



RABBI JUDAH

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YOM HA'ATZMAUT



Dedicated L'IluY Nishmas HaChaver
Shlomo Michael ben Meir z'l

It's Time!

Dr. Hillel Seidman z'l, was a *Chassidische Yid*, an archivist, researcher and survivor. The author of *The Warsaw Ghetto Diaries* and *Reflections After the Revolt*, he had written copious notes documenting community life and a faithful account of the tragic days of the Ghetto, from deportation through the uprising. In the Spring of 1949, he arrived in Eretz Yisrael for a visit.

It was Erev Yom Ha'Atzmaut, the eve of the first anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel. The streets of Yerushalayim were filled with lively celebrations of the young and the old, singing and dancing. As Dr. Seidman walked through the center of the city, he was surprised to see none other than the "Tzaddik of Yerushalayim", the beloved Rav Aryeh Levin, z'tl, dancing together with the young people in the streets.

Dr. Seidman approached the humble *tzadik*, and exclaimed, "After so much suffering, we have the good fortune to see

Jewish children in the Holy Land dancing with joy and filled with hope." Rav Aryeh's face beamed with joy, "The time has come for us to give praise and thanksgiving to *HaKadosh Baruch Hu!*"

Shabbos *Mevarchim Chodesh Iyar* welcomes a new month as we count every day in preparation for receiving the Torah on Shavuos. *Hashgacha Pratis* is revealed in Iyar, being the month when we mark the return of the Jewish Nation to our homeland. We rejoice over this restoration of sovereignty and expansion of our borders as a meaningful stage in the Divinely providential unfolding of Jewish destiny and redemption. Iyar is also a time when we observe the Hillula of the holy Tanna, Rebbe Shimon bar Yochai and his revelation of the depths of Torah, *The Zohar*.

Indeed, the secrets of the Torah and the special days on the Iyar calendar can be viewed as a single idea. As Rav Avraham Yitzchak haKohen Kook taught, "The secrets of the Torah bring redemption and return Israel to its Land because the Torah of truth...demands the complete soul of the Nation. Through this inner Torah, the Nation begins to feel the pain of exile and to realize the absolute impossibility for its character to fulfill its potential as long as

it is oppressed on foreign soil (*Orot*, p.95).”

Rebbe Shimon bar Yochai lived after the destruction of the Second Beis haMikdash. When the Temple stood, Am Yisrael's relationship with Hashem was an obvious fact. After its destruction, Hashem's existence was concealed and the Shechinah was exiled.

Beneath the surface of world events, there is an inner reality that is pulsating, alive, shining with Hashem's light

The Gemara relates that Rebbe Shimon bar Yochai, the Holy Tanna, said: “See how beloved Israel is to *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*, for wherever they went into exile, *Shechinah imahen*, the Divine Presence went with them. They were exiled to Egypt, and *Shechinah imahen*; they were exiled to Babylon, *veShechinah imahen*. And when Am Yisrael will be redeemed in the future, the Shechinah will be redeemed with them....” (*Megillah*, 29a)

In a world darkened by destruction, exile and Divine concealment, *The Zohar* reveals

hope and meaning by opening our eyes to our true inner life-force and the reality of G-d's plan and involvement in all that is transpiring. Beneath the surface of world events, there is an inner reality that is pulsating, alive, shining with Hashem's light.

The Navi (*Melachim* Alef, 6) refers to Chodesh Iyar as the month of *ziv*, ‘shining’ or splendor. This word is translated into Aramaic by the Targum as *nitzan*, ‘blossom’. And *Nitzan* itself alludes to the sweet fragrance of the coming redemption of our Land and her People:

הַנְּצַנִּים נִרְאוּ בְּאֶרֶץ עַת הַזְּמִיר הִגִּיעַ וְקוֹל הַתּוֹר נִשְׁמַע בְּאֶרְצָנוּ.

“Blossoms have appeared in the Land; the time for song has arrived...”

The song of the turtledove is heard in our Land.” (*Shir haShirim*, 2:12)

May the coming month completely reveal the ‘shining splendor’ of our people, and awaken us to the urgent need for redemption. May we plumb the depths of the secrets of Torah and bask in the holiness of Eretz Yisrael, celebrating the great return of our nation. The time has come! ■



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