

# 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**

Reprinted for Chag HaPesach, 5782  
(Vol. 29)



Published and Copyrighted by  
**Vaad L'hafotzas Sichos**

788 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, NY 11213  
Tel. (718) 774-7200 - Fax. (718) 774-7494

5759 ♦ 1999

**IN LOVING MEMORY OF**  
 Horav **Schneur Zalman Halevi** עי"ה  
 ben Horav **Yitzchok Elchonon Halevi** הי"ד  
**Shagalov**  
 Passed away on 21 Tamuz, 5766  
 Reb **Dovid Asniel** ben Reb **Eliyahu** עי"ה  
**Ekman**  
 Passed away on 5 Sivan - Erev Shavuot, 5765  
 Mrs. **Devora Rivka** bas Reb **Yosef Eliezer** עי"ה  
**Marenburg**  
 Passed away on the second day  
 of Rosh Chodesh Adar, 5766  
 Reb **Yitzchok Moshe** (Ian)  
 ben Reb **Dovid Asniel** עי"ה  
**Ekman (Santiago, Chile)**  
 Passed away on the 24th day of Shevat, 5769  
 ת. נ. צ. ג. ה.  
**AND IN HONOR OF**  
 Mrs. **Esther Shaindel** bas **Fraidel Chedva** שתחיל  
**Shagalov**  
**DEDICATED BY**  
 Rabbi & Mrs. **Yosef Y.** and **Gittel Rochel** שיחי  
**Shagalov**

Reprinted with permission of:  
**"Vaad L'Hafotzas Sichos"**

by:

**Moshiach Awareness Center,**

a Project of:

**Enlightenment For The Blind, Inc.**

602 North Orange Drive.

Los Angeles, CA 90036

Tel.: (323) 934-7095 \* Fax: (323) 934-7092

<http://www.torah4blind.org>

e-mail: [sys@torah4blind.org](mailto:sys@torah4blind.org)

**Rabbi Yosef Y. Shagalov,**  
**Executive Director**

Printed in the U.S.A.

## *Downstairs Phobia*

During World War I, Rabbi Shalom DovBer and his family were forced to vacate the town of Lubavitch and resettle in Rostov. Upon his arrival, he rented a modest apartment at 166 Pushkinsky Street, on the second floor. Now, the ground floor was occupied by an army general, a cruel and vicious-tempered individual whom everybody feared, yet this did not seem to concern the Rebbe at all. The first Purim following his arrival, he conducted a lively *farbrengen*<sup>1</sup> in his apartment and told the chassidim not to worry about annoying the downstairs tenant. At the Rebbe's behest, they sang and danced, and the day passed peacefully. After Purim, however, everyone was still wary of the irascible general.

Pesach was approaching and many of the Rebbe's belongings had not yet arrived from Lubavitch. Left with no other alternative, the Rebbe and his wife, Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah, had to *kasher* their year-round water urn for use during the holiday. The two of them did the koshering procedure themselves, pouring boiling water over the urn to render it fit for Passover use. The Rebbe poured plenty of water, scrupulously insuring that the water touched all the vessel's surfaces.

---

1. Chassidic gathering.

## Downstairs Phobia

When the Rebbetzin saw how much water her husband was spilling all over the floor, she was alarmed. "Try not to spill so much water," she cautioned him. "I am worried about our downstairs neighbor!"

"You're afraid of downstairs," mused the Rebbe aloud, "yet why are you not afraid of Upstairs?"

\* \* \*

The Lubavitcher Rebbe often visited the grave-site of his revered father-in-law, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok of Lubavitch. There he would stand in prayer for many hours, reading the hundreds of notes he received daily from people all over the world who requested the Rebbe's blessing.

Once, while returning from the cemetery, the driver noticed that the Rebbe was in a hurry. His attempts to drive faster were in vain, however, for they were stopped by a red light at every intersection.

After a while, the Rebbe commented, "My, my! If you would only adhere to the rules of *Shulchan Aruch*<sup>2</sup> as meticulously as you observe the traffic signals, you would be a fine Jew indeed."

### Source:

*Shmu'os V'sipurim* ["Sayings and Stories"] by Rabbi Raphael Kahan, vol. I, p. 155; told by Rabbi Yisroel Gordon of Morristown, New Jersey.

