

ONCE UPON A CHASSID

FESTIVALS

Stories and Anecdotes
told by the Lubavitcher Rebbe,
his predecessors, and their chassidim.
Arranged in conjunction with the festivals of the year.

By Michoel Green

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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
 ת.נ.צ.ב.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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No Questions, Please

In the early fifties the Lubavitcher Rebbe began a campaign to dispatch emissaries to every corner of the globe, to fight assimilation and promote Jewish values and observance. Straight out of Yeshiva and just married, the Rebbe sent his followers to remote places of the world where few if any observant Jews lived. At the time, the concept of outreach was quite revolutionary. Moreover, it was practically unheard of that a young religious couple should leave their insular community and all its conveniences – family and friends, readily available kosher food, Orthodox schools and synagogues – and instead reside in a spiritual wasteland of secular society. Nonetheless, the Rebbe expected his chassidim to make these sacrifices on behalf of their alienated brethren.

Initially this demand met with much hesitation. While many young people were eager and willing to stand up to the challenge, others demurred with a variety of considerations. One such couple, when solicited by the Rebbe to move to a far-off town, voiced their objections. The young man argued that he had intended to remain longer in *kolel*,¹ immersed in his studies. Furthermore, he continued, when

1. Academy for all-day Torah study, financially supported by the community.

No Questions, Please

he mentioned the proposal to his parents and in-laws, they simply would not hear of it. The precept of “honoring thy parents” is a justified cause for concern, is it not? At a subsequent gathering the Rebbe addressed these issues, and prefaced with a story:

* * *

Every Friday evening, shortly before twilight, the saintly Arizal² had a unique ritual. During this most spiritual and serene time, he would walk outdoors, accompanied by his disciples, and “greet the Shabbat bride” in the field. On one such occasion, the Arizal was in an unusually elated mood. Out in the field he turned to his entourage and exclaimed: “Let us proceed to Jerusalem together and greet the holy Shabbat there!”

His followers were startled; traveling is forbidden on the Sabbath, and only several minutes remained before sundown. It was humanly impossible to arrive in the Holy City, a distance of hundreds of miles away, within these short moments. Now, the Arizal’s students were well familiar with their master’s wondrous ways – if he intended to greet the Sabbath in Jerusalem, he certainly would do so. The *tzaddik* was capable of instantly transporting them via supernatural means. Though enticed by their Rebbe’s proposal, some of them paused hesitantly. They did not relish the idea of spending the Shabbat away from home, aban-

2. Rabbi Yitzchok Luria, seventeenth century Kabbalist.

Once Upon A Chassid

doning their families without prior notice. “Let us first go request our wives’ consent,” they replied.

Upon hearing their response, the Arizal became gravely serious. “You have just forfeited the opportunity to merit instant Redemption,” he declared with a solemn gaze.

“In that case,” the bewildered disciples rejoined, “we shall readily go with you!” Yet their pleas were all in vain, for it was too late. The gates of Heaven were only open at that auspicious moment, had they all heeded the Arizal’s words without any hesitation. Since they faltered, the Jewish people were to remain in exile for centuries to come.

* * *

Upon completing his story, the Rebbe commented:

This episode is somewhat puzzling. After all, what is so terrible about wanting to inform their spouses of their changed plans? Marital harmony is a Halachic obligation, especially with regard to the Sabbath! Indeed, for this very reason our Sages enjoined that a candle be kindled in every Jewish home on Friday before nightfall³ – to prevent the possible discord that could erupt in the household should anyone stumble in the dark.

3. Talmud, *Shabbos* 23b; *Shulchan Aruch*, *Orach Chayim* 263:3; *Magen Avraham* *ibid*.

No Questions, Please

The answer is self-evident: when one receives an instruction from his Rebbe, there is no need for ambivalence. This is not the way to bring Moshiach. Rather one must obey, with unwavering certainty that his Rebbe's directive is perfectly consistent with the Code of Jewish Law. All the other concerns, albeit valid, are simply irrelevant. If the Arizal bid his disciples to proceed to Jerusalem, they ought to have complied at once.

