אנת העס A Chassidisher

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א חסידישער דערהער

"ויעקב, הלד לדרכו..."

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AN INTERVIEW

WITH RABBI

SHMUEL LEW

Dollars, Kuntreisim, Shlichus LEBEN MITTEN REBBE'N



**CHESHVAN 5776**ISSUE 37 (114)

# **DerherContents**

**CHESHVAN 5776** ISSUF 37 (114)



#### **About the Cover:**

In the spirit of "Ve'Yaakov holach l'darkoi," our cover features a photograph of orchim being received by the Rebbe for a "farewell" yechidus at the conclusion of the month of Tishrei.

Jewish Educational Media/The Living Archive ID #194239, 30 Tishrei, 5740

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HORA'OS VEHADRACHOS

# Derher**Editorial**

Coming from the festive month of Tishrei and beginning the new year—shnas Hakhel—we present this current edition of the Derher Magazine.

In a *yechidus* to the *orchim* who had come to spend Tishrei with the Rebbe in 5748, *shnas Hakhel*, the Rebbe explained how the memories from celebrating Tishrei together—marking all the yomim tovim together and farbrenging together in one sukkah—serve as a powerful tool for us to unite even later on in the year, when we are physically distant from one-another.

This, says the Rebbe, brings Hashem's blessings into our lives in unprecedented measures, thereby giving us the strength to fulfill our everyday shlichus. Especially, the timely shlichus of gathering Yidden together and inspiring them in the spirit of "Hakhel."

אע"פ שנוסעים ונפרדים, בכל זאת כל אחד ואחת צריך לזכור במחשבתו, את כל אלו שעימם נפגשו במשך הזמן שהיו כאן ביחד. ובפרט שהיו ביחד כמשך חודש תשרי וערכו ביחד הן את הימים הנוראים והן ימי השמחה, והתוועדו ביחד באותה סוכה, ובפרט בהשמחה דשמח"ת ושבת בראשית שבאה בסמיכות לשמח"ת.. ואפשרות זו נתונה לכאו"א מדי יום ביומו, ועכ"פ – מדי פעם בפעם, ובפרט בזמני סגולה – להזכר אודות יהודים אלו שהיה ביחד אתם בימי חודש תשרי (ועד שבת בראשית וער"ח מרחשון שהוא כבר לאחר שבת מברכים חשון) – לחשוב במעלותיהם, שעי"ז יהיו מעלותיהם בהתעוררות יותר...

...ובכלל זה – השליחות המיוחדת, של כאו״א מאתנו, ושל כל כלל ישראל, בשנה זו, שנת ״הקהל״ (כאמור) – לחפש הזדמנויות לפעול ב״הקהל״, דהיינו שלא להמתין עד שיעוררוהו פעם אחר פעם, אלא כאו״א, האנשים הנשים והטף, צריך ללכת ולחפש בעצמו הזדמנויות לאסוף חברים (והנשים – חברות) שביכלתו להשפיע עליהם...

This current edition continues our line of new columns alongside our classic ones and featured articles.

Most notably, we were privileged to have interviewed the veteran shliach and *mechanech*, Rabbi Shmuel Lew from London, England.

Rabbi Lew presents his personal story of his spiritual journey to Lubavitch, and the warm, caring attention he

The Approach of a Chossid ARUM CHASSIDUS

The Chossid's Calendar HAYOM YOM

Polishing our Buttons THE DEEPER MEANING OF A FAMOUS PARABLE

Change of Heart A STORY

Tracht Gut Vet Zein Gut DARKEI HACHASSIDUS

Conversation on Eastern Parkway BEHIND THE PICTURE

Letters to the Editor



was zoche to have received from the Rebbe all the way through. Many of the Rebbe's horaos to him are especially pertinent to the avodah of a bochur, and we are very grateful that he agreed to share many of these points with us. His inspirational words resonate within his fascinating accounts, and we are sure our readers will enjoy this treasure of a story.

As we prepare for the Kinus Hashluchim towards the end of the month, we once again recommit ourselves to the ultimate *shlichus* of our time, in the Rebbe's words

at the farbrengen of the Kinus in 5752:

אז די איינציקע זאך וואס איז איצטער געבליבן אין דער עבודת השליחות, איז: צו מקבל זיין פני משיח צדקנו בפועל ממש...

May it be teikef umiyad mammosh!

The Editors

שלהי תשרי ה'תשע"ו - שנת הקהל



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A Chassidisher Derher is honored to feature unique and historic photos from Jewish Educational Media's Living Archive photo collection. The Living Archive is a project to preserve, and provide access to the video, audio, and photographic recordings of the Rebbe. These photos are copyright by JEM and are available at TheLivingArchive.org







# ALONE AGAINST THE WORLD

At the farbrengen of Rosh Chodesh Mar-Cheshvan, 5743 the Rebbe spoke about the lesson to be learned from Noach, who stood alone against a dark world and transformed it to good.

At the beginning of Parshas
Noach the *possuk* says: "These are
the offspring of Noach, Noach." The
double "Noach" refers to two types
of rest—"*naycha*"—in the higher
and lower worlds. The synonymy of
Noach and "rest" is to the extent that
the "days of old" mentioned in the *passuk* about *geulah*—"Then shall the
offering of Yehudah and Yerushalayim
be pleasing to Hashem, as in the days
of old and as in bygone years"—are
associated with the "days of Noach."

Being that Torah is eternal, this is a lesson for every Yid.

When a Yid looks around and sees that "darkness covers the earth and a [dark] cloud [covers] the nations," and that he alone has to go out and wage war against the whole world, not knowing who will win, he can become disheartened. Even before explaining to him that he is not alone but together with many Yidden and with Hashem, he should be taught the lesson to be learned from the beginning of Parshas Noach:

"Noach was a righteous man. He was perfectly righteous in (relation to) his generation." Although the way of the land was corrupt and the opposite of why it was created—"He created it to be inhabited"—Noach, alone, remained a *tzaddik*—"a righteous and perfect man"—"I saw you, a *tzaddik* before me."

Furthermore: not only were the people corrupt, but also the animals—"for all flesh had depraved its nature upon the earth."

Even so, through Noach's *avodah* he changed the world—"Hashem smelled the pleasant aroma" —in a manner that there was rest in the higher and lower worlds—"Noach, Noach."

Whether or not a Yid sees his triumph over the world is irrelevant to his continued efforts in spreading goodness—"the good and just in the eyes of Hashem your G-d"—Torah and mitzvos. He is not the first standing alone against the world; Noach did it too, and defeated it.

This does not mean that he needs to do Hashem's will without caring about the outcome. Rather, that he must do his part and then he is guaranteed that he will succeed; just like Noach.

When he knows this, he will do his *avodah* with *simcha*; as the [Frierdiker] Rebbe said, when going out to war, soldiers already sing a victory march, before the victory even happened.

This is also emphasized at the beginning of Parshas Noach. Even before discussing the details of the flood that destroyed the world, the Torah talks about "Noach, Noach"—rest in the higher and lower worlds.

(Hisvaaduyos 5743 vol. 1 p. 370)





To Where From Here?

This ksav yad kodesh was written by the Rebbe in response to a bochur who spent Tishrei with the Rebbe, and at the end of the month, he wrote to the Rebbe asking for guidance as to how to continue growing in avodas Hashem.

בתוכן כתבו - ידבר ויבקש המשפיע שי' שלו שיבארוהו פתגם נשיאינו - שלאחרי תשרי צריך פאנאנדערפאקען את החבילה שקיבלו בתשרי וכו'.

...Regarding what you write - you should speak with your *mashpia* and ask him to explain to you the phrase from our Rabbeim—that after Tishrei, one must unpack the "bundle" [i.e. spiritual *hashpa'a*] that one received during Tishrei, etc.

For the sake of clarity, we quote the Frierdiker Rebbe's sicha from Leil Simchas Torah, 5709: We once explained that on Simchas Torah, one must begin unpacking the bundles [of merchandise] he bought.

Simchas Torah is the culmination of the avoda of the months of Elul and Tishrei; [their energy] can be deeply felt during Shemini Atzeres and Simchas Torah.

This is similar to a merchant who travels to a fair, shelling out all his money, and pawning [his belongings] for borrowed money, in order to buy as much merchandise as possible. Later, when he returns home, he unpacks his bags and spreads out the merchandise to examine what he bought.

Similarly: during Elul, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Sukkos, we "bought" lots of "merchandise". On Simchas Torah, we must begin "unpacking." But we need to account for how well we did with last year's merchandise; is it justifiable to buy more now? What do we have to show for ourselves...?

For further explanation of this concept, see the Rebbe's letter in Igros Kodesh vol. 4 p. 18; Likutei Sichos vol. 25 p. 299, et. al.



SHLUCHIM LEARN THE NEW KUNTRES THROUGHOUT 770.

# Dollars, Kuntreisim, Shlichus



Livery moment in the Rebbe's presence is unique. Each t'nuah we witnessed by the Rebbe, every word we heard, is another lesson in avodas Hashem. There were, however, some extraordinary times that stand out in the hearts and minds of those that were zoche to be present. Cheshvan-Kislev of 5748, Shnas Hakhel, was one of those times, and we've tried to capture some of its significance in this article, based on a yoman that was written at the time. Writing, reading, and reliving these precious moments, only intensifies our yearning and desire to merit once again to such giluyim. May we be zoche to use the inspiration from these descriptions to bring ourselves towards the days of Moshiach, teikef umiyad.

#### WEDNESDAY, 19 CHESHVAN

After *mincha* this afternoon, we were met with a pleasant surprise:

A few minutes after davening had ended in the small *zal*, Rabbi Groner announced that a distribution of "dollars" would take place, right there and then.

It's easy to understand the feeling we had upon hearing such news; everyone's spirits filled with excitement and joy. Immediately thereafter, the Rebbe came out of the doorway of *Gan Eden Hatachton*, where a table had been set up. As each person passed, the Rebbe wished him "A hatzlachadiker Chof Cheshvan."

While at first it was very disorganized due to the surprise and excitement, soon a long and orderly line formed.

From all corners of the neighborhood people who had just caught wind of the news were seen running towards 770. People left their stores in the middle of business in order to merit receiving a dollar. There were even people who came by car from outside of Crown Heights so as not to forgo an opportunity for such a *bracha*. It's amazing how the news spread so fast; within a half an hour, hundreds of people—if not more—had converged on 770 and were waiting in line.

#### THURSDAY, 20 CHESHVAN, BIRTHDAY OF THE REBBE RASHAB

After *krias haTorah* this morning the Rebbe continued the dollars distribution that he began yesterday. This time there were literally thousands of people waiting in line, everyone there to merit receiving a dollar and to be *bentched* by the Rebbe with a "hatzlachadiker Chof Cheshvan."

If it would have ended with that, *dayeinu*. The biggest surprise, however, was to take place in the evening.

The Rebbe had returned from spending the afternoon at the Ohel and joined the minyan for maariv. Davening ended and the Rebbe left to his room, when the announcement was made that the Rebbe would now distribute the "Kuntres Heichaltzu" from the Rebbe Rashab! Words can't describe the atmosphere that enveloped Crown Heights at that moment. All the residents streamed towards 770 and stood in neverending lines winding through the streets. The distribution lasted around an hour and would have (apparently) continued much longer had the stock of kuntreisim not run out.

Thankfully, *mazkirus* announced that the distribution would continue tomorrow.

In the printhouse above 770—where they are already used to emergency work—people pushed hard throughout the night and succeeded in printing another few thousand (!) *kuntreisim*.

In the meantime, many people congregated in 770 to learn the *maamar* together and to hear a *shiur* on it from Reb Yoel Kahn.

#### FRIDAY, 21 CHESHVAN

This morning, even before the Rebbe arrived to 770, throngs of people had already congregated around the entrance of the building waiting for the *chaluka*.

As soon as the Rebbe arrived, he began to once again distribute the *kuntres* to the thousands of people who had gathered, and gave each of them a *brocha*. From across New York and beyond, myriads of Chassidim had arrived, and this very unique *chalukah* continued until the afternoon.

The scene at 770 was legendary; in every corner another person could be seen preciously holding on to his *kuntres*, with many people choosing to go to the *beis midrash* to learn from it.

The distribution brought with it a renewed *koch* in the learning of Chassidus, and the mitzvah of *ahavas Yisrael* in particular, upon which the *maamar* focused. In the wake of the *chalukah*, numerous *shiurim* were established throughout the week to study the *maamar* in depth.



THE REBBE DISTRIBUTES KUNTRES HEICHALUTZU - JUST AFTER IT ARRIVES FROM THE PRESSES - TO THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE WHO GATHERED FOR A SECOND CHALUKA.

#### SHABBOS PARSHAS CHAYEI SARAH, 22 CHESHVAN

Amongst other things he spoke about today, the Rebbe focused on the shlichus of Eliezer regarding the marriage of Yitzchak and Rivkah. The lesson the Rebbe brought from this episode to our lives is the duty to fulfill the shlichus of "la'asos oid Yehudi." The Rebbe added that there should be a special

emphasis on this in a *Hakhel* year, when we are provided with extra help in this regard.

#### TUESDAY, 25 CHESHVAN, DIDAN NOTZACH

Since last year's victory on Hei Teves, Chassidim have been cautiously optimistic about the results of the appeal which followed.

This afternoon, we were notified that Didan Notzach—the court case was won and the appeal had been dismissed.

With lightning speed, the news spread throughout Crown Heights.

From every side one could see men, women and children hurrying toward 770.

The *simcha* with which the news was received was immense and is difficult to describe with words. Although everyone was rooting for a victory and fully believed that it would come, nevertheless, the news came as a surprise.

Joy was bursting from our hearts and giant groups of people broke out dancing outside 770. The crowds grew from minute to minute as more people arrived.

The scene at 770 was legendary; in every corner another person could be seen preciously holding on to his kuntres, with many people choosing to go to the beis midrash to learn from it.

The women and children also came to partake in the celebrations and stood across the street watching the *lebedike* dancing.

In the middle of all the tumult, it became known that all three judges had signed on this ruling. In fact, in their independently written verdicts, each of them made a point of recognizing the tremendous devotion and self-sacrifice that the Frierdiker Rebbe had for *klal Yisroel*.

The notion that three non-Jewish judges could all come to the same appreciation, lifted our spirits even more. It drove home and revealed to all, the knowledge that "Moshe emes v'Toraso emes."

Rumor has it that from the moment the news arrived, the Rebbe showed tremendous Joy.

In the interim, we were notified that the Rebbe would be coming downstairs for *mincha*, and the

bimah on which the Rebbe davens during Tishrei was quickly erected.

A few minutes before *mincha*, the *shul* was already packed with people singing "Didan Notzach" eagerly anticipating the Rebbe's arrival.

When the Rebbe entered, the singing intensified and everyone was trying to get a look at the Rebbe.

The Rebbe was very serious. On the way to his place, the Rebbe walked through the lines of children and spent considerable time giving each of them coins for tzedaka.

The Rebbe was very serious throughout mincha.

This evening there was a Farbrengen to commemorate the *shloshim* of Rabbi Mentlik, rosh yeshivah of 770. It was also, above all, held to celebrate that *shehecheyanu vekiyemanu vehigianu* to this day of Didan Notzach!

#### THURSDAY, 27 CHESHVAN

This afternoon our joy reached new heights upon hearing that the court had responded positively to Aguch about returning the *sefarim* in the coming days.

At 3:50 this afternoon the Rebbe went to the Ohel (much later than usual).

Every day in 770 one can see more people that have come from all corners of the globe to spend these special times in the *daled amos* of the Rebbe.

#### FRIDAY, 28 CHESHVAN

Beginning yesterday, masses of shluchim started arriving for the Kinus Hashluchim, which will take place this week. As Shabbos approaches, 770 is filled with shluchim learning, davening, and excitedly meeting up with old friends.

When the Rebbe entered for *Kabbalas Shabbos*, we sang the Rosh Chodesh Kislev Niggun. The Rebbe intensified our *simcha* and waved his hands to encourage the singing. Even once the Rebbe reached his place, he continued encouraging the singing.

### SHABBOS MEVARCHIM KISLEV, PARSHAS TOLDOS, 29 CHESHVAN

At today's Farbrengen, the Rebbe's first *sicha* was based on the *passuk* of *Vayishlach Yitzchok es Yaakov*. The Rebbe pointed out that *behashgacha pratis* our Parsha speaks about the *avodah* of shlichus.

The Rebbe explained how, unlike the shlichus of Eliezer Eved Avraham, we must fulfill our



SHLUCHIM LEARN THE NEW KUNTRES THROUGHOUT 770.

shlichus as messengers rather than as slaves; we need to bring our own talents and strengths into the shlichus instead of just simply following orders.

Here the Rebbe mentioned how we must take the lesson from this weeks *parsha* to go out to "Charan"—charon af shel makom ba'olam, to be mekarev another Yid.

In the second *sicha*, the Rebbe noted that before sending Yaakov, Yitzchak showered him with *brachos* in a manner of *lechatchila ariber*. We find a similar thing with the Baal Shem Tov. Namely, that before involving himself in the spiritual life of a Yid, he concerned himself with his material well being.

Consequently, the Rebbe went on to say, the same applies to the shluchim of *nessi doreinu*; that all the *brachos* of the *meshaleiach* have been fulfilled in their entirety both physically and spiritually! The Rebbe cautioned the shluchim not to worry about negative things, rather remember the words of the Tzemach Tedek, "*Tracht gut vet zain gut*."

The surprise of this Shabbos came during the third *sicha*. The Rebbe began by saying that in continuation to what was earlier said [i.e. that the shluchim shouldn't need to worry about any distractions] he will now announce what will be done—*maaseh b'poel*.