---

2. Code of Jewish Law.

# BESURAS HAGEULO

## The Announcement Of The Redemption

### 11

With respect to Gideon, we find that: "In his days<sup>1</sup> the Jewish people were in distress. The Holy One, Blessed be He, sought a person who would find merit in them. When He found Gideon to be meritorious, because he found merit in them, an angel immediately appeared to him, as it says: "And the angel of G-d appeared to him and said to him, 'Go with this power, with **the power of the merit you have found in my children.**'" "Said the Holy One, Blessed be He, it is within your capacity to find a defense for Israel. **In your merit they shall be redeemed.**"<sup>2</sup>

...The merit which will hasten the Redemption is the following:

Even in the Talmudic era it has been said that "all the deadlines have passed."<sup>3</sup> Certainly now that we have endured a lengthy and arduous exile, the duration of which has exceeded 1,900 years, **and he has still not arrived...** And in regard to Teshuvah ("It depends only on Teshuvah<sup>3</sup>) [repentance, return, a prerequisite for Redemption], they have already done Teshuvah. Indeed, there is no Jewish person who has not entertained a thought of Teshuvah, (not just once, but) several times in the course of his lifetime. This [thought of Teshuvah] can transform "instantaneously"<sup>4</sup> a perfectly wicked person into a perfectly righteous individual, in accordance with the Talmudic ruling<sup>5</sup> that one who would betroth a woman "stipulating that I am a (perfectly<sup>6</sup>) righteous individual, even if he

---

1. *Tanchuma, Shoftim* 4.

2. *Yalkut Shimoni, Shoftim* 62.

3. *Sanhedrin* 97b.

4. *Zohar* I, 129, end side a.

5. *Kiddushin* 49b. Rambam, *Hilchos Ishus*, 8:5. *Tur, Shulchan Aruch, Even HoEzer*, 38:31.

6. Based on the version cited on *Or Zarua* 112.

## BESURAS HAGEULO

were previously a perfectly wicked person, she is betrothed, for perhaps he had a thought of teshuvah."

Considering the above, it is with utmost certainty that our righteous Moshiach must arrive **here and now, immediately, [mamosh] in the most literal sense.**

Now, this exercise of finding merit<sup>7</sup> in and of itself should suffice to bring about the Redemption. Moreover, in addition to the finding of merit, the imminence of Moshiach's arrival constitutes a **definitive ruling issued by many rabbis and halachic authorities.** Further, since Torah "is not in heaven,"<sup>8</sup> this ruling issued by the earthly courts "obligates," so to speak, and affords a unique privilege to, the heavenly courts. **And so it will be confirmed!**

\* \* \*

In our day and age, after G-d has vented His rage with the destruction of the Holy Temple, and after all of "our deeds and actions throughout the duration of exile,"<sup>9</sup> and after all the decrees of oppression and persecution - may Hashem, indeed, shield us and protect us from them - the Jewish people have endured throughout the protracted and arduous final exile, particularly the Holocaust of the very last generation, the process of refinement and purification has, without any doubt, been achieved in full, "enough and even too much." Consequently, the [current<sup>10</sup>] "siege of the Babylonian

---

7. [i.e., that we have already passed all the deadlines as well as satisfying the condition of Teshuvah. Translator's note.]

8. Netzavim, 30:12. See Bava Metzia 59b.

9. Tanya, beginning of chapter 37.

10. [The Hebrew term Samach, which means "besieged," can also be rendered "supported." This talk was delivered on the fast day Asara b'Teves (the Tenth of the month of Teves), the anniversary of the siege of Jerusalem by the Babylonian king. The Rebbe here is alluding to the threats of the modern day Babylonian dictator, which are actually the events which serve as preludes to the Redemption. Translator's note.]

## THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE REDEMPTION

king"<sup>11</sup> has acquired an exclusively **positive** connotation, one that is **visibly and manifestly good, even to eyes of flesh**. In the words of our sages:<sup>12</sup> The Holy One Blessed be He says to Israel, "My children have no fear. All that I have done<sup>13</sup> I have done exclusively for you... the time of your Redemption has arrived."

