



לעבן מיטן רבי'ן



RABBI PINNY LEW

KOS SHEL BRACHA, MOTZOEI SHAVUOS 5735

<p>ע"י בנם ר' יקותיאל יהודה וזוגתו מרת פעסל לאה ומשפחתם שיחיו רוהר</p>	<p>טור 'לעבן מיטן רבי'ן' 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'נ'צ'ב'ה'</p>
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# The Bilingual Tanya

SHAVUOS 5735\*



Taken from "My Encounter with the Rebbe, Vol. 2" by PCL Publishing.

“In 5730\*, Rabbi Nachman Sudak, head of the Lubavitch Foundation in London, contacted me. The Rebbe had indicated to him that the Tanya should be printed in five countries in which it had hitherto never been printed. The Tanya had never before been printed in the U.K., so Rabbi Sudak assumed that the Rebbe wished to rectify this omission as soon as possible...”

Thus began the long process of a unique and daring endeavor: The very first printing of a bilingual Tanya in which the English translation would be on the same facing page of the original Hebrew text. This innovative idea—initially presented to Rabbi Sudak by Mr. Zalmon Jaffe (author of the above quote)—met with the Rebbe’s approval, and merited the Rebbe’s constant interest and guidance all along the way, including detailed

directions in how the actual Tanya should look; i.e. the color and thickness of the paper, the type of binding and so on.

The Rebbe also instructed to have this Tanya published by the well-known Soncino Press, by repute one of the best publishers in Great Britain; a detail which prolonged the process greatly. Two weeks before the committee's scheduled departure from England to New York for Shavuot (5735\*)—after a long five years of expectations, disappointments and much back-and-forth between the project committee and the printer—the Tanyas were finally ready!

The events of these five years—including some fascinating and detailed *hora'os* from the Rebbe regarding the printing of the Tanya—are beyond the scope of this article. Presented here are excerpts from Zalmon Jaffe's diary, describing his experiences from his visit to the Rebbe for Shavuot 5735\*, when these special Tanyas were presented to the Rebbe.

### THE TANYA ARRIVES!

Our flight for Shavuot was due to leave England on Monday, Beis Sivan, 5735\*. Five days before our departure on Wednesday, 26 Iyar, Hershel Gorman phoned to tell me that he had just picked up the ten leather-bound copies. You can imagine what a relief this was for all of us who had worked and toiled for almost five years with heartache and aggravation throughout.

On Friday afternoon, three days before our departure, we also received, just in time, seventy-four ordinary bound copies.

### OUR TANYA IS (AIR)BORN(E)

At the airport in London, we met up with Hershel and we had our first glimpse of the Tanya. It was a beauty! A wonderful piece of workmanship, surpassing anything that we had ever conceived or imagined. It was a classic, a masterpiece!

Everything that had ever been written on the Tanya in English was included in the 900 pages: Explanations, the introductions to each of the five individual English sections, essays, and so forth. It had been well worth waiting for. This Tanya would enhance every library and be of the greatest value to all students of Chassidus.

Now here at last we were on the wings of a Jumbo Jet on the way to the Rebbe with the new Tanya.

Being together on the airplane, Bernard, Hershel, Nachman and I (the Tanya Committee<sup>1</sup>), naturally discussed various methods of presenting the Tanya to the Rebbe. Each of us had a different idea.

I thought it an appropriate gesture that we, the four members, autograph the Rebbe's copy and the one for the Rebbetzin. (We already had the Rebbe's copy embossed with gold letters stating that this was a gift from the *anash* of England; and, on the day we arrived in Brooklyn, we had a special wooden case made to hold that Tanya.) I also wanted each of the four committee members to receive one of the leather-bound copies directly from the Rebbe's hands—as per my discussion with the Rebbe (Yud Shevat time)<sup>2</sup>.

We ultimately accepted Rabbi Sudak's suggestion that all the Tanyas which we were bringing with us, the ten leather-bound ones and the seventy-four regular-bound ones, should be handed to the Rebbe “without strings attached.”

