

Reflections of Redemption

Essays on the Weekly Torah Reading and Moshiach,
Based on the talks of the
Lubavitcher Rebbe,
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

Reprinted for Parshat Noach, 5783
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“5783 - YEAR OF HAKHEL”

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** שתחיל
Shagalov

DEDICATED BY

Rabbi & Mrs. **Yosef Y.** and **Gittel Rochel** שיחי
Shagalov

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of
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by
Rabbi Dovid Yisroel Ber Kaufmann, Ph.D

Noach

SCIENCE AND TORAH

The Zohar predicted that a revolution in scientific and mystical knowledge would occur around the year 5600 (1840 in the secular calendar). The publication of Torah Or and Likkutei Torah was a milestone on the way to Redemption. Mystical knowledge is the source of scientific knowledge, and science illuminates the path to Moshiach.

In this week's Torah reading it states: "In the six hundredth year of Noach's life . . . all the wellsprings of the great deep burst forth and the windows of heaven opened." The *Zohar*, the fundamental work of Jewish mysticism, explains the esoteric meaning of the verse as follows: In the six hundredth year of the sixth millennium the gates of wisdom above and the wellsprings of wisdom below will be opened; the world will then be prepared to enter the seventh millennium.

The two phrases in the Torah – "the wellsprings of the great deep" and "the windows of heaven" – allude to two types of wisdom. "The wellsprings of the great deep" refers to the wisdom below, meaning science or the wisdom of the world, while "the windows of heaven" refers to the wisdom above, meaning Torah. The *Zohar*, written nearly two thousand years ago by Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, a disciple of Rabbi Akiva, predicted that an explosion in wisdom, understanding and knowledge would occur around the Hebrew year 5600 – corresponding to the secular year 1840.

Indeed, in that time period, a hundred years after the Baal Shem Tov officially began teaching Chassidus to the general public – which also corresponded with the beginnings of modern industrialization – just such an intellectual explosion occurred.

During this time – in the years 5607 and 5608, or 1847 and 1848 in the secular calendar – *Torah Or and Likkutei Torah*, two important works of the Alter Rebbe, founder of Chabad Chassidus, were finally published. To understand the significance of this event, we must remember that the Baal Shem Tov had described a spiritual ascent he had experienced on Rosh Hashanah. As the Baal Shem Tov's soul reached higher and higher spiritual levels, it encountered the soul of Moshiach. The Baal Shem Tov asked, when will the master – meaning Moshiach – come? The answer was, when your wellsprings spread forth.

The publication of these two works of the Alter Rebbe represented not just another intellectual milestone. Traditionally, the spread of mystical knowledge is both a pre-requisite to, and a result of, the coming of Moshiach. The prophet Isaiah declares that, in the era of Redemption, “the whole world will be filled with knowledge of the L-rd as the waters cover the ocean.” Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai was assured from Above that with and through the *Zohar* the Jewish people would leave their exile and usher in the Redemption. Still, mystical knowledge remained beyond the education and capacity of most people for over a thousand years. Not until the Arizal, who systematized Kabbalah, did the inner teachings of the Torah truly become available to the public.

Even so, the mystical truths were inaccessible because their form was too intellectual and academic. The task of the Baal Shem Tov – and after him, the Alter Rebbe and Chabad Chassidus – was to “translate,” so to speak, the esoteric into a form within the understanding of the average person, even one with little formal training in Hebrew or Jewish subjects – even someone with no background at all! The publication of the Alter Rebbe's works indicated that a tremendous opposition, on both the physical and spiritual planes, had been removed. The wellsprings – the windows

of heavenly knowledge – had been opened wider and the spiritual wisdom – the inner teachings and secrets of the Torah – began to pour forth.

Since the Torah of Moshiach will be such that “the whole world will be filled with knowledge of the L-rd,” it’s obvious why the dissemination and proliferation of Chassidus – the inner teachings of the Torah – is a necessary preparation for the coming of Moshiach. After all, Chassidus is a manifestation and revelation of the Torah of Moshiach – a sample and foretaste of the “knowledge of the L-rd” that will permeate the world in the era of Redemption.

But what is the connection of worldly knowledge with Moshiach? Since the *Zohar* links the “windows of heaven” – the mystical secrets of Torah – with the “wellsprings of the deep” – the discoveries and inventions of modern science – clearly one is the source and cause of the other. Still we may ask, why does the revelation of a new dimension of Torah – the inner teachings as expressed in Chassidus – result in a scientific revolution, an alteration of principles that reveals more and more of the inner truths of nature?

