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✦ R. CHAIM VITAL, SHA'AR HAGILGULIM

With so much goodness to anticipate, the real question is, how can we hasten Moshiach's arrival? Eager anticipation itself has a very powerful effect. Sincere thought of regret for past misdeeds and meaningful effort to improve our behavior (known as teshuvah) demonstrate to G-d that we are getting ourselves ready to greet Moshiach.

Regardless of religion or religious observance, each of us can hasten the Redemption—every good deed helps. And

because the Redemption is for everyone, it's beneficial to share this concept with others so they, too, can be part of the process. Together, our efforts will succeed in bringing about the time when “the glory of G-d shall be revealed, and all flesh together shall see that the mouth of G-d has spoken.”

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✦ ISAIAH 40:5

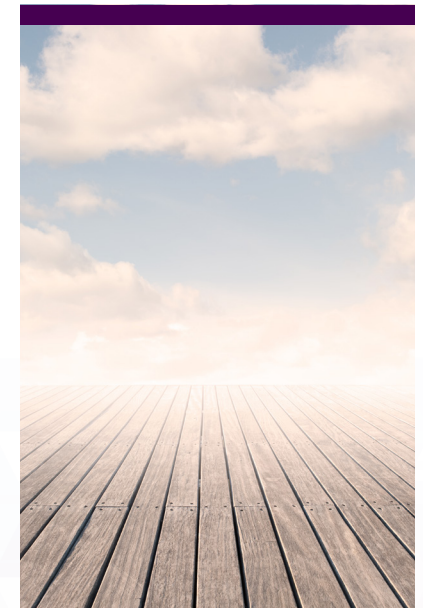
# THE JEWISH MESSIAH WILL BE GOOD FOR EVERYONE

BY LIEBA RUDOLPH

A global pandemic. Civil unrest. Uncertainty everywhere. Are times different or is something unprecedented happening in the world? The Jewish perspective sees our “new normal” as part of an all-encompassing transformation, a “happy ending” that has been G-d's plan all along. But first, we have to ask ourselves why so many Jews are unaware of this promised outcome.

Have you ever heard the expression, “been down so long it looks like up to me”? That phrase captures the worldview for much of the Jewish nation today. Jews are “down” in that they don't particularly appreciate their Jewishness because it's been “so long”—nearly two thousand years—since they have had a

Temple in Jerusalem. What made Jews “up” in Temple times? In those days, the whole world pulsed with an awareness of G-d's presence and His unique relationship with the Jewish people. Since the Temple's destruction in 70 C.E., Jews have been in “exile,” without a secure home, living among



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LIEBA RUDOLPH is a writer, speaker and activist. Her children's book, *The Best Call of All*, offers a glimpse of the wonderful ways Moshiach will change the world.

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# “IN THE BEGINNING G-D CREATED THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH... AND THE SPIRIT OF G-D HOVERED OVER THE WATERS...”

◆ GENESIS 1:1-2

the often hostile nations of the world. As painful as this exile has been for the collective Jewish body, it has been equally, if not more painful, for the collective Jewish soul as well.

This unfortunate state of affairs for our generation was predicted by the Zohar, the original text of Jewish mysticism. Is this “Dark Age” of spirituality a harbinger of untreatable doom?

Believe it or not, what the world is experiencing today is actually a good sign for the Jewish people. Just as the darkest time of night comes right before the dawn, the time of greatest spiritual darkness indicates that tremendous light will soon be revealed. This is indeed what G-d has promised the world, that we will ultimately

merit to perceive His presence with our flesh eyes, in everyone and everything. Best of all, this “new world order” will last eternally.

G-d did not create the world without a Master plan. According to the Sages, in the first lines of the Book of Genesis, when the Torah speaks of “the spirit of G-d,” it’s a reference to the spirit of Moshiach, the Messiah, who has “hovered” over the world since the beginning of time, waiting to reveal the truth of G-d’s Oneness. Everything that has occurred since the creation of the world has prepared it, albeit mysteriously, for this ultimate purpose. Moshiach will redeem the Jewish nation from its dependence on the nations of the world, build the Third Holy Temple, and usher in an age of peace and harmony within all of creation.

Everything the Zohar foretells regarding the pre-Moshiach era aligns with what is happening in our world today: “The world will experience poverty, terrible diseases, wars, impudent leadership and international confrontation. Truth will be abandoned and the pious will be despised.” In curious contrast, the Zohar also predicts the propagation of the Torah’s mystical insights. The Chassidic movement has largely accomplished this; in recent years, the teachings of Chassidus have brought a deeper understanding of G-d to an unprecedented number of Jews and non-Jews alike. These divergent realities raise a cosmic question: Why should our generation, a generation so obviously

lacking in spiritual greatness, be chosen by G-d to receive the esoteric teachings that will ultimately redeem the world?

The answer lies in a parable, the story of a king whose only son was deathly ill. Doctors told the king that the only hope to save his son would be to create a potent elixir made by crushing the center stone of the royal crown. The king happily obliged, well aware that only a few drops would pass through his son’s mouth and enter his weakened body. Although the crown was the symbol of his dominion and would be worthless without its center stone, the king understood that something much more valuable was at stake: Without an heir, his entire kingdom was worthless.

This parable is analogous to our generation. It is precisely because we’ve been “down so long” and our world is bereft of the great Torah luminaries of yesteryear that our meager efforts are so precious to G-d. We are like that ailing prince and Chassidus is the jewel in the crown, the precious gem of spirituality that revives our connection to G-d. In the words of

Rabbi Chaim Vital, “a very small act in this generation is equal to many great mitzvot in others; for in these generations evil is extremely overpowering...” We are likened to midgets on the shoulders of giants; we are small yet we are the ones upon whom it is incumbent to complete the task of ushering in the Redemption.

It’s hard to imagine what it will be like to see G-dliness within all of creation, but because we know it’s our ultimate reward, we know it will be blissful beyond our wildest dreams. The Redemption’s by-products alone are blissful; we’ll see an end to evil and sin, poverty, disease, and even death.

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◆ THE ZOHAR

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