

# 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**  
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 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  
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 ה. נ. צ. ג. ה.

**AND IN HONOR OF**  
 Mrs. **Esther Shaindel** bas **Fraidel Chedva** שתח'ל  
**Shagalov**

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## Once Upon A Chassid

25:42

כי עבדי הם אשר הוצאתי אתם מארץ  
מצרים לא ימכרו ממכרת עבד  
*For they [the Jewish people] are my  
servants, whom I have taken out from  
the land of Egypt - they cannot be sold  
into slavery*

My deed of ownership precedes and voids  
any other.

Rashi's commentary

In redeeming us from Egypt the Almighty made  
us subject to Him alone, and thus inherently and  
eternally free: no force or law on earth has any  
jurisdiction over the Jew.

Rabbi Yehudah Lowe of Prague (the 'Maharal')

## *Highly Connected*

The *mikveh* (ritual bathhouse) in Primishlan, home to  
Rabbi Meir'1 Primishlaner, was located at the foot of a steep  
hill. Even under the best of conditions it was a precarious  
climb down to the bathhouse and back up to town. But  
during the winter months, when the hill was covered with  
ice, the slope was altogether impassable, and even the most  
agile and daring of the young men were forced to give up

## B'har / Highly Connected

after the first few steps. From the first freeze to the spring thaw, the townspeople were forced to take a long, round-about route to the *mikveh*.

All but one. The elderly rebbe of Primishlan would walk down the icy slope every morning to immerse himself before praying. Straight as a rod, he would make his unflinching way to the bathhouse and back.

One day, two young skeptics set out to prove that there was nothing extraordinary about Rabbi Meir's daily trip. But their attempt met with dismal failure: bruised, bloodied, and with half a dozen broken bones between them, they walked *nowhere* for a good few weeks. Later, one of them asked Rabbi Meir, "How do you do it?"

Said the Primishlaner: "When one is connected above, one does not fall below. Meir'l is connected above, so he does not fall below."

### Source:

Likkutei Dibburim (Collected Talks of Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok of Lubavitch), vol. 11\*, p. 542.

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\*. Correction: Vol. 2.

# 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

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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.*

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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

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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.]

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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)*

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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 - סמך מלך בבל - 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.

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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.



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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 אראנני - 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)*

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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.

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**ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.**

(מנוסח המצבה)

\*

**נדפס ע"י משפחתו שיחיו**

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**  
Reb **Ihya Amram** ben Reb **Nissim** ע"ה **Elharrar**  
Passed away on 15 Iyar, 5759  
Mrs. **Chana** bas Reb **Moshe** ע"ה **Elharrar**  
Passed away on 16 Iyar, 5773

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

\*

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