

# אמרי אשכנז

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 'Moreh Shchoirah'

## לכוון בהנחת התפלין

איך וואלט פארגעלייגט אז אייער פרוי מרת... תחי' זאל אלע ערב שבת ויום טוב פאר ליכט בענטשן אריינווארפן צדקה אין פושקע פון ר' מאיר בעל הנס, און איר אליין זאלט בשעת הנחת תפלין דערמאנען זיך אז איר זייט פארבונדן מיט כ"ק מו"ח אדמו"ר הכ"מ, וואס דאס וועט זיין דער צינור דורך וועלכן עס וועט מקויים ווערן די ברכה [לזרעא חייא וקיימא].

(אג"ק ח"ד ע' נא)

## לעבן מיטן רבין

### QUIET DIPLOMACY

AS TOLD BY JACOB C. HECHT

I was elected to the United States Senate in 1982. A couple of years later, my brother, Martin Hecht, and nephew, Dr. Chaim Hecht, took me to Brooklyn to meet the Rebbe at a Farbrengen. The Rebbe spoke to me and said "your top priority should be to get the Jews out of Russia." I replied that my late mother was an immigrant from Russia who had to flee with her family to escape death at the hands of the Russian Cossacks. "The key," the Rebbe said, was "quiet diplomacy." Please remember that the Cold War with Russia was still on.

About three years later, a very important vote came before the U.S. Senate. President Reagan needed my vote to break a tie. The vote was very important to the President. I had been a top supporter of President Reagan as I felt he was the best friend Israel has in the White House.

I met personally with President Reagan and told him of my decision to back him with my tie-breaking vote. I then asked if I might bring up a concern on my mind. President Reagan graciously agreed. I told President Reagan that my late mother was an immigrant from the Soviet Union, and only by the grace of G-d am I standing before you today in the United States Senate. I urged the President to place increased emphasis on the release of tens of thousands of Soviet Jews before the next summit conference. "Those who are allowed to leave the Soviet Union, Mr. President, should not be just elderly, but children, teenagers, doctors and scientists. All should be allowed the basic human right of freedom." President Reagan expressed tremendous concern.

I was President Reagan's last appointment before leaving for the Reykjavik, Iceland Conference which took place in early October 1986. At that meeting I presented President Reagan with a list of names of 1,200 Soviet Jews who had applied to emigrate from Russia. I reminded the President that the numbers could reach in the millions, but this would be a start. I used "quiet diplomacy" as only the President, an aide, and myself were in the oval

office.

President Reagan gave the list of 1,200 names to Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev at the Reykjavik Conference and spoke of its importance. Within weeks a trickle of Jews began to leave Russia. Soon the trickle mushroomed into tens of thousands.

After President Reagan left office and I became Ambassador to the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, he and Mrs. Reagan came to the Bahamas to vacation. They invited my wife and me to a cocktail party for a few friends. I told the President what a wonderful service he did for the Jewish people in getting the Jews to leave Russia and I asked why he never mentioned the act in public. Mrs. Reagan said that Mr. Gorbachev told them that there were many around him that did not want the Jews to leave Russia and if we made it public, the exodus would stop. President Reagan used "quiet diplomacy" with Mr. Gorbachev.

The story continues with a human touch. My brother, Marty, who has had trouble with his feet, went to Scripps Clinic in La Jolla, California. He was assigned a doctor who referred him to a specialist. The specialist examined him and asked a question, "As your name is Hecht, would you know a Senator Hecht?" Marty said, "He is my brother." The doctor became very emotional and replied that I had saved his wife, mother and father-in-law. They were on the list and told to be at the airport at a certain time. They did not know what to expect. They boarded the plane and took off for Vienna. With what money they had, they sent a telegram of thanks to President Reagan. Since that time, I have met many more Jews that were on that list.

The Rebbe's advice and instructions on using "quiet diplomacy" resulted in the saving of hundreds of thousands of lives and a stronger Israel where the majority immigrated.