These emissaries have been given the rare opportunity to set out and conquer the world with Torah and mitzvos. They are the fortunate individuals who will verily bring about the long-awaited Redemption. Accordingly, now is not the time to confer with one's parents or in-laws. Likewise all other considerations, however justified, must be disregarded. A soldier must follow his instructions despite all odds, and this is precisely how the war will be won. Indeed, as a result of such conduct, the emissaries and their families will be showered with abundant blessings, in both the material and spiritual sense.

Source:

Told by the Lubavitcher Rebbe on Shabbos Parshas Shemini, 1958.

BESURAS HAGEULO

The Announcement Of The Redemption

14

[This excerpt follows the Rebbe's instruction concerning the preparation for Yud Shvat (tenth of the month of Shvat), the anniversary of the passing of the Previous Rebbe. The Rebbe called for increases in Torah study and tzedekah. He then proceeds to call for extra emphasis on preparation for the Redemption. Translator's note.]

The preparation for Redemption should be emphasized more, by strengthening faith and trust in, and expectation of, the Redemption, "I await him every day that he should come."¹ - In the language of the Previous Rebbe:² **"Stand ready all of you to greet our righteous Moshiach."**³

The above applies specifically in this year, "It will be a year in which I will show him wonders,"⁴ and after they've already seen the miracles and wonders in this last period, including and particularly - the exodus of many Jews from that country [the Soviet Union] to the land of Israel, through which they also come closer to Judaism, Torah and its mitzvos. For subject⁵ is a reflection and example of, and the immediate preparation to fulfill the promise, "a great congregation will return here."⁶

1. The 12th principle of the 13 principles [of faith].

2. *[This talk was given the Shabbos before the yahrtzeit (anniversary) of the passing of the Previous Rebbe. Translator's note]*

3. *HaYom Yom* 15 Teves. And in many places.

4. *[In Hebrew, each letter has a numerical equivalent. The letters of the year 5751 (Hey, Tuf, Shin, Nun, Aleph) are an acronym of this phrase, based on Michah 7:15. Translator's note]*

5. *[The emigration from the Soviet Union. Translator's note]*

6. *Yirmiyahu* (Jeremiah) 31:7.

BESURAS HAGEULO

There has been an increase in the above during these most recent days.

The events of these final days in the affair of "the kingdoms will struggle with each other" emphasize that we find ourselves in reality close to the Redemption, as explained in the midrashim of our Sages, may their memories be for a blessing,⁷ that this⁸ is one **of the signs of Redemption.**

In the language of the Midrash [it states⁹], "In the year the King Moshiach will be revealed... the king of Persia will provoke the king of Arabia... all the nations of the world will be in turmoil and terror... and (the Holy One, Blessed be He) will say to them (Israel), "My children, do not be afraid, all that I have done I have done only for your sake... **the time of your Redemption has arrived.**"

...And in regard to the activities of the enemies of Israel, which they try to injure, G-d forbid - there is no substance in them, and their efforts will not succeed,

...The connection of these events to the children of Israel is - the knowledge that **"the time of your Redemption has arrived"**; therefore, stand ready all of you to greet our righteous Moshiach, including and in particular through increasing in matters of Torah and mitzvos, since through "one mitzvah," one tips the scale for himself and the entire world to the side of merit, and causes for himself and them salvation and deliverance."¹⁰

From the talk of Shabbos Parshas Bo, 4 Shvat, 5751

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

8. *[The struggle of the nations, particularly the Gulf War, prophetically described in the Yalkut Shimoni (see next paragraph). Translator's note]*

9. *Yalkut Shimoni Yeshayahu* (Isaiah), remez 499.

