

A HOLOCAUST EVERY 70 YEARS

Rav Eliezer Berland's grandson, Rav Shmuel Isaac Zucker, once explained that: "My mother told me, in the name of her father that in the year 5742 (1981), the Rav told her that every 70 years there should be another holocaust¹ but, through insults and humiliation, it's possible to sweeten this. He said that if there had been a *tzaddik* at the time of the Holocaust who would have been prepared to accept terrible shame and humiliation upon himself, the Holocaust wouldn't have occurred."

In 2012, sixty-seven years after the Holocaust, the Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant had reached its full capacity, and the Iranians were very close to obtaining a full-fledged nuclear arsenal – and everyone knew where those war heads would be aimed.

The Jewish year 5772 (corresponding to 2011-2012) had long been touted as a very likely date for the redemption of the Jewish people to begin. The late Rav Yitzchak Kaduri had publicly stated on a number of occasions that *Moshiach* would come during *Av* 5772.²

Rav Yitzchak Shlomo Zilberman also publicized the tradition he'd received that the Vilna Gaon had hinted that 5772 was the year of *Keitz*, or End of Days, as had other descendants of the Vilna Gaon's students.

Meanwhile, Rav Yosef Scheinberger publicized the story he'd heard directly from Rav Grosnas, one of the Chofetz Chaim's students, that the Chofetz Chaim had said in 5692 that it wouldn't take more than another 80 years for *Moshiach* to come—again, bringing us to 5772.

Then there were all the sources from the *Zohar* and other holy works, and all the *gematrias* and all the anecdotal traditions which all seemed to be pointing to the year 5772, as the year of redemption. As more and more of this information came to light, the religious public waited with bated breath to see *what will be* in 5772.

Back in the 1980s and 1990s, the saying "We want Moshiach NOW!" became very popular in certain sections of the Jewish community, and there were many who believed that *Am Yisrael* had already begun the process of *geulah* and redemption, and that all that was left was to wait to greet *Moshiach*.

A senior student of the Rav, Rav Shlomo Gefen, recalls that when Rav Berland first heard this, he commented, "It's not so simple to say that we've already begun the redemption process. Blood is still going to be smeared on the walls of our cities, and *Am Yisrael* still needs to undergo the selection and clarification process associated with the nuclear bomb."

THE BIRTH PANGS OF MOSHIACH

Before *Moshiach* could come and redeem the nation, the world would first have to undergo the difficult test known as the "birth pangs of *Moshiach*," including the War of Gog and Magog.

¹ The idea that there would be another holocaust in roughly 70 years' time was also passed down in the name of the Chofetz Chaim.

² Rav Kaduri stated this directly to Rav Yehuda Moalem and Rav Yosef Chai Zakkai.

These were known to be such difficult tests that some of the Sages of *Chazal* had said, “Let the *Moshiach* come, but let me not be there to see him!”³

If the Jewish people would merit it, the *Moshiach* would come the sweet way. If they didn't merit it, *Moshiach* would come with enormous wars, suffering, and loss of life. As 5772 approached, the papers were full of headlines screaming about Iran's imminent nuclear bomb, and many of the nation's leading kabbalists and Rabbis began to issue detailed warnings about the terrible events they could foresee in the near future.

At this crucial juncture, three of the Jewish nation's holiest men got together to try to avert the coming disaster, by sweetening the awful judgments at their spiritual root. It's taught that there are three things that can sweeten even the harshest judgments, namely: death, shame, and exile.

It's written in Lesson I:260 of *Likutei Moharan* and also in *Bava Metzia* 58b that the embarrassment of losing one's good name and reputation is akin to dying. It's taught elsewhere that when a person has no home of his own and is forced to wander from place to place, on some level that's also considered akin to dying.

LESSON 260, FROM LIKUTEI MOHARAN - BOX OUT

In Lesson I:260 of *Likutei Moharan*, Rebbe Nachman describes how the one *Tzaddik* who takes upon himself exile, shame, and suffering will save the whole generation from suffering terrible things. And by doing so, this *Tzaddik* will enable the redemption to come with mercy, and without wars:

The name of a person is his soul, as is taught in chapter 59, as in the verse, “A living soul is his name” (Bereishis 2). Just as we find that a person can sacrifice his soul for the sanctification of God's name and thereby sweeten harsh judgments, so too can he sacrifice his name, that is, his reputation⁴. Sometimes a vast number of Jews need to be killed, God forbid, in order to facilitate a certain spiritual unification.

A person can be famous but not really be famous—that is, everyone knows about him and speaks about him, but he is not really famous, since he is not respected at all. Or, there is the person who against his wish loses his fame, which is a loss of the name, which is the soul...

But there is one person who does this intentionally and consciously, surrendering his soul for the sanctification of God's Name. He surrenders his fame—his 'name,' corresponding to the soul—and on account of this, although he is renowned, he is not famous at all.

On the contrary, everyone talks against him, conjuring stories about him that he would never have dreamed of doing. He experiences this as if he was literally being killed. He does this all

³ Other sages said: “Let me see him, even if I sit in the dung of his donkey.”

