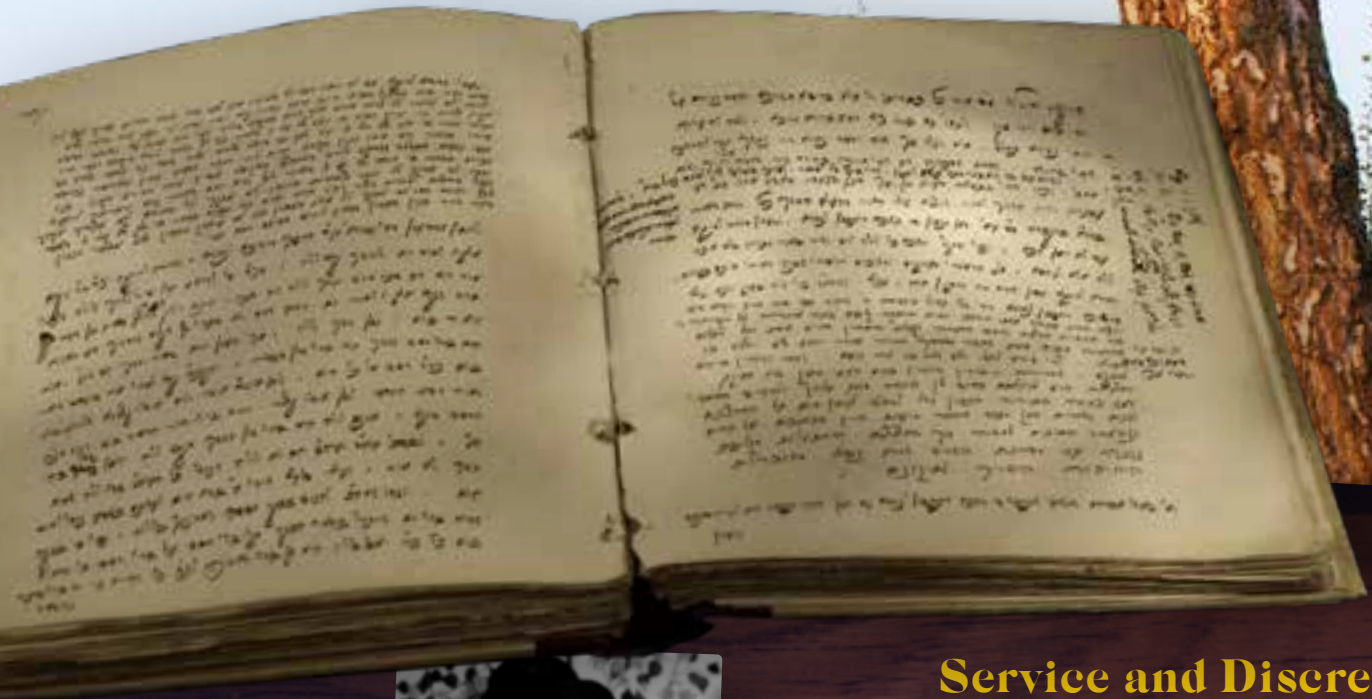


A Chassidisher **Derher**

א חסידישער דערהער

לכתחילה אריבער

THE REBBE MAHARASH



Service and Discretion

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF THE LEGENDARY MAZKIR,
REB MOSHE LEIB RODSHTAIN

Living Well

THE REBBE ON THE IMPORTANCE
OF A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE



IYAR 5781
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JUNE 2021

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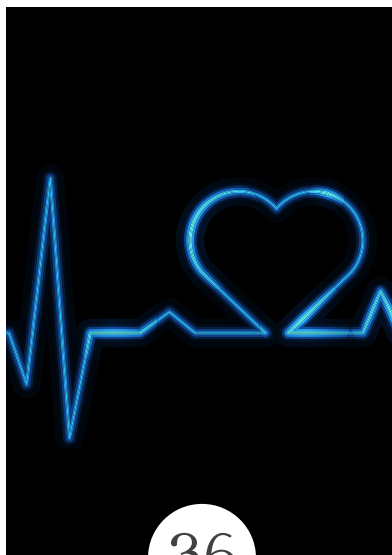
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On the Cover: In honor of Beis Iyar, the birthday of the Rebbe Maharash who originated the approach of "L'chatchila Arib'er"
—a facsimile of the Rebbe Maharash's ksav yad kodesh, against the backdrop of a recent photo of the city of Lubavitch.



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Vaad Talmidei Hatmimim
Rabbi Tzvi Altein

Publisher
Rabbi Yossi Kamman

Editor in Chief
Rabbi Mendel Jacobs

Director of Operations
Rabbi Levi Kesselman

Administrator
Rabbi Schneur Druk

Circulation and Marketing
Rabbi Mendy Shishler

Photo Research/Editing
Rabbi Mendel Levertov

Editors
Rabbi Mendel Alperowitz
Rabbi Mendel Misholovin
Rabbi David Olidort

Copy Editor
Rabbi Eliezer Zalmanov

Design
Rabbi Mendy Weg

Printed by
The Print House

Contributors

Rabbi Yanky Bell • Rabbi Yossi Bendet • Rabbi Koppel Chaiton • Rabbi Tzemach Feller • Rabbi Levi Greenberg • Rabbi Menachem Mendel Greenberg • Rabbi Mendy Greenberg • Rabbi Zevi Kaplan • Rabbi Levi Katz • Rabbi Levi Levertov • Rabbi Mendy Shemtov • Schabse Soffer • Rabbi Mendel Vogel

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טור 'לעבן מיטן רבין' הוקדש לזכרון ולעילוי נשמת
 ר' שמואל ב"ר יהושע אליהו ז"ל
 ואשתו מרת שרה ע"ה בת ר' יקותיאל ומרת לאה הי"ד
 ת"נצ'ב'ה

ע"י בנם
 ר' יקותיאל יהודה
 וזוגתו מרת פעסל לאה ומשפחתם שיחיו
 רוהר

“We Want Chassidus!”

