

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** 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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Once Upon A Chassid

13:33

ושם ראינו את הנפילים בני ענק
מן הנפילים ונהי בעינינו כחגבים

*There we saw the giants... and we were
in our own eyes as locusts*

The Irsome Burden

Someone once asked Rabbi Shmuel of Lubavitch: “What is true learning?”

The Rebbe replied: “When one studies a section of Talmud or an idea in *chassidus*, one is **there**, together with its illustrious author. He is building upon the sage’s wisdom like a midget perched upon a giant - he is riding on the giant’s shoulders.

“One must be grateful to the giant that he doesn’t fling the nuisance from his shoulders...”

Source:

Sefer Hasichos 5703 (Talks of Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok of Lubavitch, 1942-43) p. 139.

13:33

ונהי בעינינו כחגבים וכן היינו בעיניהם
*We were in our own eyes as locusts,
and so we were in theirs*

The Rebbe as Economist

Mrs. Kalmenson, wife of the chassid Rabbi Zalman Kalmenson, told:

My father earned his living by operating a tavern and inn. Once, a competing tavern opened its doors across the road from his, offering its vodka at a lower price. Slowly, his regulars began drifting over to the cheaper establishment.

Father journeyed to Lubavitch to seek the counsel of the Rebbe, Rabbi Sholom DovBer. The Rebbe advised him to set up two barrels of vodka at the bar and to offer drinks both at his regular price and at the lower rate.

Soon the tavern was filled with customers, all clamoring for the more expensive vodka...

Source:

Shmu'os V'sipurim ["Sayings and Stories"] by
Rabbi Rephael Nachman Kahan, vol. 1, p. 161.

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15:19-20

מראשית ערסתיכם תתנו לה'

When you eat of the bread of the land, lift up an offering to G-d. The first of your grain-cradle you shall uplift as a challah-offering

The best years of your life, the prime hours of your day, the freshest of your energies, the choicest of your talents and abilities - what is first and uppermost in you, devote to G-dly pursuits...

Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, the Lubavitcher
Rebbe shlita

Grammar Made Un-dull

Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok of Lubavitch related:

Winter 5651¹ was my third term of study with my teacher, Reb Nissan the *melamed*. My father also hired Reb Yitzchok Gershon (who led the prayers and read from the Torah at the synagogue) to teach me. For one hour each day, we studied *Nach*,² the meaning of the prayers, Hebrew grammar, and the musical notes for the Torah reading.

1. 1891.

2. The Prophets (*Navi'm*) and the Writings (*Ketuvim*), the second and third sections of the Bible.

Shlach / Grammar Made Un-dull

I greatly enjoyed the Nach; I would review my lessons repeatedly - in the time that I was free from cheder, of course. In fact, my devotion to Nach infringed upon my study of *mishnayos*,³ of which I was obliged to review several chapters a day by heart. I would take from the time allotted for the mishnayos to study Nach.

Also my study of the prayers went well - in two weeks I had mastered the meaning of the words. But the technicalities of grammar and the notes were a burden to me. In these studies I showed little progress - by morning the previous evening's lesson had evaporated as if it never was. I had special difficulty with the upper and lower accents and the stressed and light pronunciations. (In Hebrew Grammar a *mil'ill*, or 'upper accent', means that the first or middle syllable of a word is stressed; if the accent is on the final syllable, the word is a *milrah*, or 'lower accent.' The *dogush* ('stressed'), and *rofeh* ('light') pronunciations designate a hard or soft consonant respectively. A rule of thumb is that a *mil'ill* is always *dogush*, and a *milrah* always *rofeh*.)

Once, after such a grammar lesson, I poured out my heart to my father. Reb Yitzchok Gershon had tested me and was satisfied by the results, but I knew better: the lesson was merely hovering about my brain. In tears, I confessed my lack of interest in grammar and was prepared to hear words of rebuke. But Father took a different approach: he proceeded to explain to me the inner significance of the technicalities of grammar.

3. See vol. I pg. 32 footnote 4.

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“The upper and lower accents are heaven and earth,” he said. “‘The upper’ is the Torah and its precepts; the ‘lower’ represents the material needs and pursuits of man. The upper must always be stressed - strong and intense. But the lower is to be taken lightly. True, we are speaking of permissible things, but these need not be regarded as ‘musts’ and should be pursued in a negligible and feeble manner - no more than is absolutely necessary.”

Source:

From the talks of Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok of Lubavitch. Printed in Sefer Hamaamorim 5710 p. 87; Sefer Hamaamorim 5711, p. 295.

BESURAS HAGEULO

The Announcement Of The Redemption

27

The dissemination of the wellsprings, the inner dimension of Torah,¹ **outward** to the most remote places, has already occurred. This is exemplified by the innovative extension of these wellsprings in our generation to this "lower hemisphere"² in which the leader of the generation, my sainted father-in-law, the Moses of the generation, established his residence. From here these wellsprings are being disseminated to the farthest reaches of the world for over a **fifty year-Jubilee period**,³ a time referred to as "eternal."⁴

As a consequence of the increased dissemination of the wellsprings of Torah to the outside world, which has exceeded the quota, and the enhancement of "**know** the G-d of your father"⁵ and of the concept of "**according to your understanding**,"⁶ we

1. The "hidden" dimension of Torah, which unifies the "hidden" dimension of a Jewish person with the "hidden" dimension of G-d." See *Zohar* III, 73a. *Likkutei Torah, Vayikra*, 5c. *Nitzovim*, 46a. And in several other places.

