

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 Chof Ches Nissan, 5779
(Vol. 31)



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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
 ה. 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

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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

Rabbi Yosef Y. Shagalov,
Executive Director

Printed in the U.S.A.

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.

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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.

No Questions, Please

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*.

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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.

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"ה שׂתבֿלחֿט

Mrs. **Elka** bas **Raizel** שׂתחֿי **Caplan**

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

BESURAS HAGEULO

The Announcement Of The Redemption

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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 Tikun¹ - **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,² "Because it is a stiff-necked people (to their benefit,³ 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*⁴ to give to *tzedekah* [charity], for "great is *tzedekah* since it draws near the Redemption."⁵

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.

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