IYAR 5710*



In the following pages, we present an account of some of the events of Iyar 5710*, just a few months after the *histalkus* of the Friediker Rebbe. Chassidim were yearning for the Ramash—the title by which the Rebbe was then known—to accept the *nesius*, and they did not hide this desire from the Rebbe. Throughout this collection of personal memories and diaries of various individuals as they are recorded in “Yemei Bereishis,” we repeatedly

encounter the efforts made for the Rebbe to finally agree to accept the role of *Nossi*, along with stories and anecdotes illustrating the Rebbe’s care and concern for the *bochurim*, the Chassidim in general, and for all of *klal Yisroel*.

1 IYAR - FARBRENGEN FOR BOCHURIM

Tonight, in honor of Beis Iyar, birthday of the Rebbe Maharash, the Rebbe farbrenged with the

L'Chatchila Ariber!

The Rebbe Maharash

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לזכות
הרה"ת ר' אברהם יהודה הלוי
וזוגתו מרת דבורה לאה
ומשפחתם שיחיו
סאסקינד
נוביי, מישיגין



ONE OF THE MEGILOS WRITTEN BY THE REBBE MAHARASH

In the Rebbe's *sichos*, a very common refrain is the need to accomplish one's *avoda* in a manner of "*Lechatchilah Aribet*." This line, the Rebbe often explained, originates from the Rebbe Maharash who personified this *sefer avoda*.

The Rebbe often spoke about the Rebbe Maharash and often asked to sing his *niggun*. In fact, the Rebbe personally printed the Rebbe Maharash's biography, *Sefer Hatoldos Admur Maharash* – the only Rebbe for which he did so.

Although comparing and evaluating the conduct of a Rebbe is beyond our purview, Chassidim have often noted the many similarities between the style of the Rebbe and the Rebbe Maharash.

In honor of Beis Iyar, "*Tiferes Shebiteferes*," the birthday of the Rebbe Maharash, A *Chassidisher Derher* presents the following overview and description of his *nesius*.

Ushering In A New Era

“Hashem desired the souls of the *tzaddikim*, my father the Rebbe, on Wednesday evening, 13 Nissan 5626* (תרכ"ו). The *aron kodesh*, the light of the Jewish nation, was taken into captivity. May the dwellers of the dust rise and sing, and him among them, and share with us the wonders of Hashem’s Torah...”

With these words, the Rebbe Maharash inscribed the news of the Tzemach Tzedek’s *histalkus* on the *pinkas* of the *chevra kadisha* of Lubavitch. After close to 40 years, the sun had set on the *nesius* of the Tzemach Tzedek. The Rebbe Maharash, his youngest son, was chosen to be his successor.

The choice wasn’t a simple one.

The Rebbe Maharash was young, not yet 32 years old. He had always kept a low profile, while his five older brothers were each well-known and highly esteemed among Chassidim. One brother was known for his vast knowledge of *nigleh*, another for his deep understanding of Chassidus, and yet another for his passionate and inspiring davening. Indeed, in the years following the Tzemach Tzedek’s passing, the brothers moved to other towns where they led Chassidim of their own.

The Rebbe Maharash, on the other hand, was unpretentious in spiritual matters. He didn’t profess his knowledge of *nigleh* or Chassidus during his early life, and even when he became a Rebbe and began speaking Chassidus, he rarely spoke *nigleh*. His davening appeared to people as simple, without the external trappings of excitement.

During a discussion after the Tzemach Tzedek’s passing, the Rebbe Maharash presented his thoughts on a certain matter according to *halacha*, and his brother Reb Yisroel Noach—

famous for his brilliance in *nigleh*—expressed his shock and amazement.

“Where did you get this? You are so young!” he exclaimed.

“You are old in your own years,” the Rebbe Maharash responded. “But I am old with father’s years.”¹

As a youngster, the Rebbe Maharash was known to be somewhat mischievous. Even as an adult, the Rebbe writes in *Reshimas Hayoman*,² he did not conduct himself like his brothers. The Tzemach Tzedek’s elder sons would entertain the visitors to Lubavitch and review their father’s Chassidus in public, but the Rebbe Maharash would not speak Chassidus publicly, and was known to be a *freilicher* person.

However, in the last years of his life, the Tzemach Tzedek had instructed all of his sons to deliver *maamarim*, and the Rebbe Maharash had begun to do so.³ More and more, Chassidim began to acquaint themselves with ‘the Rebbe’s youngest son.’ And before his passing, the Tzemach Tzedek wrote a note to the Chassidim saying, “You should listen to him [referring to the Rebbe Maharash] just as you listened to me.”

After the *histalkus*, there were various discussions and disagreements between the Tzemach Tzedek’s sons that were brought before a *beis din* of three highly esteemed Chassidim. At the end, the Rebbe Maharash was chosen to be his father’s *memaleh makom* to sit on his seat in the town of Lubavitch.⁴

News did not travel fast in those days. On 8 Av, one Chossid in the town of Pleshtzenitz wrote the following in a letter to his friend, Reb Avraham Chaim Rosenbaum:⁵

“We haven’t heard much, but last week, we received a letter from Reb Meir Amstizer... He writes that he met Reb Yosef Kremenchuker arriving from Lubavitch, and he showed him *tzetlach* from the Rebbe... from those notes it is very clear that the Maharash⁶ should be the Rebbe.

“Reb Yosef related that one individual came to the Maharash and complained that he was completely destitute. The Maharash attributed his problem to a failing in his *avodas Hashem* based on a certain *possuk*,⁷ and ultimately, the person admitted to that failing.”



ARTIST'S SKETCH OF LUBAVITCH

“After receiving his letter, we felt encouraged and enthused. We said *lchaim*; may Hashem give us the merit to follow the correct path.

“Most of the *olam* is following the Maharash. They are recounting amazing things...”⁸

A Close Connection

As a child, the Rebbe Maharash would spend a lot of time with his father, the Tzemach Tzedek. Aside from his regular studies in *cheder* and with private tutors, the Tzemach Tzedek personally taught him a variety of subjects, such as Kesuvim and Tanya, and when he grew older, they learned Kabbalah and Chakirah for hours at a time.

