

שנת
הקהל את העם

A Chassidisher

Derher

א חסידישער דערהער

Letter by Letter

THE STORY OF THE
ספר תורה לילדי ישראל

התוועדות חסידיים

AS DETAILED IN
THE TEACHINGS
OF OUR RABBEIM

A Surprise Farbrengen

כ' טבת תשמ"ה



AN ETERNAL VICTORY

THREE SHLUCHIM SHARE
THEIR MEMORIES AS BOCHURIM
AT THE TIME OF HEI TEVES



TEVES 5776
ISSUE 39 (116)

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TEVES 5776 ISSUE 39 (116)



About the Cover:

Featured on our cover is a photograph of the first Sefer Torah written for Yaldei Yisroel. The mantel and golden crown were designed as per the Rebbe's meticulous instructions. See the detailed story in this month's magazine.

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Derher**Editorial**

הביאור היחידי שניתן למצוא בתור סיבה שגרמה לטענות אלו, עד למצב המבהיל והספיקות כ' שנמצאו בו בתקופה האחרונה, הוא שליחותו של האלקים, כדי שעי"ז יתוסף כמה פעמים ככה, עד להוספת שלא בערך, בהפצת המעיינות חוצה, כולל – כפי שחודרת בהפצת התורה והיהדות.

“...The only explanation that may be given as a basis for these claims—which ultimately brought about the terrible situation and uncertainty in which we recently found ourselves—is that it was a shlichus from Hashem. As a result of this [temporary negative situation], our achievements in *hafotzas hamaayanos* and spreading Torah and Yiddishkeit will expand in an unprecedented manner...”

These words were said by the Rebbe on the afternoon of Hei Teves 5747, in a special *sicha* after *mincha*, referring to the question as to how it was at all possible to raise a claim against Chabad that we are not active.

“We have accomplished so much (גדולות ונפלאות) in *hafotzas hamaayanos*, to the point that *nessi doreinu* has already announced that all has been done to prepare for Moshiach. All that remains is for us to polish our buttons. How then can someone claim that we are inactive?” the Rebbe asked.

The explanation, the Rebbe said, is that this episode serves as a calling and opportunity to lift our efforts to

unprecedented heights—in a manner that is באין ערוך—incomparably greater than up to this point.

The Rebbe drew on the famous story of the Alter Rebbe when he was imprisoned, and the heavenly *kitrug* against Chassidus in his time. He was instructed to spread even more Chassidus as a result.

And indeed, the activities of Lubavitch stepped up to an entirely new level following the trial and victory over the *sefarim*.

Marking the day of Hei Teves this month, we hosted three shluchim, who were *bochurim* at the time, for an exclusive discussion on the meaning of the day. They each shared with us their recollections of what it felt like to experience these events in the Rebbe's presence, and the lessons we can apply from the story to our *hiskashrus* as Chassidim today.



One of the main issues that the Rebbe addressed when speaking of the *sefarim* was the fact that a Rebbe is *nitzchi*—eternal. The Rebbe emphasized again and again that “*Hu ba'chayim*”—the Friediker Rebbe is alive and will continue to lead us *ad sof kol hadoros*, until the end of time.

Often, when we listen to the Rebbe's words, though spoken so many years ago, they resonate in such a practical

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manner that one could hear as if the Rebbe is actually speaking now; addressing our world today.

In the early 5740s, the Rebbe spoke of a "turbulence" in the world. The world is shaking and trembling, the Rebbe said, sitting on the brink of total destruction. In days bygone, causing major destruction took sophisticated planning and large groups of people. But in today's world, one maniac can destroy the entire planet with the push of a button!

The solution that the Rebbe offered was to unite Jewish children throughout the world by joining them together with one mitzvah. Thus, the *Sefer Torah L'Yaldei Yisroel* was born. (See *Sichos Kodesh* 5741 vol. 3 p. 476.)

And very soon, 35 years later, the sixth *Sefer Torah L'Yaldei Yisroel* will be completed in Yerushalayim.

By including a detailed overview of the story of this *mitvza*, we hope that our readers will be encouraged to get involved in this special endeavor, and as the Rebbe once explained (*ibid.* p. 486):

"Moshiach will come even before the *siyum* and he will complete the final letters of ישראל כל לעיני with his own hand..."

The Editors

י"ט-כ"ף כסלו, ה'תשע"ו, שנת הקהל (ופרצת)



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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





A TZADDIK'S HILULA

פועל ישועות בקרב הארץ

The Alter Rebbe, whose yahrtzeit is Chof Daled Teves, writes in Iggeres Hakodesh 28 that, “at the time of [a tzadik’s] passing, the chesed of Hashem radiates from world to world, over those who fear Him and affects salvations in the midst of the earth¹ to atone for the sin of the generation, even for the deliberate sins which are of the three impure kelipos.”

