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A ה'תשנ"ח CHASSIDISHER DERHER

AV 5775
ISSUE 34 (111)



· IN THE · REBBE'S RESHUS



CAMP GAN YISROEL

A CHASSIDISHER DERHER

ISSUE 34 (111) • AV 5775

בס"ד

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Behind the Picture

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The Living Archive

Editorial

With pleasure we present this Av issue of A Chassidisher Derher Magazine.

This special summer edition, filled with informative content is sure to thrill all of our readers.

At the center stands an extensive overview on the founding of Camp Gan Yisroel, as we prepare to mark 60 years since this momentous project began. Highlighting the Rebbe's involvement in every step of the founding and detailing the Rebbe's visits to camp grounds, we learn of the Rebbe's special affection for the place he set to nurture a new generation of Chassidim. In fact, the Rebbe remarked of the quality of Camp Gan Yisroel as the place where children are "twenty-four hours a day in the Rebbe's *reshus*..." A powerful and timely message.

~
Towards the end of the month, on Chof Av, we mark the *yahrtzeit* of the Rebbe's father, HoRav Levi Yitzchok Schneerson.

The Rebbe's father stood firm as a fierce leader in the face of the tyrant government of his time, eventually paying the ultimate price, leaving this world while in exile, in Kazakhstan.

During those final months of his saintly life, he was in the midst of a handful of Chassidim who had escaped the war and relocated to his region, in Alma-Ata.

Presented in this issue are several most intriguing stories related by those who were present at the time (or their close relatives), casting light on the final moments of the life of HoRav Levi Yitzchok. These precious bits of information further offer a glimpse

into this gigantic personality, if only for a short period of it.

As one of the interviewees recalls:

"It was a time of terrible oppression... This was already three or four years into the war, and people had lost everything, including their most prized possessions...

"Within all of this chaos, a Jew suddenly appears, dressed in a dignified manner, with black rabbinic garb and a hat. All this, in addition to his saintly countenance, caused heads to turn in his direction. We constantly saw how, when walking in the street, non-Jews would remove their hats and bow their heads in deference to HoRav Levi Yitzchak.

"I remember the first time he came to our shul... When the davening was over and HoRav Levi Yitzchak began to speak, we understood that this was something different, something special. We felt that this wasn't just an external dignity, but a truly *pnimiusdiker* nobility and holiness..."

We are duly grateful to JEM's My Encounter team for sharing these precious stories with us for the benefit of our readership. We trust that these will assist us all in internalizing the message of this special day, as taught in the Rebbe's *sichos*.

At this time of year, we conclude with the prayer for the fulfillment of the *possuk*, oft-quoted by the Rebbe: "וצום החמישי... יה' לבית יהודה לששון ולשמחה ולמועדים" "טובים, והאמת והשלום אהבו..."

The Editors

Motzoei Shabbos Kodesh parshas Pinchas, 24 Tammuz, 5775*

*Birthday of HoRav Boruch Shneur, father of HoRav Levi Yitzchok



PHOTO: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 104489

The Neshama Sees

Seeing the Beis Hamikdash

At the farbrengen of Shabbos Parshas Devarim, 5742, the Rebbe quoted the famous vort that the Mikdash is shown to each Yid's neshama, and how this is applicable to every single Yid. It's up to each and every one to actually feel the revelation.

Some argue that although they know that each Yid sees the *Beis Hamikdash* on *Shabbos Chazon*, physically they do not see it.

Those who see the *Mikdash* physically are not the subject of discussion at this farbrengen. It does not need to be explained to them. We are discussing those who do not see the *Mikdash* physically, who argue that although they see it spiritually it does not affect them.

The *passuk* in Daniel states: "I Daniel alone saw the sight, and those who were with me did not see, but a great fear fell upon them." The Gemara asks: being that they did not see, why were they afraid? And the Gemara answers that although they did not see, their *neshama* did.

They were afraid because their own *neshama* had seen, not because Daniel had seen and told them of the sight.

The Ba'al Shem Tov argues a similar point to clarify a difficult passage of Mishna. The Mishna states that each day a *bas kol* emanates from *Chorev* bemoaning the abandonment of Torah. The purpose of a *bas kol* is that its message—which is true regardless if it is known—be heard. So it seems that this *bas kol*, which is not heard, is useless. The Ba'al Shem Tov explains that although it is not heard physically it is heard by the Yid's *neshama*.

The *avodah* of a Yid is to connect to the source of his *neshama*, which sees the *Mikdash*. This affects him physically too. The source of the *neshama* is in the heavens; but reaching it is not as difficult as reaching the heavens itself—"Lo bashamayim hi."

This Shabbos is called *Chazon*, based on the opening passage of its *haftora*

"*Chazon Yeshayahu*" (the name *Yeshayahu* implies *yeshua*—salvation). On this Shabbos each Yid sees the *Mikdash*. This has been printed in *Chassidus*, and as the *Tzemach Tzedek* said, something printed exists forever. On this Shabbos each Yid must try to connect with his *neshama* and to see the *Mikdash*.

It is not enough for the Rebbe to see the *Mikdash*. Since the *Mikdash* is shown to each Yid, he must try to see it himself.

Hashem gives strength for *avodah*—"Hakadosh Baruch Hu ozro." Being that "*tzaddikim domim leboram*," the Rebbe provides strength too. However, the *avodah* itself must be done by each Yid, even if he knows that the Rebbe does this *avodah* in its purest form.

Just as Daniel's companions saw the sight themselves and did not hear about it from Daniel, so too, being that the

Mikdash is shown to each Yid, he must strive to see the *Mikdash* himself.

The same holds true regarding the special *avodah* of these days, increasing in Torah and *tzeddaka*, "ציון במשפט תפדה ושב," בצדקה.

Some argue that it is enough to give *tzeddaka*—as well as the broader definition of *tzeddaka* to include all mitzvos—and to rely on others that learn Torah to instruct on how to do mitzvos.

Every Yid must learn Torah himself. The Alter Rebbe writes in Tanya (Ch. 34): "To learn Torah at set times by day and night for the length of time prescribed for each

person in Hilchos Talmud Torah." The Alter Rebbe also adds: "If one has more time, he should gather strength, etc."

Torah must be studied in its ultimate form—halacha. Halacha is associated with "Tzion shall be redeemed with *mishpat*," as "*mishpat*" refers to halacha. As stated by the Alter Rebbe in this week's Likkutei Torah: "*Mishpat* is halacha. The *targum* of 'kemishpat harishon' is '*kehilchasa kadmayasa*.'"

And every Yid must also learn *Primiyyus Hatorah*.

The Rambam writes (Hilchos Yesodei Hatorah Ch. 2): "What is the path to

love and fear of Hashem? Contemplating Hashem's actions." The meditations prescribed by the Rambam are similar to those of *Chassidus*.

Being that every Yid is obligated to love and fear Hashem, he must learn *Chassidus* and not rely on the Rebbe to learn *Chassidus* and love and fear Hashem.

Avodah should not be performed in a manner of "*Tzaddik be'emunaso yichye*—do not read it *yichye* but *yechaye*." Each Yid must perform the *avodah* himself, actively as well as with *kochos priniyyim*—the *Chabad shebenefesh*. D



PHOTO: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 110554 / 29 ELUL, 5722



כתב יד קודש

POWER OF A FARBRENGEN

In this letter, the Rebbe responds to a Chossid who had written about an acquaintance of his that he was attempting to draw closer to Yiddishkeit. The Rebbe asks that he continue to update the Rebbe on his progress, and then adds in his holy handwriting:

RABBI MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON

Office Address:

Lubavitch, 770 EASTERN PARKWAY
BROOKLYN 13, N. Y.

HYacinth 3-9250

מנחם מענדל שניאורסאהן

ביה, כ"ה אייר תשי"א
ברוקלין.

הרה"ק והרה"ח אי"א נ"י וכו'
סוה"ר

שלום וברכה!

קבלתי הפניג בעד מר בן
ולבשאתי על ציון כ"ק מ"ח אדמו"ר וצוקלה"ה
נכונים וי"ע אזכירו לעורר ר"ר עליו להמציא לו,
ובס"ח יודיע מוסן לוסן מהמבנה סגנו בעבודת ה'
ליסוד התורה וקיום המצות, וחיית מראש.

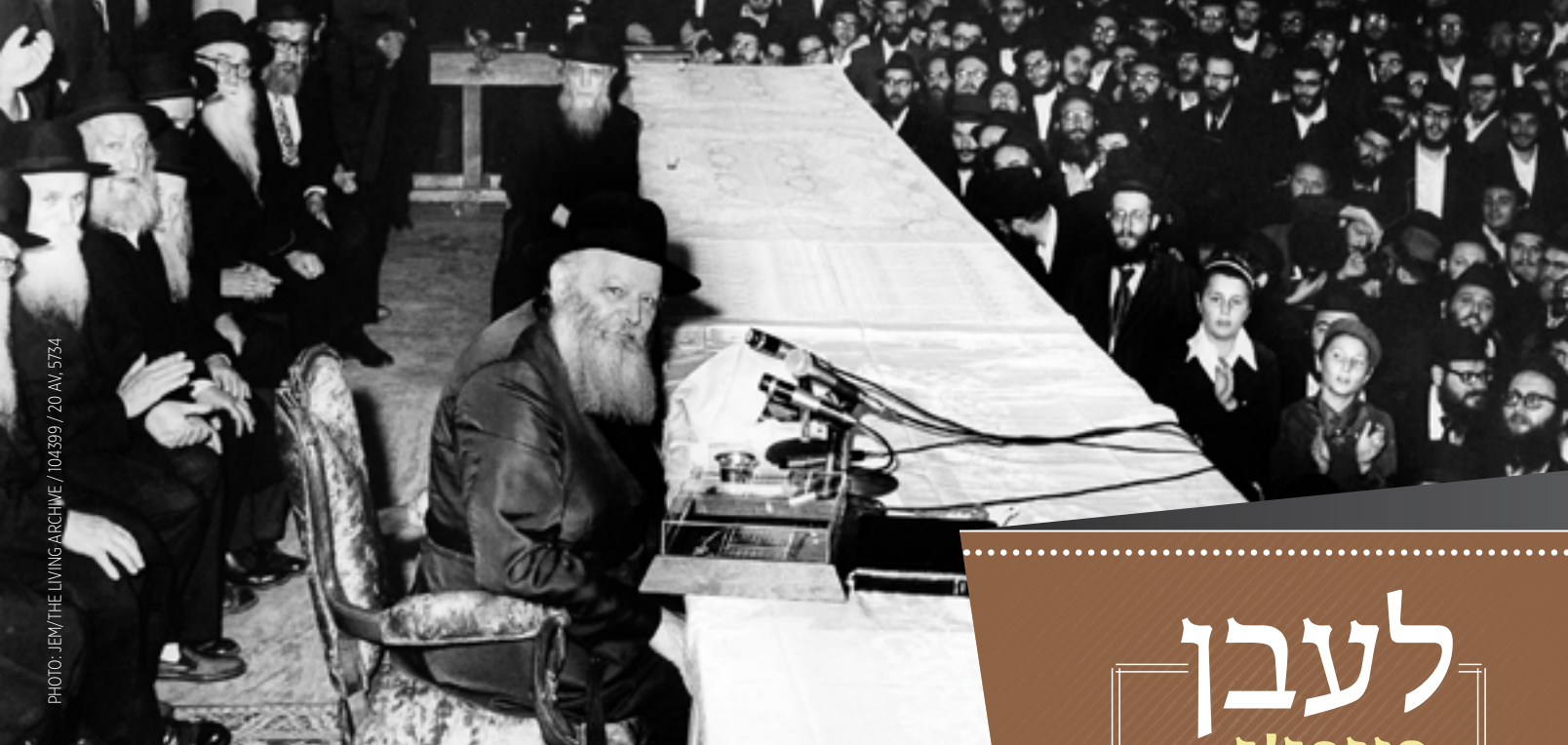
בברכת שלמה דה"ץ וקדושת

כפ"ח ה' (הד"ח)
להתקדש משיח.
וה' ב"ע, ד"ח י"ח
ההכשרה, ד"ח י"ח.

It would be worthwhile to bring him to a chassidishe farbrengen. This would subtly (בדרך מקיף) affect his general [spiritual] development.

כדאי ה' להביאו להתועדות חסידים. וה' פועל, בכלליות ההכשרה, בדרך מקיף.

(Teshura, Menaker - Shapiro 5766)



A SCENE FROM THE FARBRENGEN OF 20 AV, 5734.

לעבן מיט'ן רבי'ן

Menachem-Av
5734

SUMMERTIME with the REBBE

Chassidim who were privileged to be with the Rebbe in Crown Heights during the summer months witnessed many unique giluyim. Whether it was the Rebbe's emphasis on the rebuilding of the Beis Hamikdash during the Three Weeks or the culmination of the Nine Days with Tisha B'av; from Chof Av, the yahrtzeit of the Rebbe's father, to the visit of the campers from Gan Yisroel, summer in the Rebbe's daled-amos was a very exclusive experience. Below are excerpts from the diary of by Reb Yitzchok Meir Sassover, of some of these memorable moments in the year 5734.

Shabbos Rosh Chodesh, Parshas Matos-Massei, 1 Av

Before davening, I headed to the Rebbe's home to accompany him to 770. I waited outside for around twenty minutes until the Rebbe exited the house. While walking down the stairs, as well as during the remainder of the walk, the Rebbe often looked around in different directions. There were a few policemen stationed on Brooklyn Avenue and as the Rebbe passed them, he touched his hat in greeting.

The *kriah* this Shabbos was read using Moshiach's *sefer Torah*, followed by the

haftorah "Shimu," which was read aloud by the Rebbe. At the conclusion of the *haftorah*, the Rebbe read the extra *pesukim* as per the *minhag* in Lubavitch, adding the first and last *pasuk* of the *Erev Rosh Chodesh haftorah* as well (this was discussed at the farbrengen last Thursday night). During *musaf*, the Rebbe energetically encouraged the singing of "Hu Elokeinu."

Immediately following *davening*, before the *gabbai* could announce the times for the upcoming *tefilos*, the Rebbe took his *siddur* [and left the shul]; this signaled that a farbrengen would take place before

mincha. As the Rebbe left, he encouraged the singing of his father's *niggun*.

This time of year it is relatively easy to find a good place at the farbrengen, since many Chassidim have gone to the country for the summer. It affords the rest of us a special opportunity to get closer to the Rebbe.

At the farbrengen the Rebbe explained that the Three Weeks, while appearing to connote negativity, are in reality good, albeit in a hidden way. The Rebbe told us that through serving Hashem with *simcha*, we will hasten the revelation of the true nature of these days—that it is



ON HIS WAY TO THE CAR, THE REBBE OBSERVES THE MIVTZA TANKS OUTSIDE 770.

positive. The Rebbe quoted his father as saying that on the *Shabbosim* of *Bein Hametzarim* it is important to have even more *simcha* than usual, to ensure that no traces of *aveilus* are visible on Shabbos.

In connection to what was spoken about last Thursday, the Rebbe offered additional explanation on the custom of appending extra *pesukim* to the *haftarah*.

Over the course of the farbrengen, the Rebbe spoke very passionately about the controversy surrounding the topic of *Mihu Yehudi*. The Rebbe lamented the fact that people were idle despite there being an opportunity to correct the law.

The Rebbe went on to speak about *bitachon*; how it is important that *Yidden* do not fret over “what will be,” since Hashem is constantly protecting the *Yidden* and *Yiddishkeit* from any harm. The Rebbe cautioned that we emphasize

this not to assuage our own fears, but rather as an effort to establish it as fact. Additionally, when the “seventy wolves” see that the “lone lamb” is not intimidated by them or their tactics, their resolve is weakened.

In general, since last Thursday the Rebbe has displayed much joy, and by extension, this affects us Chassidim. The farbrengen was very joyous and the Rebbe enthusiastically encouraged the singing throughout.

The Rebbe handed some cake to representatives of Tzach, and instructed them to arrange a farbrengen later, on Shabbos afternoon.

In line with the joyous spirit we have all been feeling, the Rebbe further encouraged our singing while he was saying *korbanos* for *mincha*. After *mincha*, the Rebbe once again began the *niggun* of

his father. The singing continued when the Rebbe left 770 and again when he returned from his house. Later on in the day, as per the Rebbe’s instruction, there was a gathering at which Tzach distributed the *mezonos* from the Rebbe’s farbrengen.

Thursday, 6 Av

If *chas veshalom* Moshiach’s arrival is delayed, *Tisha B’Av* will soon be upon us. This morning during *krias haTorah*, one could see the Rebbe looking into *Megillas Eicha* with Rashi. The Rebbe continued this after *kriah* for the remainder of *shacharis* and did not say *Tehillim* (with us).

Friday, 7 Av

Today, during *chazaras hashatz* for *mincha*, the Rebbe was looking into the *maamar* “*Eicha Yashva Vadad*” from 5731.

THE REBBE EXPLAINED THAT THE “THREE WEEKS”, ALTHOUGH THEY APPEAR TO CONNOTE NEGATIVITY, ARE IN THEIR TRUE FORM GOOD

Shabbos Parshas Devarim, Erev Tisha B'av

On Thursday the Rebbe had instructed the *gaboim* to once again *lein* from Moshiach's *Sefer Torah* this Shabbos. Just as last week, the Rebbe again left before the *gabbai* announced a time for *mincha*. As noted, this indicated that there would be an afternoon *farbrengen*.

At this week's *farbrengen* the Rebbe continued to discuss the theme of *bitachon* and then asked us to sing “*Becha Botchu*.” In line with the mood over the

past few weeks, the *farbrengen* was very joyous and *lebedik*.