# JUMPING TO THE MOON

Many of the Frume Yiddishe people felt disoriented. This latest scientific achievement befuddled them. Reaching the moon was in some way a breach in their security blanket. Could the heavens be reached so easily? Was it overextending human bounds? Could G-d allow this? Was it possible?

Jewish leaders scrambled for explanations. Stunned by the unfolding events, some rabbis suggested that ideological changes were necessary to suit the current events; while others simply denied that reaching the moon was possible.

In 770 the scene was completely different, that Shabbas afternoon, July 19th, while Apollo 11 was still making its historic voyage to the moon, the Rebbe farbrenged, due in part, he said, to discuss the ever popular events of the previous week.

It all began a few days earlier. Wednesday morning, July 16, 1969, at precisely 9:32am EDT, an enormous fiery cloud formed beneath Apollo 11, as the historic countdown was reaching its end: "6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 0, all engines running, liftoff! We have a liftoff!"

The roaring sound of the liftoff overwhelmed the screams of a million spectators. Many cried and many prayed, all hoping for the success of the first ever manned mission to land on the moon. Millions more worldwide watched in awe as the lunar module raced through space. People held their breath at what was seen as the almost impossible mission.

At the Farbrengen the Rebbe's tone was almost surprised, "In this past week people are going around completely confused regarding the voyage to the moon," he said, "but why would this cause Jews to lose balance? There was nothing to be apprehensive about, no reason to feel intimidated."

In an article entitled "With which other Chasidic Rebbe could you possibly discuss landing on the moon?" the well known Israeli journalist Shlomo Nakdimon penned a conversation he had with the Rebbe which shows that the Rebbe clearly agreed that landing on the moon was foreseeable.

"Will man ever be able to reach the moon?" asked Nakdimon.

"It's surely possible" replied the Rebbe.

"What will they find?" asked Nakdimon.

"What they will find, is something we will find out when they reach the moon...."

"How does Torah view these types of experiments?" Nakdimon pressed on.

"The discovery of the atom, its particles and laws are more crucial in the Jewish view than the 'conquest' of space," said the Rebbe and

continued on to explain the reason.

"And Torah doesn't withhold or prohibit exploring space?" Nakdimon persisted.

"Torah has no opposition to continued research," replied the Rebbe.

Almost a decade later, what had begun as a dream had become a reality.

While the world was mesmerized, the Rebbe seemed complacent. Sure, there was what to learn from every event that occurs, and this event too was not different. "In fact," said the Rebbe in the Shabbat talk, "the only justification and possible logic for this bewilderment was to bring the attention of man to ponder and understand important messages this flight contained."

One Rav had actually proposed a change in the Nusach of Kiddush L'vanah, which includes a phrase from the Gemorah: "Just as I leap towards you [i.e. the moon] but cannot touch you, so may my enemies be unable to touch me harmfully." Now that man had made his footprint on the moon's pumice-like surface, wasn't this passage "outdated"? The Rebbe negated this view, explaining that the passage was simply saying that a person jumping up from the earth, from where he is reciting the Brochah, cannot touch the moon—not that the moon was in essence unreachable.

Scientific findings would not and could not shake our Torah's foundations. Not because we need to deny the advancements of science, but because

these are in truth no contradiction to the truth we hold from the days of Moshe.

"Even questions as to whether there is life on other planets has been addressed two thousand years ago in the Gemorah," said the Rebbe.

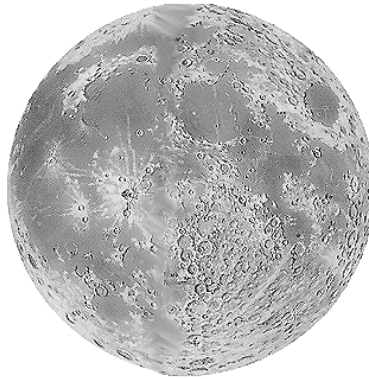
But lessons were certainly to be learned, so the Rebbe touched upon three areas of interest.

