

Personal Farewell

The Yom-Tov of Shavuos in 5728 was quite unique for the Lew and Jaffee families. Although the family patriarch, Reb Zalmon Jaffee had been spending Shavuos with the Rebbe since 5724, this was the first time all the children and grand-children were joining him.

Having journeyed across the Atlantic Ocean to see the Rebbe, they made sure to stay an additional week after the Yom-Tov had ended.

On the last day of their visit the family readied themselves to spend their final moments with the Rebbe. They packed their bags and headed to 770 for their clos-

ing Mincha with the Rebbe.

The Rebbe sat in his regular place alongside the door which links the lobby of 770 to the upstairs Zal. Nearby stood Reb Zalmon and his grandson Yossi Lew (currently a Shliach in Peachtree City, GA).

Observing from a distance was Rabbi Chaim Boruch Halberstam a Meshamesh B'kodesh in the Rebbe's home and founder of WLCC. He sensed that something out-of-the-ordinary was about to occur. He dashed to his office, grabbed his camera with its remaining film and hurried back into the Shul.





As Mincha ended, the Rebbe turned to Reb Zalmon and began inquiring into the wellbeing of his family, and how his visit had been (picture 1). After conversing for a few minutes the Rebbe shook Reb Zalmon's hand, and looked up and saw the rest of the Jaffee and Lew families standing right outside the door.

Smiling broadly, the Rebbe exclaimed: "Fohr Gezunterheit!" and waved to the entire family assembled. Excitedly, little Yossi returned the Rebbe's wave with one of his own. The Rebbe smiled and began approaching Yossi!

The Rebbe made his way around the table to where Yossi was standing and extended his handshake. Young Yossi stuck out his own small hand and placed it within the Rebbe's grip (picture 2).

[Yossi's father Rabbi Shmuel Lew relates that just minutes before Mincha he tried imparting to his then four year old son the practice amongst Lubavitcher Chassidim, to abstain from shaking hands with the Rebbe as one would with common-folk. In sensitivity and awe of

the Rebbe, it would be impudent to relate to the Rebbe in this manner.

Yet, in the eyes of a child, how can one refuse the handshake of the Rebbe!]

The Rebbe then turned to Yossi's younger brother Mendel and shook his hand.

Looking further the Rebbe notice Yossi's younger sister sitting in the stroller and extended his handshake to her as well. The young child couldn't return the handshake because alas she was firmly buckled, her hands immobile. Immediately Mrs. Lew tended to unbuckling the little girl.

The Rebbe stood by and waited the entire time until the child was unbuckled and could shake the Rebbe's hand!

Rabbi Halberstam relates that he regrets running out of film to capture the rest of these precious moments, which express so vividly the Rebbe's care for each and every Chossid. ■

