

# א חסידי שער דערהער...

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ערש"ק פרשת ויקהל, כ"א אדר א', תשע"א

## Shabbos Vayakhel 5752

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

|                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Leben Miten Rebben              | 1 |
| A Special Connection            | 2 |
| Shaarei Neggina Darkecha        | 3 |
| Biography - David Chase - 2     | 3 |
| Practical Q&A - Mivtza Tefillin | 4 |

The 25th of Adar I, 5752 was a Shabbos like many others for Chassidim. Because it was *Shabbos Mevorchim* they joined the Rebbe in the shul at 8:30 am to recite the entire Tehillim, as is the Lubavitch custom. After Mussaf, some rushed home for a quickly-eaten Shabbos meal. Within the hour they were back, joining those who had remained in 770. By 1:30 p.m., the time that the Rebbe's weekly farbrengen was scheduled to begin, several thousand Chassidim crowded the large shul at 770.

Shortly thereafter, the Rebbe entered. For the next three hours he spoke, expounding on a variety of Torah subjects. In the short intermissions between sichos, Chassidim sang and raised small plastic cups of wine to say *lechaim* to the Rebbe. A Shabbat like many others for the Chabad-Lubavitch Chassidim of Crown Heights.

In one of his talks, the Rebbe dwelled on the fact that the Krias Hatorah of the day, *Vayakhel*, is on many years read together with *Pekudei*. Because of the varying length of the Jewish year, the annual cycle of Krias Hatorah includes certain *Parshiyos* that are sometimes combined with each other. An interesting feature of these potential "pairs" is that often their names express opposite meanings. For example, *Nitzavim*, which means "standing," is often joined to *Vayeilech*, which means "going."

*Vayakhel* and *Pekudei* form one of these paradoxical pairs: *Vayakhel* means "And he assembled" and is related to the word *kehillah*, "community"; *Pekudei* means "the counted things" and "the remembered things"- the emphasis on the item within the whole and the individual within the community.

In other words, explained the Rebbe, *Vayakhel* and *Pekudei* express the contrasting values of community and individuality, and the need to unite the two: to build a community that fosters, rather than suppresses, the individuality of its members; and

to cultivate an individuality that contributes to, rather than conflicts with, the communal whole.

Then the Rebbe asked a question: If that is the case, why does *Vayakhel* come before *Pekudei*? Don't we first need to develop and perfect the individual, before hoping to make healthy communities out of him and his fellows?

But this, the Rebbe explained, is the Torah's very point: Make communities, even before you have perfect individuals. People are not bricks or gears, which must be individually forged to perfection before they can be assembled together in a constructive way. People are souls, with the potential for perfection implicit within them. And nothing brings out a soul's potential as much interacting and uniting with other souls. Imperfect individuals, brought together in love and fellowship, make perfect communities.

At the farbrengen's end, those who had not yet eaten went home for the Shabbos meal; they, too, had to hurry, as the short winter day was already drawing to a close. As soon as Shabbos was over, a group of *chozrim* gathered to recall and write down the Rebbe's words. Within 24 hours, the Rebbe's sichos were transcribed, translated into half a dozen languages, and faxed to hundreds of Chabad-Lubavitch centers around the world. The Rebbe's Chassidim now had "material" to study, disseminate and implement until next Shabbos's farbrengen, if the Rebbe did not deliver a weekday address before then (as he often would).

But on Monday afternoon, 27 Adar I, 5752, the Rebbe suffered a stroke and to our devastation, did not continue to deliver Sichos afterwards. There was no farbrengen on the following Shabbos, nor on the Shabbos after that.

Since that dreadful day, nineteen years have elapsed, and while eagerly awaiting the next farbrengen, we, the Rebbe's Chassidim are creating communities as by the Rebbe's wish.

### צריך לדעת

\* כותב לי אחר, שרצונו שבנו ידע אך ורק אודות מציאותו של הקב"ה, מציאותה של "ליובאוויטש", ותו לא מידי ("מער גארניט")! וזוהי כל תכליתו. כל שאר הענינים הקיימים בעולם אינם מציאות, כי אם דמיון ("א פארבלענדעניש"), אחיזת עינים, עד שקיימת "שאלה" אם מותר לברך על כך. הילד צריך לדעת—כך כותב אלי—אודות מציאותו של הקב"ה, והקב"ה ברא את "ליובאוויטש", וכל שאר הענינים אינם במציאות!