The first lesson was of the amazing team work needed for the spacecraft to achieve success. "Every individual is responsible for the other," gleaned the Rebbe.

The second point was how every detail counted. In the cockpit alone hitting the wrong switch of which there were almost 400, if you included plungers, ratchets, handle and knobs, could be disastrous.

The third and final point was how the finite man could invent something so much larger than himself: "A small finite man created the giant, almost infinite device."

But more important than making these instruments, said the Rebbe, was realizing that they were not to play-up the person's ego, rather they were made possible so that man could come to admire Hashem's fascinating creations. To their credit, the astronauts did exactly that. "On their way up they quoted verses from Psalms that discuss mesmerizing on the greatness of Hashem as seen through His awesome creations," said the Rebbe.



**PART ONE – INSPIRING AVODAS HA'TEFILLAH**

In the years following the Histalkus of the Rebbe Maharash on 13 Tishrei 5643, the Chassidim paid less attention to the Avodah of Davening. Although the Rebbe Rashab would daven with the Chassidim regularly and Chassidim would invest much effort in reviewing the Rebbe's Maamorim, nevertheless, the Chassidim's Avodah of Davening suffered and was no longer a priority.

Seeking to reinvigorate the Chassidim with the importance of Davening and reestablish it as one of the cornerstones of Avodah, the Rebbe Rashab began a series of sichos about davening and penned the famous "*Kuntres HaTefillah*."

On the night of Simchas Torah 5653, the Rebbe Rashab spoke about the significance of davening and singing niggunim during davening. The Chassidim were inspired and they resolved to improve in their Avodas Hatefillah.

The following morning, the Razoh – the Rebbe Rashab's older brother – approached the Rebbe Rashab and asked why Chassidim had the custom to sing niggunim during davening.

"*Ko'el Me'orer Ha'kavana* – vocalizing (a thought) stimulates concentration," he responded, explaining that singing a niggun aids in the meditation of Chassidus.

"And of course, when a Chossid finally understands the topic he has been working on, he breaks out in a niggun!"

Noticing an immediate improvement in the Chassidim's davening during Shacharis and Mussaf, the Rebbe Rashab delivered more sichos in the afternoon. He thoroughly explained the idea of singing before and during davening, clarifying the various types of Niggunim (Simcha, Merirus etc.), and the particular Avodah for which each type of niggun is suited.

**Keys, Groups and Composers**

After Sukkos, inspired by the passionate words of the Rebbe Rashab, the Hanhala decided to form a *kvutza* of *Menagnim*, consisting of Bochorim with musical skills. The group led a Seder Niggunim every week between Mincha and Kabolos Shabbos and also between Mincha and Maariv at the end of Shabbos<sup>1</sup>. Additionally, they collated and reviewed all the niggunei Chabad and even composed some original niggunim.

This new institution caused a revolution among the Chassidim, they were inspired to devote time and effort on their Avodas Hatefillah, something that made the Rebbe Rashab very happy.

In his Reshimos, the Rebbe quotes from the Friediker Rebbe that, "Until the times of the Rebbe Rashab, Avodas Hatefillah was only common by a select few, but from then on it became usual by all Chassidim – even by the younger Tmimim."

From all his instructions in Davening B'Avodah, the Rebbe Rashab stressed the singing of niggunim. Using a metaphor of a lock and key, he summed up the significance of neginna:

"Every lock has its particular key, and yet, a locksmith has a key which can open all locks – neggina is that sort of key."

(To be continued)

1. For more about seder niggunim in Lubavitch see Derher Issue 17.

Reb Yankel was a true example of what it means to care for another's Yiddishkeit. He would go to extreme measures to help another Yid with a Mitzvah. And when it required a little more than the traditional way of thinking he had his ways as well. For example if he would see a lady returning home from a shopping trip, hands laden with many bags, he would discreetly slip a little note inside that had the address of a Mikva and the Shabbos lighting times with a short explanation on its meaning and importance!