The answer lies in the fact that nature itself is part of creation. The laws of nature, the axioms, theorems and principles of science are simply observations and deductions about the world which G-d created. Scientific discoveries about how gravity bends light, cells reproduce or the inner structure of a quark are themselves preparations for the coming of Moshiach. The increase in scientific knowledge serves a deeper purpose than satisfying idle curiosity or enabling us to spend more hours on increasingly trivial pursuits.

Rather, like everything else that exists, science was created “for the sake of Torah and the sake of Israel.” Or, as it is expressed in the Talmud, “All that G-d created in His world He created solely for His glory.” This means that every aspect of creation can be utilized in the Divine service of a Jew. Just as the Jewish people,

through the mitzvos of the Torah, reveal the G-dliness within the world, so, too, the natural sciences – scientific knowledge – and our understanding of the world exists to be used in the service of G-d, to deepen our understanding of the true spiritual reality, the Divine nature of existence.

For example, we are told by the prophets that in the times of Moshiach, the “whole world will be filled with knowledge of the L-rd” and that “all flesh will see,” meaning that with our physical eyes we will see G-dliness. Our sight will not be simply an “insight,” an intellectual comprehension, but a physical seeing. G-dliness will be truly visible.

Of course, such a condition is difficult to conceive. Even if we can grasp a little of this concept theoretically, it’s hard to imagine what the world will be like – what we will be like. We can readily admit that there is a spiritual life-force within every object, sustaining its physical existence at every moment. But how can the spiritual be perceived by the physical?

Modern science provides us with an analogy. One of the most powerful forces of nature is electricity. It has existed since the beginning of creation, obviously, but it was discovered only a few hundred years ago; application of its power is even more recent. By utilizing electricity to transmit sound, a voice at one end of the earth can instantaneously be transmitted to someone at the other end of the earth. The speaker may not even know who the recipient is – or that his words are being heard thousands of miles away. This parallels and makes comprehensible the concept that there is an “Eye that sees and an Ear that hears.” The physically fantastic makes it easier to understand the spiritually fantastic. Further, if we know that someone else is listening to our conversation, we become very careful with what we say. How much more so when we recognize that every word, indeed, every thought is “overheard” Above.

There is a practical lesson, one relevant to our current situation just prior to the revelation of Moshiach. As mentioned earlier, the coming of Moshiach depends on the spreading of the wellsprings of Chassidus. When modern scientific inventions, such as the radio (or now, even computers and the internet) are used to teach Torah to millions of people, we surely are in the era of Redemption. Indeed, such an electronic “flooding” of the airwaves and cyberspace with Torah and Chassidus, spreading everywhere without limitation, and available to everyone, actually begins to fulfill the prophecy that the “earth will be filled with the knowledge of the L-rd.”

(Based on Likkutei Sichos 15, pp. 42-48)

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The Announcement Of The Redemption

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Special emphasis should be placed this year in all that was said previously in relation to the "just accounting"¹ of Parshas Noach:

The reason for a special emphasis this year can be understood from the following. My sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation, has testified that all aspects of our Divine Service have already been completed, including the polishing of the buttons, and we stand ready ("stand all of you ready") to receive our righteous Moshiach. Therefore, the goal of the "just accounting" (emphasizing that a just accounting must be a true one) performed in these days is the immediate need for the true and final Redemption to come in actual reality!

More specifically:

Even though a person recognizes his own personal deficiencies that need correction, this doesn't contradict, G-d Forbid, the testimony of the leader of our generation that we have already completed the Divine Service and stand ready to greet our

1. [The term "Cheshbon Tzedek," here translated at "just accounting," refers to the process of self-analysis and self-judgment incumbent upon every Jew (indeed, every human being). It is the "taking stock" of where one stands spiritually and honestly assessing one's faults and deficiencies, with the intent of improving and correcting them. This analysis takes place, on different levels, at regular intervals, i.e., once a day (before retiring), once a week (Shabbos), once a month (Rosh Chodesh), once a year (Yom Kippur). In the full text of the sicha, the Rebbe discusses the significance of Parshas Noach as the first full week of the post-Holiday season. Accordingly, this is the time for an honest self-appraisal and correction of all that needs correction in a manner that is consistent with the rest and joy that is characterized by Noach. In this excerpt, the Rebbe speaks of the special self-appraisal that has to be made because of the uniqueness of this year. Translator's note.]

righteous Moshiach This is because **the Jewish people's collective** Divine Service over the course of the generations, required during the time of exile to bring the complete Redemption (which depends on our deeds and service during the entire period of exile²) **has been concluded and perfected**. There is absolutely no explanation or reason for the delay of the Redemption. Therefore, even if an individual's Divine service is lacking over the course of time that the Redemption has been delayed, this is a **personal matter** that certainly needs to be corrected and completed. But this does not diminish, G-d Forbid, the completion and perfection of "our actions and service" of the Jewish people as a whole, which stands ready for the Redemption. The very fact that the collective has been perfected allows the individual to correct himself easier and with joy, knowing that the true and complete Redemption is coming imminently.