This is the great accomplishment of the anniversary of a tzadik’s passing. Although we find ourselves in the final moments of golus—when, like the moments before daybreak, the night is especially dark—when the yahrtzeit of the Alter Rebbe comes around, “Hashem radiates from world to world, over those who fear Him, and affects salvations in the midst of the earth.” True, golus is a tragedy, in fact it is the worst golus ever—as is written in Daniel², “And it will be a time of distress that never was since a nation existed until that time”—nevertheless, “It is a time of distress for Yaakov, and from it he shall be saved³.” On the day of a tzadik’s passing, this very hardship is transformed into salvation.

From this we derive the following lesson in avodas Hashem:

There are times in a person’s life that he lives in “the world of intellect,” i.e. while involved in the study of Torah (or other studies, *lehavdil*); his mind, and by extension his person, is encompassed by ‘ideas.’

In that mode, it is simple for him to appreciate that Hashem performs miracles, and that He “affects salvations in the midst of the earth.”

Even when a person is in the “world of emotions,” in middle of prayer—which the sages⁴ call “a service of the heart”—he can easily be lead to recognize Hashem’s presence in the universe. Although emotions are less spiritual than intellect, when praying the person is still not involved with the physicality, and definitely not the coarseness, of the world.

But the true power of the “salvation He affects” is discovered when one is involved in mundane matters; when he leaves the study hall after



he has davened and learned, and goes to work. The novelty is that even then a revelation of Hashem's deliverance is drawn down upon him.

And more so; even if he acts without thinking first—as a human being ought to—like he is asleep, the revealed “salvation in the midst of the earth” still affects him.

To explain: We are known as “believers, the sons of believers,” as the *possuk* says in *parshas Shemos*⁵ (which is read on the Shabbos before 24 Teves) “the nation believed.” Meaning, we are also believers, not just our parents. Therefore, when a Jew behaves properly, even while he is involved in “the way of the land,” he doesn't lose his G-dly image, which gives him the title *adam*—person (named so because he is *adame l'elyon*, similar to G-d). All his dealings are clearly intelligent and compassionate. He acts honestly in business and refrains from even the slightest infringement to someone else's livelihood.

Unfortunately, however, there are times when one's actions don't reflect his *adame l'elyon* humanity. His business affairs are defined by extreme involvement in materialism

to the point of greed; when “he has one hundred, he wants two.” At this point it is no longer evident that these actions are being taken by an intelligent and morally upstanding human being, because his defining human feature, his comparability to Hashem, has been consumed by the animal inside him.

And sometimes it's worse than that. Sometimes his actions don't even reflect those of a normal animal. A healthy animal isn't suicidal. Case in point: If one sees a beast jump into a fire, it is a sure sign that the animal is not normal. Here too, one's animal soul in normal circumstances should recognize that acting honestly and in a G-dly fashion is crucial to success. The Torah says⁶, “If you follow My statutes and observe My commandments and perform them, I will give your rains in their time,” and “I will grant peace in the Land.” So following Torah is the vessel for all blessings, and if someone doesn't behave this way, not only is his human status not evident, his behavior is in certain ways worse than an animal's!

This is the real novelty of the “salvation that is affected in

the midst of the earth,” on the anniversary of a *tzadik's* passing. Hashem's deliverance reaches even people whose actions indicate at non-intelligence or beastliness; notwithstanding their behavior.

In Egypt, Hashem performed miracles so that the *Yidden* would come to know him; that even Egypt, the most depraved of lands, can become an arena for Hashem's revealed presence.

This applies in every generation. Hashem, “the guardian of Israel,” protects every Jew—regardless of his situation—from the “seventy wolves,” the world's nations, and from the “old and foolish king,” our evil inclination.

Until Hashem transforms the darkness to light, and redemption is brought about, which has the “advantage of light that comes from within darkness.” ❶

(Based on a *sicha* delivered 24 Teves 5742, *Toras Menachem Hisvaaduyos* 5742, volume 2, pgs. 685-687)

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Tehillim 74:12 | 6. Vayikra 26:3 |
| 2. 12:2 | 7. ibid. 6 |
| 3. Yirmiyahu 30:7 | 8. Tehillim 121:4 |
| 4. Taanis 2a | |
| 5. 4:31 | |



כתב יד קודש

Immeasurable Impact

Established in 5719, *Di Yiddishe Heim* was a Yiddish and English periodical newsletter published by N'shei Ubnos Chabad, catering to Jewish women and girls. It was in circulation for nearly five decades. From its inception, it enjoyed unique attention from the Rebbe, including the Rebbe's constant review, and even editing of most of the newsletter¹.

