

Visiting the Sedorim

Pesach night. As usual the Bochrin are excited, eagerly anticipating the start of Davening. The Rebbe is about to enter the room and Pesach, the Yom Tov into which so much hard work, hours of sweat and blood, has been poured, will begin.

After Marriv, which on Pesach includes Hallel, 770 empties rapidly. None of the usual lingering is seen. One the usual night some Bochrin would stay late either to watch the Rebbe leave to his house, or to stay and learn a little. Tonight all the Bochrin have disappeared. Or so it seems.

Where did they run? Follow them! Down the block they race, in a rush to prepare their Seder. For you see, the Rebbe will visit them on the way home, and everything must be ready for the Rebbe's visit.

Starting in 5713, an exclusive and unique tradition took place each Pesach. On the way to his home on the first night of Pesach the Rebbe, instead of turning left and walking straight home, would turn right and make a visit to the Seder of the Bochrin. The Rebbe would walk through the kitchen and the dining room making a full inspection as it were, taking note of each and every detail. Many times the Rebbe would comment on things that should be changed or fixed while on the visit.

As the years progressed and more Mosdos began hosting their own the Rebbe began to include more stops on his "itinerary", visiting the Sedarim in Hadar HaTorah, the Russian Seder in F.R.E.E., Machon Chana, and the Seder for the Iranian refugees. By each Seder the Rebbe would give a short brocha, sometimes speaking in Russian for the participants of the Russian Seder.

On the beginning of the walk only a few people would accompany the Rebbe. With each stop along the way more and more people would join the ranks, until the crowd swelled into a nice-sized entourage. This entourage would then accompany the Rebbe home.

Those who merited in taking part describe how they felt an unusual feeling, as if privy to a very personal moment as they walked the Rebbe home and waited respectfully until the door to the Rebbe's house closed, before going home to their own Sedorim.

Later the short Brochos that were said by each Seder were transcribed and printed. Many of these were published in the back of Likkutei Sichos.

This *minhag* continued until 5742, when the Rebbetzin moved into the Library next-door to 770. Since the Rebbe would not walk home anymore, from that year the tradition stopped.

For more interesting stories look in the Yumanim.

Correction

Two corrections to the past Issue have come to light:

1. Reb Yehoshua Ganzburg was part of the original Va'ad HaBoicher.
2. Rabbi Mentlik was the one in charge of the baking of the Rebbe's Matzos. Rabbi Labkowsky only assumed the job after Rabbi Mentlik's passing.

A Special Connection

Reb Yisroel—Second Installment

*The special care and attention that the Rebbe reserved for the bochurim is well-known. 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.*

In those years there was a routine system each month when Rabbi Mordechai Mentlick, the Rosh yeshivah of Tomchei Temimim at 770, came to Newark to test the bochurim on their studies, and then Rabbi Mentlick and I would each write a report of the results to the Rebbe. One month, the bochurim were slacking a bit in their learning and the results indeed proved to be very poor.

When the reports reached the Rebbe, we received instruction from Rabbi Hadakov that the Yeshivah must be temporarily closed. For a course of three days, Rabbi Hadakov called each bochur separately into his office, showed them the report, and demanded an explanation for this intolerable behavior.



It happened at one point that the administration of the Yeshivah in Newark resolved to improve its standards, and in that spirit, began to ask certain bochurim to leave the Yeshivah.

One night during that period I received a phone call from Rabbi Hadakov at 2:30 am, and he began to inquire about the reasons behind our decision to expel a specific bochur. He continued to ask and seek detailed information about this matter for a very long time, to the extent that I grew very tired and felt like asking him if this issue could be discussed at a later opportunity. But suddenly I heard a cough on the other end of the line. I recognized that cough very well; the Rebbe was listening in to our conversation! It was then that I realized of what importance this phone call was, and I continued speaking with Rabbi Hadakov for close to an hour.

Approximately ten minutes after the conclusion of our discussion, during the course of which Rabbi Hadakov had done very thorough research about this bochur, I received another phone call. This time it was the director of the Yeshivah, Rabbi Moshe Herson, who informed me that he had just received instructions from Rabbi Hadakov that we accept this bochur back in the Yeshivah...

1. When we asked Reb Yisroel if this directive was indeed initiated by the Rebbe, he responded that they only received word from Rabbi Hadakov. But based on personal experience in the past, more than once, when an instruction was given by Rabbi Hadakov, one could safely assume that it was indeed coming from the Rebbe. His words were always followed without further question.