### CROWN HEIGHTS; HOME AWAY FROM HOME

We arrived at 770 at about 2:30 on Monday afternoon, Beis Sivan. (Shavuot was Thursday evening.) The Rebbe was at the Ohel when we arrived.

We immediately sent a memorandum to the Rebbe stating that we had brought with us a consignment of the first printed bilingual Tanya,



THE NEW TANYA WITH ENGLISH TRANSLATION

RABBI PINNY LEW

comprised of ten leather-bound and seventy-four ordinary-bound volumes.

When the Rebbe returned from the Ohel, I was waiting in the hallway. I immediately received my reward for the journey: One of the Rebbe's most glorious smiles, which is something worth receiving and seeing.

We later received a note from the Rebbe instructing us to send in to him the ten leather-bound copies but to ensure that the other seventy-four were first completed properly [i.e. markers and jackets had to now be affixed as the Rebbe had originally instructed; due to time constraints, these Tanyas were not fully completed before the trip. -Ed.]

### THE TANYA PRESENTATION

On Wednesday afternoon, 4 Sivan, the Rebbe went to the Ohel again, returning for a late Mincha.

Following Mincha, Rabbi Hodakov went into the Rebbe's room and came out with an announcement that at 9:30, only a half hour's time, there would be a farbrengen (this would be following Maariv).

A few minutes later, we received a message from the Rebbe, through Rabbi Groner, that at the end of the farbrengen, the Rebbe would like the members of the committee to formally present six of the leather-bound Tanyas to him.

Before the commencement of the farbrengen, before the Rebbe entered, Leibel placed a box with some of the Tanyas under the Rebbe's dais. We were now all ready.

It was quite a short farbrengen—about 90 minutes all told. Towards the end of the farbrengen, the Rebbe gave me a signal. The exciting moment of the presentation had now arrived! I immediately jumped up to move toward the Rebbe's platform and Bernard followed right on my heels. Rabbi Sudak, already on the platform, was a step ahead. Hershel was dragging his feet.

We were now all together on the dais. Rabbi Sudak took a Tanya from the box under the table and went forward to present it to the Rebbe. The Rebbe was literally beaming with pleasure.

The Rebbe accepted the Tanya and said, "*Ah groisen yasher koach* (Thank you very much)." He



later handed Rabbi Sudak some vodka and the Rebbe's pastoral letter published for Shavuos.

I was the next in line. Rabbi Groner was excitedly and hoarsely whispering, "Come on, come on, quickly, quickly." In order to accelerate the proceedings, I took two Tanyas from the box and handed them to the Rebbe.

The Rebbe took them and asked, "Tzvei? Un einer far vemen? (Two? And [the other] one is for whom?)"

I replied, "They are both for the Rebbe." The Rebbe smiled and accepted the Tanyas. (He later also handed me the vodka and letter and wished me *lchaim*.) Bernard and Hershel then followed.

### THE REBBE'S BRITISH SUBJECTS

After handing the Tanyas to the Rebbe, while we were still standing on the Rebbe's platform, the Rebbe delivered a six-minute *sicha*.

Following this *sicha*, the Rebbe called upon various "English citizens" (and their sons) to come up to the dais.

The Rebbe called out: "Vu iz [where is] Tiefenbrun? Vu iz Shmuel Lew? Nem dee kinder oichet [bring your children too]." The Rebbe then asked, "S'iz doh noch eimitzer fun England? [Is there anyone else here from England?]" Rabbi Chaim Farro and Mendel Katsch were called up.

As the Rebbe's dais began filling up with all of the Rebbe's (and Her Majesty's) British subjects (the original four—we who had presented a Tanya before the last *sicha*—still remaining on the platform), the Rebbe turned to me and said, "You are the 'governor' of the United Kingdom; *breingt ahertzu alleh Einglisher citizens* [bring all English citizens up here]!"

The Rebbe handed to each adult a letter and vodka, and cake for the boys. It was a most impressive scene. The Rebbe definitely knows how to orchestrate something on a grand scale.

