

א חסידי שער דערהער...

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 18

ערש"ק פרשת קרח, כ"ב סיון, תשע"א

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Leben Miten Rebben	1
Serpa Pinto	2
Niggun — Alter Rebbe's Niggunim	3
Biography - Reb Berke Chein - 5	3
Q&A - Learning Gemara	4

A Visit to the Ohel - Rostov 5685

As Gimmel Tammuz approaches, we found it appropriate to quote the following section from the memoirs of Horav Yisroel Jacobson. It was in the year 5685 (1925), shortly after the rise of the Communist regime in Russia when the Frierdiker Rebbe appointed him as his personal Shliach to visit the Ohel of the Rebbe Rashab in Rostov on his Yahrtzei, Beis Nissan. From the words of the Frierdiker Rebbe in that Yechidus, we learn much about the significance of a Chossid visiting the Rebbe's Ohel, in it's being not merely a stop at Kivrei Tzadikim (Chas V' Sholom), but an actual Yechidus with the Rebbe. (In the following excerpt, "the Rebbe" refers to the Frierdiker Rebbe).

On Thursday evening, I was received by the Rebbe for Yechidus. The Rebbe told me that he wishes to appoint me as his Shliach to Rostov for the Yahrtzeit on Beis Nissan, which occurs this year on a Friday. He asked, "Will you have time for this?" I answered, "What's the question? If this is the Rebbe's wish then I will; certainly!" So the Rebbe explained: "I know that you are preoccupied now and that your time is restricted". I assured the Rebbe that I will make the time and I'm prepared to go.

The Rebbe instructed that I return to his room tomorrow, when he'll give me money to purchase a ticket on the train headed from Leningrad to Moscow on Sunday evening at 7:30. An hour and a half earlier, at 6:00, I was to come to his room once more for an additional Yechidus (as the Rebbe needed to "prepare" himself for this Yechidus three hours prior!).

The next day, when giving me the money for the trip, the Rebbe instructed me to remain for one day in Moscow to receive *Panim* from *Anash* there and he allowed me to accept payment from them, but he insisted that the cost of the trip should be covered in its entirety by him personally. In

The Rebbe handed me a packet of *Panim* and instructed that I only place them on the Ohel without reading them at all beforehand. Whereas his own personal *Pan*, I was to read only once and only upon reaching the Ohel, no earlier. I was absolutely forbidden to show it to anyone else or to copy it down; no exceptions! (When I did read it, I noticed that in the first section he requested *Brochos* for himself personally as a Rebbe, and later as a leader of world Jewry, he mentioned and articulated many of the problems encountering the Jewish people as a whole at the time and requested to evoke Heavenly mercy on their behalf. At the end, he mentioned a number of individuals by name; some of them were familiar to me while others were not).

Towards the end of the Yechidus, the Rebbe instructed me to stop at his mother's room, for she also wished to give me a *Pan* on her behalf.

Before I left the room, the Rebbe turned to me and said, "Yisroel! Do you know how to speak to my father?" I was dumbfounded. "You must speak to my father as you would in Yechidus; you were in Yechidus with my father in the past. You should say, 'Rebbe! I am a Shliach of your son and of your Rebbetzin. They appointed me as their Shliach.' Then you should say the *Maane Loshon*."

There were many more expressions from the Rebbe which I cannot remember. One thing that he told me then was, "When you'll be at the Ohel in the morning it'll be approximately the same time that I'll be davening *Shacharis* here, so my davening will be all the more *geshmak!* (*S'vet zich davenen geshmaker*)."

The closeness and affection that I experienced in that Yechidus from the Rebbe were overwhelming... On the train, I traveled with another Chossid, Reb Shmuel Abba Dulitsky. Although I was not allowed to disclose all the unbelievable words I had heard from the Rebbe, I was unable to restrain my excitable feelings and my emotion was quite evident. In Reb Shmuel Abba's look, I noticed his awe he regarded me, as if to say, "How fortunate you are for having merited to carry out such a great and holy mission!"

