

# 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 Acharon Shel Pesach, 5779  
(Vol. 30)



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** שתח'ל  
**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.

## No Complaints

I await his coming every day...

*Maimonides' "Thirteen Principles of Faith"*

On the final day of Pesach, the Baal Shem Tov used to eat a third festive meal in honor of Moshiach. He called it "Moshiach's *Seudah*." The final day of Pesach is the day for Moshiach's *Seudah* because on this day the radiance of the light of Moshiach shines openly.

*Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok of Lubavitch*

## *No Complaints*

The Talmud declares that the day Eliyahu the Prophet will come to herald the advent of Moshiach will not be a Friday, nor a day preceding the festivals, so as not to create any inconvenience.<sup>1</sup> For his unexpected arrival would invariably cause people to interrupt their Sabbath preparations in order to run outside and welcome him.<sup>2</sup>

At a public gathering on one such date, Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch spoke emphatically about Moshiach's imminent coming. One of his listeners coun-

---

1. Talmud, *Eruvin* 43b.

2. Rashi, *ibid*.

## Once Upon A Chassid

tered: “Why bother talking about Moshiach if he cannot come today in any case?”

“Let him come today,” replied the Rebbe. “Once he arrives and resolves all our unsettled scholarly queries, he will surely find a solution for this one too!”

\* \* \*

One Friday afternoon, the present Lubavitcher Rebbe spoke publicly about the coming Redemption. “Although the Jewish people are in the midst of their pre-Sabbath chores,” he added, “I am certain that if Eliyahu were to arrive today, nobody would have any complaints.”

### Source:

*Likkutei Sichos* (The Collected Talks of Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, the Lubavitcher Rebbe), vol. I, p. 272.

## What is a Chassid?

# *What is a Chassid?*

Two men sat side-by-side on the Brooklyn train as it raced along on its subterranean tracks. “Kingston Avenue station!” the conductor called out when they finally rolled to a halt.

“Hmm, Kingston Avenue,” one man mused aloud. “that’s where the Lubavitcher chassidim live.”

“Lubavitcher chassidim?” his fellow asked. “Who are they?” It was the early forties, a short while after Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok’s arrival in America. Though he had already issued several public announcements concerning the imminent advent of Moshiach, some Jews were still unaware of the movement’s existence. Those who knew of Chabad identified it with the Messianic activism they had read about in the paper.

“You have never heard of Lubavitch?” the former exclaimed. “Why, they are the strange creatures who actually believe that Moshiach can come tomorrow!”

A bystander overheard this conversation and later repeated it to the Rebbe’s son-in-law and successor, the present Lubavitcher Rebbe. He did so with hesitancy, as he certainly did not want the latter to take offense at the ill-intended remark. Yet much to his surprise, the Rebbe was rather pleased – he saw it instead as a compliment. Years later he related the incident to his chassidim. “We ought to live up

## Once Upon A Chassid

to our reputation,” he concluded.

\* \* \*

Many attempts were made to slander Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi to the Czar. After one such malicious account was received, a government agent by the name of Derzhavin was dispatched to Liozna to investigate the matter. Aside from being a vicious anti-Semite, the high-ranking minister was also a half-witted alcoholic. It is no small wonder that these two factors considerably influenced the report that he submitted upon his return to Petersburg. Among the many absurdities of his detailed letter, he included an allegation that he had deducted from his own clever guesswork. “These chassidim believe strongly in the imminent advent of the Messiah,” he observed, “and long for the restoration of their Holy Temple. Certainly such a massive construction would require large sums of money and resources. That is precisely why their Rebbe is so tirelessly collecting funds,” he concluded, referring to his charitable fund to sustain the penniless chassidic community in the Holy Land, “for the express purpose of declaring their own sovereignty and building their Temple!”

The Lubavitcher Rebbe once related this story at a public gathering and concluded: “Indeed, even a crude gentile identifies a chassid as one who believes in Moshiach and makes serious preparations for his arrival. If this held true a hundred and fifty years ago, how much more so should we live by this ideal in present times, when Moshiach’s coming is so very near!”

### Source:

Told by the Lubavitcher Rebbe on Shabbos Parshas Vayishlach, 1967, and on Shabbos Parshas Shemini, 1953.