After Shabbos the Rebbe came into shul for *maariv* already wearing non-leather shoes and sat down on a box. Following *shmona esrei* the Rebbe instructed to remove the *paroches* from the *aron kodesh* (as is customary). The Rebbe—and as a result, all the Chassidim—was very serious throughout the reading of *Eicha*. Tonight the Rebbe walked home instead of going by car (presumably because he did not want to sit on the car seat on Tisha B'av).



Sunday, Tisha b'Av

During *shacharis* this morning, the Rebbe was again seen glancing in the *maamar* “*Eicha Yashva Vadad*” from 5731.

After *shacharis*, the Rebbe asked Rabbi Hodakov for some money to give to *tzedakah* and then reminded a few young boys to give *tzedakah*.

The Rebbe entered for *mincha* already wearing his tefillin. The *kriah* was read from Moshiach's *Sefer Torah* both by *shacharis* and *mincha*.

Wednesday, 12 Av

On Monday after *mincha*, the Rebbe had *bentched* those who were leaving to Eretz Yisroel, and today after *mincha* there were some more people leaving.

Mrs. Pinson (from Tunisia) was standing with her son next to *Gan Eden Hatachton*. The Rebbe wished them a pleasant journey back and asked whether they would be spending any time in Marseille on their return trip. The Rebbe then asked her if she received any *shliach mitzvah gelt* and she answered affirmatively. The Rebbe instructed her to send her son to a yeshiva and then wished them *besuros tovos*.

Thursday, 13 Av

Today, Rabbi Leibel Groner went to ask the Rebbe if there would be a *farbrengen* on Shabbos, since many people would be traveling to the *Yarchei Kallah* in Gan



THE REBBE SITS ON A LOW SEAT DURING THE TEFILLOS OF TISHA B'AV.

THE REBBE SMILED AT THEM AND ALLOWED THE BOY TO KISS HIS HAND. THE BOY THEN RAN TO FETCH A SHOFAR WHICH HE PROCEEDED TO BLOW



THE REBBE DAVENS AT THE AMUD.

Yisroel. The Rebbe told him to announce that there would not be a *farbrengen* this week.

Monday, 17 Av

As the Rebbe was leaving 770 this evening, some of us witnessed a most fascinating scene. Outside, a woman with amputated legs was waiting with her son in order to catch a glimpse of the Rebbe. The Rebbe smiled at them and allowed the boy to kiss his hand. The boy then ran to fetch a *shofar* which he proceeded to blow. In a most touching manner, the Rebbe stood and listened, looked upon the young boy and smiled.

Wednesday Evening, Leil Chof Av

In honor of the *yahrtzeit* of the Rebbe's father, tonight the Rebbe will lead *maariv* at the *amud*. People are already claiming places some time before *maariv* in order

to be close to the Rebbe when he takes the *amud* for *davening*.

Thursday, Chof Av

This morning the Rebbe came into shul at 9:30 a.m. already wrapped in tallis and tefillin and proceeded to daven at the *amud*. As the Rebbe was leaving the shul he noticed a pair of tefillin resting on a *sefer* and promptly removed it. When the Rebbe entered for *maariv*, he passed Rabbi Yolles, who had come from Philadelphia for the *farbrengen*, and smiled upon seeing him.

When the Rebbe arrived to the *farbrengen*, the shul was already packed with people.

In the first *sicha*, the Rebbe dealt with the question of why we celebrate on a *yahrtzeit*, seemingly a sad day. The Rebbe pointed out that although it is a personal commemoration for himself, it is nonetheless of importance to the

Chassidim as well.

While conducting a *siyum* on *mesechte Makos*, the Rebbe explained the significance of this *mesechte*.

Speaking passionately about the *mitzvot*, the Rebbe explained that not only do they prevent negative things, but that they can correct negativity post facto as well. The Rebbe went on to discuss the *mitvza* of *bayis malei sefarim* and how it relates particularly to women, concluding the *sicha* by relating the benefits of the *mitzvot* and their power to mend any undesirable things.

Rabbi Shlomo Cunin presented the Rebbe with a key to Camp Gan Yisroel in Los Angeles and the Rebbe focused a lot of attention on the gift. The Rebbe then requested a bottle of *mashkeh* and poured a *l'chaim* for Rabbi Cunin.

While an appeal was being held during the *farbrengen*, somebody presented the

Rebbe with a *sefer*. When putting the *sefer* and the key into a paper bag, the Rebbe was careful that the key not be placed on top of the *sefer*.

The Rebbe then addressed a topic that he said warranted clarification: Since the launch of *mivtza mezuzah* earlier in the year, people have objected to the need to check mezuzos more often than is brought down in *sifrei halacha*. The Rebbe pointed out various reasons as to why today we should take extra precautions and encouraged further strengthening of this *mivtza*.

Following this, the Rebbe spoke again about *bitachon*—an ongoing theme lately—and of our certainty in Hashem's protection. The Rebbe requested that one of the Russian Jews sing a *niggun*, and then once again began to sing his father's *niggun* and encouraged the singing of the *bochurim* as he left for home.

Shabbos Parshas Eikev, 22 Av

This Shabbos we again had the special *z'chus* of hearing *krias haTorah* from Moshiach's *Sefer Torah*, and then merited a *farbrengen* with the Rebbe.

At this *farbrengen*, among other things, the Rebbe continued on the topics of Mesechte Makos and *mivtza mezuzah*. At one point in the *farbrengen*, the Rebbe distributed *mashke* to share with the Chassidim in various locations around the world. After making a *bracha acharona*, the Rebbe suddenly rose from his seat and began clapping to the *niggunim* being sung.

After *mincha*, the Rebbe once again began singing *Becha Botchu*.

Sunday, 23 Av

Today, the Rebbe held a *yechidus* with a *bochur* who was being drafted into the army. When he entered the Rebbe's room, the *bochur* handed a *tzetel* which only contained his name with a request for a *bracha*. The Rebbe asked if he had given a paper to the *mazkirus* containing his questions. When he replied that he indeed had, the Rebbe said that he

had not received the paper and would therefore listen to his questions orally. The Rebbe told him that he should continue learning in yeshiva until he must leave to the army, and that his schedule of studies should be very rigorous; befitting that of an army. The *bochur* then pointed to a note on the Rebbe's table and said that he thinks that it is his note. The Rebbe replied that it wasn't.

There was also another person at *yechidus* today with whom the Rebbe discussed the security situation in Eretz Yisroel.

AT ONE POINT OF THE
RIDE THE MITZVAH TANKS
GOT SEPARATED FROM
THE REBBE'S CAR. I
HEARD THAT THE REBBE
THEN ASKED RABBI
KRINSKY WHERE THEY
HAD GONE.

Monday, 24 Av

Excitement filled the air today as the children arrived from camp. In order to accommodate the large crowds, *mincha* was held in the shul downstairs. As the children sang *Ashrei* the Rebbe read slowly along with them, though he did not sing. The children continued their singing with *Aleinu* and *Al Tirah*. The Rebbe indicated that the *chazzan* should say *kaddish* before more singing, which he encouraged.

As the Rebbe left the shul he put some *tzedakah* into the big camp *pushkah*.

After *mincha* Rabbi Gershon Mendel Garelik from Italy and Rabbi Nissan Pinson from Tunisia went into *Gan Eden Hatachton*. The Rebbe gave each of them *mashkeh* and dollars to distribute in their respective countries.

When the Rebbe came into shul for *maariv*, Rabbi Shneur Zalman Wilschansky—about to leave on *shlichus*

to Miami—was standing in the entrance. The Rebbe wished him a pleasant journey.

Thursday, 27 Av

Today the Rebbe visited the Ohel. Upon taking his seat in the car, the Rebbe donned his glasses and began reading petitions for *brachos*. On his return from the Ohel the Rebbe noticed the mitzvah tanks returning from the airport. The tanks' loudspeakers rang with joyous music to which the Rebbe showed his approval and encouragement.

At one point during the ride, the tanks got separated from the Rebbe's car. I heard that the Rebbe then asked Rabbi Krinsky where they had gone.

The Rebbe left for home very shortly after *maariv*. As the Rebbe left he peered into the *zal* to see what was happening. The *bochurim*, who weren't anticipating the Rebbe leaving earlier than usual, were sent into a panic.

Shabbos Mevorchim Parshas Re'eh, 29 Av

This Shabbos again, being Shabbos *mevorchim* there was a *farbrengen*. The Rebbe began with discussing the uniqueness of the month of Elul. Following that, the Rebbe expounded on the *siyum* he had made on Chof Av on *mesechte Makos*.

The Rebbe bemoaned the fact that he hadn't been asked about anything he said then, and it seems that nobody is losing any sleep over it.

The Rebbe then spoke again about the *Mihu Yehudi* controversy. The Rebbe decried the arguments being made against the exclusivity of *giyur kahalacha*.

The Rebbe did not really encourage the singing today. After *mincha* however, the Rebbe once again began *Becha Botchu*, thereby further emphasizing the message he has stressed over the past few weeks: that no matter the apparent troubles we may face, when we do our part, Hashem will surely take care of the rest. D

THE PROMISED LAND

*The Rebbe's guidance for those considering
emigrating to Eretz Yisrael*

IS ALIYAH TO ISRAEL GOOD FOR THE JEWS?

5741

Prof. —

Johannesburg, South Africa

Greeting and Blessing:

This is to confirm receipt of your letter, which reached me with some delay. I regret that because of the pressure of duties, this acknowledgment has been unavoidably delayed.

With regard to the subject matter of your letter, namely, a request for clarification of my view on *aliyah*: I had hoped that in view of the fact that *aliyah* is not an academic question, but has been going on for many years, the factual results would speak for themselves, and there would be no need for expressing views and opinions. However, since you are still requesting my response to a letter of over a year ago, I will summarize my views, after some prefatory remarks.

Insofar as Lubavitch is concerned, you surely know that there is a flourishing Chabad village near Lod of immigrants from behind the Iron Curtain, and more recently a second Kfar Chabad has begun to emerge, with projects for additional hundreds of apartments. There is a Chabad settlement in Kiryat Malachi, Nachalat Har Chabad, and a Shikun Chabad in Jerusalem. There is also a rapidly expanding Kiryat Chabad in Safed (Tzfat). This organized Chabad *aliyah* is, of course, in


addition to the old Chabad *yishuvim*, in existence since the time of the founder of the Chabad movement (some 200 years ago). There have also been many individual families, not necessarily Chabad (Lubavitch), who have sought advice and have been encouraged to settle in Eretz Yisrael on their own merits.

Now, with regard to *aliyah* in general—aside from situations where there is a compelling need for emigration, as from Arab lands, the Soviet Union, etc., and excepting special cases such as reunification of families and the like—it is clear that in view of the limited resources available, there must be a set of priorities as to what kind of *aliyah* should be concentrated on. Several basic factors must be taken into account:

1) That the new immigrant arriving in Eretz Yisrael should be able to contribute towards the development and wellbeing of Eretz Yisrael, and certainly not be detrimental to it.

2) The new immigrant should be able to integrate into the economy of the land, and not add to the excessive burden already placed on it.

3) Even where the said conditions (1) and (2) are met, the gain of a new immigrant, or group of immigrants, should be weighed against the loss that their emigration from their present country will cause to the local Jewish community. If the person happens to be a leader in his community, and his departure would seriously affect the wellbeing of the community—spiritually, economically or politically—thereby weakening that community's support for Eretz Yisrael, then the



gain would clearly be more than offset by the loss. We have seen this happen time and again, when the leaders of a community have been persuaded to make *aliyah*, with the inevitable result that the community dwindled rapidly, physically and spiritually. In a small community, the departure of a single influential member, whether a rabbi or layman, can make all the difference.

If there was a time, decades ago, when the above considerations (to which I have consistently called attention) were considered conjectural, the long-term effects of ill-conceived *aliyah* no longer leave room for any doubts as to what kind of *aliyah* is constructive. Far too long have those who are concerned with *aliyah*, with all good intentions, considered only the immediate gain and ignored the loss in the longer run. Others, in their zeal to produce quick “achievements,” have, unwittingly or otherwise, resorted to propaganda methods, etc., which were even more inimical to all concerned—Eretz Yisrael, the Diaspora and the immigrants themselves—and this has contributed in no small measure to the inordinate levels of *yeridah*.

A classic example is the emigration from Morocco. The *aliyah* campaign was concentrated on the group of least resistance—the spiritual leaders—despite my warnings, behind the scenes, of the disastrous consequences of despoiling the local communities of their leadership. The basic argument was that “the leaders must show the way; the flock will follow.” What happened was that the leaders did, by and large, make *aliyah*, but the local communities became largely demoralized. In the end, hundreds of thousands of Moroccan Jews emigrated, not to the Land of Israel, but to France, to be exposed to forces of assimilation they had not met before. This went on despite the fact that Morocco was the most benign of Arab countries (as it still is, which is something of a miracle).

Needless to say, it is not enough to get someone to be an *oleh*; it is necessary to make sure, to the extent that this is possible, that the *oleh* will not, sooner or later, become a *yored*. Surely there is no point—and it is not merely an exercise in futility, but the squandering of limited resources—to persuade someone to make *aliyah* when he is 51% a potential *yored*, not to mention one who is 90% so. Yet it is a matter of record that all too often *aliyah* activists have ignored this basic principle, either through wishful thinking or, more deplorably, through setting up for

themselves “quotas,” to be fulfilled by all means, in order to justify and maintain their positions as successful recruiting agents.

Of course, the inordinate level of *yeridah*, especially in recent years, is not due solely to the lack of proper screening or selectivity, or the exaggerated promises and prospects offered to would-be *olim*. A very substantial number of the *yordim* are in fact native-born, which is a painful subject in itself. Here we are speaking of *olim* who have become *yordim*, or of their children who have grown up there but have also become *yordim*. The disenchantment of some *olim* is not always rooted in economics, though the situation would have been much better if there had been closer coordination between the *aliyah* department and the *klitah* (absorption) agencies. Ultimately, it is not the promise of a nicer apartment, a better job and higher standards of living that will satisfy an *oleh* from the free world, but the fact that Eretz Yisrael is uniquely different for a Jew, its uniqueness deriving from its spiritual quality, and from the fact that it is the Holy Land. If all the accent will be placed on the material aspects of life, with total disregard of the essential point, namely that true and lasting *aliyah* is inseparable from a spiritual *aliyah*, there will inevitably be *yordim* or, at the very least, disgruntled and embittered “foreigners” whose hearts and minds will be elsewhere. Such an *oleh* is not likely to recommend relatives and friends back in his country of origin to follow in his footsteps.

A case in point—which is also one of the basic factors responsible for the so-called *neshirah* (the problem of “dropouts”)—is the policy that has been practiced among those groups of *olim* where family ties and traditions have been very strong in their native countries, of separating the younger generation from their parents. Ostensibly, this was done for the purpose of hastening the process of “integration,” but in fact it has proved disastrous: in terms of juvenile delinquency on the one hand, and in terms of the parents who have been terribly hurt by it on the other.

Now, with regard to the specific question of *aliyah* from the Republic of South Africa. I regret to say that—certainly in retrospect—it has been a disaster both for Eretz Yisrael and for the S.A. Jewish community. Suffice to say that a substantial number of *olim* from S.A. are now in the USA and Canada; worse still, the majority of them comprise the most productive,

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younger element. In other words, not only has the S.A. Jewish community paid a heavy price in terms of its own viability, but Eretz Yisrael has benefited little from this *aliyah* even in the short term, not to mention the long-term loss resulting from a weakened S.A. community.

In this case, too, when the *aliyah* campaign began in S.A., I warned against creating a panic as a means of spurring *aliyah*. Aside from this being contrary to the Torah, especially when not absolutely justified by an imminent threat, it would adversely affect the good relations the S.A. government maintains towards the Jewish community, as well as towards Eretz Yisrael. I further pointed out that the RSA was one of but very few friendly governments that consistently maintained its friendly policy. I believe that to some extent I succeeded in averting a stampede, but I have not succeeded in halting the trend altogether. Certainly in the present world situation, one would have expected it to be self-evident that it is not in the interests of Eretz Yisrael to press for a mass *aliyah* from S.A., considering that the RSA is one of the only two friends Eretz Yisrael has in the whole world, and the one which—relatively speaking—is more consistent and stable than the other, namely the USA. It is something of a miracle that, despite the attempts of certain persons to create a panic among S.A. Jewry, the relationship has not suffered substantially—at a time when other countries around the world have found it expedient to turn their backs on the beleaguered Yishuv and lend their support to its mortal enemies.

In summary, it may be said that the underlying problem of *aliyah* has been the mistaken premise and inclination to “write off” the Diaspora Jews, and to use all possible means to encourage indiscriminate *aliyah*, regardless of the inevitable “fallout.” This has reached a point where even non-Jews are encouraged to settle in Eretz Yisrael (especially where there is a Jewish spouse), without their being required to undergo


geirut (conversion) according to the *halachah*—the only kind of conversion that is valid. Under this ill-conceived policy of “*aliyah* at all costs,” many a healthy and thriving Jewish community in the Diaspora has been seriously weakened, and in some cases destroyed, by being despoiled of its leaders, religious and lay, and men of means and influence, who are not only the mainstay of their communities but pillars of support for Eretz Yisrael, and whose usefulness as such diminished or ceased when their role became that of *olim*. Clearly, a great deal of the effort and resources spent on futile, or even harmful, *aliyah* would have been better spent on strengthening communities in the Diaspora, through Torah education, fighting assimilation, and so on. A healthy Jewish community in the Diaspora—Jewish not just in name—is the best asset for Eretz Yisrael, as well as a source of truly good and permanent *olim*.

