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וזוגתו שלומית בת שושנה ומשפחתו שיחיו גודמאן

לזכות טויבא בת שבע בת הינדא להצלחה בכל בגו"ר ולבשורות טובות

15th of Sivan

Imprisonment of the Previous Rebbe

INTRODUCTION

The Previous Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, was arrested at midnight on the eve of the 15th of Sivan 5687 (1927), due to his incessant activities on behalf of Jews and Judaism throughout Communist Russia. He was incarcerated in the Spalerno prison whose name, as he later wrote, "was enough by itself to strike dread, fear and trepidation in the heart of all who heard its mention..."

However, as the Rebbe later explained, "during the imprisonment there was a 'sowing' which then enabled a tremendous growth in the dissemination of Chassidus". The sequence of events triggered by this arrest culminated in the Previous Rebbe immigrating to New York and turning the Chabad movement into a worldwide tool for spreading Torah Judaism and Chassidus.

CONTEMPLATE AND ACT ACCORDINGLY

- "These days are commemorated and actualized" (Megilah 9:28). We should recall the happenings of "those days" in order to again "actualize" all of the goodly influences that were then conferred. (Moreover, we should do so as soon as possible, so "that they not be delayed (even) as a wink of an eye"!)¹

A LIBERATION FOR JEWRY

- On the night of the 15th of Sivan, an overarching and unique incident occurred to my father-in-law, Leader of our generation.²

1. "...Or on an even loftier level that that of the original event!" (Night of 15th of Sivan 5748 - Hisvaduoyos p.478)

2. "This was an episode involving the "Nassi" (Leader) of the generation, "who bore (Nasah) our ills (i.e., the illness that was truly meant for us)". The word "nasah" -he bore" in this case also carries the connotation of 'uplifted' and 'elevated'. In other words, he raised us to the extent that from that point onward we are no longer required to undergo episodes of a similar nature, and may suffice with accomplishing the equivalent via our spiritual service." (ibid p.480)

Although only the negative dimensions of the event were apparent at the time, it was subsequently clarified the entire episode was in fact the catalyst of a great salvation.³ The affair is therefore one

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3. "On this night, the eve of the 15th of Sivan in the year 5687 (1927), ???, the infamous prison ordeal of the Previous Rebbe began. At that time, only the negative aspect of the episode was apparent and it appeared to be wholly undesirable (to make an understatement...), and this outlook was expressed by an outpouring of prayers and pleas, as is well known.

However, it has become clear in retrospect that the ordeal was the catalyst of a great salvation. It was this incident that eventually enabled the Previous Rebbe to exit that country altogether along with his family and all of his books, manuscripts, and other possessions. According to the ways in which that country was then run and based on its laws, such an exit would have not been possible were it not for the events of the incarceration and so on. The Previous Rebbe was then able to go to a place and lifestyle wherein he was capable to engage in all of his activities - the chief among them being the dissemination of Chassidus amidst the general dissemination of Judaism - without any restrictions whatsoever. These activities then continuously expanded and flourished until they reached the advanced state that we witness today...

The beginning of this salvation began on the 3rd of Tammuz, when the Previous Rebbe was partially released, and subsequently developed into a state of complete redemption on the 12th and 13th of Tammuz - days which became a Yom Tov for all Jews worldwide and whose observance as such continues to proliferate." (ibid p.478-479)

"Although during that year we only saw the events as a completely and utterly undesirable episode, it later became apparent how the events allowed the Leader of our generation to arrive in the 'lower hemisphere' [i.e., America]. That in turn allowed an even further intensification of the dissemination of Chassidus, amidst the general dissemination of Torah and Mitzvos via the spread of Judaism in general. In particular, this resulted in Torah and the wellsprings [of Chassidus] being disseminated in many foreign languages." (Night of 12th of Sivan 5749 - Hisvaduyos p.313)

"Although the original 15th of Sivan occurred in a very undesirable manner, nevertheless, in the subsequent years (i.e., following the redemption of the 12th of Tammuz whereby it was revealed that the intention behind the incarceration was only in order to facilitate the subsequent redemption), the 15th of Sivan too bears the theme of redemption.

