

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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33:1

איש האלקים

Moses the man of G-d

"Moses the man of G-d" - says the Midrash: his upper half was G-dly, his lower half, that of a man.

Every Jewish soul possesses a spark of the soul of Moses, enabling it to be a "man of G-d": one who integrates the eternal and infinite perfection of the Divine with the realities of the human condition.

Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, the Lubavitcher
Rebbe shlita

Split Personality

The Talmud¹ relates the following story:

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi asked Moshiach: "When are you coming?"

Replied Moshiach, "Today."

1. Sanhedrin 98a.

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Later, Rabbi Yehoshua met Elijah the Prophet and complained: “He told me that he is coming today, yet he didn’t come.” Answered Elijah, “This is what he meant: *‘Today, if to His voice you will harken’* (Psalms 95:7).”

* * *

Asks the Lubavitcher Rebbe shlita: What is the meaning of this seemingly evasive and misleading statement? Does Moshiach engage in diplomatic wordplay?

What Moshiach is conveying, the Rebbe explains, is an attitude. The Jew knows that the world is inherently good, that the true, intrinsic state of G-d’s creation is the perfect world of Moshiach. He knows that the currently deficient reality is superimposed and unnatural. The fact that things have been this way for thousands of years makes it no more genuine or real.

So despite centuries of ‘experience’ to the contrary, a Jew fully and realistically expects Moshiach *instantaneously*. His response to the question “when is Moshiach coming?” is an unhesitant “today”. Only if, G-d forbid, a moment passes and somehow Moshiach has not arrived, is he compelled to explain “...*if to His voice you will harken.*” Namely, G-d desires that the world undergo a process of refinement and elevation before its true, quintessential reality may come to light.

Someone once asked Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok of Lubavitch: “We are told to stand ready to receive Moshiach,

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confident that he is indeed coming immediately. Yet at the same time, we are charged with the mission to build, to found new organizations, to lay the groundwork for future work. Which state of mind is one to adopt, that of the anticipant believer or that of the pragmatic doer?"

Indeed, the Jew must straddle both worlds, simultaneously adopting two diverse mind-sets. On the one hand, he must bring holiness to a mundane world by working to perfect an imperfect reality. In doing this, he deals with conditions as they are. So he formulates budgets, contracts for construction, and plans long-term projects.

At the same time, he anticipates, nay *expects*, Moshiach's immediate coming. An instantaneously perfect existence is not only feasible but the most natural thing in the world.

Source:

From an address by Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, the Lubavitcher Rebbe shlita, Rosh Hashana 1989.

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BESURAS HAGEULO

The Announcement Of The Redemption

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Our many discussion of late all indicate that we are now standing on the threshold of Redemption, when "Behold he (Moshiach) is coming"¹ and immediately thereafter, it can be read as he **has already** come.²

One can accordingly appreciate that the nature of the Jewish people's service during Simchas Torah and its extension throughout the year, particularly this year, is one that is permeated with the ideal of Redemption and Moshiach. This means, that the manner in which a Jew conducts his daily activities, even as we stand in exile immediately before the Redemption, is a sampling of and analogous to the way of life and conduct that will occur in the actual Messianic Age.

[This is also the reason for the recent emphasis on learning the "laws of Moshiach," i.e., the laws that relate to the life of a Jew in the Era of Redemption.]

One of the essential features of the future era (as stated in Tanya, cited earlier), is that we will experience fully the state expressed in the verse: "You have shown us to know that G-d is the L-rd, there is none else besides Him."³ The entire world will manifest that there is no other existence save G-d, "There is none besides Him."

The life of a Jew must also reflect a similar sense and feeling that "There is none besides Him." This means that not only should the **intent** and **objective** of all worldly matters be G-dliness, so that

1. *Shir Hashirim* 2:8 and *Shir Hashirim Rabah* on this verse.

2. [The Hebrew word "Ba" can be translated both in the present tense as well as in the past tense. Translator's note.]

3. *Va'eschanan* 4:35.

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one's service will be in a manner that "All of your deeds are for the sake of Heaven,"⁴ and "Know Him in all of your ways,"⁵ but also the worldly matters themselves are G-dliness. Although the "secular" still exists, and they remain "your deeds" and "your ways," they become infused with a holy objective. One does not even begin to "detect" any other existence, because, "there is nothing else but G-d..."

This might provide us with a rationalization for the bizarre delay of the Redemption. The reason is that Jewish people have lacked the integrity in the level of Divine service that is: "I was not created **except** for serving my maker."⁶ Only with this understanding can one attain the Redemption that will be characterized by the type of Divine service in which "there is nothing else besides Him." However, this impediment has now also been removed and "everything is (therefore) ready for the feast," a reference to the feast of the Leviathan and the Wild Ox and the preserved wine⁷ that will occur during the true and complete Redemption, imminently and in actuality.

...According to our sages,⁸ the verse, "Do not touch My **anointed ones** (Meshichoi),⁹ refers to the children who study Torah."

4. *Avos* Chapter 2, Mishneh 12. Rambam *Hilchos De'os* end of chapter 3. *Tur* and *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim*, sec. 231.

5. *Mishlei* 3:6. See Rambam and *Tur* and *Shulchan Aruch* there. *Shulchan Aruch, Admor Hazoken*, sec. 156, par. 2.

6. *Mishneh* and *Beraisa*, end of *Kiddushin*. This is the version in the manuscripts of the Talmud (Collection of manuscripts of the Babylonian Talmud, Jerusalem, 5724) of the foregoing *Mishneh* and *Beraisa*. *Melech Shlomo* there, too, cites this version in his commentary on that *Mishneh*. See also *Yalkut Shimoni, Yirmiyahu, remez* 276.

7. See *Berachos* 34b. *Bava Basra* 75a. *Vayikra Rabbah Parsha* 13:e and in other sources.

8. *Shabbos* 119b.

9. *Divrei Hayamim* I, 16:22.

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One of the explanations of this statement (in addition to those provided by the commentators) is that the education of school children has to be in a manner that the children are completely permeated and absorbed with the ideal of Moshiach. Just by looking at a Jewish child, what should one see? - Moshiach!

His entire being is "Moshiach" - i.e., the realization of "You have been shown... there is none beside Him."

...The idea is even more pronounced with respect to the school children of our generation who are called (and endorsed by Jewish leaders as) "Tzivos Hashem-the Army of G-d:"

The name Tzivos Hashem signifies that the children are totally devoted and subordinated to G-d, as (and even more than) the devotion of "soldiers" to their "general." It follows that Jewish children of our generation - boys and girls - possess in an even more revealed measure the status of Moshichoi, i.e., G-d's own anointed ones. This provides for the preparation and introduction that leads to the impending revelation of the general Moshiach of all Jews, with the true and complete Redemption.

And "As in the days that you left Egypt I shall you wonders:"¹⁰ all the "Tzivos Hashem departed from the Land of Egypt,"¹¹ so, too, the "Tzivos Hashem" of our generation will depart from the present exile to the true and complete Redemption.

(From the talks of the night of Simchas Torah before Hakofos, 5752)

10. *Michah* 7:15.

11. *Bo*, 12:41.

<p style="text-align:center">SPONSORED BY Hatomim Yosef Meir ben Chana שיחי Weiss in honor of his birthday, 24 Tishrei, 5782</p> <p style="text-align:center">*</p> <p style="text-align:center">May he go from strength to strength in health, happiness, Torah and <i>mitzvot</i>.</p>
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