...And we see in reality how it was and it will be that "he will fight the wars of G-d"[6] and be victorious in various situations, and specifically through a war of peace.[7] And "victory" is also an expression of "eternity,"[8] connected with the revelation of "Endurance":[9] Nun - revelation of the 50th gate;[10] Tzaddik - the ninetieth year (as Jewish people have designated the year);[11] and Ches - the revelation of our righteous Moshiach, who is connected with the number eight (eight princes of man[12]).

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4. *Yeshayahu, remez* 499.

5. *Midrash Lekach Tov, Lech Lecha* 14:1. See also *Bereishis Rabba*, chapter 42, 4.

6. Rambam, *Laws of Kings*, chapter 11, halacha 4.

7. *["Fighting the wars of G-d" is one of the qualifications an individual must meet before being presumed to be Moshiach. There is no necessity, however, for the war to involve bloodshed or even to be on a physical level (as the fight for spirituality and observance of mitzvos may also properly be described as a "war of G-d.") Hence the expression "a war of peace." Translator's note.]*

8. *[The word for "victory" in Hebrew - nitzachon - is etymologically related to the Hebrew word for "eternity" - nitzchiyus. Translator's note.]*

9. *["Endurance" - Netzach, in Hebrew - is one of the ten Sefiros, or Divine Attributes through which the universe is created. It is etymologically related to nitzachon and nitzchiyus (victory and eternity, respectively) Its three Hebrew letters - nun, tzadik and gimmel - are here used not just as the letters of a word but as an acronym revealing a deeper meaning of the word.. Translator's note.]*

10. *[A reference to the fiftieth and final gate of Wisdom. Translator's note.]*

11. *[The numerical value of the letter Tzadik is 90. This discourse was delivered in the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach's 90th year. Translator's note.]*

12. *Sukkah 52:b. [The numerical value of the letter Ches is 8. The passage in the Talmud referenced in note 6 discusses a verse in the prophetic book of Micah that mentions seven shepherds and eight princes. In the Talmudic discussion, each of the shepherds and princes is identified. One of the eight*

The *shluchim* have already begun long ago to fulfill the work of *shlichus* in spreading the Torah, Judaism and the Wellsprings of the inner teachings of Torah outward, and for a long time have even reached **completion** in the work of *shlichus*, according to the announcement of my sainted father-in-law mentioned above. Nevertheless, the true and complete Redemption has not yet actually come. It must be said, then, that there must be something that remains to be done that will bring the Redemption into reality.

What is needed is the following: It is known that "in every generation an individual descended from Yehuda is born who is qualified to be the Moshiach for Israel,"[13] and that "one who qualifies because of his righteousness to be the Redeemer and when the time arrives G-d will be revealed to him and send him, etc."[14] And according to the announcement of my sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation, the singular *shliach* of our generation, the singular Moshiach of our generation, that everything has already concluded, it's understood that there has begun to be fulfilled the "send now the one You will send,"[15] the shlichus of my sainted father-in-law. And therefore it's obvious that the only thing that now remains in the work of *shlichus* is **to greet our righteous Moshiach in actual reality**, in order that he should be able to fulfill his *shlichus* in actuality and bring all the Jews out of exile!

…This then must be the practical lesson that results as we gather

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princes is Moshiach. Translator's note.]

13. The commentary of the Bartenura on *Megillas Rus*.

14. See *Sha'alos v'Teshuvos Chasam Sofer Choshen Mishpat* (vol. 6) at the end (section 98). And see *S'dei Chemed*, *Peas HaSadeh*, entry Aleph, klal 70, ff.

15. *Shmos* 4:13. *[In the passage from Exodus referenced in note 9, Moses demurs from the shlichus, or mission, of redeeming the Jewish people. His last protest before accepting the shlichus are the words quoted. This phrase, "send now the one You will send" is classically seen as a reference to Moshiach. Thus, Moses asked G-d to send Moshiach immediately. This - the immediate sending of Moshiach - was also the shlichus of the Previous Rebbe. Translator's note.]*

now at the opening and commencement of the "International Convention of *Shluchim*."

We must come out with a resolution and an announcement to all *shluchim* that the work of *shlichus* now and for every Jew is to their capacity to lead to the greeting of our righteous Moshiach.

This means that all the details of the work of *shlichus* in spreading the Torah and Judaism and spreading the Wellsprings of the inner teachings of Torah outward must be permeated with greeting our righteous Moshiach.