To better illustrate Rabbi Hadakov's profound and unique devotion to the Rebbe, Reb Yisroel recounts an incident that he was eyewitness to: One year on Erev Yom Kippur, he stood near Rabbi Hadakov and waited on line for a very long while to receive Lekach from the Rebbe. Needless to say, had Rabbi Hadakov wished to receive Lekach straight from the Rebbe without having to wait, it would have been granted to him, but he chose to stand on the long-stretched line and wait for his turn to see the Rebbe like an ordinary, simple Chossid.



שערי נגינה

Yud Alef Nissan Niggunim - 2

In the beginning of the third Tekufa mentioned last week [in which a new niggun would be composed in honor of the upcoming Yud Alef Nissan] there was no clear method of choosing the niggun of that year. This lack of clarity created a sense of conflict among the composers leading, at times, to fights R"L. Obviously, the Bochrin had a large part in deciding which niggunim would be sung by the Rebbe's Farbrengen. This was crucial to the composers, for the niggun sung by the Rebbe's Farbrengen became the Niggun of the year. Therefore each composer would attempt to rally the Bochrin behind his niggun.

Eventually, a Va'ad was established to choose which niggun would be the official Niggun of that year. The Bochrin involved in creating the Va'ad included: Y.Y. Greenbeg, N. Greenwald, Y. Karasik and Y.Y. Kaplan. The Va'ad was comprised of a few Baalei Menagnim amongst who were: Reb Tzvi Hirsh Ganzburg, Reb Mordechai Gurari, Reb Eliezer Zalmanov, Reb Moshe Taleshevsky, Reb Eli Lipsker, Reb Avrohom Friedman, Reb Mendel Schneerson, Reb Schneur Zalmen Baumgarten and Reb Avrohom Charitonov. In order to guarantee a fair winner it was decided to prohibit anyone on the Va'ad from submitting a niggun into that year's competition.

Once a Niggun was chosen and sung in the presence of the Rebbe, it was the first niggun sung every Farbrengen for the entire year.

On occasion, even after the Niggun was officially chosen, it was changed later on. One instance was in 5749. A few niggunim were composed by the Baalei Menagnim. The Va'ad chose one of the niggunim as that year's niggun. However, there was a significant block that disagreed with the Va'ad choice and they sang one of the other compositions, creating confusion during the singing. To clear the air, on Shabbos Hagadol, Erev Yud Alef Nissan (which was on a Sunday), before the Farbrengen, it was announced in 770 that all present should please sing the niggun that the Va'ad chose.

After the Rebbe came downstairs and made Kiddush, Reb Moshe Taleshevsky led the crowd in singing the Niggun the Va'ad had chosen. (The Niggun starts with the posuk: "Tavoi Lefanecha".) To the surprise of all, the Rebbe started the first Sicha by explaining the posuk of "Shir Mizmor". The only niggun that included this posuk was the niggun that Reb Sholom Ber Brochshtat had composed. Obviously that changed everything and the niggun right after that first sicha was "Shir Mizmor". It then became the Niggun of that year. (Reb Sholom Brochshtat took a lot of mashke after the Farbrengen and danced for hours, celebrating that the Rebbe had chosen his niggun.)

In general though, the Rebbe did not get involved in choosing the Niggun. On the other hand it was the Rebbe who had the "last word". As mentioned above, if the niggun was sung by the Farbrengen and the Rebbe encouraged it, then this was essentially a final decision. There were some times when a niggun was started and the Rebbe would not encourage the singing. In 5749 for example, when the Matzos were being sent to Eretz Yisroel the Bochrin tried a niggun but the Rebbe showed no reaction.

To end on interesting note: Many of the Yud Alef Nissan Niggunim were recorded on the tapes of Nichoach. When they gave the Rebbe the list of niggunim that were planned for Vol. 8 the Rebbe added "Velokim Maki Mikedem" - the niggun of that year 5735.

1. To appreciate his joy, one must realize that his niggunim had been ignored for two years already; this would have been the third, had he not been "saved".

א ציור פון א חסיד

Reb Shilem Kuryatin part 5

Tomchei Temimim in the Teeth of World War I

In August 5674 the First World War broke out. Day by day, concerned at the advance of the German armies, the Rebbe Rashab would send Shilem with a group of students to place notes at the resting places of the Rebbe Maharash and the Tzemach Tzedek, begging them to intercede for Divine mercy.