And then, with the English contingent all standing and literally surrounding the Rebbe on his dais, and to everyone's absolute surprise and joy, the Rebbe himself commenced the singing of the "Alter Rebbe's *Niggun*." This was the first time [and the only time –Ed.] that the Rebbe himself commenced the singing of this hallowed *niggun*—at least in public—by singing the first bars of this tune. Everyone present at this historic moment was singing with extra feeling and emotion; it

was the climax of an already unique and exciting farbrengen.

At the conclusion of the *niggun*, the Rebbe handed Rabbi Sudak the rest of the cake, saying: "Upgeben dee froyen [distribute this to the women]." The Rebbe then turned and said: "Farro iz doch oich a rov [Farro is also a rabbi]," and he gave Rabbi Chaim Farro the rest of the wine and said to him: "Upgeben dee froyen voss zainen gekumen fun England [distribute to the women who came from England]."

The Rebbe then began singing his father's Simchas Torah *niggun* and with everyone standing, singing and clapping, the Rebbe left the hall. This entire farbrengen with the presentation lasted less than two hours.

After the farbrengen, I, together with scores of others, waited outside the Rebbe's room. Many hundreds more were lining the walkway and the street. We all wanted to show our thanks and appreciation to the Rebbe. Suddenly, the Rebbe's door opened and we spontaneously burst out singing the Simchas Torah *niggun* as loudly as possible. The Rebbe emerged from his study with a wonderful and happy smile, swinging and twirling the Tanya in tune to the *niggun*, whilst urging us on with his other hand to sing louder and faster. With sprightly steps the Rebbe reached his car and left for home.

### OUR YECHIDUS

Our *yechidus* took place on Monday night, Tes Sivan. The great moment arrived at 11:45 p.m.

...I now indicated to the Rebbe that I had a very important business matter to discuss. The Rebbe owed me an account, which has been outstanding for a little while:

Last Shavuos, at the Rebbe's behest, I had arranged a *shidduch* for a young English woman. The Rebbe had promised to (personally) give me the *shadchanus gelt* for this. I admitted that this matter was outstanding only due to my own choice; at that time, I intimated that I would not accept a cash settlement. I had implied that when the time was opportune, I would request payment in kind. It is well known how much the Rebbe dislikes being a *ba'al chov*. I was now prepared to "make a deal." If the Rebbe would personally hand, to each of the four members of the Tanya committee, a bilingual Tanya, autographed by the Rebbe, I would not only

consider the Rebbe's indebtedness to me completely discharged, but would consider that I had made an exceptionally handsome bargain. These Tanyas would become invaluable to each of us.

"I see you are not only a businessman in Manchester, but in America too!" said the Rebbe. He did accept my proposal by agreeing to call on the Tanya committee shortly before we departed for home.

#### SPECIAL SICHA

At the farbrengen on Shabbos Parshas Nasso, 14 Sivan, the Rebbe requested that those who had participated in the publication of the Tanya should say "*l'chaim*" to him.

I was facing the Rebbe in the well of the hall in my usual farbrengen place. I held a large tumbler, half-filled with wine, and the Rebbe nodded to me. I said "*l'chaim*" and drank. The Rebbe was unimpressed with this half-filled cup, because he told me to fill my cup again, this time right to the

brim. I thus said "*l'chaim*" again to the Rebbe, and drank it all in one shot. The Rebbe also wished "*l'chaim*" to Bernard, Nachman, and Hershel.

Following this, the Rebbe delivered another *sicha* about the Tanya, first tracing the history of the Tanya's various translations:

The first was about 75 years ago when Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the youngest son of the Rebbe Maharash<sup>3</sup>, translated the first chapter of the Tanya into Russian. It was a great success and it was received with acclaim. However, no further progress was made until the previous Rebbe published a Yiddish version [1940s].

Translations into English, French, Italian and Spanish came later [during our Rebbe's reign]. However, now is the first time the translation appears in the same volume as the original Hebrew, page by page. It is the first time a different language is directly opposite the original Hebrew text. This

#### ENCOUNTERS WITH THE REBBETZIN

One of the highlights of our trip to the Rebbe is our visit with the Rebbetzin at her home on President Street. The Rebbetzin is a very charming and friendly person. She always makes us feel very much at home.