I trust you will accept the above remarks in the spirit they have been made—namely not, Gd forbid, as rebuke or criticism for its own sake, nor as preachment, but in the sincere hope that this exchange of correspondence will induce some deep reflection and rethinking and, more importantly, will stimulate concrete action for the benefit of Jews, both in Eretz Yisrael and in the Diaspora.

In conclusion, I would like to reciprocate with a request of my own: not for a clarification of your position on *aliyah* in general, and on any of the points raised in this letter in particular; but—since “action is the essential thing”—a request for news as to what action you have taken, or plan to take, in connection with this matter, and with what results.

With blessing,

P.S. Inasmuch as certain sections of this letter ought to be treated with confidence, I trust you will use your discretion in sharing them only with appropriate persons for whom such material will serve a useful purpose.



“A JEW CONSIDERING EMIGRATION FROM ANY PART
OF THE WORLD TO ANY OTHER, MUST NOT TAKE
A NARROW VIEW, BUT SHOULD CONSIDER IT IN
BROADER TERMS.”

ON LEADERS ABANDONING THEIR HOMETOWNS

By the Grace of Gd
16th of Cheshvan, 5734
[November 11, 1973]
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Mrs. —
Johannesburg, So. Africa

Blessing and Greeting:

This is to confirm receipt of your correspondence. In the meantime, you no doubt received my previous letter.

With reference to your writing about the idea of settling in Eretz Yisroel [the Land of Israel] in the near future, about which you ask my opinion—

I have often emphasized, as you may be aware, that a Jew considering emigration from any part of the world to any other, must not take a narrow view, but should consider it in broader terms. What I mean is that Jews are, of course, a minority among the nations of the world, and must therefore always think in terms of self-preservation. Wherever Jews are, they must consider themselves in a state of perpetual mobilization to protect their independence, not only insofar as they themselves are concerned, but also insofar as the Jewish people as a whole is concerned. This applies to all places, but the situation varies, for there are some places where the percentage of Jews is relatively smaller, and hence more vulnerable. And among the Jews themselves there are places where those who are active in the strengthening of Torah and Mitzvot, the very foundation of Jewish existence, are very few, which increases their responsibility all the more, especially those who have been active and successful, whose departure would leave an irreparable void.


And as already mentioned, this is a question of survival not only for local communities, but for the Jewish people in general. Clearly, one's first responsibility is towards the community where one has been brought up, and to which one can contribute effectively.

Now, let us consider South Africa, where Jews originally came mostly from Lithuania and similar places, where Jewish life was flourishing. I do not have to tell you what the situation is in the R.S.A. in terms of true Yiddishkeit [Judaism], even in JHB [Johannesburg], which has the largest Jewish community in South Africa. Consequently, you and your husband occupy a very special place in the community, and must consider yourselves in the forefront of a far-reaching endeavor to strengthen the true religious foundations of Jewish life in your community and in the country at large.

One can well understand the motivation and desire to help Eretz Yisroel. But it is sometimes overlooked that such help can often be even more effective when those who are responsible for their posts on the local front remain at their posts. If in the past this point might have been debatable, recent events have clearly shown how important has been the help of Jews in the Diaspora, through their contacts in the world's capitals, and otherwise, although it is premature to reveal the full extent of such help. Obviously it is such Jews who are deeply concerned for the survival of the Jewish people that have provided this vital help.

I am sure there is no need to elaborate to you further on the above.

With blessing,
M. Schneerson



When Lubavitch moved to America in the early 5700s, they were faced with a novel crisis. Unlike in Russia, where they were fighting government persecution and rabid antisemitism, here they were facing something much less ugly, yet in some ways harder to counter—the pull of American culture and the draw of assimilation.

As soon as they landed on American shores, the Frierdiker Rebbe and the Rebbe immediately began opening institutions and developing new approaches to grapple with this growing issue. One of these very early institutions was Camp Gan Yisroel. This year marks the 60th year since the founding of Camp Gan Yisroel. And this is its story.

In the preparation of this article we were greatly assisted by: **B'nois Deshe**, an album of the Rebbe's visits to Camp Gan Yisroel published by **Kehot Publication Society**; and an article by **Avrohom Browd** on Camp Gan Yisroel.

CAMPERS AND STAFF AT A RALLY IN 770 FOLLOWING CAMP.
PHOTO: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 129071 / 21 ELUL, 5743



· IN THE ·
REBBE'S
RESHUS

CAMP GAN YISROEL

Dedicated by
The Shul of Bal Harbour Community
To achieve a "Chassidisher Derher" this year.

PART 1: THE IDEA

THE PROBLEM

Rabbi Moshe Lazar relates:

“In the beginning of 5716 my friend, Reb Yosef Weinbaum, and I decided that we wanted to establish a Jewish summer camp. The reason for this was there were many public school children who were attending various Jewish camps during the summer and nobody was making sure that they continued their Jewish education in a yeshiva environment.

“I wrote in to the Rebbe about our idea and the Rebbe answered that until Pesach I shouldn’t give it any thought and instead immerse myself in learning. After Pesach I again wrote in to the Rebbe, who answered that we should arrange for someone older to assume the main responsibilities. We recruited Reb Kehos Weiss and after informing the Rebbe, we were called into yechidus.

The Rebbe turned to me with a very serious look and asked me, ‘Why do we need the camp?’

“I turned pale, and everything around me started spinning. I felt like I was going to faint right there in the Rebbe’s room. Here I had spent so many months working on this project, and the Rebbe might not even agree...

“The Rebbe quickly noticed my pale face and told Rabbi Weiss to take me out of the room and calm me down. I slumped into a chair in *gan eden hatachton*, and Rabbi Weiss, who was a very intelligent person, explained to me that there was no reason to get scared. ‘Moshe,’ he told me, ‘the Rebbe wants to hear from you why you think it’s important to make a camp!’

“This was a subject I had been thinking about the past few months, so I thought it

over and we re-entered the Rebbe’s room. With a heartwarming smile, the Rebbe asked, ‘Are you feeling better now?’ This gave me the courage to open my mouth.

“I said that the objective was to educate Jewish children in an atmosphere that was twenty four hours Yiddishkeit and that the ultimate goal was to convince them to attend a yeshiva after the summer.

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“The Rebbe listened intently and then gave his approval, saying that we should go ahead with the project and that it should be with *hatzlacha*.”

GETTING IT GOING

Once the project was officially underway, the Rebbe said that a *vaad* should be established. The members of the *vaad* were: Rabbi Hodakov; Rabbi Shlomo Aharon

IN 5716, PRIOR TO CAMP’S INAUGURAL SUMMER, CAMP GAN YISROEL RAN A YIDDISH ADVERTISEMENT IN DER TOG MORGEN JOURNAL. ITS TITLE READS, “JEWISH PARENTS! REGISTER YOUR BOY IN CAMP GAN YISROEL.”

Kazarnovsky, who was very involved in fundraising; Rabbi Yaakov Yehuda Hecht, who had experience with Camp Emunah; and a lawyer named Mr. Aizik Shtrual, who would ensure that everything was up to legal standards.

After the *vaad* was set up, the Rebbe asked that they all come in for a *yechidus* together. There they received many specific *hora’as* about all types of issues related to setting up the camp. (One interesting *hora’ah* was not to purchase land the first year, but to focus instead on finding an area to rent.) The Rebbe gave them a *bracha* for *hatzlacha rabba*, and a *yasher koach* for their involvement in the project.

During that period, the people arranging camp merited to go into *yechidus* several times, and they received detailed guidance and many *brachos* every step of the way—both directly from the Rebbe, and in writing on their questions and *tzetzlach*.

“GAN YISROEL”

As soon as they received the Rebbe’s approval, the staff immediately set off to the Catskills in upstate New York to find a place for the camp. But after much

PHOTO: KEHOT PUBLICATION SOCIETY



RABBI KEHOS WEISS SHOWS THE REBBE AROUND THE CAMP GROUNDS IN SWAN LAKE DURING THE VISIT OF 5717.

PHOTO: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 102726 / 15 TAMMUZ, 5717

searching, they could not find anything.

At the last minute, only a few short weeks before camp, they managed to find grounds to rent in Ellenville, New York. (These grounds were used the previous year by a camp named “Israel.”) After receiving a report on the new grounds, the Rebbe gave his *haskama*, telling them to begin working immediately so that it would be ready in time.

Once the location was in order, they turned to the Rebbe with the request that he should give the camp a name. The Rebbe answered that they should come up with a few options from which to choose. They came up with several ideas—*Machane Nofesh* was one of them—but the Rebbe turned them all down. Instead he gave the name “Machne Gan Yisroel.”

PART 2: THE REBBE'S VISION

On the second day of Shavuot 5716,¹ the Rebbe announced this new institution, laying out the problems it was addressing and the solutions it offered.

CONSTANT VACATION

First the Rebbe spoke about a major problem plaguing the education system: the outrageous amount of vacation time. In the past, children spent most of the day in *cheder* throughout the whole year, getting vacation only twice: before *pesach*, and before Rosh Hashanah.

[Even this little vacation wasn't at the behest of the teachers of the *cheder*, rather, it was because of their wives.

Since these were the two times a year when they would do a house-cleaning, and being that the *cheder* was located in the house of the *melamed*, there simply wasn't room for them to learn.]

When the children stayed in yeshiva



A GROUP OF TALMIDIM FROM YESHIVAS TOMCHEI T'MIMIM LUBAVITCH POSING IN THE UPSTAIRS ZAL OF 770 IN 5702.

throughout the year, they grew up in a healthy manner, both physically and spiritually.

However, things have changed these days, especially in America; there is a newfound need for vacation:

Since the children are “worn out” from the few hours they learn every day, they have this idea of “the weekend,” they travel out of the city on Friday, returning only on Sunday. [Some people are *mehader* to leave even earlier, on Thursday... There is a limit to how much you can add to Shabbos, but when it comes to the weekend there is no limit at all!]

This is what happens throughout the year. As if that isn't enough, when the winter comes, with Chanukah and *lehavdil* the *goyishe* holidays, there is even more vacation! Since the children work “extremely hard” throughout the year, they are “forced” to relax for a few weeks...

The same applies to the summer, and then it is much worse. During the summer, vacation has no limitations! Not days or weeks of vacation, but *months* of vacation: from the Fourth of July until Labor Day!

Even once the child gets back from vacation, he still can't get back into learning right away, because now he is worn out from the vacation!

This is how people think they will raise a דור ישרים יבורך [an upright, blessed



IN 5733, FOLLOWING THE REBBE'S RENEWED CALLS TO ENROLL CHILDREN IN CAMP, AN INTENSIVE CAMPAIGN WAS LAUNCHED TO PLACE JEWISH CHILDREN IN CAMPS AND SUMMER PROGRAMS. THIS IS AN ADVERTISEMENT PUBLISHED IN THE JEWISH PRESS.

generation]!

The education system is deluged with too much vacation. How can it be fixed?

There are several ways to deal with this issue:

One way is to nullify vacation completely, and have the children learn the entire year in *cheder*. The problem with this idea is that when it was tried, the *roshei yeshivos* themselves opposed it, saying that they, too, wish to rest. They also said that since they wouldn't be getting paid for their summer teaching, they will not be able to focus on preparing a *shiur* because they will have too much *pizur hanefesh*.

Not only are the *talmidim* opposed to abolishing vacation, the *melamdin* are as well! Therefore, another solution was found:

To establish a camp; one that would look like a camp on the outside, but it would be a yeshiva on the inside. In other words, this camp should have all the good *gashmiyus* that other camps have: *cholov Yisroel*, but fatty milk; kosher meat, but fresh meat. And at the same time, they should learn like in yeshiva. They will utilize all the good *b'gashmiyus* for holiness.

The Rebbe added that camp is not only a *substitute* for yeshiva, rather, it also has certain advantages over yeshiva.

Firstly, when the children are in camp, they are relieved from learning *limudei chol*. Second, they are free from the influence of “ידי נשים רחמניות”—their doting mothers who spoil them at every opportunity, which is unhealthy for them both physically and spiritually.

For this reason, when the children are in camp, away from their homes and their mothers, and free of *limudei chol*, one can affect the children even more than in yeshiva. What takes months to accomplish in yeshiva can be accomplished in camp within weeks.

It must be ensured, however, that the *melamdin* aren't pulled after *talmidim*. As the Russian saying goes, “Stari kak mali” [the elder is like the youngster]. Otherwise, not only will they not be able to influence the *talmidim*, to the contrary, they themselves will become like the *talmidim*—going around dressed like kohanim, with pants that only reach their thighs, and playing ball! It must be ensured that this camp will truly be a yeshiva on the inside.

The Rebbe went on to announce the name of the camp, quoting the Zohar which says that there are 53 - ג'ן *parshiyos* in the Torah (although there are actually 54), and since every Jew has a letter in the Torah, the camp was named Gan Yisroel. Then the Rebbe blessed the camp with

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THE REBBE WALKS AROUND THE LAKE AS HE TOURS THE CAMP GROUNDS IN 5716.

success both *b'gashmiyus* and *b'ruchniyus*. When the children return home, the directors will be able to say ראו גידולים שגידלתי, and the parents will want their children to go to camp next year. Everyone who is able to help will surely assist in this endeavor. It isn't *bittul Torah* to be involved in this, rather camp will strengthen Torah, לאפשא לה.

Since this is the first year, the camp needs increased blessings. Hashem should grant the camp with success beyond nature, and it should be more and more successful from year to year until Moshiach comes. Then the entire camp—the field, shul, and *lehavdil* the farm and the lake—will go to Eretz Yisroel together with Moshiach Tzidkeinu.



AN ARTICLE IN DER TOG MORGEN JOURNAL REPORTING ON THE FIRST YEAR OF CAMP GAN YISROEL.

PARENTS-LESS

In several farbrengens years later, the Rebbe expounded upon the advantage of camp over a traditional yeshiva. In a *sicha* on Yud-Gimmel Tammuz 5735, the Rebbe spoke at length about the fact that the children are away from their over-spoiling parents.

The Rebbe began with the Mishna that says הוי גולה למקום תורה, one should exile

himself to a place of Torah. How does a person achieve success in *limud haTorah*? Certainly not by bringing the teacher to the house, where one sleeps properly, has plenty of food, all of his clothing, his mother doting on him and his father buying him clothing and presents. Rather, success in Torah is achieved by being exiled to a place of Torah.

Throughout the year, children live at home, going to *cheder* or yeshiva only during the day, and this creates problems for their education. As soon as his teacher berates him—for whatever reason—the child runs home to his parents complaining that his teacher is bothering him. The mother, in turn, immediately comes running to the school protesting this ‘outrageous’ behavior. “How can this happen!? My husband gives such-and-such amount of money to the school! How can my son (or daughter) not get the highest grades?!

And if the *melamed* won’t give in, I will destroy the entire *mosad*!

Now, it is true that according to Torah a child must be very dear to his parents, but this should never bring to ‘sparing the rod,’ which is contrary to the true benefit of the child.

When a child knows that as soon as he gets home he is a *meyuchas*, the *melamed*’s influence on him becomes limited. Therefore, it is important for the child to go away from home, to a place where he knows he can’t run to his parents about every little thing.

These days it is less common for children to go away to study. Therefore, there is another, easier way to be ‘exiled’ to a place of Torah, and the *yetzer hara* also agrees with this: camp. The mother thinks the idea is to send for relaxation, but on a deeper level, the child is being ‘exiled to a place of Torah.’ At least for these two months—or even six or seven weeks—the child is constantly in the care of their teachers.

That’s why it is a *tikkun gadol* that children can only meet their relatives once a week or once in two weeks. When a mother/father/aunt are able to visit often, they sometimes start ‘pitying’ the child. He can’t run around wild without knowing what to do with himself, and instead he is taught *Toras Hashem* and shown how to keep *mitzvos Hashem*. They might ruin the *chinuch* that camp is providing. When his or her relatives cannot visit often, the child is truly under the influence of camp.

If the staff of camp truly utilizes their time with the children, they can accomplish *gedolos veniflaos*. They have

the ability to illuminate the path of the child not only for the duration of camp, and not only for the year until next summer, but for his entire life.

One might ask, if they teach him so much this year, what will they teach him next year? The answer is, “Longer than the earth is [Torah’s] measure, and wider than the sea.” There will always be enough to teach the children next year and the year after, until the coming of Moshiach.

TWENTY FOUR HOURS

On another occasion², the Rebbe explained an additional reason why camp’s *chinuch* is in some aspects more successful than that of a yeshiva. When they are in yeshiva, the children go home at the end of the day. But when they are in camp they aren’t in the *reshus* of their parents, they are in the *reshus* of the Rebbe twenty four hours a day. They spend weeks at a time completely in the Rebbe’s care.

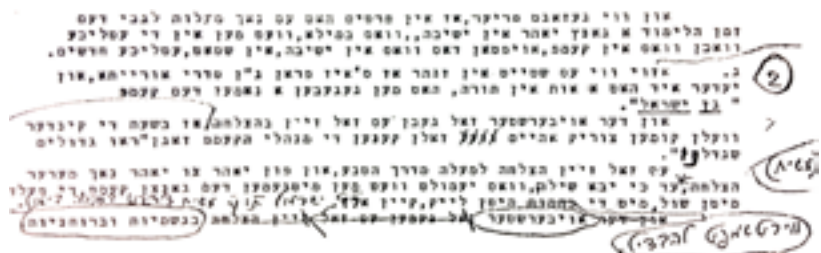
ENJOYING CAMP

In the above farbrengens, the Rebbe highlighted that camp’s advantage over school lies in the fact that the children don’t go home, which means that, a) their *chinuch* is free from their parents’ meddling, and b) they are in the Rebbe’s *reshus* throughout the entire summer. However, this applies only to overnight camps, where the children are away from home, but not necessarily to day camps, where the children go home every night.