(משיחת כ"ד טבת תשי"ב)

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\* ידוע שהנשמה כללית הנה על ידה צריך להיות כל ההמשכות, ולא רק אלו שברוחניות בלבד, ואמר כ"ק אדני"ע: לערן מיינע חסידות וועסטו ווערן מיינ חסיד. שזו הוראה לכל דור ודור באופן ההתקשרות שצ"ל ע"י תורה, ובפרט אצל חסידי חב"ד.

(אגרות קודש ח"ג ע' רלב)

## A Special Connection

### Reb Yisroel—Part One

The special care and attention that the Rebbe reserved for the bochurim is well-known. One need not look far to see the incredible statements and expressions that can be found in numerous locations throughout the letters and sichos of the Rebbe that display just that. Still, little is known about the Rebbe's extraordinary concern with the details of the welfare of each individual bochur – materially and physically. These facts remain only with those individuals who played a part in them from "behind the scenes". Considering the significance of the subject, we turned to **Horav Yisroel Friedman**, Rosh Yeshivah of Oholei Torah in Crown Heights, and asked him to share with us some of the many incidents that he personally experienced in this regard.

(All of the stories are recorded here as they were heard from Reb Yisroel).

In the year 5723, although I was still a bochur myself at the time, I served as the Rosh Yeshivah of Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim in Newark, New Jersey (which was subsequently relocated to Morristown). Each year I had the Zechus to be received by the Rebbe in Yechidus, just as all of my fellow bochurim. These were generally short – not exceeding one or two minutes, in which the Rebbe read the letter that I had prepared and responded with a blessing for continued success in my Avodas Hashem, and study of Torah during the coming year.

But this time was to be different. As I was preparing to leave at what I thought was to be the conclusion of the Yechidus, the Rebbe suddenly retrieved a paper from his desk. It was a report that I had sent in some time earlier that month regarding one of the students whom I taught. I had a practice in those years to routinely send a detailed report to the Rebbe about each of my students on a monthly basis, in which I specified the progress of each one; where they stood in regards to success in their studies, proper conduct with Yiras Shomayim, and so on. This particular bochur had not been doing well at the time and in the report that month I had described to the Rebbe how I felt, that he was failing to succeed in learning.

With the report in hand, the Rebbe began to speak about this specific boy, devising a plan of action how I was to best deal with his situation. He continued to go down to intricate details, how I should try to arrange that he have quality chavrusos, and that I should try to assist him in his learning in general, in a way that he'll feel that he's actually reaching a goal and succeeding in his studies. The Rebbe went on for what I recall to be close to twenty minutes! More than once during our conversation, Rabbi Hodakov opened the door in attempt to end the Yechidus, (one should bear in mind that I was still a bochur at the time, and as I mentioned, an average Yechidus for a bochur did not last longer than a minute or two...) but the Rebbe motioned to me that I should not pay attention to him, as if saying "I'm speaking with you about an important matter; you need not be concerned about Rabbi Hadakov's agitation".

I left the Rebbe's room that night in absolute awe. I always knew that the Rebbe took great interest in the needs of each

individual bochur in Tomchei Temimim, but from that night and on, I realized that it was far greater than I had imagined. The Rebbe gave so much of his precious time, even while many others waited on line to come in to the Rebbe after me, just to assure that a bochur should feel that he's succeeding in his learning...



As mentioned, every month I would send a report to the Rebbe regarding each one of my students, describing their progress in their studies and general behavior. These were always very detailed and precise, particularizing the status of each one individually. It so happened that one month, for whatever reason, I failed to send in my usual report. Before long, I received word from Rabbi Hodakov that the Rebbe was disappointed by the sudden omission. And I was to know, that when the Rebbe chooses which bochurim are to be sent on Shlichus, he gives a look at the reports which I had sent, and bases his decision partially on what I had written. It was then that I realized how much the Rebbe paid attention to my reports, and how crucial it was that I continue to send them.