Lately, we have been arranging two visits with the Rebbetzin during each stay in Brooklyn.

On our first visit, after exchanging pleasantries, the Rebbetzin informed us that the Rebbe brought home a Tanya for her to see and she had examined it minutely. She exclaimed how she, too, was enthralled with it. It was well beyond her highest expectations. The Rebbetzin stated repeatedly, during the course of our almost three-hour visit, how much she and the Rebbe loved the Tanya. It was just beautiful—beautiful! Such a lovely production—a classic!

She said the Rebbe had divulged to her that "Reb Zalmon" had been in *yeichidus* for an hour and that the Rebbe had thoroughly "enjoyed it." The Rebbetzin said she hoped I would continue to make the Rebbe happy as I have been doing.

That is the *ikar*. Don't take notice of what people are saying.

I asked the Rebbetzin whether she would be pleased to officially receive the members of the Tanya committee, as they wished to present her with a leather-bound Tanya autographed by the board.

She agreed and said she would be delighted, honored and gratified to receive an official delegation representing *anash* of England.

We arranged this next appointment for the following Sunday afternoon, Tes-Vov Sivan.

The Rebbetzin, who is only a small lady, sat at the table, her personality filling the entire large room. No queen receiving her faithful and loyal subjects could have looked more regal and gracious than our dear Rebbetzin.

Rabbi Sudak made the presentation. On the inside cover of the Tanya was a beautifully inscribed parchment that read, "To our gracious and esteemed Rebbetzin, with best wishes from the *anash* of England, presented by the committee." Here followed the four signatures and the date.

The Rebbetzin was tremendously pleased and expressed her warm appreciation.



THE REBBE HANDS A TANYA TO RABBI SUDAK.

placed a heavy responsibility on those who had carried out this pioneering work. It was a bold step. Now, students will be able to much more easily learn and understand the Tanya.

The highest thanks are extended to all those who had taken part in its publication and, since it was now done, it deserves—and will, please G-d, achieve—great success and there will hopefully soon be a second and then a third edition. This third edition would create a *chazaka* and it would become a permanent production. This will help make it possible to translate other Chassidic texts in the same manner, too.

The manner with which they worked was also very commendable: Using their own funds and without requiring constant consultations, advice and guidance at every little stage.

Those who had worked on its publication have a *zechus* for the hard work and dedication, and since they were not functioning on their “own accord,” but were carrying out what they were told to do, the ultimate responsibility is not theirs.

Following this *sicha*, the Rebbe summoned the Tanya committee to come up to the dais. A bottle of vodka was presented to each one of us (Rabbi

Nachman Sudak, Bernard Perrin, Hershel Gorman and me).

#### PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

On Sunday, Tes-Vov Sivan, I had a mini-*yechidus* with the Rebbe outside of 770. The Rebbe further elaborated on yesterday’s *sicha* about the Tanya and emphasized, yet again, that if there were any complaints from whatever people or sources about any aspect of the Tanya, he accepted full and all responsibility. He personally had nothing but praise for all who took part in its publication.

The Rebbe requested that a British delegation comprised of Rabbi Sudak, Hershel, Bernard, Mendel Katsch, Shmuel and me should present a Tanya to as many organizations (in Crown Heights) as time would permit, including Machon Chana and Beis Rivkah; “Mrs. Jaffe and your daughter [Hindy Lew] should join this delegation too.” We should then take this same delegation to the other organizations, like Hadar Hatorah and the library. The Rebbe said we should not take one to the Central Lubavitch Yeshiva, as the *bochurim* there needed to learn Tanya from the original, not the bilingual one.