The emphasis of this generation - particularly this year, the year designated as "It shall be a year of wonders I will show him" - should be placed on the concept of G-d's support of those who have fallen,<sup>14</sup> to strengthen and encourage the Jewish people, emphasizing particularly the support and encouragement acquired through faith in the coming of Moshiach and the implicit trust that "behold he (our righteous Moshiach) is coming."<sup>15</sup> This should be accompanied with enhanced preparation for his arrival by way of teshuvah [repentance, return] and observance of Torah and mitzvos. In the words of the pronouncement of my sainted father-in-law - the leader of our generation: "immediate Teshuvah, immediate Redemption."<sup>16</sup> "Return, O, Israel, unto G-d your G-d; prepare yourselves and your family to greet our righteous Moshiach, who shall arrive soon, in the most literal sense."<sup>17</sup>

*(From the talks of Shabbos Parshas Vayechi  
(and Asara b'Teves, may it be transformed into joy) 5751)*

---

11. *Yechezkal* 24:2.

12. *Yalkut Shimoni, Yeshayahu* 499.

13. This includes the efforts of the Babylonian King, who is merely an ax in the hands of the one who chops with it. [i.e. He is G-d's instrument.]

14. [The phrase *סומך נופלים* - "supports the falling" - is similar to the expression mentioned before - *בבל מלך בסך* - the Babylonian King besieged," which the Rebbe interpreted in a positive vein to mean that "he supported." Translator's note.]

15. *Shir HaShirim* 2:8. See *Shir HaShirim Rabbah* on this verse (2:8(b)).

16. In his *Igros Kodesh*, vol. 5, end of p. 361 ff., 377 ff., 408 ff. and in other places.

17. *Hayom Yom* - 15 Teves.

12

All of the signs mentioned by our sages indicate that we are currently situated **at the very end of the period of exile**. We have "passed all the deadlines."<sup>1</sup> We have also performed Teshuvah [repentance, return, a prerequisite for Redemption]. Indeed, my sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation, declared (several decades ago) that we have already concluded all the service [necessary for Redemption], including the "polishing of the buttons,"<sup>2</sup> and we now stand ready ("All of you stand ready") to greet our righteous Moshiach.<sup>3</sup>

\* \* \*

Despite the difficult and protracted final exile, which has lasted more than 1,900 years (in stark contrast to the duration of the Egyptian bondage which lasted 210 years), the nature of "the Children of **Israel**" has essentially **transcended exile**. Thus, every additional moment we remain in exile is a form "having **now come** into Egypt,"<sup>4</sup> "as if they had that very day entered into Egypt."<sup>5</sup>

The Jewish people, therefore, stand with firm faith and conviction that G-d will immediately fulfill his promise that "I have indeed remembered you"<sup>6</sup> by bringing the genuine and complete Redemption, especially when hearing from the Moses of our generation,<sup>7</sup> my sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation, that we have already concluded all matters of Divine service and

1. *Sanhedrin* 97b.

2. Talk of Simchas Torah, 5689.

3. Cf. *Hayom Yom*, among others, 15 Teves.

4. *Shemos* 1:1.

5. *Shemos Rabbah*, beginning of our Parsha (8:14), *Tanchuma*, loc. cit. 3.

6. *Shemos* 3:16.

7. See *Bereishis Rabbah* 56:7: "There is no generation in which there is none like Moses." See also *Zohar* 3:273a. *Tikkunei Zohar* 69 (112, beginning of side a. 114, beginning of side a). *Tanya* chapter 44. Ibid. *Iggeres HaKodesh*, elucidation of sec. 27, end.



## THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE REDEMPTION

are presently standing ready to greet our righteous Redeemer [Moshiach]. This is particularly true now that we have reached the milestone of forty years<sup>8</sup> concerning which the Torah says, "G-d gave you a heart to know and eyes to see and ears to hear."<sup>9</sup> Additionally, we are now situated in the fifty first year [5751], which in Hebrew forms the acrostic (It shall be a year of) wonders which I will show him [נפלאות אראנו - Niflaos Avenu].