Every shliach who finds himself in debt should engage the services of a licensed bookkeeper. They should make an accounting of the entire budget up until Rosh Chodesh Kislev. This should then be sent to a specially designated division within the Vaad Hashluchim. Ten percent would be covered by Merkos and half of the remaining ninety percent (forty-five percent in total) will be given as a loan to be paid up over the following four to five years.

Following this *sicha* the Rebbe recited a *maamar ke'ein Sicha*, after which came yet another bombshell:

The Rebbe announced that on Sunday a special *kuntres* would be distributed to every shliach and shlucha.

At *mincha* the Rebbe encouraged the singing of *Aleinu*. It began spontaneously as the crowd burst into song. This was followed by *Al Tira*, which was sung as well. The Rebbe continued to encourage the singing until *maariv*, after which the Rebbe left the *shul* to the *niggun* of Rosh Chodesh Kislev.

The overjoyed crowd remained in their places and continued to sing and dance to the *niggun* at fever pitch. It was a natural expression of the immense joy and overflowing emotion felt by all, for their great *zechus* to spend this Shabbos with the

Rebbe and to witness the unique farbrengen this week.

After Shabbos there was a farbrengen/seudas hodaah to celebrate Rosh Chodesh Kislev.

The farbrengen began with Reb Yoel Kahn reviewing what the Rebbe had said earlier, at today's farbrengen.

The featured guest speaker was Dr. Weiss who flew in from Chicago especially for this event. Dr. Weiss spoke about his connection with Chabad, and in particular, with the Rebbe himself.

Amongst other things, he told the story of the Rebbe's heart attack and recovery in 5738. The warm words from Dr. Weiss were received with lots of applause from the crowd.

Rabbi Aron Leizer Ceitlin from Tzfas was also invited to address the crowd. He spoke passionately about the Rebbe's new "mivtza Hakhel" and called upon those gathered to mobilize all their kochos for this special campaign. He then went on to relate some personal experiences and successes that he had had in his involvement in the mivtza.

As the farbrengen came to a close, Reb Meir Harlig surprised everyone by showing a beautiful video. The film included excerpts of different events and farbrengens, beginning from when the Frierdiker Rebbe arrived in America until today!

The night passed with singing and dancing, to thank and praise Hashem's greatness "Al nisecha ve'al nifle'osecha ve'al yeshuosecha."

#### SUNDAY, ROSH CHODESH KISLEV

This afternoon the shluchim took a group picture outside 770.

The scene was stunning; hundreds of shluchim arranged in rows one above the other. As the picture was being taken, the shluchim sang the Rosh Chodesh Kislev Niggun.

Afterwards, they entered 770 for mincha, anxiously anticipating receiving the kuntres and dollar, as per the Rebbe's announcement yesterday.

When the Rebbe came in he turned unexpectedly to Rabbi Groner and informed him that he would deliver a sicha immediately after mincha. Quickly, the shtender and microphone were set up.

The Rebbe began by blessing the shluchim and shluchos in their holy and crucial avodah. The Rebbe mentioned that he had received duchos from a number of shluchim who had reported incredible



GROUP PHOTO OF THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL KINUS HASHLUCHIM.





THE REBBE DISTRIBUTES KUNTREISIM AND DOLLARS TO THE SHLUCHIM ON **ROSH CHODESH KISLEV, 5748.** 

JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 147987 / 1 KISLEV, 5748



KINUS HASHLUCHIM BANQUET.



MR. DAVID CHASE ADDRESSES THE CROWD AT THE KINUS HASHLUCHIM BANQUET.

success. The Rebbe then encouraged anyone who had not yet done so, to send one in.

The Rebbe then started the distribution of *kuntresim* and dollars, and announced that the shluchim—only the Shluchim—should come over, and everybody else should stand on the side.

Numerous people who passed were asked by the Rebbe whether or not they were shluchim. When one person answered that he is a rov, the Rebbe smiled but raised his hands in wonder. When someone else said that he is a *mashpia*, the Rebbe told him "I'm not even taking for myself!"

#### MONDAY, 2 KISLEV

We witnessed a touching scene this morning, as the Rebbe gave out tzedaka to the children. One boy put his hand out a second time and the Rebbe gave him another coin. Afterwards, the child called, "Rebbe..." and put his hand out once again. The Rebbe gave him a third coin and stood with him until he put it into his *pushka*.



THE SEFORIM ARE RETURNED TO 770 ON BEIS KISLEY, 5748.

As the day progressed, so did our excitement, as we were waiting with anticipation for the return of the *sefarim*!

At around 2:00 p.m. the Rebbe left to the Ohel. Before he got into the car, the Rebbe distributed coins to the children for tzedaka. As the Rebbe was giving out the coins, we stood around singing Didan Notzach. As the Rebbe came to the last of the children, he turned to us with a pained expression, and began scolding us for not using the victory as an opportunity to learn from the *sefarim*. Instead we were using our time singing Didan Notzach without taking advantage of the gift we've been given. The Rebbe then got into the car and left to the Ohel.

Rumor has it that the Rebbe asked that if the *sefarim* arrive while he is at the Ohel, some of them should be sent over to the Ohel.

Around an hour later, the *sefarim* arrived. With delight and elation, the members of Aguch brought them into 770. The *sefarim* were placed in *Gan Eden Hatachton* next to the door to the Rebbe's room, and some were sent to the Rebbe at the Ohel.

In the afternoon the main session of the Kinus Hashluchim took place. The guest speaker was attorney Jerry Shestack, who was involved in the court case and his speech was received enthusiastically.

Later on in the evening there was a farbrengen, where the members of Aguch spoke about the great victory. More importantly, they emphasized the importance of using it as an inspiration for growth—to increase and strengthen our learning in general and particularly the teachings and lessons of the Rebbe.

# AN **INTERVIEW**

Rabbi Shmuel Lew is a veteran shliach and mechanech, and a beloved mashpia to hundreds of people throughout the globe.

In an exclusive interview with A Chassidisher Derher, Rabbi Lew tells us about the early years of his life - how he became a Lubavitcher Chossid, how he became involved in communal work, and more. Most importantly, he gives us a glimpse of his personal connection with the Rebbe.

Rabbi Shmuel Lew resides in London, England.

Photo credits: Rabbi Pinny Lew, Rabbi Shmuel Lew, Jewish Educational Media, Library of Agudas Chasidei Chabad, Raskin Family Archives.



Rabbi Lew, thank you for taking the time to speak to us. Let's start from the beginning. Can you tell us a little bit about your upbringing and how your connection with Lubavitch began?

I was born in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, in 5700 to a religious family, my father being a lawyer from a Litvishe background. My childhood took place in an era before the big *chassidishe* communities arrived in America, and you didn't see Chassidim all over New York as you would today. Whereas the Williamsburg of today is a place full of Chassidim, during my childhood it was a mostly non-religious community, *shuls* bursting with people on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur but mostly empty the rest of the year.

Lubavitch, too, had just begun to blossom in America, and Lubavitchers were few and far in between. Aside from one time when I saw two Merkos shluchim at our bungalow colony, I don't recall meeting any Lubavitchers, and only vaguely heard about Lubavitch.

My connection with Lubavitch began when I went to the Aguda summer camp in 5715, when I was fifteen years old.

Part of the *tziyur* of a camp in those days was to have *yeshiva* bochurim come as guests for a week or two during the summer to spend some time learning and relaxing. Lubavitcher bochurim seized this opportunity to visit the various Jewish camps and—unofficially—teach the campers Chassidus. (This was before the establishment of Camp Gan Yisroel.)

Two of the guests in Camp Agudah that year were Rabbi Berel Shemtov and Rabbi Yizchak Meir



SHMUEL LEW AT THE AGE OF TEN.

Gourarie. Rabbi Gourarie invited me to join a *shiur* in Iggeres Hatshuva.

At first, going to the *shiur* sounded "way out there" to me. I was a busy kid. I was involved in various organizations, including Pirchei (the Agudah youth movement); I enjoyed playing sports - I wasn't looking for things to do. However, since Rabbi Gourarie had invited me, I agreed to come.

Since the *shiur* wasn't officially sanctioned by the camp, it could not take place in the *shul* or classrooms, and we had to learn clandestinely in the bunkhouses. Notwithstanding the questionable conditions, the learning was serious, and we finished the entire Iggeres Hatshuva that summer.

The Lubavitcher bochurim didn't only learn with me; rather, they developed a personal relationship with me and were mekarev me on a personal level, both in camp and later on. [For example, at the end of the summer, right before Rosh Hashana, I received a handwritten shana tova letter from Rabbi Berel Shemtov —in handwriting that I would later find out was a copy of the Rebbe's בתב יד קודש —together with a black, pocket-sized Tanya.]



SHMUEL LEW IN CAMP AGUDAH, SUMMER 5715.



A YOUNG SHMUEL LEW. CIRCA 5716.

At the end of the summer, the *bochurim* invited me to come to the Rebbe's Simchas Bais Hashoeva farbrengen of 5716, and this marked the first time I merited to see the Rebbe.

Following our summer together, Rabbi Yitzchak Meir Gourarie called me up one day inviting me to join the unofficial Chassidus *shiurim* in the dormitory of Torah Vodaas, where I was learning at the time. Dozens of *bochurim* in Torah Vodaas were going to these *shiurim*— Rabbi Moshe Feller, for example, who was a student in Torah Vodaas at the time (and would later become my



"THE GAN YISROEL FAMILY". THE THREE LEW BROTHERS (L-R) CHAIM, SHMUEL, AND ELAZAR ZEEV, POSE FOR A PICTURE WHILE IN CAMP GAN YISROEL FOR THEIR FIRST SUMMER, 5716.



CAMPERS AND STAFF POSE FOR A PICTURE AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE FIRST SUMMER OF CAMP GAN YISROEL IN ELLENVILLE, NY; SUMMER 5716.

brother-in-law), was very involved—and I agreed to join as well.

I became a steady participant in the *shiurei Chassidus*. These *shiurim* were taught by various *bochurim*, including Rabbi Berel Shemtov, Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky, Rabbi Moshe Bogomilsky, Rabbi Nachman Sudak a"h, and Rabbi Gershon Mendel Garelik; and each taught at a different level and with their own style. I personally enjoyed Rabbi Garelik's *shiur*, ultimately learning with him for two years.

Shortly before Yud-Tes Kislev, the *bochurim* held a farbrengen for the *talmidim* of Torah Vodaas. It was the first time I was at a farbrengen of Chassidim and heard this type of talk, and it was simply fantastic. I loved it. I was so excited, I remember going home and telling my mother about it.

Over the course of the farbrengen, the *bochurim* encouraged us to come to the Yud-Tes Kislev farbrengen with the Rebbe. I went to that farbrengen, and subsequently began going to all the Rebbe's major farbrengens.

# Did you have any personal relationship with the Rebbe?

Right around that time, I had my first interaction with the Rebbe.

One of my closest friends in Torah Vodaas was a *bochur* by the name of Yosef Nachman Rottenberg, a brilliant *bochur* who later went on to become a *dayan* in Baltimore. He, too, went to the Tanya *shiurim*, and together we would go to the Rebbe's farbrengens.

At the conclusion of the farbrengen of Acharon Shel Pesach 5716, during kos shel bracha, we approached the Rebbe together with Rabbi Berel Shemtov, who said, "דא זיינען צוויי בחרים" פון תורה ודעת, רוטנברג און לו, און זיי ווילען פון תורה ודעת, רוטנברג און לו, און זיי ווילען ברכה אז זיי זאלען זיין חסידיש'ע בעטען א ברכה אז זיי זאלען זיין חסידיש'ע [Here are two bochurim from Torah Vodaas, Rottenberg and Lew, and they would like to request a bracha to be chassidishe bochurim.]

"רוטנברג און...?[Rottenberg and...?]", the Rebbe asked.

"Lew," Rabbi Shemtov answered. איך בין מסכים, נאר זיי דארפען" "אויך מסכים זיין [I agree, but they must agree], the Rebbe said, and wished us l'chaim.

As the year 5716 progressed, I continued participating in the Chassidus *shiurim* and going to the Rebbe's farbrengens, becoming more and more involved.

# Interesting. So when did the real transformation happen?

In the summer of 5716, the Rebbe started Gan Yisroel under the directorship of Rabbi Moshe Lazar, who was a close family friend. Trusting that a camp under Rabbi Moshe Lazar's direction would have a positive atmosphere, my mother decided to send my brothers and me to Gan Yisroel. (Although we had previously attended the Agudah camp, my family wasn't specifically connected to it as we were not "Agudah'niks" per se.)

By the way, we weren't the only non-Lubavitch family in Gan Yisroel; far from it. In fact, most of the campers were kids like us: children who learned in Chaim Berlin, Torah Vodaas and other yeshivos, and plenty of them came from homes that were not *frum*. To be sure, there were many



THE REBBE VISITS THE SITE OF CAMP GAN YISROEL IN ELLENVILLE, NY; 16 TAMMUZ, 5716.

Lubavitcher children there too, but they were far from the majority.

Now, I'd like to tell you something about Gan Yisroel that most people don't know. Although camp was only starting a few days later, the Rebbe wanted the official opening to be on Yud-Beis/Yud-Gimmel Tammuz, the Frierdiker Rebbe's *chag hageula*, so he instructed that a *minyan* go to camp and make a *chanukas habayis* on Yud-Beis/Yud-Gimmel Tammuz.

I was asked to join the trip, which was on Friday - a school day. I played hooky, and we all piled into the back of a pickup truck for the three hour drive to Ellenville, getting nicely sunburned in the process. When we arrived in camp we had a *seuda* in honor of the *chanukas habyais*, and made it back to Brooklyn right before Shabbos.

[A few days later, the Rebbe himself paid his famous surprise visit to the Gan Yisroel grounds, but I missed it; I was probably at home playing ball or the like, and I heard nothing about it. I must tell you that until today, 60 years later, it still bothers me that no-one told me about it.]

After spending that summer in Gan Yisroel, with the farbrengens,

shiurei Chassidus, and overall chassidishe atmosphere, I became much closer to Lubavitch. Whereas the year before I had only attended the major farbrengens, now I began coming for many Shabbos farbrengens as well. In my long treks to Crown Heights I was accompanied by other members of our little Lubavitcher 'kehilla' in Williamsburg, which included Rabbi Moshe Feller, and the Blesofsky brothers.

[My family continued going to camp for five or six years thereafter, and we became known as a 'Gan Yisroel' family. Since both of my brothers' birthdays are in the summer, their bar mitzva celebrations were in camp (a fact that the Rebbe mentioned in a later *yechidus*), and this served to solidify our family's connection with Gan Yisroel in particular, and Lubavitch in general.]



◆ THE REBBE'S LETTER
TO ELAZAR ZEEV LEW,
RABBI SHMUEL LEW'S
YOUNGER BROTHER,
IN HONOR OF HIS BAR
MITZVAH WHICH TOOK
PLACE IN CAMP GAN
ISRAEL IN SWAN LAKE,
NY, SUMMER 5717.

# When was your first yechidus?

Towards the beginning of 5717, Rabbi Gershon Mendel Garelik asked me if I would like to go into *yechidus* by the Rebbe in honor of my next birthday. (My birthday was months away, in Adar, but *yechidus* had to be scheduled months in advance.)

I took Rabbi Garelik up on his offer, and he proceeded to arrange a date of *yechidus* for me. But he didn't suffice with making the technical arrangements, he did much more than that. He—together with the other *bochurim*—taught me how to prepare for *yechidus* like a Chossid. In the months leading up to my *yechidus*, I took upon myself all types of Lubavitcher *minhagim*: wearing woolen *tzitzis*; giving tzedakah before davening; preparing *negel vasser* near my bed. I got involved in *Atoh* [*Igud Talmidei Hayeshivos*].

# Lookng at me he said in yiddish, "What do you think, I said Havaya, so I became a Lubavitcher?"

Additionally, I decided to learn the *maamar* Basi Legani 5712 by heart.

I began coming to 770 once a week to learn the *maamar* with one of the *bochurim*, which turned out to be a major push for my budding growth as a Lubavitcher. Heretofore, my only visits to 770 had been for the Rebbe's farbrengens, but now I had the opportunity to spend time *tzvishen di chevre* and become part of the *bochurim*.

[When the bochurim prepared me for yechidus, they gave me a few pointers, and one of them was not to sit down, even if the Rebbe told me to. It was difficult to come to terms with this idea—if the Rebbe instructs you to do something, how could you not listen? In a way, this was the hardest part of the yechidus for me to accept. But they assured me that, in any case, this was unlikely to happen and there was nothing to worry about.

When I walked into *gan eden* ha'elyon, the first word the Rebbe told me was 'zitzt' [sit down].

(As per my friends' instructions, I remained standing.)]

Two days before my seventeenth birthday, my time for *yechidus* arrived.

In my tzetel, I wrote about my hachanos to yechidus, gave a general description of my situation in life, and asked the Rebbe's advice on two dilemmas facing me at the time, both regarding yeshiva.

At the time, I was still planning on becoming a lawyer like my father. I was thinking about starting night college following my graduation from high school at the end of the year, as many *bochurim* at that time would do. However, the *hanhala* of Torah Vodaas had advised some *bochurim* to push it off a year and instead stay in yeshiva full-time, and I asked the Rebbe's advice on what to do.

My second question was whether I should join Tomchei Temimim. Although I myself didn't feel ready for such a step, I asked the Rebbe if it would be a good idea.



In contrast to all my later *yechidus*'n and conversations with the Rebbe, during this first yechidus the Rebbe addressed me with the formal 'ir,' instead of the informal 'du.' [I went into *yechidus* 25 or 26 times after that, and I had many more interactions at farbrengens and otherwise, but this was the only time the Rebbe addressed me as



A LETTER SHMUEL LEW RECEIVED FROM THE REBBE WHILE A COUNSELOR IN CAMP GAN YISROEL IN SWAN LAKE, NY, DATED 15 MENACHEMAV 5717, WHERE HE IS ENCOURAGED TO INSTILL IN THE CHILDREN YIRAS SHOMAYIM AND A LOVE FOR TORAH AND MITZYOS.