In a farbrengen on Shabbos Parshas Shemini 5745, the Rebbe said that camps



AS PART OF THE 5733 CAMPAIGN TO ENROLL CHILDREN IN JEWISH CAMPS, A BROCHURE WAS PRINTED URGING CHILDREN TO PHONE THE SUMMER TORAH EDUCATION PROGRAM (S-T-E-P), UNDER THE AUSPICES OF MERKOS.



THE REBBE’S HANDWRITTEN HAGAHOS ON THE SICHA OF SHAVUOS 5716, REGARDING THE FOUNDING OF CAMP GAN YISROEL.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

In a farbrengen in the summer of 5747³, the Rebbe said:

It is the obligation of *every single man and woman* to do everything in their ability to influence the children around them to go to a camp of *chinuch hakasher*, and even a *chinuch al taharas hakodesh*. This must be done with כפליים לתושי, double strength. As the Gemara says, “If he is accustomed to learning one page, he should learn two pages, and if he was accustomed to learning two, he should learn four.” If you influenced ten children to go to camp last year, then this year you must influence—at the very least—twenty children!

This applies even more so when you see so many Jewish children walking around lacking any sort of guidance, and certainly not proper guidance. Some behave in ways not befitting a Jewish child at all. The fact that you see this child isn’t because your eyes ‘happened’ to be open and you ‘happened’ to see him—such an idea doesn’t even begin to work. Rather, the fact that you see this child is *behashgacha pratis*, (as the Baal Shem Tov says: every single thing that a person sees or hears is a lesson in *avodas Hashem*). It shows that you have the responsibility to try and help him.

If this *avoda* is a new *avoda* for you, one which you are unaccustomed to, you must still do it. For in order to bring the *geula chadasha*, the new redemption—וְנוֹדֵל לָךְ שִׁיר חָדָשׁ—and the *Torah chadasha*, we have to perform an *avoda chadasha*!

Surely you have the sufficient *kochos* to fulfill this *avoda*, for Hashem doesn’t ask of a person more than he can achieve. This includes the *kochos* to change his usual behavior and in one moment to start working for the *chinuch* of Jewish children...

... I am not stating theoretical ideas, rather this should happen in actuality—forget all the meetings and committees etc.—every man and woman should start working on this. You should be able to point with your finger and say:

These are the children who have been brought to *chinuch hakasher* through my work in 5747!

have another advantage over school, an advantage that applies to day camps as well.

To a certain extent, when a child goes to school he feels like he’s being forced. If it were up to him, he would be playing games the whole day; only because of his parents does he go to school and learn. Whenever he’s in school, he waits impatiently to get back to his games, either during recess or when he gets home.

But camp is different. No one has to force a child to go to camp. On the contrary, he loves going.

Therein lies the advantage of camp over school. The child *wants* to be in camp,

and therefore his mindset is more open and free. Therefore the learning and *chinuch* has a much deeper impact on him, more than the *chinuch* he receives in school.

PART 3: THE VISIT

The Rebbe displayed a special fondness for camp, showing much personal interest in all areas relating its operation.

This fondness was displayed in full glory when the Rebbe did something completely out of habit, something that seldom ever happened: the Rebbe left

New York City to pay camp a visit. The Rebbe visited camp several times, and these were the sole times the Rebbe left New York since beginning the *nesius*.

A SHOCK

It was early in the morning of Monday, 16 Tammuz, 5716. As usual, the people involved in camp were working in their office in 770, busily preparing for the grand opening of camp in only a few days.

Suddenly, Rabbi Leibel Groner entered their office, turned to Rabbi Lazar, and asked him how long it takes to travel to camp. He answered that it takes two to three hours, and Rabbi Groner left the office.



SUDDENLY, RABBI LEIBEL GRONER ENTERED THEIR OFFICE, TURNED TO RABBI LAZAR, AND ASKED HIM HOW LONG IT TAKES TO TRAVEL TO CAMP.

PHOTO: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 103583 / 15 TAMMUZ 5717

STANDING UP ON THE FLOOR OF THE CAR, THE REBBE ENCOURAGES THE CAMPERS' SINGING AS HE CONCLUDES HIS 5717 VISIT.

A few minutes later, he arrived back in the office with a surprise: in a few hours, the Rebbe would be visiting the camp grounds!

The shocking news spread like wildfire throughout 770, and everyone immediately tried finding themselves a spot in a car to join the trip.

THE TRIP

After *shacharis*, the Rebbe left 770 and went into his car. The Rebbe sat in the front; in the driver's seat was Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky; in the back were Rabbi Hodakov, Rabbi Moshe Leib Rodstein, Rabbi Shlomo Aharon Kazarnovsky, and Rabbi Groner. The historic trip had begun.

The first car of the caravan, in front of the Rebbe's car, was the car carrying the directors of camp—Rabbi Kehos Weiss, Rabbi Moshe Lazar, and Rabbi Avraham Shemtov—and they led the way. They had several children in their car as well. Behind the Rebbe was a long caravan of cars with dozens of *anash* and *bochurim*.

[When they arrived at a toll, Rabbi Weiss paid for the Rebbe's car as well. Seeing

“BASIC
LOGIC
SAYS
THAT IF
EVERYONE
WOULD
SIT
DOWN, IT
WOULDN'T
BE SO
HOT...”

the Rebbe's Cadillac, the person manning the toll-booth asked, “Doesn't the person behind you have money to pay for himself?”]

On the way to Ellenville, a policeman stopped Rabbi Weiss's car, and quickly noticed that there were several kids crammed into the car—over the legal limit. As the policeman was getting ready to write the ticket, the Rebbe opened his window and said that some of the kids could switch to his car. In the end, only one of the kids merited to join the Rebbe's car, since after a back-and-forth with the policeman, he gave in and let them go.

As halacha mandates, the Rebbe did not say *tefilas haderech* while the car was driving; the car was stopped, and the Rebbe got out to say *tefilas haderech*.

After three hours of driving, they arrived at the grounds of camp in the Catskill Mountains.

THE TOUR

As soon as they arrived, the Rebbe swiftly got out of the car and began touring the area, taking interest in every detail and giving *hora'as* on making it nicer. First the Rebbe entered the main hall which

PHOTO: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 102449 / 15 TAMMUZ, 5717



FOLLOWING HIS VISIT TO CAMP GAN YISROEL, THE REBBE VISITS CAMP EMUNAH FOR GIRLS.

was to be the shul, and then he went to check the bunks. Hanging in one of the bunks was a drawing of a house and a child. The Rebbe stopped next to it and said to add a *yarmulke* on the boy's head, and a *mezuzah* on the door.

After examining the bunks, the Rebbe went to see the lake, which was to be used as a swimming pool. Walking around the lake, the Rebbe pointed to the fence, which only surrounded some of it, and instructed them to fence around the entire lake for the safety of the children.

As the Rebbe was walking by the lake, he spoke with the directors about the importance of emphasizing the children's safety. The Rebbe wanted to know which side of the lake is better for the younger children and which for the older children, adding that they should put a marker between the shallow and deep ends. The Rebbe also asked if they would be able to use it as a mikvah.

From there the Rebbe went to see the infirmary, and upon arrival he remarked, “This is a good thing, and it is a necessity, but it shouldn't have to come to use.”

FARBRENGEN

Upon completion of the tour, the Rebbe went into the dining hall for a *farbrengen*, and the entire crowd packed into the room around the tables. The Rebbe wanted to wash in honor of the *chanukas habayis*; someone pointed out the washing station (in a side room next to the kitchen). The Rebbe entered the room, changing his *sirtuk* to a silk one, and washed his hands for bread. After

PHOTO: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 102690 / 15 TAMMUZ, 5717



CAMPERS SING AS THE REBBE CONCLUDES HIS VISIT OF 5717.

returning to his place in the dining room, the Rebbe took out a piece of matzah from the pocket of his *sirtuk* and recited *Hamotzi*.

The Rebbe turned to the crowd and said that everyone should wash for bread. Once everyone returned the Rebbe said they should all be seated. The Rebbe turned to someone and asked, “Have you washed?” When someone said that he's busy, the Rebbe answered, “He, too, must go out to wash.”

Next to the head table there were two long tables, and about fifty people stood and sat around them. Some were people working on getting the camp ready, and the rest were the *eltare* Chassidim, *anash*, and *bochurim* who had managed to get a ride from 770.

CHALUKAS MATZAH

After the Rebbe ate a piece of matzah he gave the rest he had brought with him to be distributed among the crowd. The Rebbe requested that each person take only one piece so that everyone would get, saying that, “There's no reason to grab, there is enough for everyone.”

The Rebbe also ensured that the second table receives matzah, saying, “The main thing is that every person should get a piece. The quantity doesn't matter, and if someone grabs a larger piece, it also makes no difference.”

Suddenly, the Rebbe stopped the *chaluka* for a moment, took several pieces of matzah and covered them with a napkin, and put them back in the pocket of his *sirtuk*, resuming the distribution

PHOTO: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 102727 / 15 TAMMUZ, 5720



THE REBBE LEAVES ONE OF THE BUNKHOUSES.

immediately thereafter.

A STORY

At the end of the *chaluka*, the Rebbe asked everyone to be seated for the farbrengen. It was a hot summer day without air conditioning, and people were soaked with sweat from all the pushing and shoving to get closer to the Rebbe. Thus, the Rebbe requested that everyone be seated, and then he related a fascinating story:

“My father-in-law once related, that the *misnagdim*—who were always looking to ask questions—asked the Alter Rebbe three questions: 1) Why does he travel in a wagon which is harnessed with several horses? 2) Why does he wear a modern, fur coat (made with special fur)? 3) Why does he eat chicken?”

The Rebbe smiled, and continued, “The Alter Rebbe answered that he travels with several horses because it goes faster; he wears a modern coat because it’s warmer and softer; and he eats chicken because it’s softer than cow meat.”

The Rebbe finished off, “Basic logic says that if everyone would sit down, it wouldn’t be so hot...”

The crowd began settling down, and the Rebbe asked the directors of camp, the ‘*baalei-batim*,’ whether there were enough seats for everyone to sit. The Rebbe called Rabbi Lazar by his name, and asked, “Is there enough room for everyone?” He hastened to answer that there were, and the Rebbe responded with a smile, “There won’t be a *kepaida* on you [even if there wasn’t enough seating space].”

PHOTO: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 102727 / 15 TAMMUZ, 5717



DURING HIS 5717 VISIT, THE REBBE RECITED TWO SICHOS AND A MAAMAR.

SICHOS AND MAAMAR

The Rebbe began this special farbrengen discussing the importance of the body’s health, and went on to explain the *chiddush* in this area in the generations since the Baal Shem Tov.

One of the themes the Rebbe covered in the *sichos* was that, on a simple level, camp is made to strengthen the physical body. However, when the time in camp is utilized for spiritual health—through adding in Torah and *tefilla*—then the body’s physical health becomes part of *avodas Hashem* as well.

After the *sichos*, the crowd sang a *niggun hisvaadus*. Then the Rebbe said to sing *Avinu Malkeinu*, *Ani Maamin*, and, *Tzama Lecha Nafshi*, directing them to sing *Tzama Lecha Nafshi* several times.

Next, the Rebbe said to sing a *niggun* without words, and then the *niggun hachana* for a *maamar*. Then the Rebbe delivered a *maamor* on the *possuk*, “מזמור לדוד ג' בנאות דשא וג'.”

After the *maamar* they sang *Niye Zuritche Chloptze*. The Rebbe encouraged the singing with great joy, turning to the directors of camp the Rebbe directed them to dance.

The Rebbe asked, “Are there any children present who will be in camp? They should dance, at least dance with the *niggun*, *Al Hasela*.”

PHOTO: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 102699 / 16 TAMMUZ, 5716



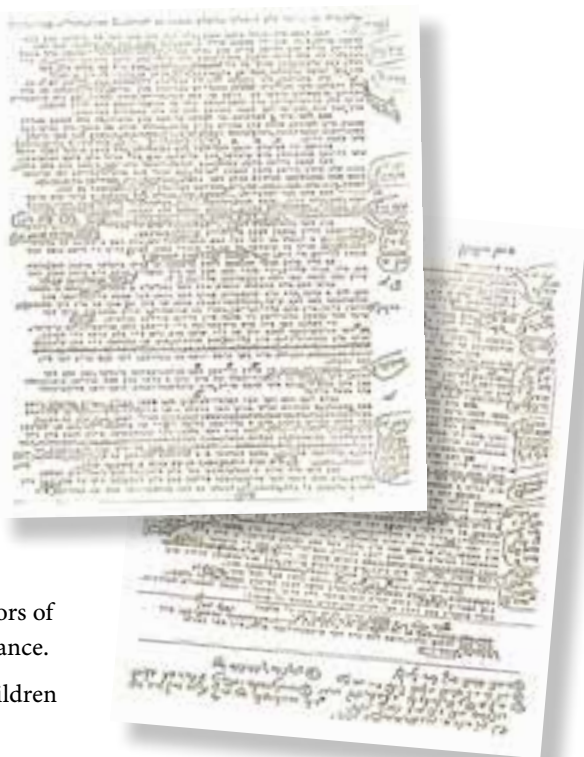
A SCENE FROM BEFORE THE FARBRENGEN WHILE VISITING CAMP IN 5716.

At that point, Rabbi Weiss went over to the Rebbe, and told the Rebbe about a terrible car accident that had occurred. A vehicle that Merkos had rented to drive to camp was full of people on the way from 770 to Ellenville and had flipped over three times!

The Rebbe asked who had been in the car, and Rabbi Weiss began listing their names, a total of 13 people, but after he said just a single name, the Rebbe interrupted him and said, “Nu, everything will be okay.”

The Rebbe put his hand in his pocket, took out the pieces of matzah that he

PHOTO: KEHOT PUBLICATION SOCIETY



THE REBBE’S HANDWRITTEN HAGAHOS ON THE SICHOS HE DELIVERED TO CAMP GAN YISROEL IN 5717.



THE REBBE FINISHES TOURING A CAMP BUILDING DURING THE VISIT OF 5720.

had put there earlier, and gave it to be distributed to those in the crash.

[It was later found out that the Rebbe had put the pieces of matzah into his pocket at the same time that the car had flipped over! As it turned out, although it was indeed a dangerous crash, they all emerged unscathed.]

Meanwhile, everyone had stopped singing, so the Rebbe told them again to sing the song “that will later be sung in camp.” They continued singing *Al Hasela*. The directors and the children danced with great joy, and the Rebbe strongly encouraged the singing for a long time. They later sang *V’chol Karnei Reshoim*, and those present said *l’chaim*.

The Rebbe ended the *farbrengen* with the *bracha*:

“Hashem should help that בנאות דשא ירביצנו *kipshuto*, in the ultimate good. Very soon we should merit to the continuation of the *mizmor*, כוסו רוי, which is the chair of the *melech hamoshiach*, speedily in our days. *Lchaim, lchaim.*”

BIRKAS HAMAZON AND MINCHA

The Rebbe *bentched*, and added שהשמחה במעונו in honor of the *sheva brachos* of Rabbi Mendel Shemtov.

At the end of *bentching* someone recited the *sheva brachos*, the Rebbe made the *bracha* on the wine, and drank it.

Then the Rebbe distributed *kos shel brocha*, and gave Rabbi Yosef Weinbaum a full bottle of wine for those who were in the crash and also for the people who worked on opening the camp. The Rebbe added that after camp opened, the wine should be given out to the campers, and the rest of it should be used for the duration of camp.

Later on, when *mincha* time came, no-one knew which way was east. As they were trying to figure it out, the Rebbe went out to the balcony and looked at the sky for a few seconds. He then returned to the room and pointed with his finger to *mizrach*.

After davening, the Rebbe went to his car, and everyone got ready to leave. Before getting into the car, the Rebbe called Rabbi Weinbaum again, and told him that since he is the *menahel gashmi*

of camp, he is also the *baal-habayis*. Therefore, the Rebbe gave him stacks of dollars to give out as a tip to the people running the camp. Then the Rebbe gave him a *yasher koach* and a *bracha* for *hatzlacha rabba*.

The Rebbe then got into the car to leave camp and everyone sang *Ki Besimcha Seitzeiu*.

At that moment, two of the *bochurim* who had been in the car crash—Rabbi Immanuel Schochet and Rabbi Avrohom Lipskier—went over to the Rebbe, and the Rebbe asked them what had happened.

When they told the Rebbe that the car had flipped over three times, the Rebbe raised his shoulders and said with a smile, “three times?” Then the Rebbe took out the piece of matzah covered in cloth, gave it to them and pointed to Rabbi Weiss who was standing nearby, saying that he should give them *l’chaim* from the bottle of wine that was left over from *kos shel brocha*. They took wine and said *l’chaim* to the Rebbe.

The Rebbe then left to visit Camp Emunah, the girls’ camp.

The Rebbe visited camp again the following year, in 5717, for the *chanukas habayis* of the new grounds in Swan Lake, and then again in 5720 - marking two hundred years since the *histalkus* of the Baal Shem Tov.⁴

Although these visits were in many aspects similar to the first one, they were unique in the fact that they took place while camp was in session. The Rebbe specifically requested before the second visit that the schedule not be changed in honor of the visit, and that everything should run as usual, so that the Rebbe can see the routine schedule at camp.



DURING THE VISITS OF 5717 AND 5720, THE REBBE DISTRIBUTED A MINCHA-MAARIV BOOKLET TO ALL THE PARTICIPANTS AT CAMP. THIS BOOKLET FROM THE 5720 VISIT HAD BEEN PRINTED A YEAR EARLIER, BUT THE REBBE INSTRUCTED THAT THE YEAR 5720 SHOULD BE HANDWRITTEN IN THE SHAAR BLATT.