### Behind the Naming of the Derher

People think that the unique contribution of *Chassidus* is merely the intellectual apprehension of Divinity. In truth, however, the entire goal of *Chassidus* is the fulfilling of Hashem's intent in causing one's soul to descend into a body.

On a number of occasions we have recounted the words of the Alter Rebbe<sup>1</sup> to a certain eminent chassid: "You are saying everything that *you* need; as to what *you* are needed for, you say nothing."

With these thirteen words [in Yiddish] the Alter Rebbe aroused and elicited within that chassid a quintessential light that utterly permeated him. As the early chassidim used to express it, "It permeated him so intensely that it ignited his toenails."

That is what is called *derhern*.

Hearing (*hern*) and sensitively apprehending (*derhern*) are two distinct concepts<sup>2</sup>. *Hern* means hearing something tangentially and superficially — in one ear and out the other, as people say. Whatever was said simply passed through the ears, leaving no effect or trace. *Derhern* means that what one hears leaves an impression: one ponders over one's own current spiritual condition, determining which character attributes are positive and which demand correction.

1 See the *sichah* of Lag BaOmer, 5707 [1947], which appears in *Kuntreis* 57. [And in *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5708, p. 190.]

2 See also the *sichah* of Yud-Beis Tammuz, 5708 [1948], which appears in *Kuntreis* 59.



## שערי נגינה The Rebbe's Niggunim - 2

One of the members of Anash who was present many times while the Rebbe taught Niggunim in 770 recalls:

"The Rebbe would Farbreng until about one or 2:00, then the Ata Horeisasa began, which lasted for about another two hours. After that we would dance until about 4:00 in the morning. The Rebbe would then go upstairs to eat the Yom Tov meal in the Friediker Rebbe's apartment (as was done every Yom Tov). After the meal, the Rebbe would come back downstairs, and that's when the new Niggun would be taught. By that time there was only a small crowd of people left in 770, because most had already gone home for the night. I remember these events as the highlight of the year. We would anticipate the new Niggun that we would learn on Simchas Torah, and we would go all through the year with that Niggun on our lips.

Whenever it would finish, we would go home to eat our Yom Tov meals. One time it was 5:00 and one time it even went to 7:00 in the morning, and someone asked the Rebbe what to do in regards to the Yom Tov meal since it was already the next day. The Rebbe answered: "Close the window (so as not to let in sun-light) and proceed with the meal."

### 5716 - Darkecho

After Hakofos on the night of Simchas Torah 5716, before the Rebbe went upstairs to the Friediker Rebbe's apartment for the Seuda, he announced, "Those who have still not received a Possuk or Hakofa should do so now, and", continued the Rebbe, "Hakofos should be repeated until *everyone here* has received a Possuk and Hakofa".

When they had finished the Rebbe came downstairs and danced with those present and then said, "In accordance with the yearly Minhag, we will now hand out mashke to those who will accept upon themselves an additional daily shiur in Nigleh and Chassidus, to help strengthen their Hachlota."

During the distribution the Rebbe announced, "As mentioned earlier in the Farbrengen, Shmini Atzeres and Simchas Torah are like Rosh Hashona, therefore this time, before daybreak, corresponds to the time of Slichos. So, we will now sing the niggun 'Darkecha'.

The people in the crowd didn't know the niggun, so the Rebbe sang it a number of times until everyone had learned it. They then sang this new niggun many times over.

The Rebbe then went on to explain that the reason for singing this niggun is based on a saying of the Rebbe Rashab at a simchas Torah'diker farbrengen that "שמחת תורה שאדם ניט" (Simchas Torah does no damage)". Therefore, although we say "Darkecho... *Dalim V'reikim*" (i.e. we are poor and empty) we only take out of it that which is advantageous for us. Meaning that we know our situation (זיוורו מען האלטי), - the level of empty vessels, ready to receive.

After this explanation the Rebbe concluded "we will now leave while dancing with the niggun 'Darkecho'. We'll then rest up a bit and prepare ourselves for 'Freiliche Hakofos' and this joy should spread itself onto the whole entire year.