'ir.'] I was very emotional, shaking with awe and immense feeling.

First the Rebbe told me a general horaa: that I should learn Chassidus for at least ten or fifteen minutes every day, adding that for my birthday, I should learn an extra shiur of nigleh and Chassidus "at your disposition."

Then the Rebbe addressed my question about schooling:

"Regarding what you write about college: This [academic] year, which concludes in June...you will surely remain in Torah Vodaas [—instead of going to Tomchei Temimim right away]. In regards to afterwards, if you're asking my opinion, I think you should utilize [אריינלייגען] all your energies in *limudei kodesh* for another year - as you wrote - and perhaps even longer."

I followed the Rebbe's instructions and finished the school year in Torah Vodaas, but although I hadn't

# As I was drawing away, after I had taken two or three steps, the Rebbe called out to me and said, "סע עפעס", "You must also do something for this."

moved to Tomchei Tmimim, there were many things happening in my life that were causing me to identify more and more with the Lubavitcher way of life. I was coming to many of the Rebbe's farbrengens, learning Chassidus, and spending time with Lubavitcher *bochurim*.

Slowly, I was becoming known as 'the Lubavitcher' in Torah Vodaas. One of my teachers was Reb Avrohom Yeshaya Rappaport, a talmid muvhak of Reb Shimon Shkop (the closeness is evident in the fact that he is one of the few people mentioned in the hakdama to Shaarei Yosher). We were learning Maseches Yevamos one day, and as he read the passage מקיש הוי' ליציאה (a hekesh comparing the way one acquires a woman with the way she is divorced), he looked at me and said in Yiddish, "What do you think, I said "Havaya", so I became a Lubavitcher?"

# What was it that made you decide to make such a big change in your life and become a Lubavitcher?

You know, my friends were always asking me the same question: 'What were you missing before?" Or, "What were you running away from?"

My answer has always been that nothing was missing in my life before I came to Lubavitch. To the contrary, I had a very full life: I was a *gabbai* in the shul, played softball in the local camp, was active in various organizations, and had no wish to leave my old life behind.

And the truth of the matter is that I didn't leave my old life behind, for my values and way of life stayed the same. What learning Chassidus and being by the Rebbe accomplished was to take everything I had been doing before and make it much more meaningful.

The next summer, in 5717, I again went to Gan Yisroel. After camp was over and everyone went home, I went back to help finish packing. While there, Rabbi Avraham Shemtov and I went on a walk. He told me that, in his opinion, the time had arrived for me to join Tomchei Temimim. "You will end up coming to Tomchei Temimim anyways," he told me, "but it will bother you that you didn't join sooner."

I had already been on the path to Tomchei Temimim, but this was the *makeh bipatish*. I decided to go ahead with it. As far as choosing a specific yeshiva to go to, Newark, the predecessor of Morristown, seemed to be the obvious choice, since Rabbi Yosef Rosenfeld—who was a *bochur* my age—had earlier spoken to me about being my *chavrusa* there.

After the summer, on Chof-Gimmel Elul, I wrote a *tzetel* to the Rebbe detailing my decision to join Tomchei Temimim and asking if I should go to Newark, and, in addition, I wrote about a problem that had arisen. My father wasn't happy with my decision to go to yeshiva full time, instead of starting college in preparation for a career in law. I asked the Rebbe what to do.

Two days later, on Chof-Hei Elul 5717, I got my answer. Regarding the choice of yeshiva, the Rebbe wrote נוארק או מאנטרעאל, כעצח, Newark or Montreal, according to the advice of Rabbi Mentlik *sheyichye*.

Regarding my father, the Rebbe wrote, 'הדיבור עם אביו שיחי', [the



A SIMCHAS BEIS HASHOEVAH FARBRENGEN IN THE SUKKAH, 5715.



conversation with your father should be based on *birkas hazan* (the first *bracha* in *birkas hamazon*).]

What was the Rebbe referring to? Rabbi Hodakov, who, in addition to his function of relaying the Rebbe's answers themselves, was empowered by the Rebbe to explain these short, succinct responses—explained it to me: We say in *birkas hamazon* that Hashem feeds every single one of his creations. "If Hashem gives parnassa to the 3 billion people of the world, He can provide parnassa for you as well, even without a college degree." Hashem is the one who sustains us, so there's nothing to worry about.

#### What was Rabbi Mentlik's advice on a choice of yeshiva?

That's a story for itself. When the Rebbe had told me to go to

Rabbi Mentlik, I assumed that it was to be tested in learning, the outcome of which would determine which place was more appropriate for my capabilities.

I approached Rabbi Mentlik, and related to him my question to the Rebbe and the answer I had received. He asked me (in Yiddish), "In your *tzetel*, did you mention Montreal?" I.e., was it part of your proposal, or was it wholly the Rebbe's idea?

I said "No". (In fact, I had never heard of the yeshiva in Montreal until the Rebbe had mentioned it.)

"If so," Rabbi Mentlik said, "Montreal."

That was it. The entire episode, the entire "test" I had been nervously anticipating, must have taken less than thirty seconds. Once Rabbi Mentlik realized that the Rebbe wanted me to go to Montreal, there were no other considerations. (Maybe the Rebbe put me through this process so that I would see what the *bitul* of a *chassidishe Yid* looks like.)

All this transpired at the end of Elul 5717, a few days before Rosh Hashana 5718. That Tishrei was the first one I spent in Crown Heights, and it was then that I truly experienced Tishrei with the Rebbe: davening in 770, hearing the Rebbe's *tekios* on Rosh Hashana, and participating in the Sukkos farbrengens.

At the Simchas Torah farbrengen at night, I approached the Rebbe's place—a common practice then—and asked for a *bracha* for *hatzlacha* in Tomchei Temimim. The Rebbe answered "Amen, Amen." (That was the only time in my life that the Rebbe wished me a double *amen*.) As I was drawing away, after I had taken two or three steps, the Rebbe called



RABBI SHMUEL LEW (R) AT THE TRAIN STATION ON HIS WAY TO JOIN YESHIVAS TOMCHEI TEMIMIM LUBAVITCH MONTREAL. RABBI AVRAHAM SHEMTOV (L) JOINS HIM AT THE STATION.

out to me and said, "דו דארפ'סט עפעס", "You must also do something for this." In other words, the Rebbe had given me the *nesinas koach*, but I would have to work on it.

After Simchas Torah, I went to Montreal, and an entirely new chapter opened in my life. Those were *geshmake* years..

# When did you visit New York during those years?



THE "PASSPORT" FROM YESHIVAS TOMCHEI TEMIMIM MONTREAL, CONFIRMING THAT PERMISSION WAS GRANTED FOR A BOCHUR TO TRAVEL TO THE REBBE.



RABBI SHMUEL LEW (C) AND FELLOW BOCHURIM BREAK OUT IN A DANCE UPON THEIR ARRIVAL AT THE YESHIVA IN MONTREAL.

The Montreal yeshiva would travel to the Rebbe four times a year: Tishrei, Yud Shevat, Pesach, and Yud-Beis Tammuz. But in order to get permission to go, you had to be tested in nigleh and Chassidus-both before the trip, in Montreal, and also during the trip, in New York. (I was tested in New York by Rabbi Mentlik in nigleh, and by Rabbi Yoel Kahn in Chassidus.) It was a strict system; Rabbi Hodakov once saw a bochur in 770 and asked him "Where is your 'passport?" -- meaning the tests. Without your 'passport,' you weren't allowed to be in New York.

We weren't allowed to "just go"; we prepared ourselves before visiting the Rebbe. This was true even when we weren't planning on having *yechidus* - which was most times we came to New York, since *yechidus* was only once a year. The very fact that we went to the Rebbe demanded preparation.

This is an important point in general. It is of critical importance to prepare oneself before going to the Rebbe, and you can't compare being by the Rebbe with *hachana* to without.

Every person must prepare on their own level. Some people are on a higher level where they are expected to do more than others; for example, when I was in Montreal, my friend Rabbi Yitzchok Meir Gourarie was expected You should always keep in mind that you are there for a single purpose — to see the Rebbe. All other "horses," like visiting family and the like, shouldn't distract you from your real purpose.



A LETTER FROM THE REBBE TO SHMUEL LEW UPON HIS ARRIVAL IN MONTREAL DATED 20 MENACHEMAV 5720, WISHING HIM SUCCESS IN HIS STUDIES.

to be tested on **three** *maamarim baal peh*. And he didn't just have to recite the *maamar*; rather, he was asked, "What does it say in *ois gimmel* of this

maamar? What does it say in ois ches?" He was expected to know it perfectly.

On the other hand, other people's preparation was in basic Yiddishkeit. A big-macher in the UJA once flew to New York for yechidus with the Rebbe to discuss communal affairs. Although he generally didn't keep kashrus, he refrained from eating the treife airline meal on the way to New York. His reasoning was that it didn't feel appropriate to eat non-kosher right before going in to the Rebbe.

Raphael Nouril is a famous artist living here in England. Originally hailing from Iran, he is a genius artist who was commissioned to draw portraits of the Shah of Iran's family. He became a Lubavitcher later in life after experiencing a miracle of the Rebbe, but many years ago, when he was still non-observant and had yet to become a Lubavitcher, he drew a portrait of the Rebbe.

Although he was completely non-religious, during the time when he was drawing the Rebbe's portrait he put on tefillin every day. He felt that when doing something so intimately connected to the Rebbe, his behavior should be better. [This was one of the portraits on which the Rebbe commented "it's better than the original."]

Even people who were completely non-religious understood that going to the Rebbe demands some type of improvement in one's behavior.

In addition to the preparation one must do before traveling to the Rebbe, it's very important to stay focused during the trip itself.

At farbrengens, Rabbi Greenglass used to tell us the story of a Chossid who would always travel to the Rebbe on foot, eschewing travel by horse and buggy. As he got older and walking became more difficult, he went to the Rebbe less frequently. Chassidim asked him, "Now that you're older, and you cannot make

the trip by foot, why not travel with a horse and buggy? That way, at least you'll be able to see the Rebbe!"

"After I pass away and come to shomayim," the Chossid answered, "everything that was involved in my life will try to take credit for my trip to the Rebbe. If I travel with a horse and buggy, the horse will take credit as well. Why," the Chossid concluded, "should I have a horse in my Lubavitch?"

Rabbi Greenglass would explain that you have to prevent your own "horses" from invading your trip to the Rebbe. You should always keep in mind that you are there for a single purpose - to see the Rebbe. All other "horses," like visiting family and the like, shouldn't distract you from your real purpose.

Wow. Thank you for those inspiring and very relevant words. Can you share with us some of the Rebbe's words to you in yechidus from after you joined Tomchei Tmimim?

Sure. My first trip from Montreal to the Rebbe was for Yud Shevat 5718, and since this was the closest time to my birthday that I would be in New York, I was scheduled for *yechidus* on Sunday, 12 Shevat.

I was the second to last person to enter *yechidus* that night, beginning my *yechidus* at about 4:00 a.m.

As I mentioned earlier, my father wasn't happy about my choice to learn in yeshiva full-time instead of attending college in the evenings, and he was even more upset that I had gone to a yeshiva out of town. Because of this, during this visit for Yud Shevat, I had spent Shabbos with my parents instead of in 770. The atmosphere at home was a bit tense.

In my *tzetel* that I handed to the Rebbe at the *yechidus*, I wrote about the difficulties I was having at home, and the Rebbe addressed this at length.

"My father is fond of Lubavitch," I said, "however..."

The Rebbe finished my thought: "But not that you should be [a Lubavitcher]?"

The Rebbe inquired about my father and my family, and I mentioned that my grandfather, R' Pinchas z"l had learned by Rabbi Chaim Brisker. The Rebbe commented, "He [Rabbi Chaim Brisker] had a good relationship with the Chassidim, and the Soloveitchik here [Rabbi Yosef Ber Soloveitchik, a grandson of his] is constantly praising the Chassidim."

Then the Rebbe advised me on how to deal with the situation at home. "Go back to Montreal as soon



THE REBBE STANDS IN THE COURTYARD OF 770, GREETING THE CHILDREN RETURNING HOME FROM CAMP GAN YISROEL, 5717. RABBI SHMUEL LEW CAN BE SEEN RIGHT BEHIND THE REBBE'S LEFT SHOULDER.

# "People don't know what Chassidim are; they think they just sing and dance, much as they are portrayed on television.



THE REBBE POURS A L'CHAIM FOR RABBI SHMUEL LEW AT THE YUD SHEVAT FARBRENGEN, 5724.

as possible," the Rebbe said. "Don't enter into debates, 'ניט קוועטשען' ["don't squeeze them into a corner"], and don't get into machlokes'in." The Rebbe repeated this a few times. The Rebbe also instructed me to, "Ask the hanhala to send a report [to your father] about your progress in learning, etc. When he sees your success in [yeshiva], he will realize that college is not for you."

The Rebbe then asked me, "Has your father ever been at a farbrengen?"

"No", I answered. But I added that I had asked him if he would like to go into *yechidus*.

"The request that he speak to a person whom he doesn't know [i.e. going into *yechidus*] is more difficult," the Rebbe said. "On the other hand, all types of people come to the farbrengens, some with beards and others without beards."

The Rebbe continued: "[In general] people don't know what Chassidim are; they think they just sing and dance, much as they are portrayed on television. If your father would come to a farbrengen and see the people there: Americans and non-Americans, with beards and without beards; and he will hear what is being said, it will surely have an impact on him."

The Rebbe added that my father could be driven to the farbrengen in a car—which would make it easier on him, although it might be too early to invite him for the farbrengen on Purim.

The Rebbe then asked if my parents were close to anyone from Camp Gan Yisroel (like Rabbi Kehos Weiss).

When I answered that they knew and liked Rabbi Avrohom Shemtov, the Rebbe said to ask Rabbi Shemtov to invite my father to the farbrengen and arrange for him to come.

[When my father was invited to the farbrengen by Rabbi Shemtov, the first thing he asked was, "Will you send a car?" It's amazing how the Rebbe's words were right on target. In the end, a bochur from 770 picked up my parents in his car, and they spent a few hours at the famous farbrengen of Purim 5718. Five weeks later, on Motzei Acharaon Shel Pesach, when I went by the Rebbe at kos shel bracha, the Rebbe asked me, "Did your father repeat something from [the farbrengen on] Purim?" "A little bit," I replied. "Has it [=the situation] gotten better?" asked the Rebbe. "A bit better." "Nu," the Rebbe concluded, "it should become completely better."]

After we had discussed my difficulties at home, the Rebbe gave some *hora'os* for yeshiva. "Find opportunities to influence others; *hashpa'ah* is not only for those younger than you, but for friends and others as well."

Afterwards, I requested a *bracha* for my sister to have children, and the Rebbe asked who her husband was. When I replied that he had learned in Nitra [a Chassidishe Yeshiva], the Rebbe asked, "Is your father happy with that? They wear white stockings!" I explained that he had become a *baal teshuva* while learning in Y.U.

The Rebbe smiled, and said, "Es vet zayn gut" [it will be good].

It's amazing to hear about the warmth and *kiruv* you experienced in this *yechidus*. Let's go back to your time in Montreal. How long did you learn there for?

I was in Montreal for four years. Those were very important years

#### My yechidus'n on 13 Shevat 5720 and 13 Shevat 5721 were edited by the Rebbe upon my request. I'd like to tell over some of the Rebbe's guidance on issues that challenge many of us.

#### **Thoughts**

One question I asked the Rebbe was how to deal with empty or negative thoughts.

The Rebbe said to learn by heart the first part of Tanya perek 41, up to the word hamelech, where the Alter Rebbe speaks about the answer to these issues; עליו...ובוחן כליות ולב אם עובדו כראוי, Hashem stands over him...and analyzes his mind and heart to see if he is serving Him as is fitting. It's better to learn it word for word, and say it over from time to time, in speech or at least in thought.

Also, learn by heart a few perakim of Mishnayos and Tanya, and think them over when you walk in the street, during your free time, and between the sedarim of nigleh and Chassidus. A little bit of light dispels much darkness.

But the main thing is to focus on it as little as possible. When a thought like that falls in your mind, don't fight it! Just think about something else, no matter what it is: If it's an *inyan* in Torah, that's surely good; but if that's not possible for whatever reason, think about something else—the weather or politics—whatever will divert your mind from these thoughts.

#### **Tefilla**

I also inquired about which *inanyim* in Chassidus I should be *misbonen* during davening. The Rebbe answered that it depends

where I have more *chayus*. If I have more *chayus* in the *maamar* that I learned before davening, that's what I should think about; and if I find more *chayus* in the meaning of the words, that's what I should focus on. "The main thing", the Rebbe said, "is that it should be with *lebbedikeit* [liveliness]."

The Rebbe concluded: "You will see that it's not as difficult as you imagine it to be."

#### Truth

I also said to the Rebbe that I feel like I'm missing a kernel of truth in everything I do. The Rebbe told me that, in general, the first focus must be on *doing*. One of the tricks of the *yetzer hara* is to convince you that since you're not doing something *lishma*, you might as well not do it at all. The truth is, though, that you must do your *avoda* anyway. As the gemara says and the Alter Rebbe *paskens* in *halacha*, a person must serve Hashem even *shelo lishma*. As you get used to it, it will eventually be *lishma*.

#### Hiskashrus

During the farbrengen of Yud Shevat 5721, the Rebbe spoke at length about the idea that when a person has a sudden awakening for *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe, with no idea where the urge came from, he should know that it's a result of the Rebbe thinking about him. He must do everything

in his power to grab onto the *hisorerus* and express it in action.