Reb Nissan Neminov once about Reb Yankel's remarkable Koch in Mivtzoyim: "Just as the Chazal say about Avraham that he kept the whole Torah before it was given, so too Reb Yaakov Zorevitcher, carried out Mivtzoyim even before the Rebbe established them!"

Reb Refoel (Folle) Kahn once told over a story about Reb Yankel's unbelievable devotion to Mivtza Tefillin:

"I was once returning home to Moscow from a business trip at five o'clock in the morning. As I left the train station and began walking towards my house I noticed a familiar figure walking nearby, to my amazement I realized that it was Reb Yankel. What is he doing Klanchovsky square? I thought to myself. Klanchovsky square was an area in Moscow that Yidden preferred to avoid, especially at such an early hour unless one had some urgent matters to take care of. I approached Reb Yankel and pestered him to reveal to me the reason for this strange occurrence. At first he adamantly refused to divulge anything, but after my continuous pestering he agreed to tell me.

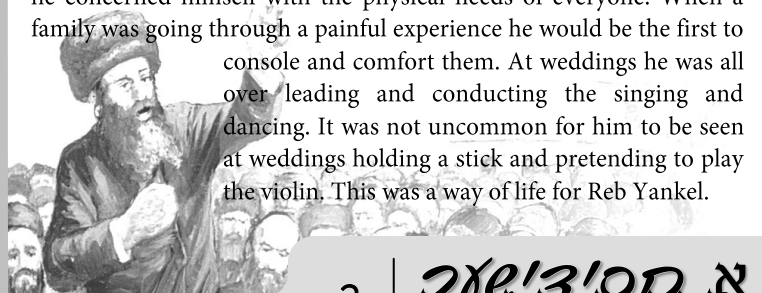
"A few weeks ago", he began, "I was traveling on the tram and next to me sat a young man. I immediately sensed that he was Jewish and began a conversation with him. He told me that he comes from a small town in Russia but he found some factory work in Moscow and now rents a room to live in along with a Russian friend of his.

I wanted to find out how much he knows about Yiddishkeit so I brought up the topic, upon hearing this he let out a deep sigh. He then told me that his parents had been frum, but he gave into the pressures of working on Shabbos, otherwise, he told me, "I would've starved to death!" Sadly, he also told me that because of the early hours the factory demands of him he can't daven Shacharis or even put on Tefillin. After a short pause he sighed and said, "In short while will be my father's Yortzeit. Oh how I wish I can daven with a Minyan and say Kaddish on that day, but I doubt that it is at all possible!"

I asked him if he knows the Hebrew date of the Yortzeit and he immediately told it to me.

"Today", concluded Reb Yankel "is the Yortzeit of that man's father. I am hurrying to his house to give him the opportunity to put on Tefillin and daven today, before he leaves to work."

Not only was he concerned with the spiritual wellbeing of others but he concerned himself with the physical needs of everyone. When a family was going through a painful experience he would be the first to console and comfort them. At weddings he was all over leading and conducting the singing and dancing. It was not uncommon for him to be seen at weddings holding a stick and pretending to play the violin. This was a way of life for Reb Yankel.



# Advice on *Mora Shchoirah*

# Q&A

(*Igros Kodesh Vol. 6 pg. 246*)

Throughout the years, the Rebbe continually stressed the need to serve Hashem happily and unequivocally rooted out the notion of depression, even when it is (seemingly) based on spiritual reasons.

In the Rebbe's *Igros Kodesh*, there is an incredible wealth of insight on this topic, explaining the groundlessness of "Atzvus" and "Mara Shchoirah", as well as advice how to rid oneself of it. Below is just a small selection of these letters.

In response to an individual who complained to the Rebbe that the failure in his own *Matzav HaRuchni* was bringing his depression, the Rebbe responds:

In response to your letter in which you write regarding your mood in general, and in particular in the recent past, where you conclude that it seems to you as if you are currently experiencing a descent in your *Ruchnius*:

Generally speaking, it's important to understand that fantasies as these, especially when they bring about depression, as you state in your letter, come from the *Yetzer Hora*, and as is explained in *Tanya* [chapter 26-27] about depression and how important it is to distance it from oneself.