At the Farbrengen the next day, they started singing this new niggun Darkecho and then the Rebbe explained at length the quote of the Rebbe Rashab which he had mentioned briefly the night before.

דעם רבי'ס א מענטש

## David Chase part 2

### My feelings towards the Rebbe

Our meeting with the Rebbe was in regards to the relocation and expansion of the Yeshiva in Newark. While we offered suggestions that we thought to be sensible, the Rebbe said that none of them would sufficiently meet the Yeshiva's current needs. We realized from this that we had to work beyond our previous limitations and to radically change our ideas of how to run the Yeshiva.

It is difficult to explain, but after that meeting I felt truly connected with the Rebbe. Maybe it was because I was so impressed by the Rebbe's far-sighted gaze, which penetrates all barriers, or maybe it was through spiritual signals on a deeper level. It is very hard to say.

Not long afterwards my family and I were privileged to have a private audience with the Rebbe. As time went on the Rebbe encouraged me to become involved with the Yeshiva and the other institutions that developed around it after it moved to Morristown. The Rebbe also endorsed my efforts to involve my friends.

Over the years my family and I have also received encouragement and guidance from the Rebbe on a variety of personal matters. For example, I once received a very moving letter from the Rebbe just before Yud-Alef Nissan, which is his birthday, in which he wrote: "Although it is not customary to ask for a specific birthday present, I have decided to go against the accepted practice and to request a gift from you for my approaching birthday. This is the assurance that you will put on tefillin every day. I also hope that you will accept a pair of tefillin from me as a present." I replied to this letter as soon as I could. I wrote that I would be very happy to give the Rebbe this "gift." Concerning the tefillin themselves, I had decided that I needed three pairs – one for home, one for my private yacht, and one for use whenever I traveled. I also wrote that I greatly treasured the Rebbe's gift but that as I knew tefillin were expensive I did not want his other activities to suffer as a result of spending too much money on them. For this reason I enclosed a check for a sum which I estimated would cover the cost of three pairs of tefillin. Since then I have always made sure to put on tefillin every single day.

It is very difficult for me to chart the exact development of my relationship with the Rebbe. It is enough to say that once a person has become connected to the Rebbe that connection continues throughout his life. This can bring about great changes in a person's life and in his spiritual direction. Such matters are personal to each and every one of us and they are above all explanation. Becoming close to the Rebbe can be compared to a starving man wandering through the desert. Once he drinks even the slightest drop of water his thirst only continues to increase. Although each of us has his own personal connection with the Rebbe, we all feel the joy of having developed such a relationship and the desire to see it grow. This includes the desire to make the Rebbe happy by fulfilling his selfless directives.

Ever since my first yechidus with the Rebbe I have always devoted myself to following his directives. I have also tried to encourage my friends and colleagues to develop a relationship with him. Over a period of many years I have put many different people from all walks of life in touch with the Rebbe. For example, I was present when the famous Canadian Jewish businessman, Albert Reichman, had a yechidus with the Rebbe. (This was particularly remarkable because by that time the Rebbe had generally stopped granting private audiences to individuals.) During this meeting the Rebbe and Reichman talked about the situation of the Jews in Russia, and as a result Reichman flew to Russia about a month later with a ton of shemurah matzah for Pesach.



# Practical Q & A: Mivtza Tefillin

**Q: Do I have to ask the fellow to take off his watch?**

A: No, from a halachic perspective there is no such thing as a *chatzitzta* (separation) between the *retzuos* and the arm (unlike the *retzuos* around the head etc...), and therefore there is no need to ask him to take off his watch<sup>1</sup>.

**Q: Why don't we make him wash *negel vasser* (or should we...)?**

A: Even though according to halacha, one certainly needs to wash *negel vasser* before laying tefillin, the Rebbe addressed this issue in a *sicha*<sup>2</sup> and concluded that it is more important that one should put on tefillin anyways based on the Smag who said "There is no *rasha* that isn't worthy of laying tefillin... Hashem wants more that a *rasha* should lay tefillin than a *tzadik*". The Rebbe added that we cannot fully compare this to today's situation being that most non-observant Jews are in the category of a *tinnok shenishba* (a child who was abducted by Goyim and doesn't know any better) and therefore should not be considered *resha'im*, however the logic still follows.