Now, in yechidus, I asked the Rebbe how, specifically, to bring it into action. The Rebbe said to do like it says in Hayom Yom; "וואס איך לערן לערן", learn what he [the Rebbe] learns [which creates a tremendous bond unparalleled in the entire world, as explained in Tanya]; keep the *shiurim* of Chitas; and, first and foremost, keep the *sidrei hayeshiva*, to such an extent that it will have an effect on others.

[Since the Rebbe said that the first and foremost thing for hiskashrus was to keep sidrei hayeshiva, I made sure to always be on time for sedarim, and I always woke up for seder Chassidus, regardless of when I went to bed. When my sister got married to Rabbi Moshe Feller, the morning after the wedding I was in zal for Chassidus.

I received a reward for my toil. On the days the Rebbe went to the Ohel, he would come to 770 early in the morning, at about 7:00 a.m. and listen to *krias haTorah*. The morning after my sister's wedding, the Rebbe came in for an early *krias haTorah* and I merited to be present there.]

At the end of the *yechidus*, I said, "The Rebbe said that I should learn what the Rebbe learns...?" [I.e. what is it that the Rebbe learns?]

"איך לערן נגלה און חסידות" "I learn *nigleh* and Chassidus," was the Rebbe's reply.

in my life, the most significant aspect being the *teshuka* to be with the Rebbe, which was a major part of the atmosphere.

Eventually, I asked the Rebbe through Rabbi Hodakov if I could come to learn in New York to be closer to my brother, who was learning in Torah Vodaas at the time, which would enable me to be *mikarev* him. Permission was granted, and thus, my time in 770 began.

"I realize that if you break up with her, you will feel a wound," the Rebbe continued. "But I assure you that, eventually, you will break up with her, and the longer you wait, the deeper the wound will be."

# What was it like to learn in 770?

Overall, we didn't see the Rebbe very often. We would see the Rebbe on Monday and Thursday during *krias haTorah*, weekday *minchas and maarivs*, and Shabbos, otherwise, we only saw glimpses here and there. But we always felt the *aimas hamelech*, knowing that the Rebbe was there in 770. Everyone felt that 770 was their true home, and that this was the place where their innermost *neshama* expressed itself.

Every night of *yechidus* I would make sure to stick around in 770 the entire time that the Rebbe was there, and I witnessed the hundreds and thousands of people streaming through 770 to meet the Rebbe, representing all segments of Jewish life. As they came out of *yechidus*, I would speak to them and try to glean an anecdote, *vort*, or piece of advice from the Rebbe.



# Were you also involved in hafatza during that time?

After I arrived back in New York, I started getting involved in visiting campuses and talking to students. This was many years before Chabad had a presence on campuses, and



RABBI LEW SITS ON THE DAIS AT THE SECOND ANNUAL "PGISHA IM CHABAD" PROGRAM, ORGANIZED FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS TO SPEND A WEEKEND IN CROWN HEIGHTS; TEVES 5725.



AN EARLY DRAFT OF THE FLYER FOR THE FIRST "PGISHA IM CHABAD" IN 5724, WITH THE REBBE'S HANDWRITTEN HAGAHOS.

our group was the one of the first that started working with students. Our group was under the leadership of Rabbi Berel Baumgarten, who worked in Tzach, and included Rabbis Yossi Goldstein, Binyomin Klein, Chaim Suede, and others.

Our first Shabbaton was at Penn State University. The Conservative rabbi at the Hillel there was formerly a rabbi in Waco, Texas, and he had met Rabbi Binyomin Klein when he was on Merkos Shlichus in Waco. After he moved to Penn State, he invited Rabbi Klein to bring a group for a Shabbaton, which was set for Shabbos *parshas Lech Lecha* 5722.

In order to spread the word, we hung up signs all over campus announcing the Shabbaton. The signs weren't fancy at all: They were Hendel Lieberman's painting of dancing Chassidim, with the words "Join us for a Chassidic Experience" and the time and the place.

To our astonishment, over three hundred students showed up for the Friday night meal. It was packed. You have to realize what it was like at the time: This was the early 1960s, only a short time after Chassidim had begun arriving in America, and many people had never seen a Chassidic Jew in their lives, English-speaking Chassidim no less. Curious to see what these Chassidim were, they came in droves.

The Shabbaton had a major impact on the students, many of whom eventually became *frum*, or at least more *frum*. A few weeks later, about ten or fifteen of these students came to 770 for a Shabbaton. This was



the first Shabbaton of students in 770, and it was the seed that would later grow into the famous *pegisha*.

When the group of students came into New York they went in for a *yechidus klolis* to the Rebbe; afterwards, three students had *yechidus protis*, and two had fascinating stories.

The first was Professor Yaakov Hanoka a"h—"Jack" at the time—a PhD student at Penn. He was in *yechidus* for about two hours. He would go on to have a very deep *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe, like a son to a father, and it all began at that *yechidus*.

The Rebbe suggested that he come learn in 770, emphasizing that he might instruct other people to learn in Yeshiva University or Torah Vodaas, but he—Yaakov—belonged in 770.

This was a radical proposal, for several reasons. First, Yaakov was completely ignorant in Jewish knowledge, lacking the ability to even read the Alef-Beis. Do you know what that meant in those days? Not knowing Hebrew was a serious obstacle to any Jewish learning, since there were very few English sefarim to begin learning from. Second, he would have a hard time learning with most of the bochurim, since three quarters of the population at 770 didn't even speak English! To top it off, he was much older than most of the bochurim in 770.

Yet, the Rebbe decided that he should learn in 770.

Every Thursday night, the Rebbe would have *yechidus* with the *hanhala* of 770. The next time the *hanhala* went in to the Rebbe, he asked them if they had received any new applications. When they answered that an application had come in from a Hanoka student, the Rebbe asked if they had accepted him.

They answered that they didn't see how he would fit in; again, he literally did not know *Alef-Beis*.

The Rebbe didn't force them to accept him. But he said, "If it were up to me - I would say to take him, because he will be the first of thousands." [They accepted him, of course.]

When I heard about this story, I danced with joy. I saw it as a *nevua*: who could have foreseen in those years, in the early sixties, the hundreds and thousands of people who would become *baalei teshuva* in the ensuing decades? Who would have dreamed of such a thing?

[It would be like saying that a Chabad House would be established in Moscow and be visited by the Russian Prime Minister; nobody could have dreamed of such things! It just shows how these signs of *yemos haMoshiach* are happening before our eyes, yet, because it is occurring slowly, we fail to recognize the immensity of it all.]

# Fascinating. What happened to the other student?

The second student - we'll call him R. - had a non-Jewish girlfriend and he was planning on marrying her r"l. She was thinking of converting, but even a kosher conversion wouldn't save the situation: he was a Kohen, prohibited from marrying a convert.

When he went into *yechidus*, after explaining to him that his status as a Kohen precludes his



marrying a convert, the Rebbe did something very unusual. Gesturing to the shelves of *sefarim* all around the room, the Rebbe said, "You see all these books? I've learned every single one of them, yet I cannot become a Kohen." Only someone born with it has that special merit.

"I realize that if you break up with her, you will feel a wound," the Rebbe continued. "But I assure you that, eventually, you will break up with her, and the longer you wait, the deeper the wound will be."

This *yechidus* also lasted about two hours, and R. related it to me after he came out.

A few weeks went by. A group of us was in Pittsburgh for an event at the local university (which attracted a huge crowd, about two hundred people), and we met R.'s non-Jewish girlfriend. After introducing herself, she told us that R. had a collapsed lung and was in the hospital. We made up to visit him at 3:00 p.m. the following day.

The next day, we went to the hospital an hour early to try avoiding the girlfriend, but she was in the room when we arrived. Nevertheless, Yaakov Hanoka, a good friend of R.'s, tried his luck at talking him out of marrying the girl.

It was all to no avail, and R. later married her.

A couple of years later, a group of Merkos shluchim met R., and this is how I found out the end of the story. Shortly after he got married, they began arguing and quarrelling with each other. And a fascinating thing happened: every time he argued with her, his lung felt a little bit better. At one point, they had a major argument which led to their separation and subsequent divorce, and consequently his lung was completely healed. According to the doctors, it was as if nothing had ever happened.

The Rebbe's words "You will feel a wound" were expressed in a very physical way.

It's astonishing how much can come out of one night of yechidus! Let's return to your outreach activities.

Those were amazing times. I must have gone with Rabbi Berel Baumgarten to at least twenty campuses: Columbia University in New York, Northwestern in Chicago, College Park in Maryland, and others. We also visited communities and spoke to B'nei Brith groups, and I even remember an event in Manhattan across the street from the U.N.

It was hard work. There were probably five shluchim throughout the entire U.S at the time—Rabbi Shlomo Cunin, for example, wasn't even married yet—and people had no idea about what Chabad was, so pulling people in was difficult.

Towards the end of his year in yeshiva, Yaakov Hanoka arranged the first *pegisha*, where students came to 770 for an "Encounter" [*pegisha*] with Chabad, and I was the co-chair of the program. The Rebbe was quite involved in it, editing the flyers and informing us if there would be a farbrengen that week. Furthermore, when the students joined the Rebbe's



farbrengen, the *sichos* were tailored towards them. At one of these farbrengens, for example, the Rebbe spoke about *teshuva* and *hora'os* that can be learned from the radio.

I think the Rebbe had a special *nachas* from these early students.

# You were there at the very beginning of everything...

I always say this to my *talmidim* and *talmidos*: when you look at Lubavitch today, you see a colossal movement. It includes all different types of people with varying levels of intellect and style, and there are thousands of shluchim spread throughout the world.

When you think about it for a moment, you come to realize that you are part of the most powerful organization in the world - not only because of its size, but because of its message; because of its continuous motivation to reach more and more people and bring the entire world to its ultimate purpose. It's a fantastic feeling to feel that you belong to such a movement, and you can feel exceedingly proud of who you are.

The danger is, though, that you can feel too small and insignificant to make a real difference. "There are already so many shluchim out there, so many Lubavitchers out there. What

when war yield a literate already so many shluchim out there, so many Lubavitchers out there. What him to more performance and the solution of the solution of

ON AN ENVELOPE FOR RABBI SHMUEL LEW, THE REBBE CROSSED OUT THE MERKOS ADDRESS, AND WROTE "C/O S. LEW".

I have come to realize that the youth of today have a deep hiskashrus to the Rebbe, a profound connection in their neshama, more than people twenty-five, forty-five, and even fifty-five years ago.

difference can I make at this point? How is my doing—or not doing—relevant in the bigger picture?"

This thinking is completely wrong. Every person has unique kochos and opportunities, and no one else can do what they can. The Rebbe would always tell each person to look at himself and his station in life, and utilize his unique ability to make a difference.

There is a beautiful story that illustrates this: Rabbi Krinsky, Lubavitch's liaison to the media, cultivated a connection with a famous journalist from the New York Times. At one point, Rabbi Krinsky invited him to meet the Rebbe at a Simchas Torah farbrengen. After introducing him to the Rebbe, Rabbi Krinsky drew away to allow the journalist to speak to the Rebbe privately.

The Rebbe told him just one sentence. "You can reach more people than I."

This sentence 'went into his bones' and made a major difference in his personal and professional life, because the Rebbe made him aware of where his potential was, and where he could make a unique contribution. [Ultimately, his only son became frum and his grandchildren attended Jewish day schools.]

This is the way the Rebbe showed us. At every opportunity, the Rebbe exhorted and encouraged people to look at their own lives and ask themselves 'What can I do that no one else can?'

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, former chief Rabbi of England, was one of the students who I learned with in my first years in England, and we had a *shiur* in his room for many years. When he became the new chief rabbi, he had an interview with BBC TV - watched by millions of people throughout the U.K. and beyond - and they asked him, "What made you, a brilliant Cambridge graduate, become a rabbi?"

In answer to their question, he told them about his first vechidus with the Rebbe. At the time, he was doing a program on Jewish leadership where he interviewed fifteen or twenty Jewish leaders, asking each one of them about twenty questions he had prepared. When he went in to the Rebbe, after he finished his list of questions, the Rebbe said, "Now let me ask you a question: what do you propose to do to enhance Jewish life in Cambridge?'

This question turned his life around. It was the first time he realized that it's not enough to be someone who 'belongs' and is affiliated with Judaism—ashreinu ma tov chelkeinu, a lucky member of the Jewish nation. Rather, he must be a producer, a creator, a leader himself. "Good leaders create followers," Rabbi Sacks said. "But great leaders create leaders." The Rebbe made him realize that he must be a leader, and take an active position in Yiddishkeit.

And this is the Rebbe's message for every one of us.

Do you feel that young people today, after Gimmel Tammuz, are able to reach the same level of chassidishkeit and hiskashrus as in your days, when the Rebbe's physical presence was felt so closely?

I experienced a similar type of issue when I was a bochur. It bothered me that I wasn't there when the Rebbe was becoming Rebbe to sign a ksav hiskashrus to the Rebbe, and this hergesh was one of the reasons that, in one of my abovementioned yechidus'n, I asked the Rebbe's bracha for hiskashrus.

However, as the years passed, I realized that this hergesh was not a correct one; it was really a diversion and distraction from my own avoda, and it might have



RABBI LEW RECEIVES LEKACH FROM THE REBBE; 19 TISHREI 5750.

served as an excuse to not fully utilize my current opportunities.

Throughout all the years, you could always choose to focus on what you didn't have. In the early years, every bochur could go into yechidus once a year, but usually only for a minute or two, and it felt a bit remote only two or three minutes a year! Afterwards, when bochurim could no longer enter yechidus, those short yechidus'n were what everyone missed.

True, It's impossible to compare this with the terrible situation after Gimmel Tammuz. But the point is the same: we cannot allow the current situation to serve as an excuse to lose focus of our avoda. We have to look at the present reality, and think to ourselves, "This is the situation I am in now - it's the only show in town. Given my current situation now, what can I do to utilize my potential to the fullest extent?"

It says in the passuk, ועתה ישראל מה ה' אלוקיך שואל מעמך [Now, Yisrael, what is Hashem demanding of you]. We have to look at ourselves and recognize the opportunities we do have, and elevate them and utilize them to the fullest extent.

Our attitude has to be, what is required from me now? How can I serve Hashem now? We cannot make any excuses for not doing our avoda.

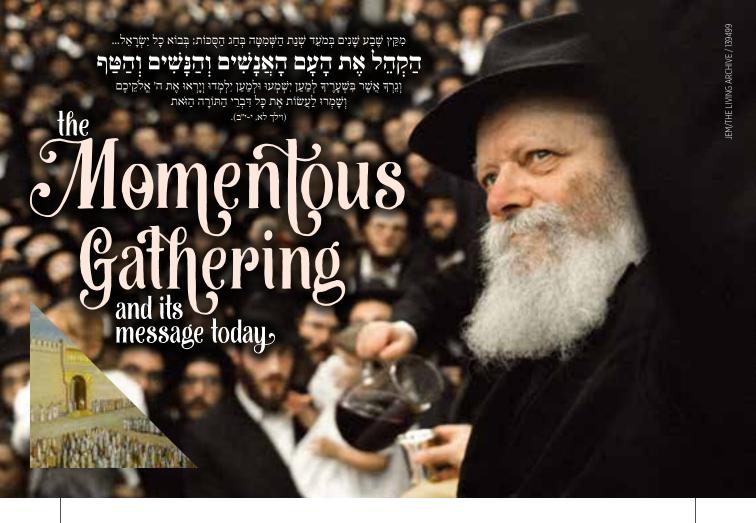
And the reality is that this generation of Chassidim truly is mekushar to the Rebbe.

When Gimmel Tammuz happened, I thought that there would be two types of people: those before Gimmel Tammuz and those who came afterwards. That was my thinking as a mechanech.

Today, though, I have come to realize that the youth of today have a deep hiskashrus to the Rebbe, a profound connection in their neshama, more than people twenty-five, fortyfive, and even fifty-five years ago. Anyone I have spoken to about this has agreed with me. I see tremendous dedication to the Rebbe's work, more than when I was a bochur. I see this hiskashrus in the bochurim I farbreng with, in the talmidos in my school - in the way they give me pani'm to take to the Rebbe, and in many other ways. A large proportion of them have it in a revealed way, and even those who don't—it's simply more reserved and hidden. But the deepest part of them is their connection with the Rebbe. This is a very special generation.

Thank you, Rabbi Lew. •





INSIGHTS INTO THE MITZVAH OF HAKHEL AND ITS RELEVANCE TODAY, COLLECTED FROM THE REBBE'S SICHOS AND LETTERS

#### **ROYAL TORAH**

Why would the king read the Torah? Lead the people, judge them—sure. But Torah? Leave that to the *Sanhedrin*. Usually, that's the way it would work; the king would enforce the law and the *Sanhedrin* would teach it. *Hakhel* is different though, and here's why:

There are two types of Torah study: one which focuses on understanding Torah, and the other is reading *Torah shebichsav*, which does not require comprehension. In this second category everyone is equal. You may be smarter than me, but we both read the same words in a Torah scroll.

Because the emphasis of *Hakhel* is Jewish unity, the portion read is from *Torah shebichsav*, in which

we're all alike, and <code>Hakhel</code>—the Rambam writes—is like the day that Torah was given initially at <code>Har Sinai</code>. For this reason too, the king is the one who restates it. We connect to our teachers by way of our minds, understanding and then internalizing what they've communicated. In this, as mentioned above, there are differences. Our association with the king, however, has nothing to do with understanding; our whole essence is under his dominion. He therefore is the best candidate to read the Torah at <code>Hakhel</code>, as everyone is uniform in their subjugation to him. The king then symbolizes the oneness of Jews better than any teacher can.