(*Zikaron L'bnei Yisroel p. 100*)

התקשרות

* ... וואלט איך מציע זיין נאך א הצעה, אז מ'זאל אויסחזר'ן - אינגאנצן אדער א חלק, פון - דעם מאמר וואס דער רבי האט ארויסגעגעבן צו זיין יום ההסתלקות [ד"ה באתי לגני] און מ'זמן לזמן, ווען מ'איז אין א מבוכה, אדער ס'איז דא עפעס ספיקות, אדער פגע בך מנוול זה - זאל מען דאס איבערטראכטן. עס איז ניט אזוי נוגע די כמות, צי דעם גאנצן מאמר, צי - אויב מ'קען ניט, מצד איזה סיבה גאנצן מאמר - א האלבן מאמר. דעם עיקר איז נוגע די איכות, מיט חיים, און עס זאל זיין מחובר מיטן מקור.

(משיחת י"ט כסלו, תשי"א)
(דאה לקו"ש חלק ב, 515.)

addition, the Rebbe gave me other sums of money that I was to deliver to various individuals and institutions. (When I met Reb Elchonon Marozov later on, he let me know that when the Rebbe gave me the money for the trip, he did not even have the bare minimum for himself to cover the Shabbos expenses - and he did not know about the other monies that the Rebbe gave me...)

As I was directed, on Sunday at 6:00, I entered the Rebbe's room for Yechidus. The first thing that the Rebbe told me was that when in Rostov, I should perform all the conducts of the Yahrtzeit (learn Mishnayos, daven at the *Amud*, and so on) in the Rebbe Rashab's home in the city (currently the residence of a few families of *Anash*).



Serpa Pinto

Seventy Years to Chof Ches Sivan

“יודו לה' חסדו ונפלאותיו לבני אדם”

The day of Chof Ches Sivan deserves unprecedented commemoration by the Chossid of Dor Hashvi'i. It was on this day that the fraction of the Rebbe's aura known so well to the world throughout the years first began to sprout out in the open. Many may not be aware of the extent of danger that the Rebbe and Rebbetzin's trip entailed, and the magnitude of the miracle for which we are so grateful to Hashem; we therefore present you with the following essay:

Serpa Pinto

The "Serpa Pinto" was one of several ships hired by the American Joint Distribution committee in 1939 to bring European Jewish refugees to the United States. She made several such voyages, the last of which took place in 1944. Most of her passengers already possessed American entry visas and paid for their own tickets to cross the Atlantic from Lisbon, capital of neutral Portugal, to North America.

Why is the name "Schneerson" not listed?

Currently, the passenger lists of the "Serpa Pinto" are stored in the archives of the "Joint" in New York. It is interesting to note that the names of the Rebbe and Rebbetzin do not appear in the accounts of those who purchased tickets in Europe. Hence, either they were granted free passage by the "Joint" or their tickets were paid for in New York.

According to various Chabad sources, the tickets came from Rabbi Mordechai Bistritzky, a chossid who was then living in America. He had bought tickets for his parents-in-law, Rabbi Levi and Mrs. Ruchama Leugvir, who lived in Antwerp. They duly left for the port of Nice, in Vichy France, from where they intended to move on to Portugal. Unfortunately, the Portuguese consulate refused to grant them a transit visa and they were unable to continue their journey. When Rabbi Bistritzky heard about the Friediker Rebbe's concern for the safety of his daughter and son-in-law, who were finding it difficult to leave Europe, he offered to send them his in-laws' unused tickets on the "Serpa Pinto". The Friediker Rebbe accepted his offer but insisted on paying him the full price of the tickets.

Here the mystery deepens. The Leugvirs are also not mentioned on any passenger list, including that which details those individuals whom the "Joint" had to reimburse after they could not sail.

Hence the theory that as the Friediker Rebbe had been connected with the "Joint" since 1922, the "Joint" itself decided to finance the Rebbe and Rebbetzin's passage. Yet this still does not explain why the name "Schneerson" never appeared in any record relating to this voyage.

Torpedo danger in the Atlantic

For those European Yidden fortunate enough to acquire places on the few ships that dared to cross the Atlantic during the last war, their troubles were not over until they finally landed. As was fully disclosed only recently, during the first years of the war the American navy was unable to protect the eastern seaboard of the United States from the huge number of German submarines that infested the Atlantic Ocean. Around the time that the Rebbe and Rebbetzin reached New York, more than 500 ships were torpedoed by the Nazis, leading to the deaths of all their passengers and crews.