The Jewish people should, therefore, be encouraged and their spirits uplifted by declaring that G-d says daily, and literally, anew, that, "**I have indeed remembered you,**" and that your righteous Moshiach "stands behind the wall"<sup>10</sup> and that "this one is coming."<sup>11</sup> Accordingly we should prepare ourselves to greet him by increasing our observance of Torah and Mitzvos, **in consonance with the ruling of the Rambam**<sup>12</sup> (whose anniversary of passing is the 20th of Teves, the night after this Sabbath), that through "one Mitzvah, one can favorably alter the balance for oneself and for the entire world, causing oneself and them salvation and deliverance."

*(From the talks of Shabbos Parshas Shemos, 19 Teves 5751)*

---

8. *[I.e., forty years since the passing of the Previous Rebbe, a milestone which enables us to fully realize the intention and depth of the teachings that were said forty years earlier. - Translator's note.]*

9. *Tavo 29:3 [Moses said this to the Jewish people who were about to enter into the Promised Land, explaining that they were now capable of realizing that which they were taught by G-d forty years earlier. Translator's note.]*

10. *Shir HaShirim 2:9.*

11. *Ibid 8. See Shir HaShirim Rabbah on this verse (ch. 2:8(b)).*

12. *Hilchos Teshuvah 3:4.*

## לעילוי נשמת

הרה"ח הרה"ת עוסק בצ"צ ורב פעלים  
ר' יונה בן הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' מאיר ע"ה  
אבצן

מקושר בלו"נ לכ"ק אדמו"ר מלך המשיח  
ומסור ונתון להוראותיו פעולותיו וענייניו הק'  
עסק במסירה ונתינה בשליחות הק'  
בתרגום הדפסת והפצת תורת כ"ק אדמו"ר מה"מ  
ותורת רבותינו נשיאנו  
וספרים בענייני משיח וגאולה בכל קצווי תבל  
ע"י "ועד שיחות באנגלית" שניהלו למעלה מארבעים שנה

פירסם באמצעות מערכת טלפונית  
וה"רשת" שיעורי לימוד יומיים  
בספר התניא וברמב"ם בהתאם לתקנה הק'  
פעל במרץ ובהצלחה בשידוכי בני ובנות ישראל  
והביא להקמת מאות בתים בישראל  
עסק בעזר גשמי ורוחני מתוך אהבת ישראל  
וקיבל את כאו"א בסבר פנים יפות  
זכה להקים דור ישרים מבורך בנים ובנות  
עוסקים בתורה ובמצוות ומקושרים לנשיא דורנו  
נפטר במיטב שנותיו ביום רביעי פ' בא  
ג' שבט שנת ה'תשע"ט

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

(מנוסח המצבה)

\*

DEDICATED BY  
ENLIGHTENMENT FOR THE BLIND, INC.  
Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok שיחי Shagalov  
Los Angeles, California

**IN LOVING MEMORY OF A DEAR FRIEND**  
Horav **Avrohom Aharon** ben Reb **Yitzchok** ע"ה  
**Plotkin**

Passed away on Shabbat Parshat Nasso, 14 Sivan, 5780

**ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.**

\*

**DEDICATED BY**  
**ENLIGHTENMENT FOR THE BLIND, INC.**  
Rabbi **Yosef Yitzchok** שיחי **Shagalov**  
Los Angeles, California

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

**IN LOVING MEMORY OF**  
Mrs. **Chana** (Carrie) bas Reb **Meir** ע"ה **Greenberg**  
Passed away on 9 Sivan, 5781  
**ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.**  
\*

**DEDICATED BY**  
**CHABAD OF OAK PARK, CALIFORNIA**  
Rabbi & Mrs. **Yisroel** and **Leah** שיחי **Levine**

היי שותף בהפצת עניני "משיח וגאולה"!!!  
להקדשות ולפרטים נוספים:  
טל.: 753-6844 (718) או 934-7095 (323)  
אימייל: [info@torah4blind.org](mailto:info@torah4blind.org)

Be A Partner  
In Spreading *Inyonei Moshiach U'geula!!!*  
To Dedicate This Publication  
In Honor Of Your Family Or A Loved One  
For More Info. Call:  
(718) 753-6844 or (323) 934-7095  
or email: [info@torah4blind.org](mailto:info@torah4blind.org)

For this and other books on Moshiach & Geulah, go to:  
<http://www.torah4blind.org>  
**TO DEDICATE AN ISSUE IN HONOR OF A LOVED ONE, CALL (323) 934-7095**