PART 4: THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

The international Gan Yisroel network began blossoming very quickly, and over the later years it grew exponentially.

Only a short while, in 5718, Rabbi Berel Mochkin opened the first new Gan Yisroel in Canada.⁵ As with the camp in New York, the Rebbe gave him detailed guidance and sent telegrams at the start of camp.

That same year, the *Reshet* (a network of Chabad-run educational institutions) in Eretz Yisroel also started Gan Yisroel day camps. In a letter to Rabbi Yitzchok Ganzburg of the Reshet, the Rebbe writes that the name of the camp should be Gan Yisroel;⁶ (Over the years the Rebbe sent them countless *horaos*, which were usually relayed through Rabbi Hodakov to Rabbi Efraim Wolf.)

A year later, in the summer of 5719, Rabbi Gershon Mendel Garelik, the shliach to Italy, opened the first Gan Yisroel in Europe. At the farbrengen of Yud-Beis Tammuz that year, the Rebbe spoke about what Rabbi Garelik had achieved despite the numerous difficulties that had sprung in his path. The Rebbe gave a *bracha* for all the branches of Gan Yisroel, for both staff and campers, and requested that everyone at the farbrengen give 'three cheers' and 'three hurrahs' for Gan Yisroel!⁷

In 5721, the network of camps grew to include a new camp in Michigan. Over the years, the Gan Yisroel network has grown tremendously, and countless shluchim all over the world have opened branches in their communities.



▲ SCENES FROM CAMP GAN YISROEL OF KALKASKA, MICHIGAN.

▼ A GROUP OF CAMPERS FROM CAMP GAN YISROEL, PARKSVILLE, NY ON A TRIP TO WASHINGTON, D.C. POSE WITH RABBI AVROHOM SHEMTOV AND SENATOR CHARLES GOODEL.



IN 5749, CAMP GAN YISROEL IN MICHIGAN HELD A KINUS TORAH WHERE CAMPERS DELIVERED CHIDUSHEI TORAH WHICH THEY HAD PREPARED WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE STAFF. THESE SPEECHES WERE LATER WRITTEN UP AND PUBLISHED IN HONOR OF THE DIDAN NOTZACH ON 26 TISHREI, 5750. WHEN THE BOOKLET WAS GIVEN IN TO THE REBBE, THE REBBE GAVE AN ENCOURAGING RESPONSE IN WRITING.

PHOTO: KEHOT PUBLICATION SOCIETY

PART 5: CHOF AV

Chof Av, the *yahrtzeit* of the Rebbe's father HoRav Levi Yitzchak Schneerson, was a special day for the campers by the Rebbe. Beginning in 5736, camp would come in every year to join the *tefilos* and attend the farbrengen. The Rebbe would encourage their camp-style singing during the *tefilos* and shower them with attention during the farbrengen.

The entire Gan Yisroel New York would usually come in to New York, and they would be joined by groups from other camps as well. They would arrive during the afternoon of Chof Av and *daven mincha* with the Rebbe, as he was *chazzon* on occasion of the *yahrtzeit*; the campers would sit directly behind the Rebbe's place during davening. After *mincha*, they would eat a quick supper and rush to reserve a few bleachers for the farbrengen.

[When Chof Av fell out on Shabbos, camp would spend the entire Shabbos in Crown Heights, sleeping in Oholei Torah on Friday night.]

SONGS FROM THE MACHNE

During the farbrengen, the Rebbe would often ask the campers and staff to sing songs from the *machne*, strongly encouraging their singing. The way it usually worked was as follows: The Rebbe would deliver a *sicha* on a topic related to camp—often about *chinuch*—and then the Rebbe would encourage the campers to start a *niggun*.

On numerous occasions, the Rebbe explained the connection between his father's life and Gan Yisroel. In 5741, the Rebbe asked Rabbi Yaakov Yosef Raskin, who had personally known the Rebbe's father, to travel to camp and tell the campers about him.



AT A CAMP RALLY IN THE SUMMER OF 5740, THE REBBE GIVES RABBI AVRAHAM SHEMTOV, DIRECTOR OF CAMP GAN YISROEL, NEW YORK, PACKAGES OF COINS FOR DISTRIBUTION TO THE CHILDREN.

At the farbrengens during the years 5737-5739, the Rebbe requested that the campers recite the Twelve *Pesukim* at the farbrengen. When they said the *Pesukim*, the entire 770 repeated after them.

DEM TATTEN'S NIGGUN!

After Chof-Beis Shevat 5748 the Rebbe only farbrenged on Shabbos, so there usually wasn't a farbrengen on Chof Av. However, the camps still continued coming in for Chof Av to join the Rebbe's *tefilos*.

In 5749, the campers and staff joined the Rebbe for *mincha* and for *maariv*, and they davened in the regular camp tunes.

Towards the end of *maariv*, the Rebbe turned to Rabbi Leibel Groner and told him that the *sicha* be translated into English. Rabbi Groner immediately passed the message on to Rabbi Avraham Shemtov, who, in turn, immediately started arranging another microphone for the translator.

After *maariv* ended, the Rebbe walked up to the *shtender*, and asked Rabbi Groner if a microphone had been arranged for the translation, and Rabbi Groner replied that it was on its way.



IN HONOR OF THEIR OPENING IN THE SUMMER OF 5742, THE REBBE SENT A LETTER TO GAN YISROEL CAMPS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

After waiting a short time, the Rebbe turned to the crowd and said: "נזינגט א, נזינגט א" and then added, "דעם טאטן'ס ניגון," ("Nu, sing a *niggun*, my father's *niggun*!")

The entire 770 immediately burst into song, and the Rebbe strongly encouraged the singing. During the *niggun*, Rabbi Yonasan Hackner ran in with a microphone, and when the singing ended, the Rebbe said a *sicha*, speaking about the connection between HoRav Levi Yitzchok's name and the name of Gan Yisroel.

The Rebbe finished the first *sicha*. At rallies Rabbi Yaakov Yehuda Hecht would translate the *sichos* but since it wasn't a rally, and no-one had expected that there would be a translation, Rabbi Hecht was

In 5744, Chof Av fell out on Shabbos, and, as usual, the entire camp came in to Crown Heights to spend Shabbos with the Rebbe. In those years, the Rebbe would spend Shabbos in the library. After *licht bentshen*, the entire camp was lined up on both sides of the sidewalk waiting for the Rebbe to go back to 770. As the Rebbe passed through the rows of campers, they started a *lebedike* niggun, and the Rebbe smiled broadly, waving at them and strongly encouraging the singing.



PHOTO: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 20220 / 7 CHESHVAN 5748

in English. During the *sichos*, the Rebbe would direct them to sing several *niggunim*, and after the *niggunim* he would hand out to the counselors—both boys and girls—coins for the children. Generally, the children received two coins: one for *tzedakka*, and one for personal use. In the first years of these rallies (5738-5739), the Rebbe would also hand out *mugadike* [edited] *sichos* from previous camp rallies to be distributed to the children.


A unique aspect of these rallies was that the head staff of each camp would speak to the children (while the Rebbe was present) about the message to take home from camp. The head staff would talk to the children before the Rebbe's *sicha*, and sometimes the Rebbe would mention an idea the head staff had spoken about! (This continued until 5745.)



The fruits of Camp Gan Yisroel are noticeable throughout the year, and in fact, throughout the lives of the many children who were *zoche* to attend.

The attention that the Rebbe showed to the children and their staff was incomparable. Suffice it to say that the only trips the Rebbe made out of the New York City area were his visits to this special place.

As the Rebbe once explained:

“A *gan*, a garden, is a place where one goes to enjoy the beautiful fruit that grow inside it. This is Gan Yisroel, the garden where ‘Yisroel’ grows - Jewish children. Through their actions, they give pleasure to Hashem Himself...”⁸ 

not present. Rabbi Avraham Shemtov stepped up to deliver a *kitzur* of the *sicha* in English.

However, the biggest shock was yet to come. After Rabbi Shemtov's translation, the Rebbe continued with a second *sicha*—an extremely rare occurrence in this setting.

In the years afterward, the Rebbe continued giving special *kiruvim* to the campers and staff present during the *tefilos* and *sichos* on Chof Av.

RALLIES

Chof Av was the special day when camp would officially come to see the Rebbe, during camp. Additionally, from the early years of camp, the campers and staff that lived in the New York area would come to 770 and daven *mincha* with the Rebbe after camp finished for the summer. Following *mincha*, the Rebbe would give

the counselors coins to distribute to the children, with each child receiving two coins: one for personal use, and one for *tzedakka*.

From 5737 the Rebbe would hold special rallies for the camps at the end of the summer.

In the beginning, these rallies were only for the day camps, but it soon expanded to Gan Yisroel for boys, and Camp Emunah for girls. At first there were separate rallies for boys and girls, but later one rally was held for both.

After *mincha*, the children would recite the Twelve *Pesukim*, followed by a few *sichos* from the Rebbe. The topics of the *sichos* would vary, and sometimes the Rebbe would draw lessons from camp that could be applied throughout the year.

Between the *sichos*, Rabbi Hecht would give a translation of the Rebbe's words

1. Toras Menachem vol. 16 p. 347

2. Shabbos parshas Shelach, 5719; Toras Menachem vol. 26 p. 58.

3. Shabbos parshas Pinchas.

4. See a detailed account of these visits in the sefer *B'nois Deshe*.

5. See Igros Kodesh vol. 16 p. 140

6. Ibid. vol. 17 p. 172

7. Toras Menachem vol. 26 p. 129

8. Sichas 28 Av, 5749



PHOTO: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 102651 / 15 TAMMUZ 5720



THE REBBE & GAN YISROEL: A GALLERY



1. The Rebbe arrives at Camp Gan Yisroel 2. The Rebbe distributes mincha-maariv booklets in 5717 3. The Rebbe davens Mincha before the farbrengen during the visit of 5717 4. At the conclusion of camp, the Rebbe encourages the singing in the shalash of 770.

להביא לימות המשיח

THE ROUTE TO REDEMPTION

Learning and Living

Bookshelves in Lubavitcher homes are lined with many seforim of both *nigleh* and Chassidus. Included in the vast collection are inevitably books on *inyonei geulah u'Moshiach*, with dozens of books on this topic—in many different languages—making this basic and fundamental idea accessible for all.

Prominent among these titles is the two volume set that you may have perused when looking for a *vort* about Moshiach: “M’golah L’geulah,” or as it later became popularly known, “From Exile to Redemption.”

What makes it so unique is that it is possibly the very first book about Moshiach that was printed by Chabad. Following its initial publication, the floodgates have burst with many books about *geulah* being published each year.

What set this remarkable revolution in motion? What made Chassidei Chabad around the world take a new approach to *limud inyonei geulah u'Moshiach*?

The answer: Thursday night, 28 Nissan 5751.

THE SICHA

That night the Rebbe returned from an extended amount of time at the Ohel and davened *mincha* and *maariv*. Following the *tefilos* the Rebbe said a *sicha* that shook every Chossid to his core.

“In light of what we have explained regarding the *geulah*, specifically in this time period, there begs a great question,” the Rebbe began. “How can it be that despite everything, we have still not accomplished bringing Moshiach?! This



THE REBBE LEAVES THE SHUL HOLDING A DVAR MALCHUS AT THE CONCLUSION OF ITS DISTRIBUTION.

is completely not understood. What else can I do to arouse every single Yid to cry out and beg for him to come? To my disappointment, everything done until now has not helped, and the proof is that he has not yet come.”

The Rebbe then turned to the Chassidim and charged them with a mission that changed Lubavitch forever:

“The only thing I can still do is hand it over to you; do everything you can to bring Moshiach now!”

PHOTO: 15 IVAR, 5751

להביא לימות המשיח

News of this *sicha* spread like wildfire and Chassidim learnt it over and over. Yet it was unclear what specific methods the Rebbe wanted implemented in order to turn this into a reality.

They did not have to wait long with their questions.

A few short days later, the Rebbe answered this question in the form of another *sicha*, and laid it out for one and all; men, women and children alike. Throughout that period of time there were many *sichos* detailing different methods and ways to carry this out.

STEP BY STEP

At first the Rebbe explained that the way to do this is by adding in Torah study and being scrupulous in the fulfillment of the mitzvos. Shortly after this the Rebbe added, “Specifically learning the subject of Moshiach and *geulah* will hasten his arrival.”

Among other things that the Rebbe suggested was to learn these subjects in

The Rebbe then turned to the Chassidim and charged them with a mission that changed Lubavitch forever

public groups of at least ten people. The Rebbe also attributed great significance to learning the Torah, *sichos* and *maamarim*, of the *nossi hador*.

In another *sicha*, several weeks later, the Rebbe shed light on the great benefit for a person the learning of these topics has. Instead of Moshiach being a far-off abstract concept, the Rebbe explained, one can actually live with Moshiach by having a strong ‘*koch*’ and properly learning about the *geulah*.

MAKING IT GLOBAL

The Rebbe’s call was heeded immediately and groups sprung up all over to figure out ways to make this a reality.

Following is a brief overview of some of the *peulos* that were arranged following this *sicha*.

The book ‘From Exile to Redemption’ is published for the first time in Hebrew with the title *M’golah L’geulah*.

Although Rabbi Yonah Avtzon of Sichos In English had prepared this book many years earlier, the Rebbe did not give endorsement for it to be printed until now, making it a first of its kind followed by many others.

Kovtzim and literature on this topic quickly flooded the print houses, such as volumes of Likutei Sichos with *sichos* about Moshiach. Newspapers began dedicating a column to this and much more.

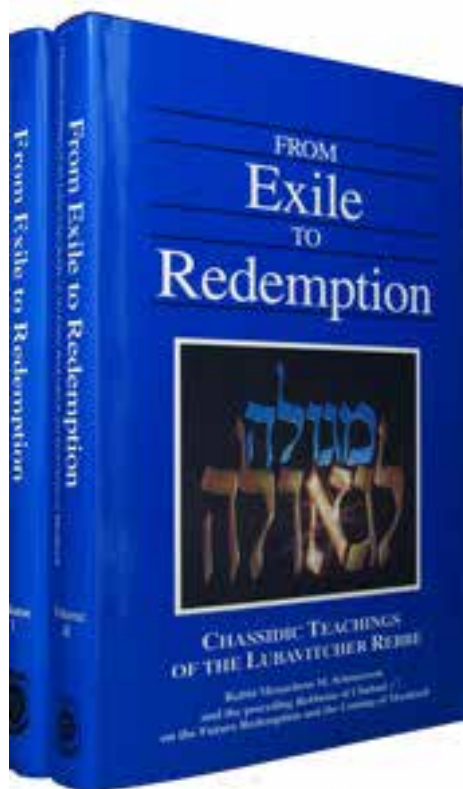
The crown jewel amongst all these was the compilation of the Dvar Malchus which the Rebbe himself distributed by hand.

The Dvar Malchus is a booklet of *sichos* the Rebbe said, explaining concepts about Moshiach based on the Rambam.

The actual Dvar Malchus publication had been around for a while beforehand. However, at that point the director, Rabbi Tuvia Peles, decided to publish one just with *sichos* about Moshiach.

He chose several *sichos*, had them translated into Hebrew, and sent them to the Rebbe. Upon receiving them, the Rebbe mentioned that they should print many of them, indicating that he would be giving them out.

It was truly a special moment to see that Rebbe hand out this special *kuntres*, and it was an open reminder to everyone how important this mission is.





BOCHURIM ANSWER THE CALL

On the Motzaei Shabbos following the Rebbe's clear directive to increase in the learning of *inyonei geulah u'Moshiach*, a group of *bochurim* came up with a novel idea. They planned and arranged a continuous cycle of learning about Moshiach that would be ongoing for 24 hours a day.

Reaching out to yeshivos around the world and in many different time zones, they split up each day into portions and every yeshiva undertook to learn during their allotted time. This ensured that at any given time somewhere in the world there were *bochurim* dedicating themselves to fulfilling the Rebbe's instructions and hastening the arrival of Moshiach.

The organizers of this special *peulah* received much positive encouragement and *brachos* from the Rebbe.

IT'S EASY, DIRECT, AND EFFECTIVE

When the Rebbe began talking about this *koch* in the learning about Moshiach, it was clear that this wasn't just another *segula* for his coming; it was the method by which we can actually make this happen.

The Rebbe quoted the first *mishna* of the second *perek* of Pirkei Avos:

"Rebbi says, "Which is the right path that a man should choose for himself? That which is honorable to himself..."

The Rebbe explained it as follows:

The word the Mishna uses for man is Adam, referring to a person who is spiritually complete. The only work that remains for him to do is to remove the little bit of dirt that is left behind. This refers to our generation, when we have finished all the necessary *avodah*. The question then is, what is the right path by which we can bring about the complete redemption?

The Mishna answers with the word "*tiferes*," which symbolizes the learning of Torah. Hence, the way to bring Moshiach is through increasing in the learning of Torah.

The Rebbe then added:

Tonight (the night the *sicha* was said) is *Tiferes She'bmalchus*. *Malchus* refers to Moshiach, therefore the Mishna is telling us that the easiest and smoothest path to bring about his coming is by increasing in the learning of Moshiach.

It was this explanation that charged the *koch* which ensued right after.

The Rebbe's call was answered immediately and groups sprung up all over to figure out ways to make this a reality.

