

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** 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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Once Upon A Chassid

25:8

ועשו לי מקדש ושכנתי בתוכם
*They shall make for Me a Sanctuary,
and I shall dwell amongst them*

G-d desired a dwelling place in the lower world.

Midrash Tanchuma

The physical existence was not created to be overwhelmed and shattered, but to be developed into a “dwelling for G-d,” a place where the Divine Presence is ‘at home’ and freely expressed. Thus, the mitzvot were given to be acted out within the natural world, so that man utilize his own natural powers and the natural resources of his environment to implement the will of G-d.

Thus, a mitzvah that is performed in a ‘spiritual’ manner, a mitzvah that is disconnected from our worldly reality, is lacking the basic function of the mitzvah: to develop the natural world, as it is, as a vehicle to express the all-pervading truth of its Creator.

Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, *shlita*, the
Lubavitcher Rebbe

On the Neva

During his imprisonment by the czarist regime, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi was held in the Peter-Paul

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Fortress, on an island in the Neva River in Petersburg. The investigation into his 'crimes' was being conducted by the czar's intelligence organization, which was housed in a building on the mainland. So Rabbi Schneur Zalman was frequently ferried across the river for questioning.

One night as the small boat was making its way across the Neva, the sky cleared and a quarter moon illuminated the skies. Rabbi Schneur Zalman, wishing to avail himself of the opportunity to 'sanctify the new moon' (*Kiddush Levanah*),¹ asked the official in charge to stop the boat. The official refused.

Suddenly, the boat came to a complete halt. Nothing the ferryman did would advance it a single oar-sweep. The Rebbe stood up in the boat and recited the first few verses of Psalm 148 which prefaces the blessing on the moon.

1. The Jewish month follows the moon's phases. The moon's wax and wane, its dwindle to nothingness and inspiring rebirth, reflects the saga of Jewish history: we, too, have had our ups and downs, rebounding time and again from crushing defeat to glorious renewal. In the words of the Talmud (Sukah 29a), "The people of Israel emulate the moon, calculate their months by the moon, and are destined to be renewed as she is."

So every month, we celebrate the affinity between the Jewish nation and its alter-ego, the moon. Standing under the moonlit sky, we say: "*Blessed are You G -d.. Who, by His word, has created the heavens, and by the breath of His mouth, all their hosts.. and to the moon he said.- "renew!" - a crown of glory to [the Jewish people] who are destined to be renewed as she is.*"

The proper time for the blessing is at the start of every month in the Jewish calendar (preferably between the 7th and the 15th of the month).

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But Rabbi Schneur Zalman refused to perform a *mitzvah* by availing himself of more than natural means. So he released the boat, allowing it to continue on its way. Again he requested of the official that the boat be stopped. Only after his request was granted and the boat came to a natural standstill did he proceed to perform the *mitzvah* of *kiddush levanah*.

Source:

Likkutei Dibburim [Collected Talks of Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok of Lubavitch], vol. IV, p. 1504.

BESURAS HAGEULO

The Announcement Of The Redemption

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In our generation - the last generation of exile and the first generation of Redemption - after all the requirements have already been completed, and it only remains to actually greet our righteous Moshiach, it is certain that G-d will bless every Jew with golden riches, materially and spiritually. [This blessing] will be such that (as it was "in the days of your going forth from the land of Egypt" and will be now that "I will show him wonders"¹) "every single Jew will have no less than **ninety** Libyan donkeys with him loaded with the wealth and gold of Egypt"²

This is in order that one should use the wealth ("gold and silver and copper") to make of one's own home a Sanctuary and Temple to G-d (and I will dwell among them, within each and every individual). This is also done through giving tzedekah to build synagogues and Houses of Study in the simple sense, "a small sanctuary."³

Further, and this is the currently essential requirement, the third Beis HaMikdash [Temple] must be built in simple reality:

After all the explanations of the verse "Make me a Sanctuary and I will dwell among them," including the explanation "within each and every individual," a Torah verse does not leave its simple meaning.⁴ First and foremost the practical legal meaning of this text is that Jews have the obligation to build the Beis HaMikdash.

1. *Micha* 7:15.

2. *Bechoros* 5b. And also in *Tanchuma Beshalach* 25. Cited by Rashi, *Bo* 13:13 (See *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 16, p. 253, note 20*).

3. *Yechezkel* 11:16. *Megillah* 29a.

4. *Shabbos* 63:1. See there for cross references.

THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE REDEMPTION

In regard to us, this means to build the third Beis HaMikdash, in simple reality, according to the ruling of the Rambam,⁵ that it will be built through our righteous Moshiach, "And he will build the Temple in its place."⁶ The Rambam stated,⁷ "Everyone is obligated to build and assist, with their own efforts and with their money, men, women and children, as with the Sanctuary in the wilderness." It's obvious that this is also relevant to the third Temple, that every Jew will participate through his contributions, men and women, and it may be suggested that even children (as it was with the gifts to the Tabernacle).

*(From the talk of Wednesday night, Thursday, Friday
and Shabbos Kodesh, Parshas Terumah, 5752)*

5. *Laws of Kings*, beginning of chapter 11 and its end. See *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 18, p.418 ff. See there for cross references.

6. The expression of the Rambam there, end of chapter 11.

7. *Laws of the Temple (Hilchos Beis HaBechirah)*, chapter 1, halacha 12.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF
Reb Aharon ben Reb Yitzchok ע"ה Nassy
Passed away on 10 Adar, 5778
ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

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IN LOVING MEMORY OF OUR DEAR FATHER
Reb Alexander ben Reb Hirsh ע"ה Voloshin
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