This is somewhat similar to the enslavement of the Jews in Egypt, whereby following their servitude involving the literal building with "mortar and bricks", the same theme was accomplished during their subsequent exiles via engaging in the intense study of Torah - "the 'mortar' (חומר - Chomer) refers to קל וחומר (Kal v'Chomer - one of the Thirteen Methods of deriving Torah laws), and the 'bricks' (לבנים - Levenim) refers to the clarification of practical rulings (הלכתא ליבון) - Libun Hilchasah)." (Parshas Naso, 15th of Sivan 5749, footnote 101 - Hisvaduyos p.344-345)

that concerns the entire generation.⁴

A PERSONAL HEARTFELT REQUEST

- On this day there is emphasized the command, directive, and soulful plea (Bakashah Nafshis⁵) that is accompanied with a granting of power to each and every Jew: Increase all of your activities to disseminate Torah, Judaism, and Chassidus, with ever greater strength!⁶

UNLEASH YOUR G-DLY ESSENCE

- Begin with yourself! Reveal the wellspring that is concealed within the inner recess of your soul and which is bound up with the inner dimension of the Torah; draw it forth and let it be revealed within the intellect of your "G-dly soul" (Chochmah Binah v'Da'as d'Nefesh Elohis). Furthermore, let it enter and radiate within your "animalistic soul" (Nefesh Habehamis) too!⁷

LIBERATE THE TORAH'S SOUL

- Then do the same with the wellsprings of Chassidus at large; due to the darkened state of the world, there are matters from the inner dimensions of Torah that have not yet been brought to light, but rather remain exiled and imprisoned. It is our duty to redeem

4. "In addition to the fact that every aspect of a Leader of the generation must bear relevance to the entire generation, since "הנשיא הוא הכל" - The Leader is all [-Rashi]", there are nevertheless numerous matters amongst the happenings of life of the Leader in which the relevance to the entire generation is not really emphasized - and then there are unique events (such as the one under discussion) in which the significance for the generation is clearly underscored. And for that reason we are required to perform the directive of "These days are commemorated and actualized"..." (Night of 15th of Sivan 5748 - Hisvaduyos p.478)

5. "The 15th of Sivan, the start of the imprisonment and subsequent redemption, creates a directive and granting of power to each person, to fulfill the soulful plea (Bakashah Nafshis) of the one who was imprisoned and redeemed to engage in the dissemination of Chassidus; both within his own self as well as having an influence on others." (ibid p.480)

6. Parshas Naso, 15th of Sivan 5749 - Hisvaduyos p.345.

7. "For when there exists a concealment and obscurity concerning the full comprehension of the inner dimension of the Torah, then its teachings are in a state that resembles 'incarceration'. When the mask and obfuscation is then removed, the teachings have been 'redeemed'. (Night of 15th of Sivan 5748 - Hisvaduyos p.480)

these matters and free them from their incarceration and exile.⁸

TAKE STOCK OF THE MONTH'S DIVINE SERVICE

- On the 15th of Sivan the "moon (and the theme of the month that it represents) is at its fullest". Now is the time for each of us to make an honest self-accounting; how have we performed our duties that pertain to "the third month" (Sivan)? Once we have made this reckoning, we should then fix that which requires repair and complete (Mashlim) that which was lacking. We should also perfect (Mashlim) our service, honing it to the height of perfection.⁹

TOTAL UNITY BETWEEN ALL JEWS

- The first duty of the month of Sivan that we should examine is that of its first day - the day of Rosh Chodesh. It was on Rosh Chodesh Sivan that the Jews reached the Sinai Desert and "He, Israel, camped there facing the mountain". It does not say "they camped", but "he camped (וייחן)", which indicated that the Jews were united "as one man with one heart"...

REFINEMENT, SUBSERVIENCE, AND TORAH

- Our subsequent services respectively reflect the three days of preparation (Sheloshes Yemei Hagbalah) for receiving the Torah; the preceding "Na'aseh - We will do (as You instruct)" to "Nishmah - We will hear (the rational behind Your instruction)"; the actual receiving of the Torah; and the subsequent days of Tashlumin (when the Jews would bring the festive sacrifices that they were unable to offer during the festival itself).⁹

8. "...So that they may exist in a state of luminance and revelation." (ibid)

9. "Having come from the Giving of the Torah on Shavuot, through the days of Tashlumin and then the first Shabbos that follows the Giving of the Torah, and having arrived at the 15th of Sivan, when the moon... [See main text above for continuation]." (Parshas Naso, 15th of Sivan 5749 - Hisvaduyos p.344.