I had understood, at our *yechidus*, that the Rebbe had agreed to give an autographed Tanya to the committee members at a special *yechidus* in

the Rebbe's private study. I mentioned this (mis) understanding of mine in a subsequent letter to the Rebbe. Where I had written "into *yechidus*", the Rebbe responded with a handwritten Hebrew note:

*?! For several years now there is no yechidus during these days [this long after Yom Tov -Ed.]. My intention was to hand the Tanya and sicha [about the Tanya] as last time, not in my room—to thus dispel the complaints which I told you about, as to why I differentiate between one person and the next, etc. It will [instead] be outside so that everyone will be able to approach immediately before their journey [home].*

After receiving this clarification, I figured the Rebbe was referring to a ceremony immediately outside his room or in the hallway at the main entrance of 770.

### THE BIG SURPRISE

We were due to leave 770 on Monday, 16 Sivan at 5:30 p.m., directly to Kennedy Airport for our flight back to England.

Rabbi Leibel Groner reminded me (not that I required reminding) that the Rebbe had promised to give out the specially autographed Tanya at 5:00 p.m. In the Rebbe's answer to me (mentioned earlier) he had indicated that he would present these "outside" right before we left. Everyone assumed this meant outside the Rebbe's room.

At 4:30 there was suddenly a great hive of activity at the main entrance of 770. The Rebbe's

*shtender* was brought out and placed right in front of the main doorway of 770. A microphone was also set up. Leibel Groner rushed up to us with new instructions. The Rebbe would be holding a *farbrengen* outside—in the open air! What excitement!

All the men and boys should form a line at the right-hand side of the walkway facing the Rebbe. Later, after each out of town guest would receive "something" from the Rebbe, they would make a complete turnaround, walk back down the other side of the walkway and enter a car. The instructions for the women were to remain on the sidewalk, behind the men.

Meanwhile, Leibel brought out boxes containing some of the seventy-four Tanyas. He extracted a few books and took them into the Rebbe's room.

A few minutes later there was a "shush" and a "hush" and then complete silence; here was the Rebbe. He was followed by Leibel, who was carrying six of these Tanyas. After him came Rabbis Hodakov, Klein, Wineberg, Harlig and Dr. Nissen Mindel and others. These gentlemen grouped themselves behind the Rebbe. The first open-air *farbrengen* had just begun.

The Rebbe delivered a five-minute *sicha*.

Rabbi Groner—who had been holding the four signed Tanyas plus two additional copies—then placed the Tanyas on the Rebbe's podium.



RABBI PINNY LEW



THE REBBE GIVES DOLLARS TO RABBI WINEBERG TO DISTRIBUTE TO THE WOMEN AND GIRLS.

The Rebbe announced that he would first distribute the Tanya “to those who were involved in the publication of the translated Tanya, followed by the rest of those assembled here.”

The Rebbe then signaled to me with his eyes—and how eloquent are the Rebbe’s eyes!—to come forward. I walked up to the Rebbe’s podium. The Rebbe handed me a Tanya, saying: “*Zol zain b’hatzlacha rabba.*”

While I was still face to face with the Rebbe, I delivered a message that “the British contingent have requested me to ask the Rebbe that Moshiach be revealed soon and speedily!” “Yes, if you can accelerate it [the coming of Moshiach],” replied the Rebbe.

Nachman was next to receive his autographed Tanya, followed by Bernard and Hershel.

Meanwhile, being back in my spot, I surreptitiously opened the cover of my Tanya. Yes—there it was—in Hebrew, of course – the Rebbe’s own handwritten inscription. There was also a photocopy of a compendium of the various *sichos* about the Tanya the Rebbe had delivered during this visit.

I was thrilled, delighted, and overwhelmed with gratitude to the Rebbe. It had been worthwhile “bothering the Rebbe” to do this. Hershel had argued with me on many occasions that it was not fair of me to pester the Rebbe to sign the Tanyas. I had remonstrated with him. I pointed out this was very important to me, but to my children’s children it would be more important still, a treasured heirloom.