(Based on Likutei Sichos, Vol 19 pg. 301)



### HAKHEL AT ITS BEST - A TIMELY CONNECTION

Cheshvan is when the real test of *Hakhel* begins; when we've left all the hype and hubbub of Tishrei behind and returned to our normal lives. Historically, the 7th of Cheshvan was the day the last pilgrims reached their homes upon returning from *aliya* leregel. While in the Beis Hamikdash it was easy to feel the unity, here is Hakhel's defining moment; can we feel one with all Jews after Tishrei, once we've left Yerushalayim, "ir shechubra la yachdav—the city that breeds togetherness?" Hakhel isn't just about a ceremony that happened on Sukkos, it's a feeling that permeates the whole year. Cheshvan accords us the opportunity to truly live up to Hakhel's challenge.

(Based on Hisvaaduyos 5748, vol. 1, pg. 423)

### WHAT CAN I DO? FARBRENGEN IN HAKHEL

5748 was a year of *Hakhel*. On Shabbos, 15 Cheshvan, the Rebbe encouraged the Chassidim to seize the opportunity and hold farbrengens on or around Chof Cheshvan, the birthday of the Rebbe Rashab. These farbrengens were to be utilized to inspire one another to add in Torah and mitzvos, *hafatzas hamaayanos*, and learning the Chassidus of the Rebbe Rashab in particular. The Rebbe specified that the gatherings be done with many in attendance, in the spirit of that year, Hakhel, and that the "rov am" would cause a joy that would inspire the days to follow.

(Based on Hisvaaduyos 5748, vol. 1, pg. 455)



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A POSTER
ENCOURAGING
EVERYONE TO JOIN
A MEETING ABOUT
HAKHEL PE'ULOS IN
770 IN THE YEAR 5748
- SHNAS HAKHEL



# Financial Difficulties on Shlichus

Often, a mosad or shliach expands beyond available funding. The Rebbe explains how to continue growing in the face of financial obstacles.



#### Mountain Climbing

You shouldn't suffice with what you've already accomplished; rather, there must be periodical growth. A lack of added activity demonstrates a lack of liveliness, since every living thing grows. Furthermore, if there is no added activity then not only are you not growing, you are, in fact, in a state of decline, to the extent that you might need to be told "there needs to be a *yeshiva*", for, in truth, you don't have a *yeshiva* at all.

This can be compared to someone travelling along a mountain slope—he cannot stay in one place; he either climbs or falls. If he chooses not to continue, not only will he not advance, but he won't even remain in place - instead he will fall down.

...Since this is the case, the only way not to fall is by increasing both in quality and in quantity. This means that every year, you must increase the number of students as well as the studies. Even the deficit must increase each year, for this signifies a living being; when he is fed or given to drink, it quiets his hunger or thirst for some time, after which he is once again hungry or thirsty.

The Rebbe, my father-in-law, said that he was always in debt, but never went bankrupt. Bankruptcy cannot occur ("דאס טויגט נישט") since it interrupts the continuation of activities. However, one must be in debt, for one must always find new activities and new obligations, which will cause him to remain in debt.<sup>1</sup>

#### Operating at a Deficit

Excerpts from conversations with the Rebbe. The Rebbe's words are in regular font. The following is from a conversation with a Lubavitch supporter along with his shliach, during yechidus of MIDF:

I would like a blessing to influence anash — the Chabad community — to send their children to our new school.

You refer to them as anash. [The word] אנשי שלומנו stands for אנשי שלומנו ("men of our peace"). When are they anash, men of our peace, in the plural? When they're at peace with you, at peace with me, at peace with him [pointing at the shliach], so you should sit down and talk peacefully. May there be good tidings and the sooner the better.

The school is still in debt and we need a blessing.

May you have much success and all the funding you need. My father-inlaw used to say that he was involved in communal work since the age of fifteen and he always operated at a deficit. But he always covered the deficit and then ran a new deficit for the new year. So may it be for you; there's nothing to be afraid of. Do it with joy and gladness.

Amen

A sweet new year.2

#### Take on New Debts

I ask for the Rebbe's blessing to raise the money we need soon.

It should be in a good way; provide food to Jews in joy and happiness. May you bear good tidings all your life.

I owe \$70,000.

You're intimidated by such an amount? G-d is estimated to be a lot wealthier than that. In any case, may you pay the debts and then take on new debts to spread Judaism even more.

#### Financing Tomchei Tmimim

You write regarding the financial situation; debts, etc. Although it is obviously difficult and upsetting, such is the situation in Tomchei Tmimim, even in the American branches. As the elder *Chassidim* retell, such was the situation in *gashmiyus* for the majority of the existence of the yeshiva. Yet not only did it remain open, but it grew and developed. Certainly, through the great [Heavenly] mercy aroused by the Rabbeim, the yeshiva will grow and develop even more, in all of its branches.

Everyone who puts in effort and labors at this holy work is fortunate; we've already seen the outstandingly great success that you've had in the initial stages of constructing a building, a large part of which has already been completed. It will certainly be completed in the near future, and the reward for those who participate [in the project] is detailed in many places. It is inestimably great, as it is in the measure of Hashem, in a corresponding measure (הדה כנגד מדה), but many times over, [with blessings

of] much true *nachas* – *chassidishe nachas* – from your children.<sup>3</sup>

### Administration According to Shulchan Aruch

A reply to an administrator of a mosad, who unsuccessfully attempted to extricate it from the debt in which it sunk.

[Your financial difficulties are] not a matter [caused by] *segulah* [roughly: fortune], but rather cause-and-effect [-the result of your actions]; If the *mosad* is one to which I have a connection, and money isn't earned according to Shulchan Aruch, the results will be as they've been [negative].<sup>4</sup>

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#### Shiurim are the Vessel

Rabbi Dovid Edelman relates: In a yechidus, I told the Rebbe about the difficult economic status of the mosdos. The Rebbe said:

From the standpoint of Heaven, there is no shortage of goodness [to give you], however, vessels need to be prepared to contain the *bracha*. These [vessels] are *shiurim* that are taught in public.

*The Rebbe specified:* 

There should be a *shiur* specifically between *mincha* and *ma'ariv*, because some congregants will not be there before *mincha*, and after *ma'ariv* the men hurry home.<sup>5</sup>

#### Debts in Rambam

A reply to someone who wrote that he has many monetary debts.

[Version 1:] When you will complete [repaying] your "debts" in Rambam study, you will complete [repaying] your physical debts.<sup>6</sup>

[Version 2:] You should repay your debts in Rambam.<sup>7</sup>

# The Solution — to Increase in Hafatza

You are certainly aware that for many years you've been getting into [debt], repaying it, immediately increasing in *hafatza*, creating new debt, and repaying it.

You've successfully done this for decades, — in your words, you are "accustomed to miracles"—, and specifically in תשא"נ [the year of אראנו "I will show you wonders"] you write a letter whose contents are the opposite of the above!

You will certainly return to your usual practices, and you will continue to be accustomed to wonders etc. etc.<sup>8</sup>

#### Sell a Mosad? Never!

A reply to Reb Zalmon Jaffe, who, following financial hardships, wanted to sell a mosad to the bank, and then rent it monthly (for a more affordable sum) from the bank.

The Rebbe gives numerous reasons why this should not be done:

Selling the house is:

1) A **public**<sup>9</sup> announcement that the [sellers] are surrendering the strength of Lubavitch in Manchester, [furthermore, if you sell the building,] how will you consistently provide them with a building, with rent paid in advance to the bank, so that they'll be able to learn *Tanya* 

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TO CONTAIN
THE BRACHA.

there and *daven* etc. [without needing to concern themselves with financing the building].

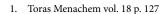
- 2) [Only possible if you can give them] a **guarantee**<sup>10</sup> that they will always have this building and money for rent a guarantee that no-one can make these days, given the recent changes in England.
- 3) Replacing mortgage payments (which lessen the debt owed on the house) with rent payments [which don't go towards eventual ownership] this runs contrary to simple logic and business sense.
- 4) [Also inadvisable because of the following reason, which is] **Not to be publicized** – according to logic

and nature, in the near future there will be a devaluation<sup>10</sup> of the GB Pound Sterling — and who knows how much the amount you would receive (if, G-d forbid, you would sell the building) will be worth [once the Pound goes down in value]. <sup>11</sup> <sup>12</sup>

# Don't Sell any Part of the Building

Needless to say the fact that your question as to the advisability of selling part of the lot belonging to the shul remained unanswered can only have one explanation, and that is that I am completely unreceptive to the idea. Indeed, it surprises me that there should have been any doubt in your mind about it, since you know that our slogan is "u'foratzto" which means expansion and new acquisitions, rather than contraction or sale.

In general, I believe that even from a purely financial viewpoint, there is no need to have any regrets, inasmuch as judging by your past experience, the transaction would not have been a success, and would have entailed problems; for what pressure could you apply upon the would-be buyers to observe and fulfill all the terms meticulously!<sup>13</sup>



<sup>2.</sup> Living Torah video, Disk 118, Program 470.

- 3. Igros Kodesh vol. 13 p. 6
- 4. From a facsimile of the Rebbe's holy handwriting, published in the Simpson Chasdan teshurah, 5768, p. 4
- 5. Hiskashrus issue #972
- 6. From Rabbi M. M. Gluckowsky
- 7. From Rabbi S. Lipsh
- 8. Dvar Melech (5752) vol. 1 p. 67
- 9. Emphases are in the original.
- 10. This word is in English in the original.
- 11. The value of the Pound Sterling went from \$2.44 at the end of 1980, to a low of \$1.03 in 1985. This letter was written on Chol Hamoed Sukkos 5740 1979.
- 12. Rivkin Simpson Teshurah (Also printed in *Mr. Manchester*)
- 13. Mr. Manchester (in the original English).



THE REBBE SEES OFF THE GROUP OF "SHLUCHEI KODESH" LEAVING TO ERETZ YISROEL, 11 SHEVAT 5736.



The Frierdiker Rebbe relates some of his memories from the year 5669. At that time in his life he was working closely with his father, the Rebbe Rashab, as his personal secretary. In his unique way, the Frierdiker Rebbe paints a picture of what it was to be a Yid in Russia and specifically a Chossid. Although nothing can substitute for the original, we have attempted to take you on that journey as well.

This segment is titled:

# The Approach of a Chossid

father's work in the year 5669 was one of outstanding importance, including his efforts on behalf of Jewry at large.

In the month of Cheshvan a secret meeting took place in Lubavitch and my father presided over it. The participants were a number of rabbanim, as well as some wealthy businessmen with a sound grasp of communal endeavors. The objective was to hear and discuss a report involving several weighty issues.

Since I was my father's personal secretary, the coordinator of the office, and one of its five active workers, I was directed by my father to familiarize the attendees with the following three primary issues: (a) how to organize the ground-work and the elections for the forthcoming rabbinical conference; (b) the manner and extent of our involvement in the preparations and elections for the forthcoming Duma, the Russian parliament; and (c) amendments to the regulations that had been instituted by the rabbanim of Germany, led by HaRav Breuer, for Machzikei HaDas, the organization that my father had left two years earlier.

The meeting lasted for five days, in the course of which decisions were reached on all the above subjects. The necessary budget was drawn up and the office was charged with carrying all these decisions through.

#### **A Difficult Winter**

The winter months were spent dealing with the above tasks, as well as in routine representations in government

circles on questions involving the economic situation of Russian Jewry.

My father spent the last three winter months in various health spas abroad, and during his stay in Germany he discussed the platform of Machzikei HaDas with rabbanim and communal activists. Those several weeks of exertion weakened my father considerably, so he was compelled to extend his stay abroad by several days.

Finally, on Wednesday morning, the ninth of Nissan, we left Berlin via Koenigsburg, Dvinsk, Vitebsk and Rudny, and at 6:00 on Thursday evening, the tenth of Nissan, we arrived at Lubavitch.

As we drove through a few of the Jewish streets of the township of Rudny we saw tables and benches outside every house, some already washed, some being washed. In the streets where gentiles lived there was nothing of this activity to be seen.

As we drove out of the town, taking the road to Lubavitch, my father said: "I will tell you a story that I heard from my father some 30 or 32 years ago."

At this point in his diary, the Frierdiker Rebbe pauses with the story and explains what he heard then, that every story has to contain a lesson in avodah. He then goes on to detail the lesson they took from the incident and then continues with the story:

#### From Shul to Shul

Here, then, is the story, as my grandfather told it to my father.

When I was in Marienbad I decided that I would travel home via Vienna and Warsaw, visiting Berditchev on the way. The entire trip was to be without anyone's knowledge, aside for Reb Pinchas Leib (the assistant *gabbai* of the Rebbe Maharash), who would accompany me throughout.

Arriving in Berditchev very early in the morning, I drove to a hotel, davened *shacharis*, and went to the resting place of the Rav of Berditchev.

When I left the Ohel I went to see the *shtiblach* of the local Poilisher Chassidim. In the first little shul I visited I found quite a number of people sitting and studying, while others were indulging in the conversation of Chassidim or exchanging stories. From there I went on to a second and third *shtibel*, everywhere finding old and young alike studying and likewise spending their time in positive talk.

This went on for quite some time, as I wandered from one *kloiz* to the next. I engaged a few individuals here and there in conversation—some of them elder Chassidim, some of them younger—asking them questions about whatever they happened to be studying at the time, and often receiving answers that showed me they had a firm grasp of their subject.

I was about to return to my hotel to rest, for there remained a few hours until my train was due to depart, when I caught sight of several elderly Chassidim with white beards. Though it was not a warm day, their long coats were tucked up, and on their feet they wore nothing more than shoes and socks. They were carrying a big bucket of water, and talking excitedly. This scene attracted my interest: I could tell that these were no common water-carriers. Moreover, as they walked, the younger people who accompanied them kept on offering to carry the bucket instead of them, but were constantly refused.

After quite a long walk they turned into an alley, where a few houses down I saw several elderly men who had taken off the long black coats that usually covered their tzitzis; they had rolled up their sleeves, and were

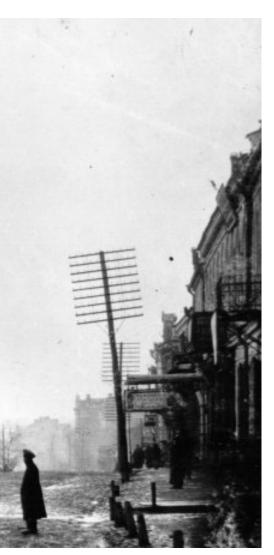


washing the floor and the walls of the house at which we had arrived.

#### No help needed

I found out after a moment's wonderment that this was a *shtibel* of Tolna Chassidim. Speaking with some of those that had brought the water, I saw at once that these were Torah scholars, and Chassidim through-and-through. When I asked them what was going on, they told me that since their Rebbe was due to visit their town the next day, they wanted to put their *kloiz* in order, in proper condition to receive such an honored guest.

"So why are you doing all of this yourselves instead of giving the younger men a turn?" I asked them.



"After all, young people do need to be brought up in the ways of Chassidim, don't they? For their sake, older Chassidim ought to have *mesirus nefesh*."

"The reason that we are doing this ourselves," they answered, "and not through hired laborers, is that we want to have healthy angels to help out the advocating angels who come out of the *tekios* of the shofar."

One of them explained: "You know the 'Yehi Ratzon' that is said after the tekios of Rosh HaShanah, the one that mentions 'the angels that are formed from the blowing of the shofar, and from the tekiah, the shevarim, the teruah, and the tekiah, and from the קשר"ק [i.e., the initials of these four names of the various kinds of sounds of the shofarl? Well, one Rosh HaShanah the holy Rav of Berditchev said: 'Sweet Father, compassionate Father! Just in case the angels that come out from the shofar that Levi Yitzchak ben Sarah has just blown, are weak angels, then let their place be taken by the holy, healthy angels that were created by the toil of Your people in preparation for Pesach, as they cleaned their kitchen utensils in order to fulfill their mitzvah as perfectly as possible, kratzen (scouring), shobben (scraping), reiben (rubbing) kasheren (making kosher)!' [— for the initials of these four Yiddish words are likewise [השר"ה].

"As for us," the old Chossid concluded, "we are doing all of this for the sake of His Name, and for the sake of his servant, our Rebbe (may he be blessed with good health)."

[My grandfather, the Rebbe Maharash resumed his recollections, as repeated to me by my father.]

#### The Wealthy Man's Well

As I contemplated these Chassidim, the whole scene before me left a remarkably favorable impression. But then, when I was about to leave, I noticed that right next to their *kloiz* there was a well.

"Why did you have to bring the water from so far," I asked the old folk, "if you have water right here?"

The same old man answered me: "Reb Baruch Yossel, one of our well-to-do Chassidim, asked and promised that if we would take water from his well—both today, in preparation for the Rebbe's arrival, and tomorrow, the first day of the Rebbe's visit—then in honor of the Rebbe he would prepare a big festive meal for all the Chassidim, at his expense."

#### **Our Unique Outlook**

Having finished recounting this incident as he had heard it from his father, the Rebbe Maharash, my father now commented:

"We may gauge the impression that this encounter made upon my father from the fact that he related it in all its details. Moreover, when he had completed his narration he said to me: 'Here we can plainly see what spiritual forces the Baal Shem Tov drew down in this world, both for the Rebbe's and for the Chassidim, so that both the recipients and their mentors should—and will indeed—ready the world for the coming of Moshiach, speedily and in our own days, Amen!"

For a long while now my father remained silent, deep in thought. Then he said:

"Regarding the question I asked the elderly Chossid as to why they didn't get the work done through hired men, it was answered well, but regarding the question I posed about allowing the younger Chassidim to have this opportunity he did not give any answer at all. This is because the *mesirus nefesh* needed to give yourself away for the benefit of a younger person is brought about only through Chassidus Chabad."

(Likutei Diburim vol 1. p. 256. based on the English translation by Kehos).