By the time he was seven or eight years old, he was fluent in the entire Chumash and much of Nach, and was learning Gemara with Tosfos regularly. He started listening to his father’s Chassidus, and soon began transcribing his own *hanachos*.

He also had the luxury of talented older brothers: When he was 10 years old, his brother Reb Yisroel Noach would learn *nigleh* with him, and his brother Reb Boruch Sholom taught him how the Alter Rebbe would *lein* the Torah.

He was first married at a young age, only 14 years old, to Sterna, the daughter of his brother Reb Chaim Shneur Zalman, but she fell ill and passed away only three months after the wedding. To comfort the Rebbe Maharash, the Tzemach Tzedek gave him a room adjacent to his own, allowing him to enter his room at any time. During the years that followed, he spent even more time with the Tzemach Tzedek. His second marriage, to Rebbetzin Rivka (a granddaughter of the Mittler Rebbe), was in 5609* or 5610*, some three years later.⁹

He would also spend time with the elder Chassidim. “Even as a child,” he



THE ROUND TABLE MADE BY THE REBBE MAHARASH

related to his son, the Rebbe Rashab, “I found favor in the eyes of the senior Chassidim, and they would share their stories with me.”¹⁰

One elder Chossid, Reb Yitzchak Aizik of Vitebsk, had been one of the earliest Chassidim of the Alter Rebbe. He paid close attention to the Rebbe Maharash and shared with him his many memories of the previous Rabbeim. Later, this same Chossid gave the Rebbe Maharash *semicha*.

A Smile of a Rebbe

Throughout his life, the Rebbe Maharash suffered from a painful and debilitating illness. Yet, despite his suffering, he always kept an upbeat appearance and never displayed his difficulties.

“I never met anyone that suffered as much as my father,” the Rebbe Rashab once expressed himself, “and yet he always had a smile on his face.” A beautiful smile, the Rebbe Rashab noted, that had G-dly qualities to it; a smile that only a Rebbe has.¹¹

Several interesting artifacts remain from the Rebbe Maharash, such as a beautifully written Megillah and a round table that sits in the Rebbe’s room. The doctors instructed him

to engage in physical activity, and he therefore made those items. In the town of Lubavitch, there was also a large candelabra which was the Rebbe Maharash’s handiwork. It would be set up each year at the bochurim’s *seder*, but it was lost over the years.

The Rebbe Maharash was extremely punctual. Every day had a specific schedule, and he would often be after Shacharis by eight in the morning.

He took two trips to the fields each day. During those trips, Chassidim would sneak into his room and copy manuscripts of Chassidus, while posting a guard at the door to warn them of his return. Among those Chassidim would also be his own wife, Rebbetzin Rivkah. The Rebbe once noted that the Rebbe Maharash definitely realized that people were copying his *ksavim*, but instead of allowing them to copy them legitimately, he preferred it to be in secrecy. “Because certain things need to be undertaken with trickery, like the *brachos* of Eisav by Yaakov...”¹²

A Different Hanhaga

President Zalman Shazar once sent a collection of manuscripts of the Rabbeim to a graphologist to analyze

A Lesson For All

ביז אפילו דעם פשוט שבפשוטים



The lesson learned this week must be understood by every single Yid, even the most simple-minded. The entire Torah was given to the *Bnei Yisroel* as a whole, but at the same time it was also given to each and every Yid individually, as the Midrash points out: *Matan Torah* was only able to happen when all 600,000 Yidden were present at Har Sinai. If even one had been missing, Hashem would not have given the Torah.

Obviously then, this lesson must be understandable even for the simplest of Jews. Yes, a smarter Yid, one of the “heads of tribes,” can and should delve deeper into the lesson and understand it more comprehensively. But at the base of it, just like every part of Torah, this lesson must be clear and straightforward—accessible to all...

(*Shabbos Parshas Bamidbar, Erev Shavuos 5738, et. al.*¹)

Me Too

When Hashem gave the Torah to the Yidden, the first words uttered were: “אנכי ה' אלקיך—I am Hashem

your G-d,” using the singular term—even though there were millions of people being addressed. The Midrash explains² that each and every Yid heard the words in a personal way; each one said “עמי הדיבור מדבר”—Hashem’s words are being addressed to me specifically.”

Likewise, the Torah was given as an inheritance to every single Yid: מורשה. קהלת יעקב. There is no prerequisite to acquiring an inheritance; according to *halacha*, even a one-day-old child can inherit whatever belonged to his predecessor.

With that being the case, every part of Torah must be accessible and understandable by each and every Yid.

The Rebbe often emphasized this point when teaching a lesson in *avodas Hashem*, stating that it must be understood by everyone—even the most simple of individuals. Similarly, the Rebbe would connect the theme of the various *parshios* and Yomim Tovim with the fact that each and every

Yid, even the most simple, must be included in the order of the day.

The Rebbe would often connect it with the theme of the *farbrengen* and the time of year. For example: Around Rosh Hashanah, the Rebbe elaborated on the *possuk* of אתם נצבים היום כולכם—how all the Yidden stand together on Rosh Hashanah, regardless of their status. We all crown Hashem as king over all of us—as members of the same nation. So the lessons of the day must certainly be appreciated by each and every one.

This is one of the most important founding principles of Chassidus as taught by the Baal Shem Tov and the Alter Rebbe. The Rebbe explains:

Before Chassidus was revealed, there was a great divide between the scholars, the *bnei Torah*, and the simple folk. Then the Baal Shem Tov, the Maggid, the Alter Rebbe, and all the Rabbeim that followed, invested immense effort to show that it is possible, and allowed access, for even the most simple Jews to reach

לזכות
החייל בצבאות ה'
מאיר שלמה שיחי'
ניו
שיגדל להיות חי"ל לנח"ר כ"ק אדמו"ר
נדפס ע"י משפחתו שיחיו



the highest levels of *avoda*. The Alter Rebbe wanted Chassidus to be for everyone, not merely for one group of people or select individuals.