Before long the Rebbe Rashab's worst fears began to materialize and in the fall of 5675 he was forced to flee southeast, to Rostov. Shilem remained in Lubavitch with the yeshivah students until the end of 5677, when the Rebbe Rashab directed that the yeshivah move to Kremenchug. The students were evacuated in three groups, beginning with the youngest, and Shilem only left with the last one.

Due to the war raging between the Germans and the forces of the new revolutionary government, the second group of students became isolated in Kharkov.

Shilem promptly wrote them that he had appointed Reb Boruch Friedman (later the mashpia in Warsaw) as their mashgiach. The letter demonstrates Shilem's characteristic love and concern for his students. In it he writes: "... We have decided to appoint the Tamim, Baruch Friedman, as your mashgiach...You do not have to be concerned with anything apart from keeping your study program, both Nigleh and Chassidus, which you must continue to pursue diligently..."

With Hashem's help, if you conduct yourselves properly, everything will work out well for you and you will be fulfilling the Rebbe's will... Let us know how much you have studied each month, both in Halachah and Chassidus, and keep in constant touch with us so that we will know what is happening with you... From committee member, Sh. Kuryatin"

His Final Years

Once the yeshivah had relocated to Kremenchug, its students still had to live in terrible conditions. Apart from the unspeakable poverty caused by the war and revolution, the students faced grave physical danger. Reb Yisrael Leibov describes one incident: "During the unstable period between the overthrow of the monarchy and the communist seizure of power, murderous gangs of criminals organized wholesale pogroms against the Jews. Once Reb Shilem, his family and a number of other Jews were abducted by one such gang. They were taken to the outskirts of the city where these murderers were about to execute them. Suddenly a miracle took place. Before the criminals managed to fire their guns, they were forced to run away and Reb Shilem and the others were saved.

"Afterwards, someone who had heard about this miraculous escape from death said to Reb Shilem" 'I would love to attain the level of teshuva that you must have achieved when those guns were pointed at you!' Reb Shilem dismissed the man's words with a wave of his hand and remarked, 'When you are standing with your family opposite the muzzle of a rifle, it is very difficult to do teshuva. The highest levels of teshuva can only be achieved when one has a tallis over his head.'"

The end of the First World War, followed by the civil war that raged throughout the former Russian empire at that time, led to famine and to fatal epidemics of typhus and cholera. On the 5th of Elul 5678, Shilem suddenly fell ill with a severe infection. As he was unable to receive medical attention his situation grew steadily worse. Although he suffered intense pain, he did not complain. On the following day, Shilem passed away at the age of thirty five. When the news of his premature death reached Rostov, the Rebbe Rashab was deeply distressed. Shilem, he remarked, was now performing the "most sublime teshuvah."

In his thirty five years, Shilem managed to effect a deep impression upon the future of Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim. Those who were privileged to know this talented young man never forgot him.



Q & A:

Why Sell Chometz? What is an "Arev Kablan"?

One might wonder where the *minhag* of selling the Chometz originated. Who created this idea to sell the chometz without giving money or transfer of goods, for the seven days of Pesach?

Upon examination of the Mishna, Gemara and Mefarshim, it emerges that Mechiras Chometz went through four stages to become the procedure we use today.

In the time of the Beis HaMikdash, the pre-Pesach clean-up wasn't really hard. Before the advent of modern technology most foods were Kosher L'Pesach. No chenichals were added to "preserve" the food and no coloring was made with obscure inventive ingredients. Most food was *chometz*-free. Because of the lack of refrigeration, all perishable items had to be used before they spoiled. Due to this, the average Yid ate most of his *chometzdike* food before Pesach. Anything left over was either burnt, or sold straight out to a goy. The yid never saw that *chometz* again.

Later there arose a new method of dealing with the chometz. Imagine the Yid had four bottles of very good whiskey, or a few expensive pieces of aged meat (having been dried with flour). What would he do? He would sell it to the goy. The goy would take the chometz to his house, but during the sale the Yid might say that if the goy still had this chometz after Pesach the Yid would most probably buy it back. Again, the sale was a full sale with the Yid reciving money and the goy walking off with the goods, the only difference from a regular trade was that the Yid (and the goy) knew that the Yid would most probably buy that chometz back after Pesach.

Later as people began to move from agriculture to business they ran into a problem: some of the businesses entailed buying and selling large amounts of whisky and ale. You couldn't sell this to the goy outright as having him cart it off would be impossible. So they began selling the *chometz*, but it would stay in the *reshus* of the Yid. Because this began to look like a trick (הערמה) the Rabbonim required that the sale be strengthened with the writing of a *shtar*, a contract.