# BESURAS HAGEULO

## The Announcement Of The Redemption

### 19

"As in the days of your going forth from Egypt I will show him miracles."<sup>1</sup>

Everyone can clearly see how the miracles of the Exodus from Egypt are reflected now in the victory of these days - both in the substance of the victory and in the time when it came, specifically - in the auspicious days of the month of Nissan.

...Still before the holiday of Pesach - was the "striking of Egypt through their firstborn."<sup>2</sup> That is, the "first born" of the nations of the world<sup>3</sup> (including the country of Egypt and her neighboring Arab countries) - according to the resolution of their representatives in the "United Nations" - waged war and struck "Mitzrayim" [Egypt], an enemy of the Jews. The name "Mitzrayim" comes from the word for<sup>4</sup> an "oppressor" of Israel, G-d forbid.

And on the day of Purim this year - "a year when I will show him wonders" - was the victory (as the nations of the world announced) and his downfall, in a manner of "to strike," etc., (not "to kill") and specifically through non-Jews ("their first born") who reprimanded and humiliated him, forcing him to regret his actions until then.

He was forced to acknowledge and accept and fulfill all the

---

1. *Michah* 7:15

2. *Tehillim* (Psalms) 136:10. And see *Midrash Tehillim* there. *Rashi and Metzudos Dovid* there.

3. And all the kingdoms are designated by the name *Mitzrayim* (*Bereishis Rabba* chapter 16:4).

4. *Bereishis Rabba* there.

## BESURAS HAGEULO

commands, instructions and requirements that were given to him by "their first born": to free some of the prisoners of war and also to comply with the other things they demanded of him.

And afterwards, the continuation was - in the month of Nissan, and within it - in the days of Pesach, "the time of our freedom" - that their "first born" in the United Nations prolonged his censure and disgrace.

During the days of Purim and immediately afterwards it still wasn't known what the continuation would be, how far he would be shamed and penalized, how strong he would remain, how much he would have to acknowledge and repay, and if he would accept all this or if it would be done through others. Afterwards, in the days of the month of Nissan, in the days of Pesach - their "first born" came out with a strong reprimand, a conclusive resolution and strong demands (in addition to the previous instructions) how Saddam should conduct himself, and also, to show and assure he would fulfill them: he should free the captives, return what he took, and pay for the losses and damages that he had caused until now (and also for what he did earlier).

And in the course of the month, through the last days of the month, the miracle increased even further - that he agreed to everything without any resistance or war, until he revealed money and property which he had hidden (and until now it wasn't known he had).

...Another example of the events of these final times in which we see wonders and miracles - is the exodus of many Jews from that country,<sup>5</sup> which is like the Exodus from Egypt:

After many years of a completely opposite manner of conduct,

---

5. *[That is, Russia. Translator's note.]*



## THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE REDEMPTION

in which Jews were not allowed to leave - specifically in this year and in the previous year did the country open its gates to let out the Jews [so that] they should go to the Holy Land (and even if, for whatever reason there may be, some of them are detained in another country for a short while (in the United States or Australia, etc.) soon they will move (with a complete desire and with joy and a glad heart) to the Holy Land, together with their families).

And the miracle has increased until the country itself assists them to leave, as was the case in the Exodus from Egypt, whose goal was to go to the Holy Land (And I shall bring you to the land, etc.<sup>6</sup>). This miracle also includes assistance from the treasures of "Egypt" (as mentioned above); these treasures have been used to such an extent that a portion of them - and also money from other nations - comes to the Jewish people, our brothers the children of Israel who just went out (and are going out now), in the "exodus from Mitzrayim." Their departure from "Mitzrayim" (a name derived from the word for distress and confinement<sup>7</sup>), from that country is similar to how it was in the Exodus from Egypt the first time, for then "they despoiled Egypt,"<sup>8</sup> until even what they didn't ask for they gave them,<sup>9</sup> including treasured items.<sup>10</sup>

...And may it be His will that G-d should help every Jew that he should have "eyes to see and (automatically) ears to hear," and "a heart to know,"<sup>11</sup> to see "the great trials that **your eyes** saw, the signs and those great wonders,"<sup>12</sup> the revealed miracles that occur every day.

---

6. *Vaeira* 6:8.

7. See *Torah Or*, *Vaeira* 57:2 and further. *Beshallah* 64:1-2. *Yisro* 71:3 and further. And in many places.

8. *Bo* 12:36.

9. The explanation of *Rashi* there, from the *Mechilta* on the verse.

10. See *Shmos Rabba* chapter 14:3. And other sources.

11. *Tavo* 29:3.