The Baal Shem Tov forged a whole new path and revolutionized the way things are done:

Before the revelation of Chassidus, the great *tzaddikim* and teachers of Torah would stay in their own place and expected anyone who wanted to learn from them to come to wherever the teacher was. Even those *tzaddikim* who had a habit of traveling and moving about, did so mainly for their own spiritual benefit, as a means of experiencing “*galus*” and cleansing their souls. While on the road, they would try hard to hide their true identity, not allowing themselves to be revealed to the Yidden that they met in the cities along the way.

The Baal Shem Tov, on the other hand, traveled extensively from city to city and from village to village. The Alter Rebbe also traveled a lot, and even when he wasn't traveling, he sent

talmidim (*shadarim*, *meshulachim*, etc.) on his behalf. Instead of concealing themselves from the public, these people would engage and educate, spreading the light of Torah and the source of the light of Torah—*penimius haTorah*—to the whole world.

This allowed for the engagement of even the least inspired Yidden, those who did not even know they were missing anything in their lives. They were taught to learn and appreciate the Torah they were missing, and they were eventually transformed into teachers themselves who spread the message even further.

Such are the ways of the Baal Shem Tov and all those who follow in his path—to teach and inspire even the uninitiated, including even very small children. The Baal Shem Tov himself worked as a teacher's assistant, tending to young children, helping them get to and from *cheder*, teaching them to say *brachos* and *Shema Yisroel*, and so on.

This was also one of the primary occupations of the [Frierdiker] Rebbe,

working hard that all Jewish children should have a proper education, not only those who were up to learning Chumash and Gemara, but even those who still needed to learn Aleph-Beis and Modeh Ani!

Even someone who is not yet even ready to learn Aleph-Beis, the [Frierdiker] Rebbe demanded that we should help them and teach them the basics of Yiddishkeit in a language that they do understand.

It is our sacred obligation to teach and inspire all the Yidden in our surroundings, to kindle the fire of their *neshamos*, or to fan the existing flames and allow them to shine ever brighter.³

The Rebbe once explained that while the Baal Shem Tov opened the door for bringing the secrets of the Torah to even the most simple people, the Alter Rebbe carried through with this mission and made it a reality. The Baal Shem Tov dealt with very young children teaching them the very basics of Yiddishkeit, as well as with the



very simple folk, inspiring them to praise Hashem and so on. However, these great and lofty energies were not able to manifest in a proper way. The *giluyim* he was revealing were sourced in *Sefiras HaKesser* and did not come

down in a manner that was palatable by lower realms.

The Maggid, and then the Alter Rebbe with Chassidus Chabad, were able to begin the process of allowing these lofty concepts to sit well within the human mind. Chassidus

Chabad not only teaches us that we can influence the most simple Jew and carry him to the loftiest heights, moreover, it even gives us the *explanation* for how this is possible. How a Yid who is considered by Torah to be a נדח—far from where he needs to be—is truly a Yid who will ultimately not be cast out forever: לא ידח ממנו נדח. We can teach this Yid even the deepest concepts in *penimius haTorah*, thereby bringing him back to where he needs to be, to the ways of Torah and mitzvos.⁴

The Rebbe once explained that since the Torah was given to each and every one of us, it is not enough for us to merely read up on what the final ruling is, what the “*maskana*” is and follow the orders. Each and every Yid needs to try and understand the depth of what lies behind that order, to the best extent possible.

This is in stark contrast to the way things were when the Yidden were still in Mitzrayim: The culture in Mitzrayim was such that only the great scholars, the “*chartumim*,” the sorcerers and stargazers, were well

What Did Chassidus Accomplish?

Many people ask: What did Chassidus accomplish? I never heard anything in this regard from my forebears. I never farbrenged with my father on Yud-Tes Kislev, so I never heard an explanation from him on this.

...What I personally think Chassidus accomplished is that each and every Yid can really understand how Hashem is מלא כל עולמין וסובב כל עולמין—He fills all the worlds and He surrounds all the worlds... Every Yid, even one who doesn't have such a lofty *neshama*, one who didn't work on cleansing his *neshama*, even he can understand and deeply connect with a G-dly idea.

When the Baal Shem Tov was told by Moshiach that he would arrive after the wellsprings of Chassidus reached the *chutza*, the Baal Shem Tov was crying. People say that he was crying because these precious wellsprings were about to be dispersed everywhere, even in the furthest places. It seems that this is what Chassidus is all about: That even those people who did not cleanse their souls should be able to understand and relate to *Elokus*.

(*The Rebbe Rashab, Sefer Hasichos Toras Shalom*, p. 113)



versed in intellectual concepts, and they gave the orders for what the common folk should do. For the Yidden, Hashem wanted the exact opposite: Every Yid is supposed to learn and understand the Torah for himself, appreciating the depth of every Torah concept to the best of his capabilities.

Even a small child is supposed to be taught Torah from the moment he begins to speak. True, he may not understand the concepts at hand as well as an adult, but the obligation to study Torah is real nonetheless. A good analogy for this would be the rays of light from the sun: The sun is indeed the greatest and most powerful luminary in the solar system, yet its reflection can be found at the same time on both a tiny drop of water and on the ocean. Torah, too, is a great and G-dly wisdom, but it manifests itself in the mind of a great genius just as well as it does in the mind of a two-year-old child.⁵

Our job is to bring the waters of Torah to everyone, even the most simple Yid, and explain it in a way that

Everyone

As we search for a lesson from this Chai Elul that we can all apply in our own *avodas Hashem*, one might think that the lesson should be by delving into a very deep secret in the innermost parts of the Torah, or by analyzing a complex subject in *nigleh*.

This is absolutely wrong. It would go contrary to the philosophy of the Baal Shem Tov, the Alter Rebbe, and all the Rabbeim who followed, including the [Frierdiker] Rebbe, to say that a lesson should be a complex thing that only intellectuals can understand but not the common folk.

The Rabbeim taught us that every lesson needs to be accessible to everyone—from the “heads of the tribes” through the “wood-choppers” and “water-drawers,” even the most simple people.

Not only that, but all these people are placed together, **אתם נצבים היום, כולכם**, becoming one entity together.