2. The revelation of the giving of the Torah did not reach into this hemisphere. See *Igros Kodesh* of the *Rebbe MaHaRayatz*, vol. 2, p. 331. See there for cross references.

3. The fifty year period includes - and with particular emphasis - the timely date of the 28th of Sivan (28=koach-strength) of this week, (which is blessed from this Shabbos) - See, at length, the talk of the 28th of Sivan (Sefer HaSichos, 5751, p. 635ff.) [*The 28th of Sivan is the anniversary of the Rebbe's (and Rebbitzin Chaya Mushkah Nishmoso Eden) arrival in America in the year 5701. Translator's note*]

4. *Kiddushin* 15a. *Mechilta* and *Rashi, Mishpatim* 21:6. Also note *Likkutei Torah* of our Parsha, 42d ff.

5. *Divrei HaYamim* I, 28:9. See *Tanya, Kuntres Acharon*, 156b and in several places.

6. [*A reference to G-d's response to Moses that the sending of the spies to Israel was not G-d's own command, but it was based on Moses' discretion, lit. "according to your understanding." In the full text of the Sicha, the Rebbe*

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deserve⁷ to see the **immediate** realization of the Messianic Age of which it is written:

"In that time⁸... the only occupation of the entire world will be to know G-d exclusively. Israel will thus become great sages and will know the hidden matters and will grasp the knowledge of their Creator according to the capacity of man, as it says⁹ "for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of G-d as the waters cover the sea bed""

*(From the talk of Shabbos Parshas Shelach,
Mevorchim Hachodesh Tammuz, 5751)*

interprets this as a reference to the need for us to employ our own understanding of G-d. Translator's note.]

7. In accordance with the promise of the King Moshiach to the Ba'al Shem Tov: in response to the Ba'al Shem Tov's question "When will the master come?" Moshiach's response was "When your wellsprings will be disseminated to the farthest reaches." (The holy epistle of the Ba'al Shem Tov - *Keser Shem Tov*, beginning).

8. Rambam, at the conclusion of his work, *Mishneh Torah*.

9. *Yeshayahu* 11:9.

An analogy may be drawn between the general idea of exile and Redemption, (i.e., the relationship between Redemption and exile) and the specific location, where we are presently situated - in the "lower hemisphere."¹

This "miniature Sanctuary"² is where my sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation established his domicile, and the place from which the wellsprings of Torah were disseminated to the entire world. Thus the Redemption and the building of the third Temple, "the sanctuary of G-d which Your hands established,"³ will begin from and occur specifically within this place.

True, the site of the Temple is in the Holy Land, in Jerusalem, on the Temple Mount. However, since the building of the Temple is facilitated by "our deeds and service in the course of exile,"⁴ particularly, through our efforts to "disseminate the wellsprings of Torah to the remotest reaches" in the end of the age of exile, then this location, and only this location, embodies the full preparation for "the sanctuary of G-d which Your hands established."

Imminently the revelation of "the Sanctuary of G-d which Your hands established" will occur in this place. For, indeed, My sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation, can demand and effect that the revelation of "the Sanctuary of G-d which Your hands established," occurs first and foremost in the location ("seven

1. *[The term "lower hemisphere" refers to the Western Hemisphere. The Rebbe here indicates that just as there is a general relationship between exile and Redemption, so there is a specific relationship between the place of exile in the "lower hemisphere" and the place of Redemption, Jerusalem. Translator's note.]*

2. *Yechezkal* 11:16. *Megillah* 29a.
3. *Beshallah* 15:17.
4. *Tanya*, beg. of ch. 37.

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hundred and seventy") where he lived and worked for the last ten years of his life, which represented the sum total of his entire life's work.

This will occur specifically through completion of the service in the "lower hemisphere," indeed in, the uttermost depths "raise up"⁵ and This in turn will reveal the **entire** building of "the Sanctuary of G-d which Your hands established," including the roof, where "the King Moshiach... stands on the roof of the Beis HaMikdash [Holy Temple] and will proclaim to Israel, 'Humble ones, the time for your Redemption has arrived!'"⁶ All this is "raised up," i.e., achieved by the (uplifting) efforts within the lowliest aspects of existence.

...The most essential matter is to bring about the true and complete Redemption And in order for G-d to achieve this goal He "needs," as it were, the participation of every Jew. This means living Jews, souls within bodies. The Redemption comes through "our deeds and efforts," and it "depends," as it were, on the Jewish person's consent, desire and proclamation that not only has "the time for your Redemption arrived," but that the Redemption is actually here, literally speaking. As mentioned above, Geulah (Redemption) is cognate to the term *Giluy* (Revelation), and is a reference to the revelation of the Master of the world within *Golah* (exile). It is the effort of the Jews in exile that brings this about.

(From the talk of Monday, 28 Sivan 5751)

5. See *Torah Or, Bereishis* 4a. See also *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 18, p. 33.

6. *Yalkut Shimoni, Yeshayahu* 499.

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 שתחי Caplan

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

* * *

IN LOVING MEMORY OF A DEAR FRIEND
Reb Yosef Yisroel ben Reb Sholom ע"ה Rosner

Passed away on 7 Menachem-Av, 5777

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

*

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