With the material available today, it is so easy for every single one of us to learn and have a *koch* in this important subject. The Rebbe made it very clear that this is

the most direct and easiest path to bring Moshiach [see sidebar]. We talk, await and beg for his arrival; but we have in our hands the recipe to make him come now. The Rebbe charged us all with this sacred task; we can and we will do it! To get a proper feel for the Sichos mentioned in the article, we recommend that you learn them in the original form. The sichos are printed in Sefer HaSichos 5751 Pages 474 and 692. **D**

SECRET

As told by the Rebbe's mazkir,
RABBI BINYOMIN KLEIN ע"ה

Aid



PHOTO: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 143279 / 1 GESHVAN 5766

The Rebbe's work was often so secretive that even those that the Rebbe helped never even knew about it.

I once received a phone call from a Yid asking me to arrange a *yechidus* with the Rebbe. He said there was an urgent, life-altering matter that he had to discuss with the Rebbe.

He added that he was not a Lubavitcher Chossid, but he was told that if he desperately needed a miraculous salvation, the address to turn to was that of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

Indeed, the following Sunday he was in *yechidus*, and he shared his sorrowful story with the Rebbe: In a distant country he has a brother who was in deep financial strain, and had accumulated immense debt. His brother's business was in foreclosure and he would very likely be imprisoned as a result of his debts.

The Rebbe listened to his story attentively, but did not really respond to it at all.

When the *yechidus* was through, I asked this individual, "Nu? How do you feel now?"

"I feel even more hopeless now," he replied sadly. "I was hoping that the Rebbe would be able to help me, but he barely responded to my story. Instead, he changed the subject and spoke about other things."

I felt very sorry for this Yid, but there wasn't much I could do for him. I tried to lift his spirits to the best of my ability, and he continued on his way.

Every night before the Rebbe left for home, Rabbi Hodakov would go into the Rebbe's room for a while. Even when the Rebbe received people for *yechidus* until the early hours of the morning, Rabbi Hodakov always went in before the Rebbe left. This particular night was no different. When *yechidus* finished at around 3:00 a.m., Rabbi Hodakov entered the Rebbe's room as usual.

That night it was my turn to drive the Rebbe home after *yechidus*, so I waited until Rabbi Hodakov concluded. When he came out he told me, "Binyomin, when you're finished, please come see me again; I have instructions from the Rebbe for you."

After driving the Rebbe home, I returned to 770 where Rabbi Hodakov was waiting for me in the *mazkirus* office.

"I have an important mission for you," he began. "The Rebbe wants us to contact a certain Yid and ask him to assist another Yid who is in dire need of financial help, and is in danger of going to prison. The Rebbe added that, 'I don't know if he has ever seen me in the past.'"

After a bit of research, I located this Yid and passed on the Rebbe's message to him immediately. I was very moved to see how well he accepted the Rebbe's words, despite the fact that he was not a Lubavitcher Chossid and had never seen the Rebbe before.

"If the Rebbe is so concerned that he made sure to reach me in middle of the night," he explained, "I am happy to be of assistance and fulfill his request."

Later on, another message was conveyed to this Yid that the Rebbe would like to receive a report on the progress of this issue.

At 8:00 in the morning I received a phone call from him, asking me to convey to the Rebbe: "The entire issue has been settled to the very last penny."

Imagine the Rebbe's immense *ahavas Yisroel*! The Rebbe's love for every Jew is unconditional. The one who was in *yechidus* and complained to the Rebbe would never even know what the Rebbe had done to help him and his brother.

THE TIMELY LETTER

*As told by Rabbi Zalman Farkash, Mashpia in Yeshivah Gedola, Buenos Aires, Argentina
Prepared by Rabbi Mendel Kaminker and Rabbi Menachem Posner*



RABBI ZALMAN FARKASH

I want to tell you a story that I myself experienced on Sunday, 20 Sivan, 5775 (June 7th, 2015).

On the previous Thursday, I left my home in Buenos Aires to travel to Seattle, Washington where my niece was to be married. I took the opportunity to depart early and first fly to New York and spend some time at the Ohel.

A dear friend of mine by the name of Mendel Chaim gave me a ride to the airport. He is a cancer survivor. Baruch Hashem, he is alive and well. However

the terrible illness impaired his ability to father children.

As we navigated the teeming streets of Buenos Aires, Mendel Chaim told me that he and his wife were considering adoption. “We just don’t know how to proceed,” he said. “On one hand, we’d prefer to adopt a Jewish child. On the other hand, it’s not easy to find a Jewish baby in need of a home. We’re considering adopting a non-Jewish child, converting him or her as a baby, and then raising him or her as Jewish. We’ve spoken to many rabbonim and received a number of different answers, and we just don’t know what to do...”

Before I got out of the car, Chaim Mendel gave me his mother’s Hebrew name and asked that I daven for him and his wife at the Ohel. Of course I agreed.

On Friday, I arrived in New York with plans to remain there until Sunday evening when I’d catch my connecting flight to Seattle. I entered the Ohel on Friday and on Motzaei Shabbos

and on both occasions I mentioned my friend and his situation.

On Sunday morning, I sat in the shul near the Ohel learning a maamor. As I studied, the room filled up and people began to daven shacharis. One of them was a middle-aged man who had come with a younger man. I observed that the older man was saying *kaddish yasom* at the appropriate places in the davening—nothing unusual for a man of that age.

Shacharis ended and I was still studying, completely engrossed in my *sefer*. Suddenly the man turned to me, dug his hand into the velvet tallis bag and pulled out a folded yellowing piece of paper.

“Here,” he said, “have a look at what it says here; I’m sure you’ll find it interesting.”

Not sure what else to do, I gingerly took the slip of paper, unfolded it, and began to read.

The page was a copy of a typed letter from the Rebbe dated 17 Iyar 5718 on the topic of . . . adoption!



In the letter, the Rebbe advises the man and his wife to seek out a child in need of a home from a large, impoverished Jewish family. The Rebbe also advised the prospective adoptive parents to increase in their mitzvah observance in advance of the new addition to their family.¹

I was shocked. I asked the man if I could perhaps snap a picture with my phone, but he refused. When I told him about the conversation I had with my friend on the way to the airport, he agreed on the condition that I would not photograph the family name written on the top of the letter.

He then told me the story of the letter:

“The Rebbe sent this letter to my father. My parents had been without children for many years and wanted to adopt. Unsure of what to do, my father turned to the renowned *posek* Rabbi Moshe Feinstein who suggested that he write to the Rebbe for advice.

“The Rebbe advised my parents to look for a Jewish child in need of a home, and I am that child. My father passed away almost a year ago, and today is the last day that I am saying kaddish for him.

“I’m not sure why,” he concluded, “but after I said the final kaddish, I felt a strong urge to show you this letter.”

The Rebbe had found his way to answer Mendel Chaim and his wife. **D**

1. The Rebbe’s view on adoption is nuanced and multifaceted. The different answers the Rebbe gave in this regard vary depending on the situation. It’s important to bear in mind that the Rebbe said, that an answer to one is not necessarily applicable to another. See also Shulchan Menachem vol. 6 p. 38.



THE PICTURE RABBI FARKASH TOOK OF THE REBBE’S LETTER CONTAINING ADVICE CONCERNING THE ADOPTION OF A JEWISH CHILD.



PHOTO: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 126067 / 9 TISHREI, 5741

YOUR STORY

Share your story with
A Chassidsher Derher by emailing
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מוקדש לזכות
החתן הנעלה והמצויין חבר מערכת של גליון זה
הרה"ת ר' לוי יצחק וזוגתו מרת חי' מושקא שי' דובאוו
לרגל חתונתם בשעתומ"צ ביום ו' תמוז תשע"ה

כ"ף מנחם - אב

יום הסתלקות כ"ק הרה"ג והרה"ח המקובל וכו' ר' לוי יצחק ז"ל שניאורסאהן

Encounters with
HoRAV LEVI YITZCHAK SCHNEERSON,
THE REBBE'S FATHER

The Unbreakable Spirit



"I was happy to receive your letter...especially after hearing so much about the activities that you did during those years for my father. This assistance brings very great blessing, to fulfill your heart's desires for good, for you and for your relatives."¹

This letter is one of the many instances that the Rebbe expressed his gratitude to those who merited to assist the Rebbe's father, HoRav Levi Yitzchak Schneerson, especially during his years of exile in Chi'ili and Alma Ata.

Often, at farbrengens in conjunction with Chof Av, HoRav Levi Yitzchak's *yom hilulah*, the Rebbe would instruct them to say *l'chaim*, and bless them that the merit of the *baal hahilula* bring much revealed good for them and their families.

In honor of Chof Av this year, we present our readers with the stories of some of the individuals who merited to be with HoRav Levi Yitzchak during those difficult years, and had the opportunity to be of assistance to him and Rebbetzin Chana.



The interviews published here are transcripts of conversations conducted by **Jewish Educational Media's** *My Encounter with the Rebbe* project, which has documented thousands of interactions with the Rebbe. Our deep gratitude goes to **Rabbi Elkanah Shmotkin, Rabbi Yechiel Cagen** and the *My Encounter* team for making these priceless memories of the Rebbe's father available for this publication.

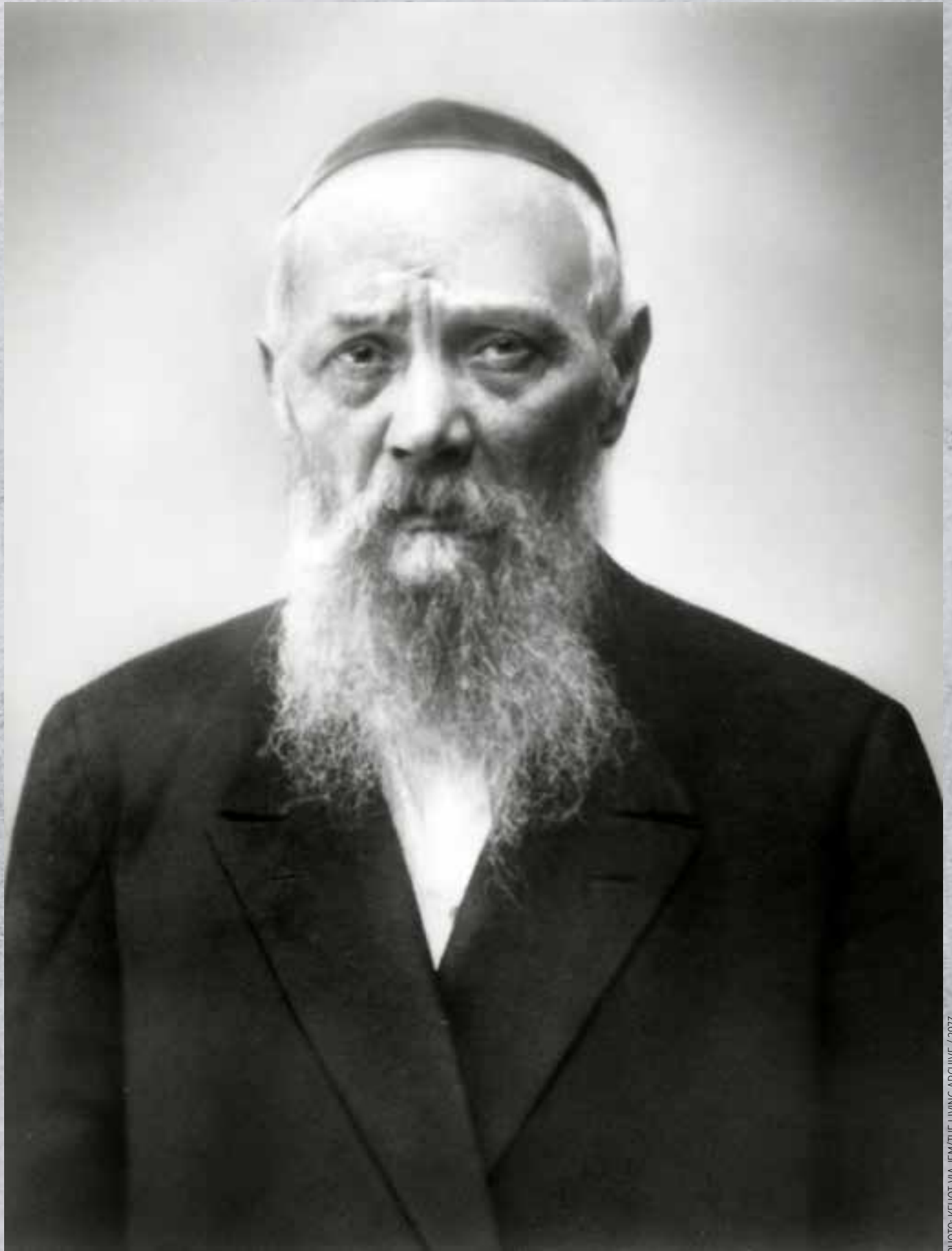


PHOTO: KEHOT VIA JEW/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 2973

Rabbi Leibel Raskin



Rabbi Leibel Raskin a”h, the Rebbe’s shliach to Morocco, was 11 years old when his family came to Alma Ata, and they merited to be with the Rebbe’s father.

Bringing HoRav Levi Yitzchak

In the year 5704 we found out that HoRav Levi Yitzchak Schneerson, the rav of Yekatrinoslav, had been exiled to Chi’ili, Kazakhstan, and his five year sentence was set to finish in the coming February or March.

The law in Russia at the time stipulated that someone who was sentenced to five years of exile must serve an additional five years after he completes his initial term. That being the case, it was essential to arrange that HoRav Levi Yitzchak’s sentence be terminated before the culmination of the five year sentence, so that he should not be subject to that law, and be able to leave his place of exile in the near future.

The vast majority of Chassidim were living at the time in Samarkand [after fleeing the advance of the Nazi armies in the west]. There were just a few families—including ours—that were located in Alma Ata, Kazakhstan, which was relatively close to Chi’ili. (My father told me that he later understood that the reason, *b’hashgacha pratis*, that we were located in Alma Ata—instead of in Samarkand with the rest of the

Chassidim—was in order to come to HoRav Levi Yitzchak’s aid.)

Alma Ata was a very large city; at the time, it had over a million residents. When we would walk down the street, we would see almost only women; all of the men had been drafted to the war effort. My brothers were all old enough to be in the army, and my father was eligible as well. It was with the Frierdiker Rebbe’s *bracha* that they managed to evade the draft.

With us in Alma Ata were two brothers, Hirshel and Mendel Rabinovitch. Mendel had previously served in the military, where he had sustained injuries. He still wore his military uniform—which enabled him to do many things that regular civilians were not capable of—and he and his brother were both immensely dedicated to HoRav Levi Yitzchak.

It was Mendel who organized the entire scheme to save HoRav Levi Yitzchak. He traveled to Chi’ili over Pesach that year, and while there he arranged that HoRav Levi Yitzchak should be freed immediately after Yom Tov.

On *Isru Chag*, the day after Yom Tov, they traveled together through Zumarda

and arrived in Alma Ata. Our family, along with other families of anash, came to the train station to meet HoRav Levi Yitzchak and Rebbetzin Chana. We children were told that this was the Tzemach Tzedek’s grandchild, and the Rebbe’s *mechutan*. [As youngsters, we all knew about the [Frierdiker] Rebbe; we often wished “*L’chaim, der Rebbe zol zein gezunt*.”]

After their arrival, an apartment was rented for them. Hirshel Rabinovitch was the one who helped HoRav Levi Yitzchak the most, but the rest of Anash were involved as well. Our family, my sisters and my brothers, were very close with him in particular.

The Message of Matan Torah

At the time, HoRav Levi Yitzchak would often sit and speak for hours long, sometimes taking a person’s name and explaining its inner meaning with *gematrios*, etc. But as I was a young child, I did not understand his words.

There was one occasion, however, that I did understand his message:

In Alma Ata we had a shul, located in a cellar, and I remember that HoRav Levi Yitzchak came to daven there on Shavuos [5704]. He recited *Akdomus*, which stood out in my memory, since in our home, we were careful to follow *minhogeï Chabad*, and we therefore never recited it. (I later learned that the Rebbe would also recite it on his own every Shavuos.)

Afterwards, HoRav Levi Yitzchak delivered a *drasha*. It was a speech that even we—young children—were able to understand. (Aside for myself, there were a few other young children in Alma Ata; one of them was Gedalia Zeideh, a grandchild of the Shpoler Zeideh.)

HoRav Levi Yitzchak spoke then about *matan Torah*. He spoke mainly to the children, saying that we need to know

HE SAID THAT EVEN OUR FRIGHT FROM THE GOVERNMENT MUST NOT HINDER OUR ACTIVITIES.

that we cannot be *nispoel* from anything around us, we need to grow in *limmud Hatorah* and fulfilling mitzvos, and not be afraid of anyone; our will must be the *Aibershter's* will. He spoke very clearly, elucidating his idea very well. Since I was a young child, I do not remember all the details, but his main message was that we have to behave in a way that even our fright from the government will not hinder our activities.

The day after Shavuot they discovered his illness; in Russian they called it *shatucheh*. To our dismay, the illness worsened from day to day. I remember that my brothers would go to his house every day to assist him to put on tefillin.

The *histalkus* was on Chof Menachem-Av; he was 66-years-old.

Immediately after his passing it was necessary to find a place for his burial. My father was the *shliach* to go to the cemetery to locate a burial plot. My father bought six plots, and he later acquired a significant amount of metal (which was quite an accomplishment during the war years) to create a barrier around the *kever*, so that there would be some sort of Ohel.

During the *levaya*, I remember my father tearing *kriah*, and announcing that those who want to touch the *aron* should first go to the mikvah.

A Night With the KGB

After HoRav Levi Yitzchak's *histalkus*, the anash families in Alma Ata 'merited' to a 'Shabbosdike guest'—every week, a KGB informant would come spend Shabbos with us.