**Q: Does he have to recite *birkas ha'Torah* before saying *Sh'ma*?**

A: Although it would certainly be preferable for him to do so, if it would be a *tircha*, we can rely upon that fact that he has is simply *davening* and has no intention on learning Torah<sup>3</sup>.

**Q: If he talks in between putting on the *shel yad* and the *shel rosh*, should I have him make another *brocho* on the *shel rosh*?**

A: Well, it depends... If he says "So I need to put this one on my head, eh" or something else related to tefillin, then no, he should not say another *brocho*<sup>4</sup>. But if he says "How 'bout a cold drink?" or anything unrelated to Tefillin, then he should make the *brocho* "Al Mitzvas Tefillin" on the *shel rosh* (after placing it on his head but before securing it in its place). If on his own accord he says the *brocho* without having made an interruption, one need not stop him, being that there are opinions which hold that one should always make two *brochos*<sup>5</sup>, he may go according to his custom.

**Q: A fellow on my route is a lefty, and I only have righty tefillin, what do I do?**

A: There are several opinions on this issue. Some say<sup>6</sup> that one should put the *retzuah* around to the other side so that it is facing the heart. However, this may be problematic being that it is tilted the wrong direction (it's no longer a *yud*), and it

can come out of place easily. Therefore others say that it is preferable to leave the *yud* facing away from the arm, being that it is not a halachic requirement that it's facing inwards, but it is a requirement that it touch the *bayis*. Yet others<sup>7</sup> say considering that the *yud* being opposite the heart is only called a "minhag yafeh"<sup>8</sup> (a nice custom), while this that the *retzuos* go through the *batim* being on the side towards the shoulder is referred to as a "minhag yafeh v'nachon"<sup>9</sup> (a nice and proper custom), it is best to turn the tefillin upside down (i.e. sliding the tefillin up the arm with the *retzua* on the wrong side and closer to the elbow) so that the *yud* should still be towards the heart and still shaped like a *yud*, even though the *retzuos* are passing through the *batim* closer to the elbow. It would appear that this final custom is halachically preferable, however it is worthy to consult a *rav* in this matter and get a personal ruling.

**Q: Should a *karkafta* recite *Shehecheyanu* the first time he puts on tefillin?**

A: Even though there are opinions that he should do so, the accepted custom is not to<sup>10</sup>.

**Q: Do I need to loosen or tighten the knot in order that the *shel rosh* should properly fit on his head?**

A: Absolutely, if the *shel rosh* is not in its proper place (directly above the hairline, or where the hairline used to be if it's receding<sup>11</sup>) then he has not fulfilled the *mitzvah* according to any opinion!

1. See Leket Tziunim V'haaros L'Shulchan Aruch ADH"Z 27:7
2. Likutei Sichos Vol. 6 pg. 272
3. See Shulchan Aruch ADH"Z 47:7
4. Siddur ADH"Z
5. Shulchan Aruch ADH"Z 25:23
6. Shitas Chayei Adam
7. See Mivtzoim K'hilchosom pg. 64
8. Shulchan Aruch ADH"Z 27:6
9. Ibid. 27:4
10. Likutei Sichos Vol. 11 pg. 289
11. Shulchan Aruch ADH"Z 27:14

| פרק א' ליום              | ג' פרקים ליום                 | מורה שיעור<br>ללימוד הרמב"ם |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| הל' מטמאי משכב פרק י'    | הל' טוען ונטען פ' י-ב         | כ"א אדר א'                  |
| פרק יא                   | פ' יג-טו                      | כ"ב אדר א'                  |
| פרק יב                   | פ' טו הל' נחלות פ' א-ב        | כ"ג אדר א'                  |
| פרק יג                   | פ' ג-ה                        | כ"ד אדר א'                  |
| הל' שאר אבות הטמאות פ' א | פ' ו-ח                        | כ"ה אדר א'                  |
| פרק ב'                   | פ' ט-יא                       | כ"ו אדר א'                  |
| פרק ג'                   | ספר שופטים הל' סנהדרין פ' א-ג | כ"ז אדר א'                  |