(Shabbos Parshas Ki Savo, Chai Elul 5740)

is palatable and understandable. If the other person still doesn’t understand it, it’s obviously not a problem on his part, because every concept in Torah is, by definition, accessible to all. The problem then must lie on the shoulders of the teacher—it is his responsibility to form a better method of explanation.⁶ ①

1. This same sentiment was repeated by the Rebbe at countless farbrengens, perhaps even hundreds of times. See below.

2. Yalkut Shimoni, Shemos 20:2.

3. Shabbos Parshas Ki Savo, Chai Elul 5711, sicha 1.

4. 19 Kislev 5720, sicha 7.

5. Yud Shevat 5743, sicha 2.

6. Pesach Sheini 5743, sicha 1.

LIVING WELL

A selection of the Rebbe's letters on the importance of maintaining optimal health and instructions for living a healthy lifestyle



הואִיל וְהִיּוֹת הַגּוּף בָּרִיא וְשָׁלֵם מִדְּרָכֵי (עֲבוּדַת) הַשֵּׁם הוּא.
שֶׁהֵרִי אֵי אֶפְשָׁר שְׂיִבִּין אוֹ יָדַע דְּבַר מִיִּדְּעַת הַבּוֹרָא וְהוּא
חוֹלָה. לְפִיכָךְ צָרִיךְ לְהִרְחִיק אָדָם עֲצָמוֹ מִדְּבָרִים הַמַּאֲבִדִין
אֶת הַגּוּף. וּלְהִנָּהִיג עֲצָמוֹ בְּדְבָרִים הַמְּבָרְרִין וְהַמְחַלְמִים.

Since maintaining a healthy and sound body is among the ways of (serving) Hashem—for one cannot understand or have any knowledge of the Creator if he is ill—therefore, he must avoid that which harms the body and accustom himself to that which is healthful and helps the body become stronger.

(Rambam, Hilchos De'os, 4:1)

לעילוי נשמת
הרה"ח הרה"ת הרב יהודה יעקב
בן ר' אברהם אבא ע"ה
רעפסון
נלב"ע כ"ז אדר ה'תש"פ
תנ"צ'ב'ה'
נדפס ע"י
משפחתו שיחיו

Introduction: The Preciousness of a Yid's Body

... My father-in-law, the Rebbe, of blessed memory, related the statement of his father, the Rebbe [Rashab] *nishmaso eden*: "See how precious is the body of a Jew — for its sake has [Hashem] poured forth so much [Torah and mitzvos]."

When Hashem gives each and every one of us something as precious as the body, we are to make every effort and truly exert ourselves to ensure that the body be healthy. In so doing, we make it possible to fulfill Hashem's will [of performing Torah and mitzvos, which is specifically performed with the body].

This is as the Rambam states in *Hilchos Deos*, beginning of ch. 4, that "maintaining a healthy and whole body is an integral part of [one's] *avodas Hashem*." And then there is the letter of the Maggid [of Mezritch] (printed in *Hatomim*) to his son, the holy "Malach," [in which he states]: "A small hole in the body causes a large hole in the soul."

My intent is not to lecture — rather, it is my hope that the above will hopefully have a positive effect on you, and through you [it will also have an effect] upon your husband.

Although the Zohar does state that the "strength of the soul leads to the weakening of the body," this is to be understood [in the context of the spiritual power and potency of the holy soul] weakening the corporeal demands of the body — not, Heaven forbid, weakening the health of the body.

Indeed, we readily observe that when a person is healthy he can accomplish so much more in all areas [than when he is unhealthy,] particularly with regard to matters relating to love of Hashem, love of Torah and love of a fellow Jew.²

Over the years, the Rebbe quoted these words of the Rambam on numerous occasions, urging his listeners, whether in *sichos*, letters, or *yechidus*, to meticulously guard their physical health. In honor of the month of אייר, the name of which includes the first letters of "אני ה' רפאך"—we present this collection of letters from the Rebbe about maintaining optimal health and healthy living habits.

These selections are culled from the book *Healthy in Body, Mind and Spirit*, volumes 1 & 2, compiled by Rabbi Sholom Ber Wineberg and published by Sichos in English.¹

The Importance of Maintaining a Proper Schedule

I received your letter in which you write about the state of your health:

You should seek the counsel of your *mashpia*, asking him to arrange your course of studies so that it will not in any way negatively impact your health, for there is the known Torah ruling, “Maintaining a healthy and whole body is an integral part of *avodas Hashem*.”

Surely you are also aware of the saying of the Alter Rebbe (quoted in Hayom Yom, entry for Erev Rosh Hashanah): “We have absolutely no conception of how precious the body of a Jew is to Hashem.”

You should therefore follow the doctor’s orders and make sure to follow a proper schedule — in accordance with your health requirements — regarding food, drink and rest. Hashem will then also grant you success that your *davening* and Torah study be accomplished with proper *yiras Shamayim*.

Enclosed is the *maamar* where you will also see that the spiritual deficiency caused by the power of the body only refers to the body being dominated by the *nefesh habahamis*, but not — G-d forbid — regarding the [power of the body] in relation to a person’s health, for that is related to the well-being of the Divine soul.³



Trade Away the Fasting

Over the years, the Rebbe generally discouraged people from taking fasts upon themselves as a way of doing teshuvah or attaining spiritual heights, and suggested other methods instead:

...With regard to fasting:

I have already told you — based on the words of the Alter Rebbe — that it is not advisable to take upon yourself extra fasts in addition to those that are already on the calendar.

One of the reasons offered by the Alter Rebbe is that today's generations are weaker than previous generations and are no longer physically capable of enduring extra fasts. Obviously, my suggestion to you is therefore valid even now [that you are feeling better].

Your impending resolution to undertake fasts should be changed to resolving to serve Hashem with extra measures of joy. Moreover, you should endeavor to inspire others to serve Hashem in this [positive] manner as well.⁴

Alternative Forms of Fasting

I was astonished to learn of your custom to fast from time to time on Mondays and Thursdays and also Erev Rosh Chodesh. Moreover, you do so despite the known directive of the Baal Shem Tov that one should make sure to be healthy so that [ill health] not be a hindrance to the command of serving Hashem with joy, for we readily observe that in this generation frequent fasting weakens one's health and hinders the performance of mitzvos.