Particularly [taking into consideration] that Hashem has given you the special privilege and placed you in the light, the light of Mitzvos and Torah ( *גנר מצוה ותורה אור* ) and the essence of Torah – Chassidus, you must certainly feel the greatest of happiness for this good fortune of yours!

Now, the fact that you feel your own deficiencies in various areas, [the way to deal with that is]:

- A) Perhaps this is only a figment of your imagination.
- B) Even if there is truth to base this feeling upon, [you must still not be dejected, for] this can be compared to someone who was not well and was unaware of it, and so he was not careful to avoid things that are harmful to him, and did not do anything to bring about his recovery, because in his mind he was completely healthy. Finally, Hashem brought the issue to his attention, thereby allowing the hope to arise that he will begin to get involved in the proper methods to recover and avoid those things harmful to him.

Obviously, the fact that he now knows of his bad situation will not at all bring about depression, on the contrary, this is his road to recovery!

In your situation, as is the case with most people, you certainly have a mixture of both of the abovementioned options. Meaning, there is a minor basis to your worry about your own deficiency, while at the same time, it is partially exaggerated by your *Yetzer Hora*...

You must serve Hashem joyfully (as it is stated), for then your *Avoda* is done with more enthusiasm and more successfully, and although you are aware of your [low-standing] situation, do not let the lowliness of the *Nefesh HaBahamis* disturb the joy of the *Nefesh Hoelokis*, as explained in *Tanya*...

In a letter to a Chossid who complained that the deteriorating situation of the Jewish community in his area was causing him to become depressed, the Rebbe writes:

...You write that you have become depressed because the level of Jewish life in your city and in the surrounding cities is not good.

Do you think that this is a solution and a means to correct the situation?

You no doubt know that, as the Alter Rebbe writes in *Tanya*, Perek 26, the opposite is true. Sadness weakens a person [and holds him back] in the battle that he must wage with the *yetzer hara* and with the evil in the world. If he sees that the enemy is strengthening itself, Heaven forbid, he should become even more energetic and should seek methods to become victorious.

Remembering Hashem's promises: "I will cause the spirit of impurity to depart from the earth," and "All flesh shall see that the mouth of G-d has spoken," should provide each one of us with the inspiration and strength to carry out the struggle, i.e., his own individual battle on the portion of the front where he is located. No positive activity is ever lost. Even if one cannot see this with his physical eyes, every good thought, word, or deed illuminates the darkness outside and brings the true *Geula* closer...

(*Igros Kodesh Vol. 3 pg. 164*)

We'll conclude with a powerful line from a letter by the Rebbe to a Chossid who had fallen into depression:

"...וואס איז שייך אריינטראכטן זיך אין זיין מעמד ומצב, אויף דרויף זיינען " פאראן זמנים מיוחדים ווען מ'דארף עס טאן, אבער די איבעריקע צייט איז גלייכער טראכטן וועגן רבי'ן, ווי אזוי ער איז תמיד מיט זיינע מקושרים און ווי ער פירט זיי על כל צעד ושעל..."

"(Whatever is necessary to contemplate into your own situation has its own designated times, but as for the rest of the time, it's better to think about the Rebbe, how he is constantly with his *Mikusharim*, and leads them through each and every step...")

(*Igros Kodesh Vol. 3 pg. 419*)



## ללימוד הרמב"ם

מורה נבוכים

ה' גירושין פרק ז	ה' כלים פרק כז-כה, ה' מקוואות פ"א	ג' חשון	ו'
פרק ח	פרק ב-ד	ד' חשון	ש"ק
פרק ט	פרק ה-ז	ה' חשון	א'
פרק י	פרק ח-י	ו' חשון	ב'
פרק י"א	פרק יא ספר נדקין ה' נדקי ממון פ"א-ב	ז' חשון	ג'
פרק י"ב	פרק ג-ה	ח' חשון	ד'
פרק י"ג	פרק ו-ח	ט' חשון	ה'