As emphasized in the program of the convention - "all the days of your life **to bring** the days of Moshiach."[16] All aspects of Divine service (every day of your life, and in every day itself - in every detail and hour of the day) must be permeated with "to bring the days of Moshiach." It's not sufficient "to increase" (as stated in many places),[17] or that he (the *shliach*) should stand and wait until Moshiach will come, at which point he will take part and have the satisfaction. Rather he is "**to bring**." He does all that depends on him **to bring** "the days of Moshiach." [The word "days" is] in the plural, [meaning] not only the beginning of one day but the days of Moshiach (and not only when Moshiach is "presumed to be

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16. *Brochos* chapter 1, mishneh 5. *[The expression "All the days of your life to bring the days of Moshiach" is the Mishneh's interpretation of the Biblcial commandment to "Remember the Exodus from Egypt all the days of your life." The Mishneh deduces that the added emphasis of the word "all" is "to bring (i.e., include) the days of Moshiach." This means simply that we will have to remember the exodus even in the Messianic Age. The Previous Rebbe in his sicha cited by the Rebbe combines the Biblical phrase and the Mishneh's interpretation to produce a novel idea, namely, that "All the days of your life [you must endeavor] to bring the days of Moshiach." Translator's note.]*

17. *[See previous note. In most places where a Biblical word implies the inclusion of other points, the Talmudic term employed is "to include" rather than "to bring." This the Rebbe interprets as a lesson for us to be proactive in bringing the days of Moshiach. Translator's note.]*

Moshiach,"[18] but all the days of Moshiach - also the completion of "absolutely Moshiach"[19] etc.)

From the international convention must come and be brought good resolutions such that every *shliach* must prepare himself and prepare all Jews in his place and city, etc. to greet our righteous Moshiach. This should be done through his explanation of the concept of Moshiach, as explained in the Written Torah and the Oral Torah, in a way that **it will be received** by everyone according to his intellect and understanding. This includes in particular learning the subject of Moshiach and Redemption, and specifically in a manner of Wisdom, Understanding and Knowledge.

And since this is the Divine service of the time, it's understood this applies to every Jew without any exception whatsoever.

…Further and fundamental: since the work of shlichus has already ended, every *Shliach* needs to approach the true *M'Shalayach*[20] - G-d - and declare: I have done my *shlichus* and now the time has come that You, as it were, should do Your *shlichus* (for G-d is also a *shliach* (He tells His word to Yaakov, etc."[21]) and together with the ten Sefiros (G-d, Himself, it is essence and being, as it were, is our righteous Moshiach[22]), is the essence and being as it were of our righteous Moshiach). "Send now the one You will send" - send us our righteous Moshiach in actual reality.

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18. Rambam, *Laws of Kings*, chapter 11, halacha 4.

19. ibid.

20. *[M'Shalayach - literally the one who causes to be sent. As a "shliach" is an emissary, the "m'shalayach" is the one who sends him on his task. Translator's note.]*

21. *Tehillim* 147:19. See also *Shmos Rabba* chapter 30, 9.

22. *[In the sicha the Rebbe refers to the fact that the word "shliach" (numerically 348) plus ten equals "Moshiach" (numerically 358). Translator's note.]*

And even if there is only a doubt that G-d will restrain the Jews in exile even a minute for the great pleasure and satisfaction that the Divine service in exile creates for Him, a Jew cries: "all that the master of the house tells you, do, except to leave."[23] All that the master of the house - this is G-d - says, one must do "except to leave." One must not remain even a minute, G-d forbid, in a situation of "leaving," the table of their father. One begs and demands, as it were, of G-d: "send now the one You will send" - in the beginning of the year "by whom You will send"[24] and bring **already** the true and complete Redemption!

And together with the completion of the work of *shlichus* (at the conclusion of *Likkutei Torah*, Parshas Brocha[25]) one immediately reaches the completion of the wedding - the Song of Songs - of Israel and G-d (specifically through an actualization of the good resolution to learn all of *Torah Or* and *Likkutei Torah*, all their chapters until the end. For learning the Torah contained within them hastens the actual Redemptive process.)

(From the talk of Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sarah, 25 Mar-Cheshvan, Blessing of the month of Kislev, 5752)

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23. *Pesachim* 86:b.

24. *[The Hebrew words numerically add up to (5)752, the year in which the sicha was said. Translator's note.]*

25. *[Torah Or and Likkutei Torah, comprise the Alter Rebbe's Chassidic discourses on the five books of the Torah and the Song of Songs. The concluding words on Deuteronomy deal with Shlichus and the commencement of the next section on Song of Songs deals with the wedding of Israel and G-d. Translator's note.]*

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