The Rebbe presented a Tanya to Rabbi Chaim Farro and one to Mendel Katsch and then to every



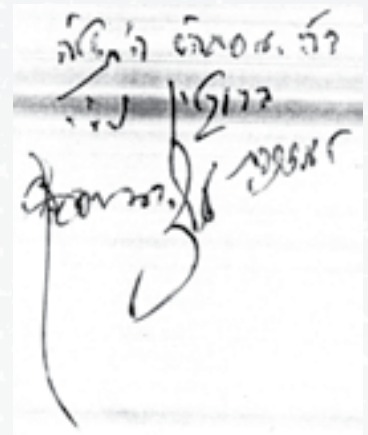
adult male traveler who lived in an English-speaking country.

The Rebbe repeatedly called out, “Who else is here from English countries? Other countries that speak English? Anyone else from England, Australia?” The Rebbe also called up a few individuals by name.

Each male traveler who did not live in an English-speaking country and all boys—even babies like my grandson Sholom Ber Lew, who was only 15 months old!—received a pocket (Hebrew only) Tanya from the Rebbe’s hand.

The Rebbe announced that each woman and girl—even little girls (like my granddaughters Zelda Rochel and Chana Lew, aged two and four years respectively)—would receive two single-dollar bills, one for charity and the other toward the Shabbos candle-lighting campaign. The Rebbe then called over Rabbi Wineberg and handed him a wad of the bills for him to distribute to the women.

The Rebbe called up Shmuel a second time, and gave him his own (the Rebbe’s) original copy of the *sicha* of the Rebbe’s remarks about the Tanya, with the Rebbe’s own handwritten additions and alterations. The Rebbe told him: “*Machen a fotostat*



THE INSCRIPTION FROM THE REBBE IN THE FOUR TANYAS FOR THE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

ב"ה. אסחה"ש [אסרו חג השבועות]  
ה'תשל"ה.  
ברוקלין נ"ו.  
למזכרת (חתימה)



in England un opshiken tzurik (make a photocopy in England and send it back).”

I approached the Rebbe and asked for a Tanya for [my son] Avrohom, who was also a member of the Tanya committee but who was in England.

“[But] he is not here!” responded the Rebbe. The Rebbe did give me a pocket Hebrew-only Tanya for him “as commission.”

The Rebbe called me up again and handed me a Tanya for Chief Rabbi Jakobovits of England, together with a personal letter for him. The Rebbe (again) instructed that a delegation present this Tanya to the Chief Rabbi. The Rebbe also gave me an extra Tanya for the airplane home: “In case you find someone who might need one.”

The Rebbe concluded this glorious affair by wishing us all, “*Furt gezunterheit, zol zein besuros*

*tovos* (have a safe journey and there should be good news).” With the Rebbe clapping and encouraging the singing of “*Ki B’simcha*,” off we went to board our vehicles. Our motorcade moved off. We all waved furiously, singing lustily to the Rebbe, who was still standing on the steps of 770, clapping his hands and giving us a farewell *bracha*.

On the plane going home, Shmuel searched and found the lost soul to give the Rebbe’s Tanya to as instructed. Someone (from our own group of passengers) had gone directly to the airport. He was not aware of the “outdoor” farbrengen and distribution. He would have been most disappointed to have missed receiving a Tanya from the Rebbe’s hand; but the Rebbe notices everything!

We arrived home tired, but still basking in the warmth of a glorious two weeks spent with the Rebbe. ①

I had given my camera to a friend, before the Rebbe arrived, with instructions that he take as many photographs as possible of the Rebbe handing out the Tanyas, a view of the crowds and of the overall scene. The Rebbe was now giving us a most wonderful opportunity to take some good photographs; just as I had requested at our *yechidus*!

At this moment, when the Rebbe answered not only verbally but with a gorgeous smile, Louis Tiefenbrun took a most superb and marvelous photograph of the Rebbe surrounded by a group of his most trusted and able lieutenants.

1. Bernard Perrin, Hershel Gorman, Nachman Sudak and the author.
2. As Zalmon Jaffe recounts elsewhere: “During that visit (Yud Shevat 5735\*), I went so far as to discuss with the Rebbe the list of people to whom the first twelve leather-bound copies would be presented; the first one would be for the Rebbe, of course, and then our Rebbetzin and so forth...”
3. 1867-1941; passed away in Bastia, Corsica, during WWII.