To give just a small appreciation of the dangers these voyages entailed, we will quote a newspaper clipping which describes an incident that took place with the very same ship, "Serpo Pinto", in 1944, three years later:

"This week, a German submarine blocked the passage of a ship packed with refugees which was bound for Philadelphia. The Germans arrested two American citizens and threatened to sink the ship. Two adults and a child died in the confusion. Eventually, instructions were received from Berlin to allow the ship to continue on its voyage".

In the words of an American naval official who later commented on this: "At this point the ship was carrying 230 passengers and 155 refugees, most of whom were on their way to Canada. The voyage was organized by the American Joint Distribution Committee.

On the first rescue mission of the "Serpa Pinto" in 1941, when the Rebbe and Rebbetzin were among her passengers, she brought more than 600 refugees to New York. During this voyage, a British naval vessel forced her to stop for three days while they searched for German citizens.

As the ship was making progress towards the harbor, preparations were under way to welcome the Rebbe and Rebbetzin to New York.

The frail health of the Friediker Rebbe did not allow him to go out to the docks and greet them. He therefore chose four of the most eminent Rabbonim in the Lubavitch community to represent him there: Rabbi Yisrael Jacobson, Rabbi Shmuel Levitin, Rabbi Eliyahu Simpson and Rabbi Shlomo Aharon Kazarnovsky.

Do you know who you are greeting!

The night before the ship was due to arrive, the Friediker Rebbe summoned these leading Chassidim to his study and said: "I hereby appoint you as emissaries to welcome my son-in-law who is arriving tomorrow. Let me

28 Sivan the Second

Six years after the episode described above, the Rebbe visited Paris in order to bring his mother, Rebbetzin Channah, who had lived there since leaving Russia, to join him in New York.

As Chazal say: "*Megalgalin zechus lyom zakai*". Divine intervention makes a meritorious incident occur on a meritorious day.

Interestingly, the date on which the Rebbe and his mother arrived in New York in 5707 was also the 28th of Sivan.

Continued on the back page



שערי נגינה

The Alter Rebbe's Niggunim - Part 1

Niggunim in his Youth

Already as a young child the Alter Rebbe displayed a great chush in negina. The Friediker Rebbe says in a sicha: "he was a "born menagen"." His father, Reb Baruch, who was one of the talmidim of the Baal Shem Tov, would often be visited by his colleagues, the Tzadikim nistarim, and at these visits the Alter Rebbe learnt many niggunim from them. He was very fond of nature and after finishing his day in cheder he would immediately head out to the fields where he would review his learning and many times break forth with a niggun.

As the renowned son-in-law of the esteemed Reb yehuda leib segal, and a great Gaon in his own right, famous for his grasp in all areas of Torah, he drew many followers through his niggunim. When he would daven, the listener would become entranced by the sweetness of his voice, unable to move away.

The people of Vitebsk would invite the Alter Rebbe to attend their simcha's were they would then honor him with the delivering of a pilpul, and then he was asked to sing a niggun, being famous for his talent. At one of these occasions the Alter Rebbe said: "language is the pen of the heart and song is the pen of the soul".

A New Appreciation

All this was even before the Rebbe went to Mezritch. There he learnt that negina is one of the ways to serve Hashem and that it can help with ones davening. Over the time he spent there he heard many niggunim that were sung by the Baal Shem Tov, reviewing them till he knew them perfectly.

The Alter Rebbe once recounted, that when he first came to mezritch he wanted to leave not seeing how he could gain or grow there, however, when he heard the Maggid singing he was drawn to him.

On another occasion he said: "When I returned to Vitebsk I was asked what I had learnt there. I replied that were three things. Firstly the source of my Neshama, secondly my purpose in this world, namely to reveal Chassidus Chabad, and thirdly, that this is accomplished through negina".

The first Pesach in Vitebsk after his return, he sang many niggunim that he had received there. All the Gaonim from the city came to hear him, every one of the listeners felt that his 'shoresh ha'neshama' (the very core of the neshama) was in a revealed state due to the power of the Alter Rebbe's singing.

Already from the beginning of his nesius, the Alter Rebbe placed much emphasis on the importance of negina and established it as one of the Darchei HaChossidus. There was a chossid named Reb Moshe Zalman who was nicknamed "Moshe Zalman der Feldman", for he would spend much time in the field singing. Being that the Alter Rebbe taught his talmidim niggunim, we can thus find many niggunim attributed to various Chassidim, for example; Reb Moshe Vilenker, Reb Shlomo Chasnik'er or they are just known as 'Chasidei Admur Hazakon'...