"It is a book in small format—just as a Chossid must be in his self-estimation—yet it is overflowing with pearls and precious stones of the best and greatest worth in quality.

"...Hashem blessed my son-in-law...and gave him great powers, which allowed for the building and the founding of a resplendent Chassidic mansion, which contains 383 rooms, in a way which 'yom yom yabia omer,' each day 'says something.'

"This is the meaning of Hayom Yom, so to say, 'today, is a day..."

−A letter by the Frierdiker Rebbe, 28 Nissan 5703



THE FIRST PRINT OF HAYOM YOM IN 5703.

סיון . תמוז . אב . אלול . תשרי . חשון . כסלו . טנ י . חשון . כסלו . טבת . שבט . אדר . ניסן . אייר . נ ז . אדר . ניסן . אייר . סיון . תמוז . אב . אלול . תש תמוז . אב . אלול . תשרי . חשון . כסלו . טבת . שנ ון . כסלו . טבת . שבט . אדר . ניסן . אייר . סיון . ת . ניסן . אייר . סיון . תמוז . אב . אלול . תשרי . חש אב . אלול . תשרי . חשון . כסלו . טבת . שבט . אי





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To date, the Rebbe's teachings have been disseminated in numerous ways; be it through the *sichos* spoken, the letters written, or the various forms of spreading Yiddishkeit that the Rebbe initiated. Each is unique in its own style, and much has been written to attempt to describe—at least in simple words—what they each portray.

Along with all of these, and at their head, stands a small 'booklet'—the 'first fruit' of the Rebbe's published works: A yearbook for the year 5703, called by the name of Hayom Yom. As the Frierdiker Rebbe instructed, the objective and purpose of the *sefer* are written in the title: *Hayom Yom—Luach Or Zarua L'Chassidei Chabad*.



#### INITIATIVE

Acharon Shel Pesach 5700. A month and a half after escaping the European inferno, the Frierdiker Rebbe addressed those present at a farbrengen. He spoke<sup>1</sup> about the special distinction of the day, and noted that the Rabbeim throughout the generations attached a unique significance to the festive meal of Acharon Shel Pesach.

Then he surprised the listeners; it has become necessary, he said, to assemble Chabad customs, together with short stories and *pisgamim*, into a single work, fully arranged in accordance to our day to day lives.

"This organized collection can be produced only by a profound *pnimi* and a highly organized person endowed with expansive wisdom. I am relying on the G-dly success that has baruch Hashem been given to me, that everything that I reckon is good for the masses in Torah, yir'as Shamayim, and Yiddishe parnasah in general, and for Chassidim in particular, may Hashem help that it be fulfilled sooner or later..."

The Chassidim were surprised by the Frierdiker Rebbe's words; what would be the distinction of this *likkut*, requiring such an extraordinary compiler, they could only guess.

Long months ensued, and the Frierdiker Rebbe's desire remained a wish; the superior individual who was to perform this holy mission had yet to be revealed.

#### THE HOLY MISSION

When the Frierdiker Rebbe spoke those words, his son-in-law the

Rebbe was living in Nazi-occupied Paris. On the day after Acharon Shel Pesach, the Rebbe wrote to Reb Dovber Chaskind, asking him to please send the Frierdiker Rebbe's *sichos* and *maamarim* from the days preceding Pesach.

Over a year of wanderings, trials and tribulations would pass before the Rebbe would safely reach American shores. Around a year and a half later, on Motzaei Yud-Tes Kislev, 5703<sup>2</sup>, the Frierdiker Rebbe wrote to the Rebbe with a directive:

The compendium, which he had spoken of almost three years earlier, was to be his responsibility.

The Frierdiker Rebbe detailed what he expected: The *likkut* should be organized in a form of a yearly calendar, containing the newly publicized daily *shiurim* of Chitas;

# IT IS A BOOK IN SMALL FORMAT - JUST AS A CHOSSID MUST BE IN HIS SELF-ESTIMATION - YET IT IS OVERFLOWING WITH PEARLS AND PRECIOUS STONES OF THE BEST AND GREATEST WORTH IN QUALITY.

minhagim; and brief 'vertelach' from Chassidus. The Frierdiker Rebbe also supplied the title: "The luach which you will compile shall be known by the name Hayom Yom–Luach Or Zarua L'chassidei Chabad" (a calendar with implanted light for Chabad Chassidim).

The Rebbe immediately began to work; choosing and amassing luminous gems from all of the Frierdiker Rebbe's teachings most of which were not yet published at the time, drawing as well from his own archive of notes, the Reshimos (see Derher Tammuz 5775).

One by one, *minhagim*, stories, and aphorisms began assuming the shape of the *luach*.

We do not know much about the editing and publishing of the *sefer*. In a letter<sup>3</sup> three years later to Reb Yaakov Landau, the Rebbe reveals that "all of the customs that I published in Hayom Yom were put in upon the directive of my father-in-law, the Rebbe, and he reviewed them once more before going to print. There were some that he instructed me to remove, saying that they are not a *hora'ah larabim*."

Many decades later, in 5749, the Rebbe added in a *sicha*<sup>4</sup>, that "this *sefer'l*, which was printed in the lifetime of the *nasi hador*, who scrutinized it even in the minutest aspects".

The Rebbe worked intensely for three months, investing "great effort." By Yud-Alef Nissan of that year, the work was published.

The Frierdiker Rebbe was overjoyed; when Reb Shlomo Aharon

Kazarnovsky brought him the *sefer*, he exclaimed "Ah! Such day-to-day spiritual sustenance!" On another occasion, the Frierdiker Rebbe praised the Hayom Yom to Rabbi Hodakov with a distinctive *niggun*: "Hayom Yom—each day is a full day."

A short while after the Hayom Yom was printed, the Frierdiker Rebbe wrote<sup>6</sup> admiringly to the librarian, Alexander Hakohen (as mentioned at the beginning of the article):

"You've certainly received by now Hayom Yom. It is a book in small format—just as a Chossid must be in his self-estimation yet it is overflowing with pearls and precious stones of the best and greatest worth in quality.

"...Hashem blessed my son-in-law... and gave him great powers, which allowed for the building and the founding of a resplendent Chassidic mansion, which contains 383 rooms, in a way which 'yom yom yabia omer,' each day 'says something.'

"This is the meaning of Hayom Yom, so to say, 'today, is a day..."

The Frierdiker Rebbe himself gave instructions as to how to internalize and live with the message of that particular day. In his replies he would sometimes quote that day's entry and base his responses upon its teachings.

On a communal level, the Frierdiker Rebbe encouraged Chassidim to delve deeply into it. In a Yud-Tes Kislev *sicha* years later, the Rebbe attested to the fact that "the Frierdiker Rebbe ordered the printing and distribution of Hayom Yom with the fullest possible *shturem!*" Indeed,



THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 102256 / 16 ADAR, 5709



THE REBBE'S HANDWRITTEN NOTE ON THE TITLE PAGE OF HIS PERSONAL HAYOM YOM, EXPLAINING WHY THE ORDER FOR THE YEAR 5704 IS SPELLED UITTI:

ולא תש"ד ע"פ ציווי כ"ק מו"ח אד"ש "אז עס וועט קומען די צייט - וועלען אלע פארשטייען".

NOT T"WID - ACCORDING TO THE [FRIERDIKER]
REBBE'S COMMAND: "WHEN THE TIME WILL COME,
ALL WILL UNDERSTAND."

at the Shavuos farbrengen of 5703, the Frierdiker Rebbe commented<sup>7</sup> that those observing Hayom Yom's daily sessions have a wholly different approach to *kabbolas haTorah*.

### WHAT IS CONCEALED WITHIN IT

During those early years, the Rebbe would often send shipments of recently published *sefarim* and *kuntreisim* to his brother, Reb Yisroel Aryeh Leib, who was living at the time in Tel Aviv. He would often be the first to receive new Kehos releases hot off the press, and would share them with the Lubavitcher Chassidim in his neighborhood.

One day in 5703 he showed up at the Chabad *shul* in an elated

mood, holding a small package in his hand. "My brother sent me his first composition!" he called out to uncomprehending onlookers. A few moments passed, and his expression became suddenly somber. "Nu? What happened?" the Chassidim asked.

"How sad", he sighed, "that no one perceives what is concealed inside it."

Indeed, this wonderful sefer, which—upon first glance—may strike one simply as a book of nice sayings, is nevertheless filled will much genius and vast wide-ranging knowledge. Whenever the Frierdiker Rebbe mentioned Hayom Yom and the Rebbe as its author, he chooses to bestow upon him the title "Hagaon."

#### **A PNIMI**

The shaar blatt of the initial printing of Hayom Yom did not have the specific design unique to the Rebbe's sefarim, as did the publications printed in later years. It seems that the entire idea of different designs for each of the Rabbeim was an idea which began in 5705, with the publishing of the Rebbe Maharash's maamarim.

The first of the Rebbe's works to bear his unique design is the Hagadah Shel Pesach, which was published in 5706. The story is told, that the Rebbe asked the Frierdiker Rebbe which design should be used. The Frierdiker Rebbe answered, "My father was a 'pnimi' and you are a 'pnimi," it is befitting therefore, that the Hagadah should have the same *shaar* as my father's."

After the first print of the *sefer*, Hayom Yom was reprinted in Shanghai two years later, by the *bochurim* located there due to the war. The next printing took place twelve years later, in 5717; in it was an updated version of the *shalsheles hayachas*, completing the *toldos* of the Frierdiker Rebbe, and also adding the *toldos* of the Rebbe up to that year.

Over the years, Hayom Yom was published in many editions, and—as the years went on—also in different languages; English, Hebrew, French and Spanish, as well as in Braille, so that every single individual may find it accessible and understandable.

On the occasion of the publishing of the English translation in 5748, the Rebbe dedicated a *sicha*<sup>9</sup> to the Hayom Yom of that day, which was essentially the first time that the Rebbe spoke directly about the *sefer* in public.

Throughout the years before then, the Rebbe generally did not speak clearly about the *sefer*. There were times, however, when the Rebbe would mention *minhagim* that were printed in it. For example, regarding the daily *shiur* of Chumash in regards to Simchas Torah: Do we begin learning parshas Bereishis immediately after the finishing of the Torah during *kriah*, or do we start learning it only the next day? In Hayom Yom it clarifies that Bereishis is started on the day after Yom Tov. The Rebbe often mentioned this *minhag*.

One special occasion took place during one of the *seudos* in the Frierdiker Rebbe's apartment. During those meals, the Rebbe would answer questions put forth by the Chassidim that had been invited to join the meal.

On the first night of Sukkos 5722, the Rebbe mentioned the fact that the Rabbeim had the custom to review specific *maamarim* often,

THE REBBE LOOKED TOWARD THE BOCHURIM THAT WERE PRESENT IN THE ROOM, AND ASKED "AZ M'VEIST NIT, VOS SHTUPT MEN ZICH?"

in order to affect the *taharas hoʻavir*. The Rebbe then asked<sup>10</sup>, "Is there anyone who knows what they are?" Adding [with a smile] that "it has been printed in Hayom Yom; I have already had enough time to forget."

The Rebbe looked towards the bochurim that were present in the room and asked, "Az m'veist nit, vos shtupt men zich?"—If you don't know, why are you pushing?

In a *sicha* on Yud-Tes Kislev 5749, the Rebbe actually spoke about learning the daily Hayom Yom:

"The beginning of the *limud* should be regarding something that has to do with that time, the *halachos* of the day; meaning, the *inyanim* in which this day's concept is explained.

"In the beginning of Hayom Yom—a *sefer* that was printed during the lifetime of the Frierdiker Rebbe and every detail was before his eyes, and obviously the foreword of the *sefer*, where there is a *pisgam* from the Frierdiker Rebbe's father..."

#### SHALSHELES HAYACHAS

In the forward to Hayom Yom, the Rebbe finishes off:

"As a preface to this calendar comes a write up with *roshei perakim* of the history of the Rabbeim, according to the information available in the *yomanim* of my father-in-law, the Rebbe, and his *reshimos*."

When Hayom Yom was reprinted in 5717, the *shalsheles hayachas* was updated, and the Frierdiker Rebbe's activities from 5703 until his *histalkus* were added, as were the Rebbe's activities up until then (in addition to changes that were made to certain entries in the actual *sefer*). This was the *shalsheles hayachas* that was printed in all of the subsequent editions, until 5742, when the *shalsheles hayachas* was updated once more.



A SAMPLING OF THE REBBE'S HAGAHOS ON THE SHALSHELES HAYACHAS THAT APPEARS AT THE BEGINNING OF HAYOM YOM.

A few days after the updated version of shalsheles hayachas was submitted to the Rebbe [in Kislev 5742], the editors were pleasantly surprised when the Rebbe returned the folios after writing and commenting on a large amount of the new entries. There were parts that the Rebbe crossed out and instructed that they not be published. In other sections he added lots of information; sometimes in the section about his life-occurrences and activities, and sometimes in the sections that list all of the sefarim of the Rabbeim, printed after each of the Rabbeim's toldos (being that many new sefarim had been published since the last update).

The following are some of the more unique edits:

During the farbrengen of Purim 5730 the Rebbe began a major campaign to correct the issue of *mihu Yehudi*, where the Israeli government did not recognize the need to stipulate that conversion to Yiddishkeit be specifically according to *halacha*.

When the shalsheles hayachas was updated, a sentence was written stating that in the year of 5730 the Rebbe "begins the battle on the subject of mihu Yehudi." The Rebbe added in his handwriting that the battle began then "b'galut"—publicly. When the Igros Kodesh were published, letters were revealed that shed light on this addition. The Rebbe had written to individuals in Eretz Yisrael—long before that Purim farbrengen—in an effort to change the law through quiet diplomacy.

Many of the issues that the Rebbe had spoken about during farbrengens were added to *shalsheles hayachas*, being called "*krias kodesh*"—a holy call. When editing the draft, the Rebbe added a line in each of these instances through the word "*kodesh*," so that the phrase would remain simply "*kriah*."

Another two additions were on the topic of the Rebbe's *koch* in the concept of Moshiach and *geulah*. The Rebbe personally added a full sentence for the year of 5742, speaking of the new *mivtza* to write general *sifrei Torah*, adding that this—being the last mitzvah in the Torah—is connected to the conclusion of the *galus*. Afterwards, the Rebbe added a line describing his encouragement of *hafatzas hamayanos*, specifically in *mivtza Chanukah*.

Regarding that year, the Rebbe also mentioned that it had been coined "Tihiye Shnas Bias Moshiach," beginning an annual custom of coining roshei teivos, which the Rebbe continued to do for many more years.

#### HAYOM YOM IN DEPTH

In 5740 Rabbi Michoel Aharon Seligson, along with Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Shagalov, began working on a new edition of Hayom Yom, which would be published together with footnotes bringing the source of each of the entries that the Rebbe had written in the *sefer*.

As the work progressed, they were surprised to reveal that many of the entries had a direct connection to the dates in which they had been placed. They soon came to realize that this is a style that continues throughout the entire *sefer*, up until the end of the year.

With that revelation, they came to understand that Hayom Yom is much more than simply a *luach*, and Rabbi Seligson decided to spend time searching for the deeper meaning hidden inside the *sefer*. Right away, Rabbi Seligson relates, he had a long list of astonishing discoveries, which showed him that every single word in the *sefer* was precise; it was a complete *Torah Shebiksav* in *avodas Hashem*.

This depth can be seen in the first words of Hayom Yom, with the first letter of each of the first four phrases in the foreword spelling out Hashem's name—the *Shem Havaye*.

יט כסלו, החג אשר פדה בשלום נפשינו, ואור וחיות נפשנו ניתן לנו, היום הזה הוא ראש השנה לדא"ח

This beginning is strikingly similar to the beginning of the Mishneh Torah, where the first four words—
Yesod hayesodos v'amud hachahmos—
stand for Shem Havaye as well.

As he revealed more and more depth, Rabbi Seligson began publishing his findings in the Kovetz Ha'aros, and they generated much attention—while mostly positive, there was also some negative. Many, at least at the outset, felt that the idea was too radical; it is not our task, they maintained, to try and understand the hidden meaning of the 'nistaros.' To them, each new 'gilui' was just a cute aphorism, and nothing more than that.

This discussion continued until Rabbi Seligson's surprising *yechidus*.



RABBI MICHOEL SELIGSON RECEIVES A DOLLAR FROM THE REBBE; 20 TEVES 5751.

#### RAMBAM IN HAYOM YOM

As his studies of Hayom Yom continued, Rabbi Seligson began to detect a pattern in which every day-beginning from 5 Teves, up to when the luach deals with Chanukah topics—corresponds to the sets of halachos in Rambam. The first day with Sefer Hamadah (the entry speaks of understanding Hashem), followed by the specific halachos—Hilchos Yesodei Hatorah (6 Teves speaks of "da es Elokei avicha"), and so on and so forth. 8 Teves, for example, which corresponds to Hilchos Talmud Torah, speaks about the Tzemach Tzedek's instructions to the teachers of his grandchildren. Rabbi Seligson continued on this path through all the 83 halachos in Rambam until he got stuck, at one of the halachos in Sefer Mishpatim, where he could not find the connection.

During that period, Rabbi Seligson's father, Reb Avraham Abba, was not in the best of health, and the Rebbe was very involved and constantly updated about his condition. Reb Avraham Abba was the doctor of beis harav, and the Rebbe, who usually heard the updates from the mazkirim, asked to hear about the situation from someone directly involved.

Rabbi Binyomin Klein called Rabbi Seligson and told him that he is invited to come for *yechidus*. He was stunned and quite moved, and he immediately began to prepare for his *yechidus*, which would take place after *mincha* that very day.