12. *Ibid*, 2.

## BESURAS HAGEULO

Particularly since we have already been more than "forty years,"<sup>13</sup> in the desert of the nations (of exile), in a situation of "(forty years) I quarreled with the generation,"<sup>14</sup> and we are ready to come to "they shall enter my resting place,"<sup>15</sup> in the Holy Land and Jerusalem,<sup>16</sup> to the extent of Shalem, a complete rest - with the true and complete Redemption.

It is understood that the Jewish people are already prepared and already have "a heart to know and eyes to see and ears to hear" (just as it was in the fortieth year after the exodus from Egypt, and that as in the days of your going forth from the land of Egypt I will show him miracles).

*(From the talk of Tuesday evening, Parshas Shimini, 26 Nissan 5751)*

---

13. It should be noted that forty years have passed since the departure of His Honored Holiness, My sainted father-in-law, the Rebbe, in the year 5710, as mentioned many times.

14. *Tehillim* (Psalms) 95:10.

15. *Ibid*, 11.

16. The explanation of *Rashi* there.

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** שתחיל **Caplan**

May she go from strength to strength  
in health, happiness, Torah and *mitzvot*.

## THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE REDEMPTION

### 20

From what has been said previously about emphasizing the subject of Redemption (especially) at this time - emerges the absolutely incredible: **how is it possible that notwithstanding all these things - we have not yet accomplished the coming of our righteous Moshiach in actual reality?!... something completely beyond comprehension!**

Equally incredible - that when ten (and many times ten) Jews gather together, and in a worthy time with regard to Redemption, and nevertheless, they don't create an uproar to cause the coming of Moshiach immediately and instantly, and it's not inconceivable to them, G-d forbid, that Moshiach won't come this night, and also tomorrow our righteous Moshiach won't come and also the day after tomorrow our righteous Moshiach won't come, G-d forbid!

Also, when they cry, "Ad Mosai" [Until when will we remain in exile] - it's because they were told to. If they meant it and desired it and cried **sincerely**, with absolute certainty Moshiach would have already come!

What more can I do so that all the children of Israel should create an uproar and cry sincerely and cause Moshiach to come in reality, since all that was done until now, **has had no effect**, and the proof is, that we find ourselves still in exile, and most essentially - an inner exile in Divine service.

The only thing I am able to do - is to turn the matter [over] to you: **do everything in your ability** - things that are in the nature of lights of Tohu, but, in vessels of Tikun<sup>1</sup> - **to actually bring our righteous Moshiach immediately, instantly, in reality.**

---

1. *[Tohu is the primordial world of chaos; Tikun is the world of order that follows it. Translator's note.]*

## BESURAS HAGEULO

And may it be His will that ultimately ten Jews will be found who are "obstinate" enough to obligate themselves to move G-d, and certainly G-d will be moved - as it is written,<sup>2</sup> "Because it is a stiff-necked people (to their benefit,<sup>3</sup> and therefore) You will pardon our iniquity and our sin and take us for Your inheritance" - to actually bring the true and complete Redemption immediately, instantly, in reality.

In order to hasten and speed the Redemption even more through my actions - I will increase and give to each and every one of you *shlichus-mitzvah*<sup>4</sup> to give to *tzedekah* [charity], for "great is *tzedekah* since it draws near the Redemption."<sup>5</sup>

I have done my part; from now on, you do all that you can.

And may it be G-d's Will that there will be found among you one, two, three that will devise a plan what to do and how to do it, and most essentially - that it will produce the true and complete Redemption in actual reality, with joy and a glad heart.

*(From the talk of Friday evening and the eve of the holy Shabbos Parshas Shmini, 28 Nissan, 5751)*

---

2. *Tissa* 34:9.

3. See *Shmos Rabba*, end of chapter 42.

4. [*Shlichus-mitzvah* literally means the mission or assignment which performs a *mitzvah*. It is customary to give someone who is leaving on a journey *tzedekah* for an institution (of his choice) at his destination. He thus becomes a "shliach" or emissary with the assignment of delivering *tzedekah* elsewhere. The Talmud states that an individual who travels to perform a *mitzvah* (as opposed to reasons of business or pleasure) is protected by the merit of that *mitzvah*.  
Translator's note]

5. *Bava Basra* 10:1. And see *Tanya* chapter 37.

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**