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

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

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27:4 | ועשה לי מטעמים כאשר אהבתי
Prepare for me delicacies, such as I love

There are two kinds of gratification before G-d: one, from the complete annihilation of evil by the righteous; the second, when evil is subdued while it is still at its strongest and most powerful through the efforts of the ordinary man.

This is the deeper significance of the verse, *"Prepare for me delicacies, such as I love."* The Almighty is speaking to the community of Israel, telling them that there are two kinds of gratification - delicacies, in the plural - which He seeks from them. The analogy is to earthly foods, which likewise include two kinds of relishes: sweet and luscious foods, and tart and sour foods which

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1. The *Benoni*, literally 'the middle one.' Rabbi Schneur Zalmen refers to the first 53 chapters of his *Tanya* as the 'Book of the Benonim', or the guidebook for the ordinary man. In it Rabbi Schneur Zalman formulates the inner profile and struggles of the Benoni, for whom the perfection of the *Tzaddik* (the Righteous Man) is beyond reach but who nonetheless refuses to succumb to the self-centered desires of his 'animal' self and allow them to be realized in his thoughts, speech or actions. The *Benoni* thus occupies the middle ground between perfection and corruption: his character is identical to that of the Rasha (the Wicked Man), consisting of the good/evil dichotomy that is the original, natural state of every man, but his behavior is as flawless as the *Tzaddik's*. Despite the extremely high standards and rigorous disciplines that the level of Benoni demands, Rabbi Schneur Zalman demonstrates how it is indeed within feasible reach of every man, regardless of brain-power, character, or spiritual station.

have been spiced and garnished so that they are made into delicacies which gratify the soul.

Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi

The Headless Etrog

One day, Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov said to his disciples:

"In a nearby village lives a Reb Dovid, a simple Jew who ekes out a scant living by the toil of his hands. But despite his poverty, Reb Dovid was determined to acquire a top quality etrog (citron) for the *Sukos* festival in order to observe the *mitzvah* of *lulav* and *etrog* in the optimum manner. All year he scraped and saved, denying himself his most essential needs. He then made the long, wearisome trip to the city and returned with an *etrog* which the richest man in town could not match.

"Reb Dovid's wife was furious. With barely a crust of bread to put on the table, her husband goes and spends a small fortune on an *etrog!* In her rage and frustration she grabbed the *etrog* and bit off its tip, making it invalid for use on the festival.

"Reb Dovid held his peace. He saw the incident as a sign that he is unworthy of such a magnificent *etrog*. How presumptuous of me, he thought, to believe that a simple Jew such as myself could aspire to such an *etrog*...

"Never since the day that Abraham bound Isaac upon the altar," the Baal Shem Tov concluded his story, "has a man withstood a test with such integrity as Reb Dovid displayed in refusing to be angered."

Source:

Sefer Hasichos 5696 (Talks of Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok of Lubavitch, 1935- 36), p. 148.

In loving memory of
Mrs. **Roneete Mona Mina** bas Reb **Zev** ע"ה **Kurtzman**
Passed away on 9 Cheshvan, 5783
ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.
*

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In loving memory of
OUR DEAR FRIEND AND COPY EDITOR
Rabbi **Benyomin Daniel (Brad)** ben Reb **Ephraim** ע"ה **Hoffman**
Passed away on 24 Tamuz, 5783
ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.
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Rabbi **Yosef Yitzchok** שיחי' **Shagalov**
Los Angeles, California

BESURAS HAGEULO
The Announcement Of The Redemption

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The essential point in the life of every Jew and that of the Jewish people as a whole throughout all the generations has been: "**All the days of your life to bring about the days of Moshiach**."[1] This requires extra emphasis in this generation and in our times, as mentioned frequently of late, that all aspects have been completed and we need only **greet** our righteous Moshiach in actuality.

…"All the days of your life" means every moment of a person's life, day or night, awake or asleep, for he is still alive then through his breathing ("All that breathes praises G-d," and "with each and every breath a person breathes..."[2]), which is necessary every moment (unlike eating and drinking). And "all the days of your life to bring about the days of Moshiach" means that his life (every instant of it) is bringing the days of Moshiach. That is, a Jew does not limit himself only to those times when he thinks or speaks or does something to bring Moshiach. Rather the essence of his life ("your life") is to bring the days of Moshiach.