My father was a *mohel*, and he would often secretly do *brissen* for children who were already a year or two old. A few weeks after the *histalkus*, an individual came to my father and requested that he perform a *bris* for his child, who was already two-years-old.

My father agreed, and he left our home with his *chalat* and his *milah* instruments. That night, six o'clock arrived, seven o'clock, and my father still had not returned. Ten o'clock, twelve o'clock, we began to consider going out to search for him.

Around six o'clock in the morning, my father returned. He was unrecognizable; while he had been away his hands and feet had been tied and his beard had been shorn. We only recognized him by his voice.

He told us, that as he had been getting off the tram car, he was accosted by a man exiting a vehicle who began shouting at him: "You are a thief; you have stolen from the kindergarten."

My father protested that he had nothing to do with a kindergarten, but the man ordered him to enter the vehicle and dragged him inside. He was taken to the central NKVD headquarters where he was locked in a cell.

In middle of the night, he was called to an interrogation, and they told him:

"Raskin, what have you done again? What have you brought here, again a Schneerson story?" This was already seventeen years after the Frierdiker Rebbe had left Russia.

"We thought we got rid of him, he is already in America; and here you bring



PHOTO: JEM / MY ENCOUNTER

RABBI LAIBEL RASKIN (L) AND RABBI DOVID RASKIN (R) TOGETHER WITH THEIR FATHER, RABBI YAAKOV YOSEF RASKIN (C).

another Schneerson, and again you are making 'Schneerson' issues!"

They then proceeded to relate the entire *drasha* that HoRav Levi Yitzchak had spoken on the past Shavuot, about *chinuch*, about Shabbos and about *kashrus*.

My father related that they had tortured him the entire night. Every hour they would allow him a break for a half-an-hour; he would fall asleep and then they would wake him again and try to pry the names of his acquaintances from him.

As dawn approached, someone (with a Jewish countenance) entered the room and said, "*Her zich ein*; we will let you go now, on condition that you sign that you will not disclose anything we have spoken about here. Additionally, you must become 'one of ours.' If you sign the document, we will let you go."

Two weeks after he was released, my father put a *tichel* around his face, took off his glasses, and escaped together with my sister to Moscow. The rest of my family remained in Alma Ata until Teves 5705.



Evsey Neymotin

Reb Evsey Neymotin is a retired nuclear scientist and former refusenik living in Columbus, Ohio.

His father, Reb Yosef Neymotin, was one of the activists secretly spreading Yiddishkeit in Alma Ata, Kazakhstan

THE DEALINGS WERE BEING DONE WITH THEIR FINGERS; SHE DID NOT SPEAK THE KAZAKH LANGUAGE, AND HE DIDN'T SPEAK RUSSIAN

in Alma Ata, they didn't have a rav, so my father made arrangements that certain individuals should go to Chi'ili, and bring HoRav Levi Yitzchak and Rebbetzin Chana back with them. This was no easy task, since he had been exiled there, and he was forbidden to leave the square kilometer of his location. If he were to leave, he would immediately be arrested and sent to prison. Additionally, this was Russia in a time of war, where one could not move from one place to another without official permission.

Before obtaining the permits however, they had to find out where HoRav Levi Yitzchak was living. They calculated that if Rebbetzin Chana was living there, they should be able to locate her at the marketplace on Friday, as she would be buying food items for Shabbos. They went to the Chi'ili bazaar, as it was called, and indeed, they met an obviously Jewish woman negotiating with a Kazakh merchant over some goods. The dealings were being done with their fingers, as she did not speak the Kazakh language, and he didn't speak Russian.

They immediately approached her, and they confirmed that yes, this was Rebbetzin Chana.

Now that they found HoRav Levi Yitzchak, my father arranged that the location of his exile be switched from Chi'ili to Alma Ata. As I said before, this was no small feat, but my father was an outgoing man, and he was friendly

Life in Alma Ata

My parents lived in Leningrad in the 1930s, where being an observant Jew was very difficult; there was a six day work week, and everyone was required to work on Shabbos. My parents tried various tricks to be able to get off of work, but they didn't manage to earn money that way, so they had practically nothing to eat.

At the time, my mother had a brother living in Crimea, where there was a Jewish settlement for agricultural work. This was a new accomplishment of the Soviet Union; they were trying to encourage Jews to work the land, and in that region food was easier to come by. Since they did not have anything to eat in Leningrad, my uncle brought my mother to his settlement in Crimea, while my father stayed in Leningrad.

Sometime later, the Germans attacked Leningrad, and my father, along with other individuals, searched for ways to escape, which was practically impossible at the time. Somehow, he was able to bribe a police officer, and he obtained

permission to leave.

He made the distant journey deep into the depths of Russia, and he miraculously managed to find my mother somewhere in Kazakhstan. Together they traveled to Alma Ata, which was not far from their location and was considered safe from the onslaught of the war. Additionally, Alma Ata was home to a considerable group of anash families.

While living in Alma Ata, the Chassidim heard that there was a rav, HoRav Levi Yitzchak Schneerson, living in Chi'ili, where he was exiled after he was arrested and tortured in 1939 for spreading Yiddishkeit and teaching Torah to Jewish children.

Chi'ili is a suburb of Alma Ata, but it does not compare at all. It is a terrible place to live. It is a purely a Kazakh place, where only Kazakhs live. They did not speak Russian, so the Rebbe's parents came into an environment where they could not communicate, and it was a terrible life.

Food for Shabbos

While there were many Chassidim living

with many police officers. I remember these parties in our house, where all the Russians and Jews would be drinking together and befriending each other, kissing each other, as if we are all friends. It was all a lie, there was no friendship; it was simply a show. But with these connections, and with the aid of a bottle of vodka, my father was able to arrange that HoRav Levi Yitzchak's place of exile be moved to Alma Ata.

An Everlasting Merit

Now that they were coming to Alma Ata—which is a very good thing—what are they going to eat? They need food; for food you need money, and it was a very poor neighborhood.

Therefore, every week—usually on Friday—my father would go around to all of the Chassidim living in the area and collect money, which he would then give to HoRav Levi Yitzchak. He did so even after the *histalkus* of HoRav Levi Yitzchak, until Rebbetzin Chana left Alma Ata.

HoRav Levi Yitzchak became the de-facto rav of the community, and he did everything a rav usually does. Once, while describing the characteristics of the various people in Alma Ata—this person is strong in Torah, this person is strong in this, etc.—and about my father he said, “Yoskeh is a *chassidishe bayndeleh*.” My father was very happy with this description. He wasn't expected to become a big Torah scholar or anything, and he was fine with his capabilities.

On a different occasion, my mother was privileged to receive a *bracha* from HoRav Levi Yitzchak.

The Histalkus

At some point, HoRav Levi Yitzchak asked my father to get a certain medicine from the pharmacy. While he was there,

my father asked the doctor why HoRav Levi Yitzchak looked so pale. The doctor answered, “Do you want me to tell the truth? I really can't tell you.” That was because HoRav Levi Yitzchak had become terminally ill.

Once, my father entered their house, and he saw that Rebbetzin Chana had a very serious look on her face, and HoRav Levi Yitzchak was crying. Rebbetzin Chana asked him, “Why are you crying?” he answered, “Who am I leaving you with? I'm crying about leaving you alone.” This was the last time my father saw HoRav Levi Yitzchak before he passed away.

In the years after the *histalkus*, my father would tend to the grave of HoRav Levi Yitzchak. He would clean it and repaint the letters when they faded, and he arranged for others to take care of it when he was unable to.

At one point, the *matzeivah* needed to be completely repainted, and my father, along with Hillel Liberov, did not know if they were permitted to touch the *matzeivah*. In the end, they hired a Russian to do the job, which he did very well. Later they sent a picture of the

renewed *matzeivah* to the Rebbe, and he approved of it.

Over the years, my father arranged that a mikvah be built. We had a one-and-a-half story home, and in the basement of the house, my father, with the help of people from Tashkent, built the mikvah. It was the only mikvah in all of the three Soviet Republics.

People from all over that would come to *daven* at HoRav Levi Yitzchak's *tziyun*, would come to *toivel* in our house beforehand. Additionally, women who needed a mikvah would travel to our house as well.

I remember my father working very hard to heat the mikvah. The insulation of the basement was not good, but he always put in a lot of effort to heat it, especially when women would come to use the mikvah.

The existence of this mikvah, in fact, was the reason the Rebbe did not allow us to leave the Soviet Union for a very long time. He felt that if we left, the mikvah would be destroyed and women would have nowhere to go.



THE TZIYON OF HORAV LEVI YITZCHAK IN ALMA - ATA, KAZAKHSTAN



Moshe Brandler

Reb Moshe Brandler was a young child when his family arrived in a city near Alma Ata.

At eleven-years-old, he had the merit to be with HoRav Levi Yitzchak, and to assist him periodically. Although they were not a family of Chassidim, his family, along with many others, gravitated towards HoRav Levi Yitzchak, being that he was the bastion of Yiddishkeit in that remote region.

HIS COUNTENANCE WAS SO STRIKING, ALL OF THE NON-JEWS, THE KAZAKS, WOULD BOW THEIR HEADS IN DEFERENCE UPON SEEING HIM

in deference upon seeing him. Other Yidden who lived in Alma Ata, even the non-religious, who initially did not want to speak to him, began to be drawn to him. After beholding his appearance, and hearing him talk to others, they also began to come and ask his advice, and to appreciate his warmth and depth of understanding.

Years later, when I told the Rebbe that I had the merit to be together with his father, he blessed us that the *zechus zol aich beishtein*. At the time, my wife had become pregnant at an older age, and all of the doctors warned us that she will miscarry. I told my wife that if the Rebbe said that we have the merit, then everything will surely be alright. Sure enough, with Hashem's help, a healthy baby girl was born, after many years of waiting for a daughter.

Mincha With the Rebbe's Father

When HoRav Levi Yitzchak lived in Alma Ata, he was generally too weak to walk to shul, and he would have a daily *minyan* in his home.

I lived then in a suburb of Alma Ata called Ili, which was a two or three hour train ride from the city, together with a Lubavitcher Chassid by the name of Leizer Leningrader and his son, who was a skin doctor and went by the name Shkovlanov. They would often travel to the city to see HoRav Levi Yitzchak, and I would sometimes join them.

While there, we would join his *minyan* for *mincha*. When there were not enough people, we would go ask others to join, and we had a set list of who we knew we could ask and who we could not. Between *mincha* and *maariv* HoRav Levi Yitzchak would give a *shiur* in *Mishnayos*. On one occasion, he performed a wedding while I was there, and I merited holding one of the poles of the *chupah*.

In general, his style of speech was very serious. Whenever he spoke, it was always regarding Chassidus or the *parshas hashavua*; one would never hear him taking part in a regular conversation. His countenance was very serious, and he would dress just as he did in Yekatrinoslav, with a black *sirtuk*, etc. This was very uncommon at the time, and I do not know how he managed to obtain such clothing.

His countenance and appearance were so striking, that when he would walk down the street, all the non-Jews—the Kazaks—would bow their heads

WHEN HE WAS IN EXILE, HORAV LEVI YITZCHAK HAD NO ACCESS TO INK AND PAPER WITH WHICH TO WRITE HIS TORAH, SO REBBETZIN CHANA HAND-PRODUCED INK FROM VARIOUS PLANTS, AND HORAV LEVI YITZCHAK WROTE HIS TORAH ON THE MARGINS OF SEFORIM. AS THE INK WAS HAND-MADE FROM THE PLANTS AVAILABLE, THE HA'AROS ARE WRITTEN IN MANY DIFFERENT COLORS.





Reb Gedalia Mazal was a child living in Alma Ata during the period of HoRav Levi Yitzchak's exile there.

His father, Reb Yisrael Avraham, was a Chossid who lived in the city who had the merit to have a close relationship with HoRav Levi Yitzchak. Young Gedalia therefore merited to see and hear, and retain memories of, much of what was going on in HoRav Levi Yitzchak's surroundings.

Golus Mitzrayim

During the time that we lived in Alma Ata, my father had a close friend by the name of Hirshel Rabinovitch, with whom he would often converse with regarding his *parnassah* among other subjects. One day, I think it was towards the summer, Hirshel told my father that they are trying to arrange for HoRav Levi Yitzchak to be able to leave Chi'ili and move to Alma Ata. Indeed, within a short period of time—yet with an immense amount of effort—HoRav Levi Yitzchak and Rebbetzin Chana arrived in our city.

My younger sister often reminisces about the impression HoRav Levi Yitzchak made upon her and her young friends when he arrived in the city. He had a very unusual appearance, even in comparison with other *rabbonim* which we knew.

It was a time of terrible oppression. HoRav Levi Yitzchak once commented that S.S.S.R. (in Hebrew) is *b'gematria mitzrayim*, and while the Yidden were

in *mitzrayim*, they did not change their names, language, or dress. This was already three or four years into the war, and people had lost everything, including their most prized possessions. My father for example, no longer had his equipment that he used in his profession as a photographer (a line of work in which he was able to work independently, and was therefore able to keep Shabbos). People were under terrible pressure, and no one dressed properly or allowed themselves to buy new belongings.

Within all of this chaos, a Jew suddenly appears, dressed in a dignified manner, with black rabbinic garb and a hat. All this, in addition to his saintly countenance, caused heads to turn in his direction. We constantly saw how, when walking in the street, non-Jews would remove their hats and bow their heads in deference to HoRav Levi Yitzchak.

I remember the first time he came to our shul—which was a simple room, half sunken into the ground. In those days, people did not converse much; when we

would come to shul, we would simply *daven*, and do nothing more. That day was no different. However, when the davening was over and HoRav Levi Yitzchak began to speak, we understood that this was something different, something special. We felt that this wasn't just an external dignity, but a truly *pnimiusdiker* nobility and holiness.

Akdomus

One story that stands out in my mind happened on Shavuot that year:

Our *minyán* in the makeshift shul was made up of Yidden from all backgrounds, each with his own unique set of *minhagim*. On Shavuot, a discussion began as to whether to recite *Akdomus* or not. My father, being an *ohev Yisrael* par excellence, proposed that instead of arguing back and forth we simply put the question to HoRav Levi Yitzchak, and do as he will direct us.

My father went over to HoRav Levi Yitzchak, who told him (I couldn't hear it at the time, but so it seems) that we should recite it. [Years later I found out that the Rebbe would say *Akdomus* quietly, to himself every year.]

When everyone heard what HoRav Levi Yitzchak had said, a small commotion erupted. One of those present, a chassidisher Yid named Tzalke, who would review a *maamar* at *shalosh seudos* every week, went over to HoRav Levi Yitzchak and told him that in Lubavitch, by the Rebbe, the custom is not to recite *Akdomus*.

The room fell silent; it was possible to hear a pin drop, and we all heard HoRav Levi Yitzchak's reply. He asked Tzalke, "Tell me, do you remember what was done by the Rebbe on the night of Shavuot?"

"Do you know why *Akdomus* was not recited by the Rebbe? It was because we

TODAY, HORAV LEVI YITZCHAK SAID, WE HAVE TWO SUCH STICKS: ONE BELONGING TO HITLER, AND ONE BELONGING TO STALIN.

had to hear the *maamar*, then review the *maamar*, go to mikvah, say the entire Tehillim, recite Tikkun, and review the *maamar* once again. So what time was left for anything else?

“And what have you done this past night? Did you review a *maamar* twice? Perhaps even once? Did you go to the mikvah? Were you awake the entire night reciting Tehillim and Tikkun?”

Needless to say, everyone became quiet and recited *Akdamus*.

Our Enemies

After HoRav Levi Yitzchak settled in Alma Ata and recovered a bit of his strength, he began to leave his home from time to time. I remember once that he came to a *simcha* of one of the Chassidim; Hirshel Rabinovitch's brother. In fact, it was this brother that was entirely dedicated to HoRav Levi Yitzchak and did his utmost to assist him in every way that he possibly could.

Present at the *simcha* were about ten or fifteen people, which was a considerable crowd in those days. We realized that HoRav Levi Yitzchak had not been broken or affected by all that he had endured in Yekatrinoslav and Chi'ili, but we still hoped that he would not express all of his thoughts in such a public setting. This was especially relevant on this occasion, for present there was a Jew who wasn't very intelligent, and was known to tell over everything he saw to his family. This individual had a son that seemed to have ties with the authorities, and over time we began to realize that whatever occurred in the father's presence would later be mentioned during interrogations that would take place in the following months. My father himself experienced the effect of this informer.

However, our hopes were for naught.

That week was *parshas Matos Mas'ei*. In his talk, HoRav Levi Yitzchak said that throughout Jewish history there have been many different *matos*—sticks; there was the staff of Moshe Rabeinu, and then there are sticks which are used to break *Yiddishe beiner*—Jewish bones. Today, HoRav Levi Yitzchak said, we have two such sticks: the one belonging to Hitler, and the one belonging to Stalin.

Everyone present began immediately looking around the room, taking into account who was present at the talk and

who wasn't. But HoRav Levi Yitzchak continued:

Everyone thinks that Hitler and Stalin are two opposites, since they are fighting each other, but in essence they are one and the same: their goal is to get rid of the Yidden. A proof for this is in the *gematria* of their names; both Hitler and Stalin have the same *mispar katan*².

HoRav Levi Yitzchak spoke much more on that occasion, however due to my young age at the time, I do not remember most of it.

While he was not arrested after that talk, my father—and I'm sure others as well—spoke to HoRav Levi Yitzchak, asking him to remember where he came from, and what could lie in store for him.

[After the *histalkus*, I witnessed a few occasions where 'they' came to 'speak' to my father. Being that he was not a Lubavitcher Chassid and he had been very close to HoRav Levi Yitzchak, the KGB tried to pry out of him details of the activities within the Chassidic community in Alma Ata, as well as details regarding HoRav Levi Yitzchak. My father ultimately had to flee, and was not even present at my bar mitzvah].