According to Halacha, movable items cannot be bought or sold with a *shtar*, still the Rabbonim saw three advantages in the writing of a *shtar*: 1) the sale should not seem to be just a "trick", the buyer receiving a contract to prove the power of the sale; 2) the rooms holding the *chometz* would be rented through the *shtar* (land can be transferred by *shtar*), the *chometz* sold along with the rooms (קנין אגב); 3) because according to civil law movable property can be sold by contract, according to halacha this contract has a certain power.

Each person would sell his own chometz in this way. In fact one could find a *Shtar Mechiras Chometz* printed in the back of many Haggados.

An interesting problem arises upon selling the *chometz* to a goy. Does the Yid need to re-*toivel* his pots after Pesach? To eliminate this problem most Rabbonim don't sell the pots, rather they rent the pots and sell the *chometz* embedded within.

The Alter Rebbe introduced a big *chiddush* in the *Mechiras Chometz* process: the *Arev Kabla* (ערב קבלן) He writes "Those that think that *Mechiras Chometz* is only *D'Rabanan*, because our *minhag* is to nullify the *chometz* and make it הפקר are making a mistake, for the *chometz* sold in the *shtar* is not *battul*. Therefore the only way to make sure the *chometz* is fully sold is to involve another Yid that will be an *Arev Kablan* and there will be no connection between the Yid

who is selling the *chometz* and the goy buying it."

To understand the meaning of these lines one must first understand how the selling of the *chometz* used to work. When the Yid would sell the *chometz*, the goy would "buy" the *chometz* with a token amount of money. The rest of the sale price would then be a "loan" on the goy until he could pay it up. After Pesach the Yid would come and buy the *chometz* back.

The *chiddush* of the Alter Rebbe is that making the money a loan is not good enough. The *Maharil* (Reb Yehuda Leib, brother of the Alter Rebbe) and the Tzemach Tzedek explain that the *Shita Mekubetzes* bring many Rishonim who say that making the rest of the sale a loan is not good enough if the person selling is "coming in and out" pressuring for the money.

Therefore the Alter Rebbe has another Yid be the *Arev Kablan* for the goy. A regular *Arev* (guarantor) waits until the debtor cannot pay and then he (the *Arev*) pays for him, with the debtor reimbursing him later. An *Arev Kablan* pays immediately without the creditor even going to the debtor in the first place; as soon as the time of the loan is up, the *Arev* pays. In this way the Alter Rebbe ensures that there will not be any interaction between the goy and the Yid who sells the *chometz* making the sale a complete and final one.

The latest stage in selling the *chometz* is the current one. Instead of each person finding another goy, and thereby risking the chance of making a serious mix-up and bungling the sale, each person goes to his Rav and gives him the power-of-attorney letting the Rav sell his *chometz* on his behalf.

The Rabbeim would not authorize a Rav to sell their *chometz*; rather sell they would sell the *chometz* to the Rav who would then sell it to the goy.

This idea arose about one hundred years ago. At first many obstacles were raised in the path of this new *takana*, but as we have seen, it was endorsed by many great Rabbanim among them the Tzemach Tzedek and is now the *minhag* almost unanimously. (In the beginning people would either make the Rav a *shliach* to sell the *chometz*, or they would sell the *chometz* to the Rav who would then sell it on their behalf. Today the former *minhag* is much more common.)

The usual *Mechiras Chometz* usually includes many different types of *kinyanim* to give it more power: *Kinyan Sudar*, *Kinyan Kesef*, *Kinyan Agav*, *Shtar*, *Tekiyas Kaf*, *Mesiras HaMaftach*.

We now understand a little more of this interesting *minhag* and the *chiddush* of the Alter Rebbe.

For a more in depth look at *Mechiras Chometz*, see the source of this article in *HaMoamid B'Halacha - Pesach*.

פרק א' ליום	ג' פרקים ליום	מורה שיעור ללימוד הרמב"ם
הל' כלים פרק ג'	הל' דעות פ' ו-ז הל' ת"ת פ' א'	ד' ניסן
פרק ד'	פ' ב-ד	ה' ניסן
פרק ה'	פ' ה-ז	ו' ניסן
פרק ו'	הל' עכו"ם פ' א-ג	ז' ניסן
פרק ז'	פ' ד-ו	ח' ניסן
פרק ח'	פ' ז-ט	ט' ניסן
פרק ט'	פ' י-יב	י' ניסן