It happened once that the Alter Rebbe went into the beis medrash while his talmidim were sitting and learning there, he sat down by a table leaned head on his hands for a few minutes in dveikus. Coming out of his meditation, he expounded on the Mishna in Shabbos, "with what does the animal go out on Shabbos and with what not..." explaining that this refers to the animal soul. How does one have the ability to send it away- through Shabbos, this refers to t'filla... and through what avodah is this possible -negina.

א ציור פון א חסיד

Reb Berke Chein Part 5

Connection to the Rebbe

Reb Berke's total hiskashrus to the Rebbe was renowned. He carefully observed not only an explicit instruction, but also the slightest allusion, to him. Even the Rebbe's general instructions he always applied to himself: For instance, when the Rebbe started the Tefillin Campaign in 5727, he immediately applied it to himself too. This campaign was not only for those who never put on Tefillin, but for everyone. So he took upon himself another hidur in Tefillin, in addition to using every opportunity to put Tefillin on someone else.

He arrived in Israel in 5721, and from 5722 onward he came to the Rebbe every year for Tishrei. The crowding and pushing did not exhaust him. The joy of being able to see the Rebbe made up for everything. What is physical inconvenience compared to spiritual contentment? The Rebbe told Rabbi Leib Groner to place Reb Berke next to him during the blowing of the Shofar on Rosh Hashana.

During the first years after his arrival to Eretz Israel, he would travel at least once a week to Kibbutzim and other towns to help disseminate Torah and Chassidus among the masses. He was not fluent in the Hebrew language, and whatever he knew, he spoke with an askenazic accent. But nothing could stop him from participating in these activities which gave the Rebbe nachas. Before going out he would dress in his Shabbos best and wear a gartel.

During the kibbutz encounters he would sit there with humility. When it was his turn to speak, he tried to describe in short and plain jargon, combined with expressions of Tanach, the mesirus nefesh of our people in Russia, and would conclude with a call from the depth of his heart: "How fortunate you are, children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, that you are privileged to live in our Holy Land without interference. My friends, please put on tefillin, observe the Shabbos, eat Kosher, observe Torah, and it will help your brethren who are still there, so that they can keep the fires of Yiddishkeit aglow." These words, said from an agonized heart, kindled the hidden sparks in the hearts of his listeners, and had a greater effect than all the polished and professional speakers.

The Rebbe was also aware of Reb Berke's total devotion and hiskashrus. After Reb Avraham Pariz, z"l, passed away, the Rebbe appointed Reb Berke to be responsible for the Rebbe's Tzedakah funds in Israel, and even maamed money would be sent to him.

To be continued...

And that is what is stated at the end of the mishna: "*Kol balei shir yotzitu b'shir v' nimshachin b' shir*", meaning that the singing in davening has the ability to pick one's self up to very high levels. It was through this teaching that the Alter Rebbe ingrained by Chassidim the idea of negina and that it should have the power to "arouse the concentration". Similarly the Tzemach Tzedek once said that the Alter Rebbe in his kindness gave the power to a chossid to wash out "the disgusting vessel" and this is through a niggun.

The Miteler Rebbe once said: "My father was able to enter into the inside of a chossid and remove what didn't belong there, either through a maamer or a niggun.

1. Another version is: 1) What is Hashem 2) What is a Yid 3) What is a niggun.



Q & A: Why do we learn Gemara?

If our goal in Yeshiva is to learn to be able to be practicing Yiddin, why don't we focus on halacha, and mussar or chakira, and chassidus? For what reason is Gemara the main focus, both in time allotted to it and in effort?

Even more so, there are many parts in Torah, Drush, Pilpul, Rambam, and so on, why do we not give them the same emphasis as we give Gemara?

One answer that could be offered is effort, *horevaniye*, that to learn Torah the student must also work hard, and really strain himself. However, if this were the only reason then there might be some yeshivos that focus on different things. One yeshiva might learn Shagas Arye, another Ktzos, and a third Minchas Chinuch. Maharal is also hard and Shalo is very interesting. We still haven't made a strong enough case for Gemara.