…In more detail:

The concept of "All the days of your life to bring about the days of Moshiach" expresses that immediately when the essence of the soul awakens (thus revealing the essence, and only the essence, of its existence), it feels in the very air it **breathes** the concept of Moshiach, **the air of Moshiach**, or in the words of our Sages of blessed memory, "**the spirit** of King Moshiach."[3]

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1. *Brochos* 12, end of second side - in the Mishneh.
2. *Tehillim* at the end. *Bereishis Rabba* chapter 14:9. *Devarim Rabba* chapter 2:37.
3. *Bereishis Rabba* chapter 2:4. Chapter 8:1.

It can be suggested that the "air (spirit) of Moshiach" is even higher than "the light[4] of Moshiach," because **the light** of Moshiach indicates **the revelation** of Moshiach through **his actions** (such as "he will fight the wars of G-d" until "he is victorious,"[5] etc.). However **the air** of Moshiach indicates the essence (the very life) of Moshiach. That is, [this refers to] the revelation of **his existence** (from his earlier status as a leader[6]) as the King Moshiach. And after the revelation of **his existence** (air that is incomparable to the light of Moshiach) begins the revelation that all can see through **his activity** (light of Moshiach).

Accordingly, it can be understood that the main innovation in the coming of Moshiach is the revelation of **his existence** ("**I found** Dovid my servant"[7]), because all the details that follow (his public revelation through his activities to redeem Israel, and everything concerned with the days of Moshiach) come **as a consequence** of the revelation of his existence, **and are included in it**.

…In terms of the practical relevance - "Action is the main thing"[8] - is that every Jew needs to increase with additional strength and vigor the concept that "all the days of your life to bring about the days of Moshiach." His entire existence, immediately upon awakening from his sleep, is penetrated with the life of Moshiach (for this is the essence of the existence of every Jew, the Moshiach within him).

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4. *Zohar* section 3 34:b. Explained in *Likkutei Levi Yitzchak* on the *Zohar*, section 3, p. 219 ff.

5. *Rambam, Hilchos Melachim*, end of chapter 11.

6. "From those that come from the descendants of Dovid and still have rulership in exile... for example Rabbeinu HaKodesh" *(Chiddushei Aggados of the Maharsha to Sanhedrin 98:b).*

7. *Tehillim* 89:21. *[The Hebrew word for existence - metziyus - and that for found - matzah - have the same three letter root (Mem, Tzadik, Aleph) and are thus etymologically related. Translator's note.]*

8. Avos, chapter 1, Mishneh 17.

…And may it be G-d's Will and this is main thing - that at the beginning of the month of Kislev, the month of Redemption, there should come in reality and visibly the true and complete Redemption, the beginning of Redemption and its completion, through our righteous Moshiach. "A king from the house of Dovid will arise..." until "He will perfect the world to serve G-d in unity, as it says[9] 'then I will turn to the nations, etc., to serve Him together.'"[10]

This is also alluded to in the conclusion of the Haftarah of the past week... the Haftarah of the past week concluded with the pronouncement, "**Let my lord King Dovid live forever**."[11] This refers to the eternality of the kingship of Dovid that was continued through the kingship of Shlomo and which will be completed by the king Moshiach who is "from the House of Dovid and the seed of Shlomo."[12] - The content of that declaration is the revelation of **the existence** of the king Moshiach.

And through this and after this comes his revelation to the eyes of everyone through his activities, etc.

(From the talk of Wednesday night, Parshas Toldos, First Day of Rosh Chodesh Kislev, and Shabbos Parshas Toldos, 2 Kislev 5752)

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9. Zephaniah 3:9.

10. Rambam, Hilchos Melachim, end of chapter 11.

11. Melachim Aleph (I Kings) 1:31.

12. *Sefer HaMitzvos* of the Rambam, negative commandment 362. Rambam's *Commentary on the Mishneh Sanhedrin*, beginning of Perek Chelek, principle 12. Iggeres Teiman.

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