Understandably, the above refers to those fasts that the person accepts upon himself (and not those fasts that are commanded by Jewish law).

Should you insist on a form of fasting, then there is the known directive of the Rebbe Maharash that this can be accomplished by refraining from unnecessary speech, even when one greatly desires to do so. This applies not only

to forbidden slanderous speech, but even refraining from speaking extraneous words.

As to food fasts — this can also be accomplished by eating nourishing foods, but not seeking out those foods that are particularly tasty.⁵

Follow Doctors Orders With Joy

It has been some time since I received a letter from you. I hope to G-d that this is a sign that everything is well. Nevertheless, it would be appropriate for you to expressly write [to me] about this.

During these days of Kislev, the “Month of Liberation,” you should act in accordance with the statement of our Sages, of blessed memory, who commanded us to follow doctor's orders and do so with a sense of joy.

It should make no difference to you in what manner and through which means you fulfill Hashem's will — what is of primary importance is that you do so without reservation. Thus, when Hashem commands you to obey the doctor, you should do so and be satisfied at the opportunity presented to you to fulfill Hashem's will.

Consequently, you should do so with a sense of joy. And when you will act in this manner, Hashem will assist you to see with your own eyes that there is indeed much to be satisfied about.⁶

What To Eat

An individual asked the Rebbe what to do about his diet; some of his “health foods” may have had an overall bad effect, etc. The Rebbe responds:

Regarding what you eat and your diet:

What you eat is not so important (as long as they are **properly kosher**); as much as the **reason why** you are eating: Is it only to indulge in pleasure and satiate your hunger, or is it in order to be healthy, thereby enabling you to do good things, etc.

See also *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim*, ch. 231 [where it is explained at length that everything a person does should not be for bodily pleasure, but in order to serve Hashem].⁷

לע"נ
אבינו הרה"ח הרה"ת
ר' יוסף מנחם מענדל
ב"ר יצחק ע"ה
ואמנו מרת זיסל דבורה
בת ר' אלי הכהן ע"ה
טענענבוים
ת"נ צ"ב

The Rebbe Remembered

Rabbi Eli Seidman served as a chaplain in the U.S. Army, retiring at the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. During a visit to Anchorage, Alaska in 2017, he shared the following story with Rabbi Yosef Greenberg, head shliach of Alaska.

In 1985, my wife and I were living in Tucson, Arizona — before I joined the Army. We had been married for about five or six years and we had no children. We tried everything — all the medical technology and all the treatments available then. We were worried. I was talking to my friend, Rabbi Yossie Shemtov, the shliach in Tucson, and he said to me, “Why don’t you write a letter to the Rebbe.” “Well, I’m not a Lubavitcher,” I said. “Where would I come from, writing a letter?”

“No, really,” Rabbi Shemtov said. “The Rebbe cares about every Jew. You tried all of these other treatments; you might as well try a spiritual treatment. It would cost you nothing more than a stamp!” So I sat down, wrote the letter, mailed it — and I forgot all about it.

A year and a half later, I joined the Army. We were first stationed in Fort Louis, Washington, and then later in Frankfurt, Germany. In 1987 we had a son, and then a daughter in 1990.

Later on, in 1991, I had an occasion to come back for a course in Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, and while I was there, I called up Chaplain Yaakov Goldstein — another friend. He asked me whether I wanted to come for Dollars, where I would be able to ask the Rebbe for a *bracha*. “Come dressed in uniform,” Goldstein told me. “Come at this specific time, and meet me at the side door; they’ll call us in. Have a little *kvittel* with what you’re asking for written on it, go up to the Rebbe, and give that note to the *mazkir*. Say to the Rebbe, ‘My name is Elimelech Seidman, a chaplain in the United States Army, and I want to ask for the Rebbe’s *bracha*.’”

So I got dressed in my dress uniform and waited at the door to meet the Rebbe with Rabbi Goldstein. The time came and they called us in. I walked up to the Rebbe, gave the *kvittel* to the Rebbe’s secretary, and said to the Rebbe, “My name is Elimelech Seidman, I’m in Frankfurt as the Jewish chaplain and



I wanted to ask for the Rebbe's *bracha*." The Rebbe said to me,

"איך האב געהאט אמאל א בריך פון אייך"

"I once received a letter from you."

I said, "No, I just gave a note." The Rebbe said, "Not today, but a few years ago." And then I remembered. It must have been about six years after I had written that letter on Rabbi Shemtov's suggestion, asking the Rebbe for a *bracha* for children. "A few years ago, when I was in Arizona, I did write," I said to the Rebbe.

"May G-d Almighty bless you to be successful about all the soldiers under your guidance, to guide them in the right direction. It's your responsibility." Then the Rebbe gave me another dollar and said, "For all your family." The Rebbe then gave Chaplain Goldstein two dollars and said to me, "He received two because he's your chaplain."

I didn't know what to say. I was in shock. I was tongue-tied. Rabbi Goldstein helped me finish the time with the Rebbe. When you watch the video of it, it happens so fast. But when it happened, it seemed like a long time, a very long time.

I went out with Rabbi Goldstein, back to his house on Montgomery Street. At his house — this was during the Kinus Hashluchim — who would be there but Rabbi Yossie Shemtov! Rabbi Shemtov exclaimed, "I told you — even if you didn't get a written answer from the Rebbe, writing still makes an impression in *Shamayim*."

I returned to Frankfurt and I picked up the phone to call another friend — also a Lubavitcher — in Zurich: Moshe Rappoport. His wife answered the phone — this was a day after this happened — and she said, "I heard about what happened with you and the Rebbe." "How did you hear so quickly?" I asked. "It's in the Kfar Chabad news," she said. She then sent me a copy: A transcript of what the Rebbe said and what I said, and above it there was a banner headline that read, "The Chaplain forgot but the Rebbe remembered."