When the Rebbe returned from the *shul* after davening, Rabbi Seligson stood in *Gan Eden Hatachton*, where the Rebbe inquired in detail about his father's situation and the doctors' opinion as to what should be done. Afterwards, the Rebbe inquired about work that was then being done in Kehos (where Rabbi Seligson worked) at the time.

Before the Rebbe entered his room, Rabbi Seligson felt that it was

an opportune time, and decided to ask the Rebbe about his research in Hayom Yom. He asked if it was appropriate to print them in a *sefer*,

#### ANA NAFSHI KSAVIS YEHAVIS

Rabbi Seligson has written and published endless amounts of *chiddushim* and explanations on the *diyukim* of Hayom Yom.

Perhaps one of the most interesting of his revelations is what is hidden in the name.

It is a common custom for authors to hint to their own names in their *sefarim*. We find that Tzemach Tzedek is the gematria of the name Menachem Mendel. When the Rebbe's *biurim* on Gemara were published, the editors suggested the name "*Chiddushim Ubiurim L'shas*." The Rebbe changed one letter, so that it should read "*Chiddushim Ubiurim B'shas*," and explained that the name of a *sefer* is something which one should be *medayek* in, quoting the equation of Tzemach Tzedek with Menachem Mendel, the author of the *sefer* Tzemach Tzedek. It took some time for them to realize that the name now was also the exact *gematria* of the Rebbe's name.

Regarding Hayom Yom, Rabbi Seligson points out, the word *yom* starts with a *yud* and ends with the letter *mem*; with the word written twice, it stands for the names of the Frierdiker Rebbe and the Rebbe.

In addition, the word *hayom*, counted with the milui (and with the *kolel*)<sup>11</sup>, is the *gematria* of Menachem; the word *yom*, calculated in the same manner, is the value of the name Mendel.<sup>12</sup>



#### **SEFER TOLDOS ADAM**

Rabbi Seligson points out that many of the entries in Hayom Yom reflect days in the Rebbe's life:

1 Adar 5662 was forty days before the Rebbe's birth, when, as the Gemara explains, a *bas kol* declares who the *neshama* will be married to. In that day's Hayom Yom, it speaks of the *neshama*'s descent into the world, in order to light up the world;<sup>13</sup>

14 Kislev<sup>14</sup>, the date of the Rebbe and Rebbetzin's Chasunah, speaks about *yichud Kudsha Brich Hu U'shchintei*.

On 14 Cheshvan in 5701, the American Government did not want to issue a visa for the Rebbe to come to the United States, due to a contradiction in the various applications: In one place it stated that he was an engineer, and in the other it wrote that he was a rabbi. In the Hayom Yom of that day, the Rebbe looks at those issues differently: it speaks about how every jew is directed by Hashem in his specific task, and how that is his *parnassah ruchnis*, to 'build' a dwelling place for the *Aibershter* in the world.

And the most obvious of connections is the Hayom Yom of Yud-Alef Nissan—"On one's birthday, he should meditate…"

to which the Rebbe answered in the affirmative. He then added about his issue with understanding the connection of the end of Rambam with the corresponding days in Hayom Yom. The Rebbe listened carefully, and then replied:

"Oib es vet zein der yageita, vet zein der matzasah"—if you will toil, you will discover it.

Rabbi Seligson fulfilled the Rebbe's instruction, and did the "yageita." Sure enough, he managed to complete his work, and sometime later, a book called 'Hayom Yom with *Ha'aros* and *Tziyunim'* was sent to print.

This was not the only occasion where the Rebbe was involved in Rabbi Seligson's work. Over the years, Rabbi Seligson wrote to the Rebbe on a number of occasions, asking various questions about Hayom Yom when he came across issues that he could not understand on his own.

Some of those questions were simply about how the Rebbe coined the names of the months; Cheshvan, for example, as opposed to Mar-Cheshvan. The Rebbe explained in an answer to Rabbi Seligson, that it is because of the (possible) negative meaning of the word *mar*—bitter

The two months of Adar are written in two different ways; Adar Rishon is called Adar 'Alef,' while the second Adar is called Adar 'Sheni.' The Rebbe explained that initially only the first Adar was known; hence the term Adar Alef, which stands for echad; in other words, the only one (as opposed to rishon, which would mean 'the first of many'). Afterwards, when we have an additional month, we call it Adar 'Sheni.' [At the time when Rosh Chodesh would be determined by the sighting of the moon, no one could know at the beginning of the of the month of the first Adar whether or not there would be a second one. -Ed.]

Rabbi Seligson continued to study Hayom Yom, and to date he has published three complete *sefarim* with his discoveries. Each Hayom Yom has been compared to the *shiurim* of that day, as well as to the *parshas hashavua* in the Zohar, and the list goes on. It is said that the Rebbe once mentioned to Rabbi Klein that "*Seligson koch't zich in Hayom Yom*."

#### THE DAY IS A DAY

In the Yud-Tes Kislev sicha mentioned above, the Rebbe said that we must 'put ourselves into' the concepts of Hayom Yom and 'live' with the messages within it.

Then, as the Rebbe spoke at the time, every day will be truly complete and fulfilled as a day should be. And in the Frierdiker Rebbe's words, היום - יום, דער טאג איז - Our day is a true day.

- 1. Sefer Hasichos Kayitz 5700, p. 80
- 2. Igros Kodesh of the Frierdiker Rebbe, Vol 7, p. 30
- 3. Igros Kodesh, Vol 2, p. 146
- 4. Hisva'aduyos 5749, Vol 2, p. 4
- 5. Igros Kodesh vol. 1 p. 108

- 6. Igros Kodesh of the Frierdiker Rebbe, Vol $7,\,\mathrm{p.}\,331$
- 7. Sefer Hasichos 5703, p. 121
- 8. Yemei Melech vol. 2 p. 797
- 9. See Hisva'aduyos 5748, Vol 3, p. 385
- 10. Hamelech Bimsibo Vol 1, p. 65
- 11. This is a standard method when calculating *gematriya'os*. A *milui* is when you calculate each letter together with the value of the letters used to spell it out.

For example, Yud is spelled יוד, so it's *gematria* would be 10+6+4=20.

"With the Kolel" would mean that the entirety of the word is used to add one number to the entire equation.

Hence: Hayom is 137 + 1 kolel = 138 = Menachem;

Yom is 122 + 3 kolel for each letter is 125 = Mendel (without an ayin) is 124 + Kolel = 125.

- 12. It should be noted that the Rebbe wrote to Rabbi Seligson that the name "Mendel" must be spelled with an *ayin*, casting doubt into this anecdote. But, based on the Rebbe's response to Rabbi Seligson later on, he left this *vort* in his *sefer* nonetheless (see the following footnote).
- 13. The Rebbe noted to Rabbi Seligson that the dates don't match up, for this is said on 1 Adar I, 70 days before Yud Aleph Nissan. Nevertheless, the Rebbe agreed to have these anecdotes included.
- 14. Kovetz Chos Ches Sivan 5751



A SEUDAH IN THE FRIERDIKER REBBE'S APARTMENT, SECOND FLOOR OF 770. THE REBBE SITS TO THE LEFT OF THE FRIERDIKER REBBE'S SEAT AT THE HEAD OF THE TABLE.

ב"ה. כה הסוז, השד"ם.

כ"ק ארסו"ר שליט"א

בעש"ק פ" מטות (העבר) נשלם פלאכה הזעצער בהעהקה כל ההערות וציונים ללוח

"היום יום..." ואי"ה לבחר כו"יהחילו זעצן (הפנים של) הלוח עצמו ומה שלפניו

"לאחריו (הוספוה), והקווהי שבעז"ה –בל"ג-יוגמר פלאכה הדפום ויו"ל בקרוב ("לאחריו (הוספוה), והקווהי שבעז"ה –בל"ג-יוגמר פלאכה הדפום ויו"ל בקרוב ("לאחריו (הוספוה), והקווהי שבעז"ה –נ"ג רבותינו נשיאינו (מה שנתוסף אצלי בשנים אלו ("ל) הוספה שנהוסף אצלי בחולדות כ"ק אדמו"ר שליט"א 4) נספחים-שקו"ט בענינים שבהלוח, 5) מכתבי עה ד-"כפר חב"ר" שאולי יכנסו בסיום הספר.

In this letter to the Rebbe, Rabbi Seligson reports that the sefer will be completed soon - בקרוב. The Rebbe adds the word ממש in his holy handwriting.

On his mentioning of the מבוא (introduction) to the sefer, the Rebbe comments "צ"ל בחתימתו, כמובן" - It must [conclude] with your signature, obviously.

בית. ה' הטרז, ה'חשר"ם.

כ"ץ אדמר"ר שלים"א

בהמשך להוראת כ"ק אד"ש אלי (בר"א או"ש)לתדשים הערות וצירנים ללרת היום יום שנתרספו

אגלי נמשך שנתיים (פעת הר"ל ספר הא' בשנת השט"ב) -ברף הספר היינו ההערות וצירנים ככר

נמצא ברפרס. - ויינו אל ליינו אל ל"ק ארסר"ר שלים"א (השט"ב-השר"ם).

מצר"ב : 1) רשימה עסקנותו של כ"ק ארסר"ר שלים"א (השט"ב-השר"ם).

In this letter dated 8 Tammuz, Rabbi Seligson reports to the Rebbe that the sefer is in print. The Rebbe notes that: "זעפ"ז בטח אפשרי שיו"ל ליב-ג חמוז" - Hence, it is certainly possible that it'll be published [in time] for Yud-Beis - [Yud-]Gimmel Tammuz.

On his mention of פרפראות ("condiments" - anecdotes), the Rebbe comments that:

"מענדל" צ"ל דוקא בעייו. שהרי הוא ע"ש הצ"צ

The name "Mendel" must be specifically [written] with an "ayin", for it is given after the Tzemach Tzedek. (See explanation in the article).



On one of the answers to Rabbi Seligson, the Rebbe comments:

> <u>מהיר</u> והזריזות תשובח

Urgent, the sooner the better.



In a note to Rabbi Seligson, the Rebbe writes:

> <u>מהיר</u> <u>הבפו"מ</u> [הבפו

<u>הבפו"מ</u> [הבפועל ממש] דהערות וכו' להיום יום?

Urgent. [What's with] the practical actuality of your *haoros* etc. to Hayom Yom?



It was noon when the clock tower's bell began to ring, and a buzz filled the soldiers' barracks. "The parade begins in an hour!" someone yelled. The hum became louder then, as the men realized what day it was. The annual procession was to take place in the city square and the soldiers would need to march. Drowsily, the crew got up from their cots and shuffled to the lockers, ready to change outfits for the occasion. The red frock coats hung neatly in a row and the boots stood gleaming beneath them. While they got dressed, the soldiers spoke excitedly between themselves in anticipation of seeing the king. It was a pleasant, sunny afternoon so it took some time for them to

get accustomed to the light and at a quarter to one, the troops stood ready in uniform; the parade would begin momentarily. As they stood in wait, each man looked to his friend and noted the perfection and beauty of his attire; flawless. All that was left was for them to add that extra brilliance, that slightly brighter glimmer to their buttons. Then they'd truly be ready.

At a farbrengen on Simchas Torah, 5689, the Frierdiker Rebbe declared that Yidden are already polishing the buttons of their uniform to greet Moshiach.<sup>1</sup>

"The only thing that remains to be accomplished before Moshiach comes, is the polishing of our buttons," the Rebbe would often quote that sicha. "Everything else has been accomplished. *Ut ut kumt Moshiach!* Moshiach is at the doorstep!"

Shining one's buttons is the last thing one does after he has gotten dressed, so understanding the analogy on a simple level would be that the goal has almost been reached and only a small, peripheral mission remains. Simply learning Torah and fulfilling mitzvos, bringing the world closer to its completion.

On a deeper level however, the specific mashal of polishing one's buttons in comparison to the accomplishment of any task, has more meaning. A button's function is to fasten one part of a garment to the other, and in line with our minhag, specifically the right side over the left. The button, therefore, symbolizes our assignment in galus to elevate the holy (right) over the mundane (left). The point is not to entirely wipe away the left side, the Rebbe explains, for it is also part of the garment which protects the person. Only that the left side must be controlled by the right. This way, the left side will also give back to the right כיתרון האור מתוך החשך.

At this point in history, says the Rebbe, we've already done our task to an almost perfect degree and very little remains to be achieved in this mission; the garment has already been manufactured, the buttons fashioned and sewn. We have to add just a bit more shine, a bit more luster. The last few dust particles need to be brushed off. (The Rebbe added that b'derech hatzachus, the word dust is roshei teivos "da sitra (achara)—this is sitra achara.")<sup>3</sup>

Even more, the original parable was said about the buttons of a soldier's uniform, and this too is a deliberate detail. Every Jew is a soldier in Hashem's army, and as Moshiach comes we will go out to greet him while wearing our uniforms with their shining buttons<sup>4</sup>.



THE REBBE IS SHOWN A "BUTTON" PRODUCED BY THE MESIBOS SHABBOS GROUP IN NEW YORK, CIRCA 5702.

The Rebbe once pointed out an additional symbolism in the button. As long as a shirt is unclosed, a foreign object can wedge itself into the opening. By fastening one's buttons, a person closes the gap in his garment and leaves no room for anything unwanted to enter. This idea is a parable for "ein od milvado." Chassidus explains this passuk to mean that there is no existence other than Hashem; everything is an extension of his essence. The unbuttoned shirt symbolizes a reality where otherness is possible. To button one's clothing means to create a world that expresses only Hashem and nothing else. A reality where there is no room for anything foreign. This avodah, which is essential for Moshiach to come, has already been accomplished almost in its entirety, and all we need to do is polish it<sup>5</sup>.

In the later years<sup>6</sup>, the Rebbe said that the buttons have already been shined to perfection. "Thirty years plus have passed since we've began polishing our buttons. By now, they are certainly polished completely<sup>7</sup>.

"More so," the Rebbe continued, "polishing one's buttons for too long will actually have the opposite effect, diminishing the fine, beautiful look..."8

On the one hand we are told that all is done. The final touches have been made. On the other hand, Moshiach still hasn't come, which means there must still be work left. On Shabbos Hagadol 57489, the Rebbe delivered a maamar which speaks about the things we need to accomplish to bring Moshiach. Then the Rebbe asks the question we're all thinking, "Aren't we already done? Why are there still more tasks we need to finish?" The Rebbe explains that we've indeed completed one form of avodah, that of beyond order (musafim kehilchosom). What we can still do is serve Hashem in an orderly fashion (temidim kesidram) where every day we grow a little more. This is all while knowing that in essence all the work is done and Moshiach is at our doorstep. May he indeed come speedly in our days. 1

- 1. Sefer Hasichos 5689 p. 42.
- 2. Toras Menachem 5747 vol. 2 p. 173. et al.
- 3. Likutei Sichos vol. 25 p. 481.
- 4. Sefer Hasichos 5748 vol. 1 p. 279.
- 5. Sefer Hasichos 5752 vol. 1 p. 39, Sichos Kodesh 5752 vol. 1 p. 191.
- 6. See for example Toras Menachem 5747 vol. 2 p. 301.
- 7. Sefer Hasichos 5748 vol. 1 p. 279.
- 3. Sefer Hasichos 5748 vol. 1 p. 355.
- 9. Toras Menachem 5748 vol. 2 p. 507.



# A Change of Heart

AS TOLD BY NAFTOLI HERTZ PEWZNER

There is a certain remote city which, due to its small Jewish population, does not have an established Jewish community. With no Jewish infrastructure such as a *shul* or community center, many Jews there felt that in terms of Yiddishkeit they were all alone in an alien environment.

This all changed when in 5771, Merkos Shluchim began visiting regularly to service the community's needs. *Be'ezras Hashem* the shlichus saw great *hatzlacha* and contributed a real sense of Jewish identity, thereby causing great strides by many in *kiyum hamitzvos*. The vast majority of the local Jews participated in the Pesach *sedarim* and *tefilos* on the Yomim Noraim arranged by the Merkos Shluchim, and before long, a large circle of local Jews took form.

In 5774 I had the *zechus*, along with a friend of mine, Berel Paltiel, to have been assigned to organize the *sedarim* that year in this city. About a month before Pesach we reached out to some of the people to notify them that once again Chabad would be joining their community to celebrate Pesach together. A short while later we received a response from an individual, who has quite a large amount of influence in the community, informing us that it does not seem that there will be an interest in our programs, and they don't think it would be "worthwhile" for us to come.

We were also informed that they would be arranging their own community *seder* to be held in the very same hall that we had used in previous years. Fortunately though, for matters of convenience, it was scheduled for the third night of Pesach, the first night of Chol Hamoed.

This was rather surprising to me, as I had already gotten to know these Yidden from a previous visit, and in the past they had been very glad to participate in our activities and even assisted in many ways. I wondered how this new attitude would affect the rest of the community; would this undo years of hard work?

However despite the apparent obstacles in our path, we were certain that the shlichus would work out. So, while knowing that we have a delicate task ahead of us, we continued to plan our trip. We explained to them that we still felt it would be worthwhile to come even if it was only for the tourists and a handful of locals that were still interested. In addition, we would also be bringing matzah and other kosher-for-Passover foods, which would only add to the community's holiday experience.

Our flight was scheduled for the Tuesday night before Pesach and of course that day I went to the Ohel. In my *tzetel* to the Rebbe, I described the sensitive situation and asked for a *brachah* that the shlichus should be successful in a manner, completely beyond our expectations. My intention was that although we had complete faith that something would change, I understood that the Rebbe's standard and estimation of *hatzlacha* must definitely stand above and beyond all of my most optimistic dreams.

Moments after I left the Ohel, at 12:52 p.m., I was notified that as I stood in front of the Rebbe, at

12:46 p.m., we had received an email from this very individual, but this time in an entirely different tone. Suddenly, they were looking forward to meeting us and offering to assist us in any way. Moreover, they had just called our hotel and arranged for us a discount on the hall that we were planning to use for the *seder!* Truly "od heim midabrim va'ani eshma."