10. Rambam, *Hilchos Teshuva*, (Laws of Repentance) Chapter 3, Halacha 4.

THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE REDEMPTION

61

There is an innovation unique to our generation - the ninth [from the Baal Shem Tov]- over all preceding generations, including the previous one (the eighth). Since the Redemption had not actually occurred then, the "come to Pharaoh" (the "revelation of "all the lights"¹ to those below) was not completely perfect, as a soul in a healthy body. (The soul was detached from the body, and also the soul when it was in a body was in the situation of "[his] speech was in exile," etc.²). This is not the case with our generation - the last generation of exile and the first generation of Redemption - when imminently and immediately "the lights [sun and moon] will be hung." Not only is nothing lacking in the great lights (the revelation of the Written Torah and the Oral Torah³), but just the opposite; for this generation will realize a greater perfection [in the revelation of the Written and Oral Torah]. (There will no longer be the "speech impediments" in the [transmission of] the Oral and Written Torah.⁴ Rather they will be transcended.) Even souls within bodies will internalize "the revelation of all the lights" that were "hung" now, by virtue of the imminent arrival of our righteous Moshiach ("Send now by the one You will send"⁵), who will teach Torah to the all the people,⁶ including "a new Torah will go forth from Me."⁷

1. *Zohar*, vol. 1 210a.

2. [A reference to the Previous Rebbe's inability to speak due to a stroke. Translator's note.]

3. See *Shaloh* in his introduction 16, end of first side. His tractate *Shavuot* 191a. See *Likkutei Torah Shir HaShirim* 11:d. Or *HaTorah* on *Bereishis* 14a, 36 end of second side. *Bamidbar* p. 46. *Megillas Esther* (in 5750, edition p. 149), Nach, p. 217 and in other sources. See *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 30, p. 10 ff.

4. *Zohar*, vol. 3, p. 28, beginning of first side.

5. *Shmos* 4:13.

6. See Rambam, Laws of Repentance, chapter 9, halacha 2. *Likkutei Torah Tzav*, 17a ff. And in several other places.

7. *Yeshayahu* 51:4. *Vayikra Rabba*, chapter 13:3.

BESURAS HAGEULO

...We see in reality (as mentioned many times recently) how the nations of the world in many, many countries are assisting the Jewish people in their Divine service (to an even greater degree than it was during the exodus from Egypt). Even that country [Russia] which was closed and locked for many years, and which did not permit Jews to emigrate, etc. and did not allow the proper observance of the Torah and mitzvos, has recently changed from one extreme to the other. Now not only are Jews permitted to live there as they please, and even to emigrate, but even more, the country assists them.

Things have changed to such an extent that we can see today in reality that, in addition to the Jews being "Ready, all of you" for the Redemption, the nations of the world also stand "ready, all of you" for the Jews to go out already from exile and go into the land of Israel in the true and complete Redemption.

And with our souls in bodies without any interruption at all, we will come immediately to the full realization of "Come to Pharaoh" with the true and complete Redemption, the completion of the revelation of "all the lights will be revealed," "And you, O L-rd, will be a light for the world."⁸

...It has been mentioned many times that already "all the appointed times have passed"⁹ and everything is concluded, and the Redemption should have come long ago. But for totally incomprehensible reasons, it has not yet come.

Therefore it follows, that now the Redemption must come imminently and immediately. To employ a colloquial expression: this is High time for the true and complete Redemption!

8. *Yeshayahu* 60:19.

9. *Sanhedrin* 97b.

THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE REDEMPTION

...In terms of spiritual matters (including the "highest" levels of spirituality) there already is perfection, including also the most (spirituality) complete state of Redemption. Thus the spiritual eyes of the Jew can already see it. We must open our physical eyes that they too should see the Redemption in a way that is clearly visible to eyes of flesh in our time...

Of practical relevance, everyone should resolve that his study of the previous Rebbe's Torah should complete and compensate for that which was lacking in the dissemination and spreading of the wellsprings due to the speech impediment of my sainted father-in-law. One accomplishes this both through one's own learning **out loud** as well as spreading of the wellsprings to others.

*(From the talk of Wednesday, Parshas Bo, 3 Shvat,
and Shabbos Parshas Bo, 6 Shvat, 5752)*

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** שיחי **Wolf**
Rabbi & Mrs. **Yosef Y.** and **Gittel Rochel** שיחי **Shagalov**

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 - א' - שתבלחט
Mrs. **Elka** bas **Raizel** 'תח' **Caplan**
May she go from strength to strength
in health, happiness, Torah and *mitzvot*.

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