I wrote one letter to the Rebbe my whole life, and I didn't remember it. How many letters did the Rebbe get? A million? And the Rebbe remembered my letter. I can't explain it. ①

Service & Discretion

The life and times of
the legendary Mazkir,
Reb Moshe Leib Rodshtein

לזכות השלוחה
מרת פערל גאלדא שתחי'
לרגל יום הולדתה א' אייר,
השליח גבריאל נח שיחי',
לרגל יום הולדתו ט' אייר,
הבחור הת' השליח לוי שיחי'
לרגל יום הולדתו י"ב אייר
נדפס ע"י
הרה"ת ר' דוד ומשפחתם שיחיו
טייכטל



JEW 11263

He was a devoted *mazkir* of the Frierdiker Rebbe and the Rebbe for over 40 years. Charged with handling the Rebbeim's highly sensitive correspondence and important matters pertaining to *Beis HoRav*, he was a "Baal Sod" - the paragon of discretion to the fullest degree. He was a tremendous *talmid chacham* and a true *Chassidisher Yid*, with a gifted sense of humor, exuding an aura of friendliness and kindness to all who knew him. Following are snippets of the life and times of Harav Moshe Leib Rodshtein.

This article was created from interviews with Rabbis Yehuda Krinsky, Meir Harlig, Shmuel Lew, Shlomo Zarchi, Bentzion Chanowitz, Moshe Chanowitz and multiple other sources. וזכות הרבים תלוי בהם

*"It's impossible to describe what the Rebbe and his family experienced since the outbreak of war... The library in Otwock is still intact... Three crates of priceless ksavim, including the Baal Shem Tov's Siddur, that were brought to Warsaw are also still intact... but the rest of their belongings, clothing, valuable gold and silver artifacts and even the Rebbe's Tallis and Tefillin were all lost in fire! Some of the Rebbe's invaluable writings were also burned, and there are no copies of them... I also merited that my belongings, which were together with the Rebbe's belongings, were all lost as well in the fires..."*¹

It was Cheshvan 5700* and Europe was burning. Germany had invaded Poland two months earlier, setting off the worst world war in history and the Jewish world would never be the same.

The above letter was written by the Frieddiker Rebbe's devoted *mazkir* Reb Moshe Leib Rodshtein to Chassidim in Eretz Yisroel describing the horrors of war-torn Warsaw and how the headquarters of Lubavitch, which had so recently started thriving in the town of Otwock after so many years of exile and wandering, was once again on the run.

As Chassidim in America worked feverishly to save the Frieddiker Rebbe's family from the inferno and to ensure their safe passage to the United States,² the Frieddiker Rebbe prepared a list of his staff and their families that were to accompany him on this journey. Reb Moshe Leib Rodshtein and his wife Kaila were on this list.

The alias that stuck

His birth name was Zushe ben Mordechai Shifrin.³ From his early teen years he learned in Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim in Lubavitch, and later on in Poltava in the late 5670s*. During those days of upheaval in Russia, men from age 17 were forced to go to army training and between the ages of 21 and 25 they were drafted into the army.

In the yeshiva, all *bochurim* who were 17 obtained false papers stating they were 14 years old, and those who were already 21 forged their ages to 25.

Zushe Shifrin was issued false documents and the ruse worked for a while but he was ultimately caught and drafted. It is unknown how he eventually got himself an exemption, but after leaving the army he traveled directly to Rostov to ask the Frieddiker Rebbe what his next step should be.

In *yechidus*, the Rebbe instructed him to leave Russia and then told him

to give him his hand. Chassidim never hold the Rebbe's hand and Zushe declined to do so now as well, but the Frieddiker Rebbe insisted and told him a story of the Baal Shem Tov while holding his hand.⁴

In preparation for his escape from Russia he received forged documents with the name Moshe Leib Rodshtein, and from then on he was called by this name by all who knew him. In writing as well as in conversation he was also commonly referred to with the acronym of this alias - רמ"ל.

He managed to cross the border but was quickly caught and apprehended by the Polish border patrol and later released. In 5684* he married Kaila Chanowitz, the daughter of the Lubavitcher *shochet* of Gluboko, Reb Yisroel Chanowitz, and he was very active in the Lubavitcher community for several years. They eventually settled in Warsaw, where he was



THE WEDDING OF REB MOSHE LEIB AND KAILA, GLUBOKO 5684*.

appointed to be the secretary of Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim in 5687*.

In the summer of 5692*, while the Frieddiker Rebbe was living in Druzhenik, a resort area on the border of Poland and Lithuania, Reb Moshe Leib was appointed to be the Frieddiker Rebbe's *mazkir*. Several days after his appointment he accompanied the Frieddiker Rebbe on a trip to visit the Lubavitcher Chassidim in Ludmir, Poland. He continued to serve as the Frieddiker Rebbe's *mazkir* until the Nazis invaded Poland in Elul 5699*.

From the Rebbe's Reshimos it emerges⁵ that even before his official appointment as *mazkir*, Reb Moshe Leib was together with the Frieddiker Rebbe in Postov, near Vilna, during the month of Adar 5692*. The Rebbe quotes Reb Moshe Leib about which *haftarah* the Frieddiker Rebbe said on Shabbos Parshas Pekudei.

When the war broke out, Reb Moshe Leib joined the Frieddiker



Rebbe and his family as they evacuated from Otwork and spent several harrowing weeks in Warsaw dodging the German bombs.

As mentioned earlier, the initial plan was for Reb Moshe Leib and his wife to join the Frierdiker Rebbe on the escape to America through Riga, but since he was a Polish citizen, there was no way for him to leave Poland to Latvia, so the Frierdiker Rebbe instructed him to travel to Gluboko and find a way to escape to Lithuania.

At the time, the Frierdiker Rebbe instructed all the *talmidim* of Tomchei Temimim to escape to Lithuania and after several weeks, dozens of *temimim* organized themselves in a yeshiva setting in Vilna. Reb Moshe Leib helped the *bochurim* in many ways and farbrenged with them.⁶

When the Frierdiker Rebbe arrived in Riga during the month of Teves, Reb Moshe Leib and Reb Shmuel Zalmanov came to Riga to update the



THE FRIERDIKER REBBE IN RIGA, CIRCA 5690*.

LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASIDEI CHABAD/KEHOT PUBLICATION SOCIETY



WITH THE BOCHURIM IN VILNA

17 ADAR I 5700. LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASIDEI CHABAD.

Frierdiker Rebbe in person about the new yeshiva in Vilna and the efforts to obtain exit visas for the *bochurim*.

At one point during this important operation Reb Moshe Leib provided names and personal information about over 120 *temimim*, Chassidim and their families - all from memory!

Although Reb Moshe Leib and his wife had been included in the Frierdiker Rebbe's list of essential staff to accompany him to the United States, their visas only arrived some time after the Frierdiker Rebbe already

left Europe, and they moved to Riga with the hope of reaching the US from there. Eventually, they were forced to escape eastward through Russia, and from the port city of Vladivostok set off to Kobe, Japan, from where they eventually set sail for America, arriving in New York City, through S. Francisco, in Cheshvan 5701*.

Six weeks later the Frierdiker Rebbe appointed Reb Moshe Leib to be the *menahel* of Agudas Chassidei Chabad in Chicago.⁷ At the time there were four Lubavitcher shuls in the city



Moments

לזכות
החייל בצבאות ה'
ישראל ארי' לייב שיחי'
לרגל הולדתו ר"ח שבט ה'תשפ"א
נדפס ע"י הוריו
הרה"ת ר' משה פינחס
וזוגתו מרת עלקא
ומשפחתם שיחיו
וואלף



OUTDOOR GREETINGS

Iyar 5747*



En route to the Ohel, the Rebbe greets former chief rabbi of Bat Yam in Eretz Yisroel, Rabbi Yosef Bar-Shalom, followed by a brief conversation and a bracha.

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מוקדש לחיזוק ההתקשרות לנשיא דורנו כ"ק אדמו"ר זצוקללה"ה נבג"מ זי"ע

ולזכרון הו"ח אי"א נו"מ ובעל מדות ר' ישראל ארי' לייב אחיו של כ"ק אדמו"ר
נפטר י"ג אייר ה'תשי"ב

לעילוי נשמת
הרה"ח הרה"ת עוסק בצ"צ וכו'
ר' יהודא ליב ז"ל
בן הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' יעקב יוסף שו"ב ז"ל
ראסקין
נלב"ע י"ב אייר ה'תשס"ד
ת"נצ'ב'ה'
נדפס על ידי ולזכות משפחתו
שיחיו לאורך ימים ושנים טובות

לע"נ
הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' דובער בן הרב ר' נפתלי ע"ה
יוניק
זכה לשמש את כ"ק אדמו"ר קרוב ליובל שנים
בקשר עם יום הארצייט שלו ט' אייר
ת"נצ'ב'ה'
ולזכות זוגתו תבלחט"א מרת פרומא תחי'
DEDICATED BY DOVID AND CHANA JUNIK AND FAMILY

לעילוי נשמת
הרה"ח הרה"ת רב פעלים וכו' ר' דוד ז"ל
בן הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' יעקב יוסף שו"ב ז"ל
ראסקין
יו"ר צאנז"ח העולמית ומנהל
ישיבת תורת"ל המרכזית - 770 למעלה מיובל שנים
נלב"ע ז' אייר ה'תשע"א
ת"נצ'ב'ה'
נדבת משפחתו שיחיו

לע"נ
הו"ח אי"א נו"נ ר' ישעי' ב"ר מנשה ע"ה טרייטעל
נלב"ע י"ג כסלו ה'תשע"ד
ולע"נ
הרה"ת ר' חיים ע"ה בן יבלחט"א ר' מנחם מענדל שליט"א
ניו
נלב"ע י"ב שבט ה'תשע"ו
ת"נצ'ב'ה'
נדפס ע"י משפחתם
הרה"ת ר' איסר וזוגתו מרת דבורה לאה שיחיו
הרה"ת ר' אליעזר דוד וזוגתו מרת חנה מושקא שיחיו
ניו

לעילוי נשמת הילדה השלוחה
מנוחה רחל ע"ה
בת יבלחט"א הרה"ת ר' יצחק יהודה שי'
נלב"ע ביום ט"ז אייר ה'תשנ"ו
ת"נצ'ב'ה'
נדפס ע"י הוריה
הרה"ת ר' יצחק יהודה וזוגתו מרת גאלדע שיחיו
בוימגארטען

לעילוי נשמת
ר' חיים יצחק בן ר' ישראל ע"ה
קוגל
נלב"ע א' אייר ה'תשע"ט
ת"נצ'ב'ה'
נדפס ע"י משפחתו שיחיו

לע"נ האשה החשובה והיקרה
מרת דוואשא ע"ה ריבקין
בת החסיד ר' מנחם מענדל והינדא ז"ל דייטש
לרגל הארצייט הראשון ד' ניסן ה'תשפ"א
ת"נצ'ב'ה'
ולזכות החיילות בצבאות השם
חנה, הינדא, ודוואשא שתחיו ברוק
נדפס ע"י הרה"ת שלום ישעי'
וזוגתו מרת עטקא חי' מושקא שיחיו
ברוק

מוקדש לחיזוק ההתקשרות
לכ"ק אדמו"ר נשיא דורנו
נדפס ע"י ולזכות
הרה"ת ר' לייביש משה
וזוגתו מרת רינה
ילדיהם קיילא באשא,
בנציון דוד, אליהו איסר,
רבקה שיינדל אלטא שיחיו
גולדהירש

לעילוי נשמת
הרה"ת ר' שמואל גרשון ניסן
בן הרה"ת ר' רפאל דובער ע"ה
גורביץ
נלב"ע י"א אייר ה'תשנ"ו
ת"נצ'ב'ה'
נדפס ע"י בנו
הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל
וזוגתו מרת נחמה דינה ומשפחתם שיחיו
גורביץ

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