Of course seeing how the Rebbe is leading us by the hand in such a clear way, gave us a huge boost and we joyfully finished packing our bags. I even ran out to the store to buy one more bottle of grape juice in preparation for a "packed house."

When we arrived, we came to realize just how deep this change of heart was. For not only did they help with cooking, etc. even more than in the past, they were surprised that I was not expecting it in the first place.

Needless to say, the *sedarim* were very well attended, and the visit as a whole was a great success. Boruch Hashem, in a more recent visit for Pesach 5775 we saw even greater *hatzlacha*.





# The Power of Positive Of Positive Thought שואכטגוט זיין גוט

Throughout the teachings of all our Rabbeim, the theme of bitachon in Hashem constantly repeats itself.

In countless letters, maanos, and sichos, the Rebbe delves deeply into this subject, expounding on the importance of trust in Hashem that all will turn out in a manner of revealed good.

Based on a story of the Tzemach Tzedek as quoted by the Frierdiker Rebbe, the Rebbe actually takes the middah of bitachon to a whole new level: "Tracht gut vet zein gut" implies that the actual trust in Hashem will bring about the good outcome.

Below is some background information, details, and insights into this very important subject.

#### Don't Despair!

The Frierdiker Rebbe relates in Lekutei Diburim:
The Frierdiker Rebbe was discussing how
precious the memories of a Chossid's yechidus
are, and how reliving these experiences and
envisioning the scene in one's mind brings
unparalleled hope and comfort in the Chossid's
darkest hour. He then went on to relate this story:

In the yeshivah Tomchei Temimim in Lubavitch, one of the *mashpi'im* was the Chossid Reb Michoel [Blinner/Der Alter]. The older *temimim* [of today] remember who Reb Michoel was.

When he was a young man, one of his children became gravely ill, and the doctors said they have no cure and don't know what to do with the child.

Reb Michoel went over to his fellow Chassidim and relayed the bitter situation. The Chassidim encouraged him and insisted that he not despair. Hashem will surely help, they said. Then they urged him to go immediately to Lubavitch.

Reb Michoel cried profusely. He wished he could go to Lubavitch, but the

doctors predicted that there were only a few hours left, r"l. So why should he go?

One of the elder Chassidim reprimanded him sharply. "The Gemara says never to lose hope in Hashem's mercy! The forces of good will certainly ask Hashem to hold out with the verdict until you get to the Rebbe."

...Arriving in Lubavitch, Reb Michoel was lucky to be immediately received in *yechidus* [by the Tzemach Tzedek].

"When I came in to see the Rebbe," Reb Michoel related, "and I handed over the *pidyon* for my son, I was overcome with the thought: Who knows what's doing with my son? The doctors predicted that it's only a matter of a few hours. So I began to cry terribly.

"The Rebbe read my note, and he said to me, 'Don't cry! *Tracht gut vet zein gut*. Don't grieve! You will be at your grandchildren's bar mitzvahs'.

"In those difficult times," Reb Michoel said, "when in my home I faced the hardships of raising my children (צער גידול בנים), I would envision the Rebbe's holy face, and the words he spoke at that yechidus, and all was good!" 1

#### The Rebbe's Thought

In another letter, the Frierdiker Rebbe relates the story, adding another interesting point. He asks the recipient to notify him of any progress in the situation of a sick person for whom he had requested a *bracha*, and then the Frierdiker Rebbe relates:

There are three stories in this regard, spanning a course of three generations, from our Rabbeim. My father [the Rebbe Rashab] once responded to someone who cried to him, begging for a blessing for a gravely ill patient. My father told me that he heard from his father [the Rebbe Maharash], that he was also approached about a similar situation, and he [the Rebbe Maharash] said that his father, the Tzemach Tzedek, also had a similar story, and he responded to the one asking for the blessing: "Tracht gut vet zein gut."

The Chossid replied, "What will it help if I think [good]. You, the Rebbe, must think [good]. Your thoughts can actually help!"
The Tzemach Tzedek replied, "Yes. But you must notify [me] how things are doing."<sup>2</sup>

#### Power of Bitachon

In a famous *sicha* defining the true meaning of *middas habitachon*, the Rebbe bases the very foundation of this *middah* on the timeless vort of the Tzemach Tzedek, "*Tracht gut vet zein gut*."

Bitachon means that one actually believes and trusts in Hashem that all will turn out good in a revealed manner. True, we believe that everything is ultimately for the best, despite the fact that we don't always understand Hashem's ways. But real bitachon goes a step further. We must trust that things will actually turn out good in a way that we can see and appreciate—בטוב הנראה והנגלה.

How can this be, the Rebbe asks. What if the person is indeed worthy of heavenly punishment? Why should he trust that all will be good?

Based on the *vort* of the Tzemach Tzedek, the Rebbe explains that *bitachon* of a Yid itself is what deems him worthy of receiving all good. That's what the Tzemach Tzedek meant when he said "*Tracht gut vet zein gut*." By thinking positively and having total trust in Hashem, then, in the Rebbe's words: "הבטחון עצמו יביא לתוצאות טובות"—the *bitachon* itself will bring about good outcome.<sup>3</sup>

#### SAFE AND SOUND

In this letter, the Frierdiker Rebbe writes to a father whose son was operating an airplane and had lost contact with ground control. Based on the date of the letter (25 Adar-Sheini 5703), we can assume that his son was part of the war effort, leaving all the more room for worry. The Frierdiker Rebbe writes:

I heard about your distinguished son who works on an airplane, and that there is still no word from him as to where he is now.

My great-grandfather, the Tzemach Tzedek, told one of the Chassidim—Reb Michoel Blinner of Nevel—when his son was in grave danger: "Arouse your trust in Hashem, your pure faith that He will save your son. Thoughts have effect. *Tracht gut vet zein gut*." And so it was; his son was saved.

May Hashem help you to fulfill the advice of the holy of holies [the Tzemach Tzedek], "ני"נ.

(Igros Kodesh vol. 7 p. 197)

#### Machshava has Effect

Throughout the years, the Rebbe repeated this instruction of the Tzemach Tzedek countless times. When people asked the Rebbe for his *brachos*, the Rebbe often quoted this timeless *horaah* as a means to bring about Hashem's salvation.

In one letter, the Rebbe explains that the power of *machshava* actually effects the goings-on of this world. Therefore, it is crucial to have only positive thoughts:

In response to your letter; it seems that I still have not influenced you to have a better spirit. I believe that I've already told you several times what is explained in *sefarim*, not necessarily in Chassidus, that one should not bring new negative thoughts into this world, and this will ensure that [negative occurrences] will not be brought into actuality...

...This is also understood based on the phrase of our Rabbeim, related by the [Frierdiker] Rebbe, "Tracht gut vet zein gut."<sup>4</sup>

In another letter, the Rebbe reprimands a *bochur* for his lack of *bitachon* in strong terms. The *bochur* wrote to the Rebbe during the month of Av that he plans to go home for Rosh Hashanah and not remain in yeshivah, because his father is not well. The Rebbe replied:

I am flabbergasted and in shock from this display of lack of *bitachon* in Hashem. At the end of Menachem-Av you have already decided and are certain that your father's health will still not be better in a month's time. Because of this, you intend to lessen your *avodas hatefilla* [by not staying in yeshivah for Rosh Hashanah].

It would be much better and appropriate if you would comply with our Rabbeim's instruction:



A GROUP OF CHASSIDIM ON MIVTZOIM WITH ISRAELI SOLDIERS DURING CHANUKAH, 5744. IN THE FACE OF TRYING AND ARDUOUS CIRCUMSTANCES, THEY DANCE.

Tracht gut vet zein gut. Be certain that your father's health situation will improve, and you will surely be able to increase in your avodah...<sup>5</sup>

#### The Thought Will Help

Rabbi Moshe Feller once wrote to the Rebbe about hardships he was experiencing in his shlichus in Minnesota. The Rebbe responded with the following powerful lines:

It is astonishing that we speak and speak [about this concept], but when it comes to actuality, everyone thinks that we meant someone else; not him!

The phrase/horaah of our Rabbeim was quoted many, many times; "Tracht gut, vet zein gut." (With the meaning being that the thought will actually help).

Instead of [complying], you "create" thoughts contrary to this [theme]. Despite our standing in the month of Adar, when we are commanded to increase in joy, you wallow in depression (see Tanya about this).

To conclude with *dvar malchus* [from our Rabbeim]: Tracht gut vet zein gut—in a visible and revealed manner.

#### When Exactly?

In conclusion, we share an amazing story, as told by Rabbi Avraham Rottenberg of Eretz Yisroel.

In 5717, Rabbi Rottenberg was living in Crown Heights, when he suddenly received a letter from his brother in Eretz Yisroel that their father suffered a heart attack and was in critical condition. Rabbi Rottenberg relates:

The letter was mailed out on Sunday and I received it on Thursday. Today it's hard to understand this; we would simply pick up the phone and call. But in those days, all I got was a letter.

Receiving a letter like this, what was I supposed to think? So I immediately wrote a note to the Rebbe explaining what my brother had written, that the situation was extremely critical, and I concluded, "וכבר אינני יודע מה לחשוב"—"I don't know what to think at this point..."

The Rebbe underlined those words, and he wrote: "ולפלא!!! שהרי ידוע ציווי רבותינו נשיאנו בכגון "דא–טראכט גוט וועט זיין גוט. ואחכה לבשו"ט. "Shocking!!! Because the command of our Rabbeim in such situations is well known: *Tracht gut vet zein gut*. I await good news."

[The exact *lashon* may have been a bit different, but the three exclamation points were certainly there -ed.]

After such an answer, I knew my father was still alive.

Shabbos passed, and on Sunday night I mustered my courage and I telephoned Eretz Yisroel. (My parents and I both had telephones, but it was still quite rare in those days to call overseas.) My mother picked up the phone, and I asked her, "How is father?"

"He's out of danger," she replied.

"When did this happen?" I asked.

"Thursday night," she answered.

I crossed over Eastern Parkway to 770 for *mincha* and stood near the Rebbe as he left the *shul*. "Nu, do you have *besuros tovos* for me?" the Rebbe asked.

"Yes," I said. "I just spoke to Eretz Yisroel and he's out of danger."

"Since when?" the Rebbe asked.

"Thursday night," I said.

The Rebbe continued: "ווען האסטו אנגעהויבן צוי" ווען האסטו אנגעהויבן צוט""—"When did you start to think good?"

"When the Rebbe told me to," I said.

"And when was that?" the Rebbe asked.

"Thursday night..."

The Rebbe concluded: "זאל דאס נאכאמאל ניט נאכאמאל צו טראכן ניט טרעפן, אבער דו זאלסט וויסן אלעמאל צו טראכן ניט טרעפן, אבער דו זאלסט וויסן אלעמאל צו טראכן...גוט —"It should never happen again, but you should always know to think good..."  $\bullet$ 

#### FURTHER READING:

לקו"ש חל"ו שמות (א)

מאמר ד"ה הבאים ישרש יעקב תשמ"ח - תו"מ סה"מ מלוקט עמ' רכח

- . Sichas Shavuos 5694. Lekutei Diburim vol. 1 p. 316.
- 2. Igros Kodesh Admur HaRaYaTZ, vol. 2 p. 537.
- 3. Likutei Sichos vol. 36 p. 4.
- 4. Igros Kodesh vol. 6 p. 286.
- 5. Ibid. vol. 9 p. 281.
- 6. Based on Rabbi Rottenberg's My Encounter interview with JEM; published on "A Glimpse Through the Veil" vol. 1.



# IEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 193118

## Conversation on Eastern Parkway

**CIRCA TISHREI 5740** 

The little time the Rebbe spent walking in or out of public spaces, was a prime opportunity for many who sought the Rebbe's *brocha* on important matters in their lives, and who were for one reason or another unable to write a letter, go in for *yechidus*, or enlist the help of *mazkirus*.<sup>1</sup>

Children often gathered in the foyer to receive nickels for tzedaka; Chassidim as well as visitors approached the Rebbe on his walk to or from davening; and the list goes on.

A less frequent occurrence was for the Rebbe to initiate a conversation with someone in the open, outside of farbrengens or dollars distribution.

The scene captured in these pictures is one such exception.

We see the Rebbe in an animated discussion with Rabbi Chaim Yitzchak

Poupko, on the front steps of 770, sometime at the end of Tishrei 5740.

#### "BEHIND" BEHIND THE PICTURE

Before we can relate what the exchange dwelled upon, let us shed some light on the persona of Rabbi Poupko:

Rabbi Chaim Yitzchok Poupko was a prominent rov in the East New York section of Brooklyn, and a scion of a distinguished family. He is both the offspring and patriarch of rabbonim, many leading *kehillos* around the world to this day. His family traces its roots back to Russia, where Rabbi Poupko's father was the rov of Veliz, a small town, and from where he fled at a mere 13 years of age, to escape forceful *chillul Shabbos* in Russian schools. In 5698 he married the daughter of the Tomashpol-Koidnover Rebbe, Rabbi Moshe Schneersohn-Twersky, who was a distant relative of the Rebbe.<sup>2</sup>

His father-in-law enjoyed a very warm relationship first with the Frierdiker Rebbe and eventually with the Rebbe, and thus began Rabbi Poupko's own connection with Lubavitch.

But Rabbi Poupko, a man of stature in his own right, had one strong passion that inevitably lead him to the Rebbe's doorstep; he was a fierce activist on behalf of *shleimus ha'aretz*, and a tireless opponent to any territorial concession or appeasement gimmicks to the Arabs.

He sat on the "International Board of Rabbis for Eretz Yisroel" and led an unrelenting campaign rallying rabbis to





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pasken on the forbidden nature of territorial concessions, exposing *halacha*'s view on contemporary matters of national security.

Knowing this, we can now understand Rabbi Poupko's own description of the scene presented here:

"I had just exited the main shul downstairs after *shacharis*, and was standing in front of the steps that led to the path to the front door of 770, when suddenly the Rebbe arrived from his house.

The Rebbe, noticing me, asked me if I had time to speak; I responded that to talk to the Rebbe I have all the time in the world!

The Rebbe then proceeded to list the numerous faults and dangers that the recently-signed peace agreement with Egypt posed to the Jewish people, as did the talk of giving up land to our enemies.

"Over the course of the conversation the Rebbe gave practical advice regarding things we should do, and others which we ought to avoid.



Rabbi Poupko passed away in the summer of 5760. ①

One particularly fond memory I have of that episode was when the Rebbe told me (in Yiddish): 'I am certain that you will succeed, and it will be not only your (personal) success, but that of kedushas ha'aretz and of Klal Yisroel.'"

Throughout the many years of his long career, he received warm words of encouragement from the Rebbe on many occasions, something he sought and appreciated with great satisfaction.

- 1. See A Chassidisher Derher 36 (113) "Behind the Picture"
- 2. It is worthy to mention that when Rabbi Moshe Schneersohn-Twersky passed away, the Rebbe was intimately involved in all matters pertaining to his *tahara* and subsequent burial, even carrying the *aron* at the *levaya*. He was interred in the Chabad *chelka* at Montefiore cemetery, near the Rebbe's Ohel.
- 3. ועד הרבנים העולמי למען ארץ ישראל.

## DerherLetters

This column is a forum for readers to send feedback, add to, or ask any questions about articles they read. All submissions are welcomed and will be reviewed by our editorial staff. Send your letter to feedback@derher.org.



In the Elul edition, page 14, you published part of a letter in the Rebbe's *ksav yad kodesh* addressed to "All Jewish Children" from Chol Hamoed Sukkos, 5741. It should be noted that at the first Tzivos Hashem rally on 19 Tishrei of that year, the Rebbe distributed copies of this letter to the *madrichim* together with coins for tzedaka to be given out to the children.

חיים שאול ברוק ועד הנחות בלה"ק



#### Dear Editor,

I am writing to express my sincere gratitude for publishing the beautiful kuntres of stories of the Rebbe in connection with Gimmel Tammuz. Each one is a gem and the entire collection was, for me, an emotional read. It truly drives home the fact that דער רבי דער רבי "וועט" געפינען א וועג ווי עם צו ענטפערן". Clearly much effort was invested in researching each story, and many thanks to the protagonists for sharing them. Hopefully many others will choose to share their personal stories for the benefit of the public. Thank you for providing rich chassidisher content for the public.

#### Levi Greenberg El-Paso, Texas



#### Dear Editor.

Thank you for your article and pictures of the Rebbe asking the photographer whether he had studied Tanya yet. As the article states that "incidents like this occurred a number of times before," I wish to point out that one of these occasions was as early as Purim, 5715¹. As the Rebbe was saying a *sicha*, someone in the crowd snapped a picture of the Rebbe, and the Rebbe inquired if the photographer studies Tanya every day. When someone answered that he doesn't study every day, the Rebbe replied, "Since it is evident that he tells the truth not only with his heart but also with his mouth, from now on he should start studying Tanya everyday. However," the Rebbe continued "If not, he should give back the picture". Much *hatzlacha* in all your endeavors,

#### Avraham D. Vaisfiche Kehot Publication Society

1. See Toras Menachem—Hisvaaduyos, vol. 13, p. 324.



I really enjoy getting the Chassidisher Derher every month and I just want to say thank you to all those that put their time into publishing it. Thank you! What I really enjoyed in the Elul edition was the Moshiach column, "No Jew Left Behind." It's unbelievable how the Rebbe showed in one letter that every Yid, whether he's perfect or not, will never be left behind when Moshiach comes. This letter shows how the Rebbe looked at every yid—as a whole world. Thank you Rebbe for believing in every Yid no matter how big or small we think we are. Moshiach now!!

#### Mendel Posner Mesivta of Coral Springs

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