Sheineh Elteren

A few weeks later, on Shabbos Parshas Bechukosai, everyone was walking together to some specific location, and my father and I were walking together



HORAV LEVI YITZCHAK WAS EXILED FROM HIS HOMETOWN IN YEKATRINOSLAV TO CHI'ILE, AND LATER TRAVELED TO ALMA ATA - A DISTANCE OF OVER 2,000 MILES.

with HoRav Levi Yitzchak. HoRav Levi Yitzchak spoke to my father about the *parshas hashavua*. Why is it, he asked, that the *tochecha*, the rebuke to the Yidden in our *parshah*, seems to finish by the verse “*Vezacharti es brissi*—and I will remember the covenant with Yaakov, etc.,” but then suddenly continues for a few more verses, “*Uvaah haaretz*, etc.” Why is it that in middle of the *tochecha* our forefathers are suddenly mentioned?

My father began to think about the question, but HoRav Levi Yitzchak continued:

“I will tell you, Reb Yisrael Avraham. Those who have *sheineh elteren*, those who have good forefathers, forefathers like Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov, *zey shmeist men merer*, they get whipped more; they get a *tosefes*, an additional portion.

“I am telling this to you, Reb Yisrael, for you are a grandson of Reb Zushe. But as I tell it to you, I am thinking about myself as well.”

The Merit Will Stand By You

My father was present on the night of the *histalkus* of HoRav Levi Yitzchak; he was right beside him during those last hours and minutes. He later told me that he realized that HoRav Levi Yitzchak was whispering something the entire time. He did not raise

his voice, and it seemed that he was not talking to the people around him, but rather upwards, to an entirely different ‘address.’

At some point he stopped whispering, and he asked my father to bring him *negel vasser*. Then he said—my father told this to me numerous times—the following words:

“*M’darf zich greiten iberchappen oif yenne zeit*—we must prepare to go over to the other side.”

When we—the young children—were woken up early the next morning, we were shocked to hear that HoRav Levi Yitzchak had passed overnight. We were told that our help was needed. The burial had to take place that very day, and being that there were no telephones, the Yidden of the city all needed to be notified.

I was all but eleven-years-old at the time; my sister went around to tell all of the Jews living in the immediate area, while I traveled to the city with the tram. I went around to the shuls and to the houses of Yidden that I was acquainted with. The message I relayed was, “My father asked me to tell you that HoRav Levi Yitzchak was *nistalek*.”

Due to the situation at the time—the exile, and the war—every person was wary of his friends and neighbors, and even his own relatives, so no one expected such a huge turnout. Yet people turned up from all ends of the city, and even beyond. The *levaya* took place with the coffin being carried on shoulders all the way to the cemetery. I remember that those who did not go to mikvah that day were not allowed to touch the coffin.

Every year when Chof Av comes around, I am pained by the fact that I did not have the understanding and the *regesh* to retain more of the memories of my encounters with HoRav Levi Yitzchak. **D**

1. The Rebbe’s letter to Reb Hirshel Rabinovitch, 17 Menachem-Av, 5721; Toldos Levi Yitzchok vol. 2 p. 644

2. A *mispar katan* is a form of *gematria* in which the total sum is added up against each other. The calculation of HoRav Levi Yitzchak seems to be according to the Russian pronunciation of Hitler and Stalin (as Rabbi Mazal pronounced them during his interview), as they are spelled in Yiddish:

7 = 322 = גיטלער

7 = 160 = סטאלין

THE PIYUT OF “AKDOMUS” RECITED IN MANY COMMUNITIES BEFORE KRIAS HATORAH ON SHAVUOS.

THOSE
WHO HAVE
FOREFATHERS
LIKE AVRAHAM,
YITZCHAK AND
YAAKOV, ‘ZEY
SHMEIST MEN
MERER’



The small waiting room was filled with people. They hailed from many cities and villages, yet all came for the same reason: to seek the advice and blessing of the great *tzaddik*, the Maggid of Koznitz. Among them were a man and woman, their clothes dusty from their long travel. Soon, the *shammas* beckoned and they entered the room of the saintly Maggid.

The woman was an *agunah*—a “living widow.” Her husband had disappeared without a trace many years before. She had travelled to the Maggid, accompanied by her brother, hoping that with his *ruach hakodesh*, he would be able to locate her husband, and she would finally be able to receive a *get* and be free to remarry.

After hearing them out, the maggid called for his attendant.

“Bring a bowl of water,” he said. When the *meshares* returned with the water, the Maggid addressed the woman, “Look into the water, and tell me what you see.” She gazed into the water, and a surprised look came to her face. “I see a big city, with many houses laid along busy streets,” she said. “Look at the marketplace,” instructed the Maggid.

“I see a bustling market; shops and stalls line the street, and throngs of people coming and going; buying, selling, and trading,” said the *agunah*. “Look into the windows of the buildings along the street,” instructed the Maggid. “As the woman did so, her face suddenly paled and she cried out in shock. “I see my husband!” she exclaimed. “He is working in a tailor’s shop, surrounded by assistants. He’s holding the sleeve of an ornate coat as he irons out its wrinkles.”

“Take the sleeve out of his hand,” said the Maggid. Without a moment’s hesitation, the woman reached her hand into the bowl. To the shock and surprise of those watching, her hand came up holding the sleeve, still warm from the iron that had been pressed against it a moment ago. The open miracle that the Maggid had just performed left a deep impression on all those present. “Guard this sleeve carefully,” cautioned the Maggid. “Leave in peace,” he told them. “You will have your *get* yet today,” he assured the woman. “Which way should we go? Where should we travel?” they asked. “Wherever you

wish,” answered the Maggid. “How will we be able to hire a coach?” they asked. “The driver will certainly want to know our destination, and we have no answer.” “Go in peace,” said the Maggid. “Hashem, in His goodness and mercy, will take care of everything. All will be well, with Hashem’s help.”

With this assurance, they left the Maggid with hopeful hearts and went out into the street. Before long, they saw a coach coming down the street, pulled by two horses. The driver was a crude-looking peasant, dressed in the rough cloth and sheepskin, typical of his station. Hailing the coach, they inquired, “Can we join you?” “Get in the wagon,” was the curt response. To their surprise, he neither asked their destination nor demanded a fee. With complete faith in the *tzaddik*, they

climbed aboard and were on their way. After about half-an-hour’s travel over the bumpy dirt road, they reached a forest. Undeterred by the thick trunks and large roots, the driver pressed on.

As they continued into the woods, the woman and her brother suddenly felt drowsy, and fell into a deep slumber. A jolt awoke them, and to their horror, the coach turned over and they were flung from their seats. When they came to their senses, they found themselves sprawled on the hard earth in middle of the woods. Looking around, they could see no trace of the wagon or its driver. Filled with dread, they realized that they had no idea how far they had travelled, or in which direction the city they sought was to be found.

With no other choice, they began walking. They walked for about an hour until they reached the edge of the woods. As they walked out into the open, they were amazed to find themselves not far from a big city. The *agunah*, seeing it, joyously exclaimed, “Baruch Hashem! The *tzaddik*’s words are true! This is the very city that I saw in the bowl of water!” Several minutes of walking brought them to the outskirts of the city. “Let’s walk the streets; maybe, with Hashem’s help, we’ll find the marketplace I saw.” Sure enough, after a few minutes, they rounded a bend and there it was: the city marketplace, with its overwhelming jumble of sights, sounds and smells. Making their way past haggling customers and harried merchants, they gazed intently into each

א חסידישע מעשה

The Maggid and the Sleeve





window they passed. Finally, they spotted a tailor shop. Looking inside, the woman immediately spotted her long-lost husband. "Let's not be too hasty," said her brother. "If we confront him now, he may very well deny that he's your husband. Let's go and ask the local rav what to do."

A brief search led them to the study of the rav of the city. "Where do you come from," he asked. When they answered "from Koznitz" the Rav said, "That's very distant; 80 *parsos* (190 miles) away." To the rav's great surprise, they replied, "We left from there this very morning." After hearing their incredible story and seeing the sleeve which they had brought with them, the rav was very impressed. He exclaimed, "Blessed is Hashem, who has not abandoned us, and who gave *tzaddikim* of our time *ruach hakodesh*." The *agunah* then described her husband's appearance and the shop where he worked. "I know the man well," said the rav. "He's been living here for a number of years, and has a wife and children." Assuring them that it will all turn out okay, and exhorting them to keep a close eye on the sleeve, the rav led them to a side room and closed the door.

Returning to his study, the rav sent for the tailor, who, wasting no time, appeared before the rav as quickly as his legs could carry him. "Are you married?" asked the Rav. "Surely the rav is aware that I have a wife and children," the tailor answered. "This I know," said the rav. "My question was whether you have a wife from before you married this woman." "I was once married," the tailor admitted, "but I was single when I came to our town."

"What did you sew today?" asked the rav. "Funny you should mention that," replied the tailor. "A strange thing happened to me today. My employees and I were sitting around the worktable, busily assembling various garments. I was ironing

the sleeve of a coat that I was in the midst of sewing for an officer of the army, when suddenly it flew out of my hand and disappeared without a trace. We turned the store upside down, but we couldn't find it. I can think of no explanation for this bizarre occurrence," he concluded. "What would you be willing to give me if I could get you the sleeve?" asked the rav. "That's impossible," said the man. "Quite the contrary," replied the rav, and with those words he rose from his chair, opened the door, and told the *agunah*, "Give your husband his sleeve." The woman walked into the room and placed the sleeve on the rav's table.

The eyes of the tailor widened in shock as his face lost its color. "This is it," he said, in a weak voice. "This is the very sleeve that flew out of my hand." In his astonishment at seeing the sleeve, he didn't realize who had brought it into the room. "This is, indeed, your sleeve," said the rav. "And I believe the woman who brought it to you is your first wife." The tailor looked up and the shock of seeing his wife, together with his surprise at the appearance of the sleeve, was too much for him to bear and he collapsed on the floor, unconscious.

After some effort, he was brought back to his senses. The rav told him the entire story of how the woman came to the city and how she possessed his sleeve. Shaken, the man admitted that she was, in fact, still married to him, and he gave her a *get* that very day, just as the Maggid promised.

Adapted from the sefer "Sippurim Nora'im" by R' Ya'akov Cadaner, a chassid of the Mittlerer Rebbe. He writes that he heard this story from a man named R. Dovid, who heard it from the tailor, the agunah, and other people who were in the room when she took the sleeve out of the bowl.



BEHIND THE PICTURE

KIDDUSH LEVANA

The Rebbe's Minhagim

EDITORIAL NOTE: The account that follows is a general collection of the Rebbe's hanhagos. It is possible that these hanhagos have changed (or stopped altogether) over the years, and some readers may recall things differently, or may have heard things not mentioned here. הפך בה והפך בה דכולא בה.

It is important to note that many of the hanhagos recounted here are not unique to the Rebbe's conduct and have sources in earlier seforim as well. Along with the pictures depicting these actions, we found it appropriate and helpful to mention all of them nonetheless.

“A gesture of a *tzadik*, certainly seeing him and hearing his voice, must make an impression never to be forgotten.”¹

These words, recorded in Hayom Yom following a seemingly ‘simple’ story of a *tzadik*’s gesture, can teach us to what lengths one must go in order to take note of the Rebbe’s any action. And all the more so a story related to *avodas Hashem* directly.

As is known, the Rebbe’s performed every mitzvah meticulously, showing care and concern in every detail. This includes several personal *minhagim*, some of which were transmitted throughout the generations from *nosi* to *nosi*, and many others which remain unknown.

At first glance, it was often hard to tell if the Rebbe was doing something in keeping with a particular *minhag* or for other reasons. But upon closer look,

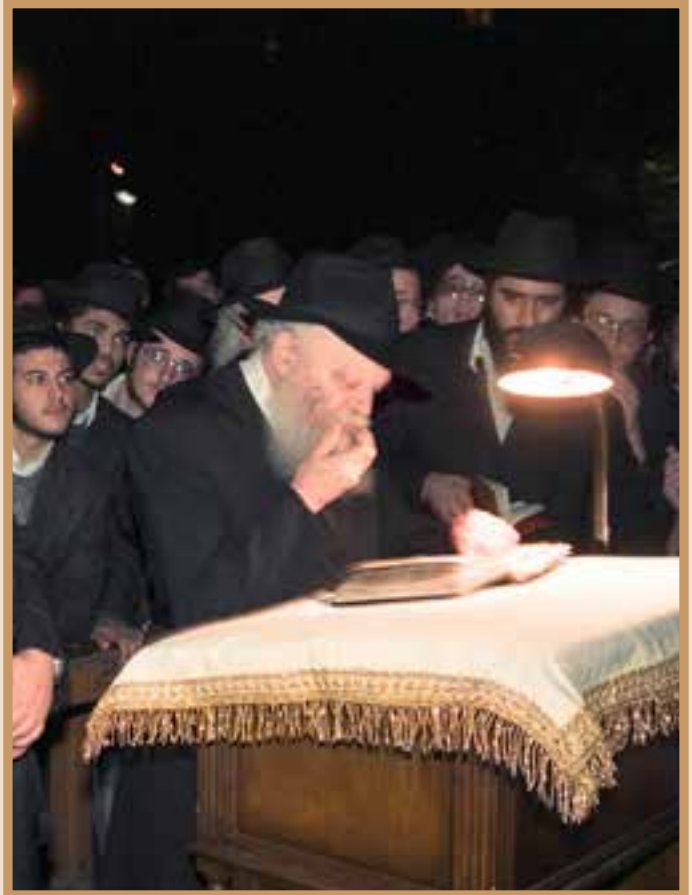
it is sometimes possible to discern several interesting facts from the Rebbe’s performance of mitzvos, which of course, “must make an impression never to be forgotten.”²

In the case of *Kiddush Levana* which of course was held outdoors, there are several notable, albeit subtle *hanhagos*.

The Rebbe recited the *brachos* on the sidewalk in front of the main entrance to 770, holding the siddur in his hands.³

While the custom brought in the Alter Rebbe’s siddur is to gaze at the moon before the *bracha* (after *Hallelukah*) the Rebbe looked upwards one additional time, at the beginning of the whole *Kiddush Levana*.

An age-old tradition dating back to early sources has it that *Kiddush Levana* is a *segulah* against toothaches. Indeed in



some circles a brief sentence is added to the *tefillah*, asking that we never suffer from toothaches.

At the paragraph “*Baruch Osech*” the Rebbe would elevate himself slightly as it says in the siddur, while passing his holy hand on his moustache, directly above his teeth. Many speculate that this practice was related to the tradition mentioned above.

While the crowd present was almost always large, when it came to exchange the traditional “*Sholom Aleichem*” the Rebbe usually directed his greeting at the nearby *mazkirim* or other aides. The Rebbe generally turned to his right side for the first greeting, then to his left for the second, and further back for the third.

Upon the conclusion of *Kiddush Levana* the Rebbe would grasp the knots of his tzitzis⁴ and shake them, as per the *minhag* in the siddur. After that the Rebbe would head back into 770 wishing those present “*Ah gut voch*” and “*Ah gut choidesh*.”⁵ **D**



1. Hayom Yom, 14 Teves

2. *ibid*.

3. It wasn't until 5743 that a lectern and small reading-light were brought out for the occasion.

4. The siddur instructs to shake the “*shulei*” (bottom of) *tallis katan*.

5. Unless of course it was a weeknight.

מוקדש לחיזוק ההתקשרות
לכ"ק אדמו"ר זצוקללה"ה נבג"מ זי"ע
נדפס ע"י הרוצה בעילום שמו

גליון זה נדפס בקשר עם

כ' מנחם-אב

יום הסתלקות

כ"ק הרה"ג והרה"ח המקובל וכו' ר' לוי יצחק ז"ל שניאורסאהן
אביו של כ"ק אדמו"ר זי"ע

לעילוי נשמת

גרז (גרצי') בת ר' אברהם

לוי

Dedicated by the Niasoff Family

נדפס ע"י

משפחת דוכמאן

לזכות ילדיהם, נכדיהם וצאצאיהם עד עולם
שיגדלו להיות חסידים ויראי שמים
ושילכו בדרך אשר הורנו רבותינו נשיאנו

לזכות

הרה"ת ר' לייביש משה זוזגנו מרת רינה
וילדיהם
קיילא באשא, בנימין דוד,
אליהו איסר, רבקה שיינדל אלתא
שיחיו
גולדהירש

מוקדש לזכות

ר' אברהם שי' שאולזון

בקשר עם כ' מנחם-אב

יום הסתלקות

כ"ק הרה"ג והרה"ח המקובל וכו'
ר' לוי יצחק ז"ל שניאורסאהן

לזכות

החתן הרה"ת ר' שמואל שי' ששונקין
והכלה מרת ח' מושקא תחי' דובאוו
לרגל חתונתם בשעתומ"צ ביום י"ט אב ה'תשע"ה הבעל"ט
נדפס ע"י הוריהם
הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל וקיילא שי' ששונקין
הרה"ת ר' שלום דובער ודבורה לאה שי' דובאוו

לזכות

החתן הנעלה והמצויין חבר מערכת של גליון זה
הרה"ת ר' אברהם שי' ניו
והכלה מרת מנוחה דרייזא תחי' שפערלין
לרגל חתונתם בשעתומ"צ ביום ד' אלול ה'תשע"ה הבעל"ט
נדפס ע"י הוריהם
הרה"ת ר' ראובן ואהובה יהודית שי' ניו
הרה"ת ר' פסח ואסתר הדסה שי' שפערלין



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