⁴ We see an example of this after the sin of the *egel*, when Moshe was begging *Hashem* to forgive the Nation; he said, “If you will not forgive them [on Your own], erase my name from Your book”. In other words, the willingness of Moshe to sacrifice his name will be enough to forgive the entire nation”.

intentionally, because it is a literal self-sacrifice of [his] soul, for the name is the soul, as said, and he experiences it as death.

But in this way, he saves the Jewish people from what would have happened to them in order to facilitate this unification, as said, and by thus sacrificing his name, which is his soul, he spares them.

THE SELF-SACRIFICE OF THE TZADDIKIM

Shortly after these three *Gedolei Hador* made their Heavenly pact to do everything they could do, spiritually, to sweeten the terrible situation facing the Jewish people, the first act of self-sacrifice on behalf of the Jewish people occurred.

On the evening of July 28, 2011 (26 Tammuz 5771), Rav Elazar Abuchatzeira (also known as the Baba Elazar) was stabbed to death in the waiting room of his *yeshiva* in Beer Sheva. His killer was an outwardly observant *chareidi* man from Elad who had come to speak with the Baba Elazar many times before. Eyewitnesses said that the Baba Elazar seemed to have known in advance what was about to happen and rushed over happily to meet his attacker, who then drew a knife and repeatedly stabbed him.

The Baba Elazar was rushed by ambulance to the Soroka Medical Center in Beer Sheva, but was pronounced dead on arrival. The murder of this holy man shocked the nation to its core, and many thousands of people attended his funeral the following day, when he was buried on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem.

THE RAV'S EXILE BEGINS

Shortly before this, in Chanukah 5771 (December 2010), Rav Eliezer Berland's exile from Jerusalem and the Shuvu Banim *Yeshiva* began. From Jerusalem, the Rav went up to the Galilee for a period of time before returning to live in the city of Beitar Illit, located to the south of Jerusalem.

But the next part of the deal—being publicly shamed, insulted, humiliated, and losing his good name—only began two years' later. But the most important thing to remember is that *Rav Berland himself agreed to be shamed and exiled, in order to atone for the Jewish people and bring the redemption the sweet way.*

Even many years ago, he knew that he would be shamed and exiled, and spent a lifetime preparing himself—and his *yeshiva*—to pass the test.

ACCEPTING AN INSULT LOVINGLY PROTECTS A THOUSAND JEWS - BOX OUT

The following excerpt comes from a *shiur* the Rav gave more than 20 years ago, where he described how accepting insults and humiliation with love could save the lives of thousands and even millions of people.

"The Rebbe says that, in the merit of those who accept upon themselves disgrace, people are saved from getting killed. It says in *Likutei Moharan* that when a person accepts an insult lovingly, he saves tens of thousands of Jews from getting killed.

“To accept an insult lovingly is the same thing as a person protecting thousands of Jews.

“It says in *Likutei Moharan* Torah 260 that when a person lovingly accepts insults and disgrace upon himself, it’s the exact same thing as when a person dies for the sanctification of *Hashem’s* Name. It’s the exact same thing! When a person lovingly accepts insults upon himself, he can save the entire Jewish people.

“The Rebbe says that there are those *tzaddikim* who willingly and lovingly accept the insults that come their way, and there are those who are insulted against their will, and they also sweeten the judgments; they also save a number of people. But those who chase after insults, who are looking for people to insult them and disgrace them at every moment, and who are trying to give others a reason to disgrace them and insult them, these people are saving *all of Am Yisrael!* Not just hundreds and not just thousands, they are saving *all of Am Yisrael!*

“A regular person is afraid of getting insulted, because he doesn’t know that through every single insult he merits rising up ten levels. The Rebbe brings here in Torah 260 that the greatest spiritual unification is when a person accepts insults with love. It’s the same spiritual unification that can be achieved by dying to sanctify God’s Name, but every time a person is insulted, it happens again [i.e., each fresh insult is considered a new ‘death’ and a new sanctification of God’s name].

“The Rebbe tells us that there are many different levels. Some people don’t want to be insulted but when they are, they don’t answer back. That is also a level. But there are those who do all different kinds of tricks in order that they should be insulted.

“The students want an explanation! They ask, “Why are you bringing all this *machlokes* on yourself!? It’s hard for us!” So [the Rebbe] says, ‘It’s your life insurance! It would be harder for you to be blown up in a terrorist attack or end up missing an eye, or who knows else would happen to you.’”

“The big *tzaddikim* would seek different ways for people to insult them, any possible way that people should persecute them. That is how they save thousands and thousands, and cancel all of the decrees. They save the entire nation. This is why the *Zohar* says that the greatest thing is to die for the sanctification of *Hashem’s* Name.

“And the Rebbe adds that this is what happens when a person takes all of the insults upon himself and does things in order that the disgrace should only continue. Even if people are saying things about him that he never did, and they are spreading a terrible blood libel against him, he accepts it even more joyfully. “