Another answer might be to understand the reasons behind the Halacha. Also not enough. The Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch was made to give the simple halacha and the reason behind it. Same case with Rambam, he wrote a Sefer that would "be a collection of all the Torah sh'baal peh" up until his time.

Yet another answer could be that the Gemara is the Yesod, the foundation to all the rest of Torah. Here we got a little closer. What does that mean when we say: the foundation of the entire Torah? Many sforim are based on previous sforim and we don't learn the earlier ones, for example shulchan Aruch. Shulchan Aruch is based directly off the Tur, however not everyone who learns the Shulchan Aruch must first go and learn through the Tur. This becomes even more apparent when learning the Nosei Kleim of the Shulchan Aruch. They bring many sforim of early Rishonim yet the average learner never cracked one of those sforim open. So why is Gemara singled out not only as a foundation but also to be learnt on its own?

The Gemara is not "a" foundation of Torah, it is the Foundation of Torah. Until the Gemara was closed, all Torah Sh'baal Peh was being taught in Yeshivos, as that became more scarce with the spread of the Yidden in Galus, the Gemara was written and sealed. The Gemara is the last sefer to be accepted by the entire Jewish nation. There is no frum Yid that can say that he disagrees with the Gemara. It is Torah Sh'baal Peh as we know it. All the sforim written since then are either explanations or synopsizes or collections of the Halacha from many different sources in the Gemara. Not one of the later sforim are a replacement ch"v.

Every single Yid has the responsibility to learn Torah. This means both Torah Sh'Beksav and Torah Sh'Baal Peh (Pnimiyus HaTorah is also included [see Hilchos Talmud Torah] in this responsibility). The Chumash that we learn and hear read in

shul is the Torah Sh'Beksav and the Gemara we learn is the Torah Sh'Baal Peh. They are the pillars of our Yiddishkeit.

So next time you walk down the street and someone asks you: "Why do you learn Gemara?" you will be able to answer him with conviction: "Because it is the Aibishter's Torah and not just another part, but the entire foundation of Torah Sh'Baal Peh".

disclose to you who he is: He does Tikkun Chatzos every night; he is completely familiar, from memory, with the entire Talmud Bavli together with the Pirushim of the Ran, Rosh, and Rif; likewise Talmud Yerushalmi and its meforshim, and the Rambam; and Likkutei Torah with all the sources it refers to. Now, go out and greet him!"

Following the 5704 incident described in the above report, out of fear that subsequent refugee ships would be torpedoed by German submarines operating in the Atlantic, the "Joint" was forced to bring its rescue voyages to an end.

Beginning a new era

The Rebbe's arrival in the United States marked the beginning of a new era in Lubavitch - one consisting of Jewish outreach in an unprecedented manner.

A short time following his arrival, the Frierdiker Rebbe appointed the Rebbe to head his three newly established organizations: (1) Machne Israel - whose objective is strengthening Judaism through the fulfillment of Torah and Mitzvos, and arouse the hearts of all Jews to repent. In addition, its role is to publicize that through repentance, we will immediately merit the redemption through Moshiach Tzidkeinu. (2) Kehot Publication Society, which is responsible for publishing Seforim of Chabad Chassidus. And (3) Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch, whose responsibility is to ensure a proper Jewish education for every Jewish boy and girl.

Indeed, those who were present in 770 in that period will attest to the sudden noticeable changes that brought Lubavitch outreach to an entirely new stage.

פרק א' ליום	ג' פרקים ליום	מורה שיעור ללימוד הרמב"ם
הל' גזילה ואבידה פ' יח	הל' סוטה פ' ד ספר קדושה הל' איסורי ביאה פ' א-ב	כ"ב סיון
הל' חובל ומזיק פ' א	פ' ג-ה	כ"ג סיון
פרק ב'	פ' ו-ח	כ"ד סיון
פרק ג'	פ' ט-יא	כ"ה סיון
פרק ד'	פ' יב-יד	כ"ז סיון
פרק ה'	פ' טו-יז	כ"ח סיון
פרק ו'	פ' יח-כ	כ"ח סיון

For questions and/or comments please call: (347) 541-4770 or email derher770@gmail.com

All content is copyright © by A Chassidishe Derher and/or authors and previous publishers as applicable.