And if the words said during the lifetime of my sainted father-in-law , the leader of our generation, all the more so after many decades have passed, more than forty years when "G-d gives you a heart to understand and eyes to see and ears to hear."³

This is even more true in this year - Hey, Tuf, Shin, Nun, Beis⁴ - which is an acronym for (and follows and adds to that of the previous year, Hey, Tuf, Shin, Nun, Aleph, a year in which I will show them wonders) "it will be a year of wonders within it," and "miracles in everything," "inclusive of everything".⁵ This [acronym] includes all aspects [of the year will be wondrous].

2. *Tanya*, beginning of chapter 37.

3. *Tavo*, 29:3.

4. [Each Hebrew letter has a numeric equivalent, which can be used to designate the years. The year 5752, in which this talk was delivered, can be rendered alphabetically with the letters enumerated above. Translator's note.]

5. "In all, for all, all" - see *Bava Basra* 15b at the end and ff. [The three phrases have the numerical value of the word *kabetz* - gather. See *Chiddush Chasam Sofer* there. Translator's note.]

Additionally, the letter Beis [meaning "in"] is a preposition that can be used in conjunction with everything. This applies primarily to the "wonders" of the true and final Redemption, "As in the days of your going forth from Egypt I will show them wonders."⁶ Since with absolute certainty all of the appointed times have passed, and we've already done teshuvah, now **it all depends on our righteous Moshiach himself!**

* * *

When we make a just accounting at the conclusion of the first week of Divine service in the world for the year Hey, Tuf, Shin, Nun, Beis, "a year of wonders in all," we come to the conclusion that **it all depends on our righteous Moshiach himself**. This awareness expresses itself in more conscientious and enhanced way of reciting the prayer for the sanctification of the moon, "for they are destined to be renewed like her,"⁷ in the true and complete Redemption through Dovid, the King Moshiach, Dovid, the king of Israel, lives forever."⁸

More specifically:

One should be careful and make an effort to recite the Sanctification of the Moon while dressed in dignified and attractive garments, in the street and "in a multitude of people [wherein] is the glory of the King."⁹ This applies also in those places where people have not been conscientious about this until now (because they lived among non-Jews).¹⁰ One should also be careful in regard to

6. *Michah* 7:15.

7. The text of the blessing of the Sanctification of the Moon (*Sanhedrin* 42a).

8. *Rosh Hashanah* 25a.

9. The details of the laws of the Sanctification of the Moon - see *Tur Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim*, section 427, and in the commentaries there.

10. See *Magen Avraham* there, 14.

the time of the Sanctification of the Moon, since we find different customs about this: three days after the Molad¹¹ [New Moon], seven days after the Molad,¹² and the evening after Shabbos [Saturday night],¹³ "If the night after Shabbos is before the tenth of the month... but if it is afterwards one should not wait until after Shabbos, because there might be two, three or four cloudy nights and the moon won't be seen and the time will pass."¹⁴ This applies specifically in those countries where the sky is covered with clouds, particularly in winter time.¹⁵ Each place should follow its custom and according to its situation. In places where there is a question or doubt, one should act according to the instructions of the rabbinic authority of that place.

Further, and this is the main point, the Sanctification of the Moon should be performed with the specific intention to speed and hasten and actualize the immediate arrival of Dovid King Moshiach, through an increased appeal and entreaty for the Redemption, as expressed in the conclusion of the Sanctification of the Moon: "**And they will seek** the L-rd their G-d and Dovid their King, Amen."

(From the talk of Shabbos Parshas Noach, 4 Mar-Cheshvan 5752)

11. See *Turei Zahav* there, section 3.

12. *Shulchan Aruch* there, par. 4. And in the Prayer Book of the Alter Rebbe, "according to the Kabbalah the Sanctification of the Moon is not recited until seven days after the Molad" (and see at length the glosses of the Rebbe Rashab (in the Prayer Book Torah Or 242:1-2. And in the *Siddur im Dach* (Siddur with Chassidic discourses) 321:1-2). *Shaar HaKolel* chapter 33, section 2. And see there for further cross references.)

13. *Shulchan Aruch* there, par. 2.

14. *Remo* there.

15. See the glosses of the Rebbe Rashab and *Shaar HaKolel* there, that for this reason the Tzemach Tzedek was not particular (in winter time) to wait until after seven days. But obviously it's different for those dwelling in countries where (many of the) winter months are not cloudy.