Mrs. Nechama Greisman prepared an article for the autumn 5736 edition, recounting her summer experience as a teacher and counselor at the Beis Chana program in Minnesota. In her article, she related how she broke her arm and was hospitalized. In the hospital she found a Jewish doctor who was surprised at seeing a Lubavitcher Chossid, saying how he never believed he would see a real-life Chossid in Minnesota. She continued to describe her conversations with him about Lubavitch, the Rebbe, and the Chabad Houses in Minnesota, which led to this doctor laying tefillin.

She then went on to express her sense of gratitude to Hashem, but she did not mention the powerful lesson we can learn from her encounter with this Jewish doctor.

Below is the Rebbe's comment upon reviewing this article.

1. This lasted through the Sivan 5751 edition. The newsletter continued on through the winter of 5764, making it the longest standing periodical catering to Jewish women.

החסידי חסידות
המאורע

לא יאמרו: מה ענין חסידות: על המאורע הזה ראה
יהודי גדול בלחטא: חסידות, ודוקא נערה בארצה
המערבית, אלא איתא פארוו, ואמא פאר דעם העלבים הזה
זה ער רפואתה, וזה ארסטיז, יהדות וער אעמא צווען -
תפלין, וער-שטח אהרן דעם וכו', אלא על פה האגלישטאט!
ונתעורר - גרויסע פא אהמא פאר חסידות ח', חסיד ח' - גרויס
פארהיטע נאט היטדות פאר: חסידות: דעם חסיד אן הנצח
אן הנצח וער-א יאער האט אצו אהמא

It is a great wonder **that the main point** is missing [from the article]:

פלא גדול שהעיקר חסר:

[Namely,] that through **her** episode, a Jew saw for the **first** time: a Chossid; and specifically an American girl who speaks English just as he does, and despite her great pain she puts effort [to speak with him] **not** regarding her medicine and healing, rather she explains him Yiddishkeit, to the extent that it achieves **action** – [that he lay] tefillin, and even more so—**he forgot** that he is a doctor, **etc.**; he forgot of **his entire existence!** He was hence inspired, in deep concentration and thought, about what live Chassidus is, and what a “living chossid” is—and through this he surely saw the entire spirit of Yiddishkeit.

In the words of Chassidus: **In one moment, a radical change, from one extreme to the other [occurred]**. And additionally, who can comprehend what future results may come from this?!

It would be worthwhile to include (and expound on) this idea.

ע"י המאורע **שלה** ראה יהודי בפעם
הראשונה: חסיד, ודוקא נערה בארצה"ב
המדברת אנגלית כמוהו, ומשתדלת
בעוצם הכאבים שלה **לא** ע"ד רפואתה,
כ"א להסבירו יהדות ועד למעשה **בפועל** -
תפלין, ועד - **ששכח** שהוא רופא וכו', שכח
על **כל המציאות שלו!** ונתעורר - בריכוז
כל מחשבתו ב"מהי חסידות ח', חסיד ח'
- שבטח ראה בזה נשמת היהדות כולה.

בל' החסידות: **ברגעא חדא מן הקצה אל**
הקצה ונוסף ע"ז - מי ישער ההמשך אצלו
לאח"ז?!

וכדאי להוסיף (ובהרחבה)



A SURPRISE FARBRENGEN... A WORTHWHILE ENDEAVOUR

כ"ף טבת, תשמ"ה

INTRODUCTION

The timing of the Rebbe's farbrengens was usually quite predictable; there were days throughout the year on which Chassidim could expect a farbrengen. However, Chof Teves—the *yahrtzeit* of the Rambam (and the focus of this *yoman*)—was not a date that farbrengens were usually held. But in 5745 that date was just several months since the Rebbe launched Mivtza Rambam¹. It was in this spirit that the Rebbe called a surprise farbrengen. Adding to the surprise was the fact that almost all farbrengens were held at 9:30 pm, after *seider hayeshiva* had ended. But on this occasion the Rebbe called the farbrengen almost immediately after returning from the Ohel, with just a few minutes notice.

A WELCOME SURPRISE

On Sunday, Chof Teves, the Rebbe went to the Ohel; upon returning, he davened *mincha* and *maariv* with the *minyan*. During *chazzaras hashatz* of *mincha*, the Rebbe was seen glancing at the *parsha* printed in the back of the *siddur*. After *maariv* the Rebbe left to his room, and almost immediately afterwards, Rabbi Leibel Groner came out and announced—to everyone's surprise—that a farbrengen would begin in five minutes!

This was completely unexpected, and needless to say, everyone was ecstatic. There was a massive rush, as the shul was quickly prepared for this special farbrengen.

With everyone's help and participation, the room was set up within just a few minutes, and the

relatively small crowd stood waiting for the Rebbe to enter. Although the Rebbe's chair was set up as usual, due to the surprise nature of this farbrengen, there wasn't enough time to bring the regular cake. Reb Berel Junik brought a plate of cookies to serve as the "*mezonos*" instead, and placed it on the table near the Rebbe's place.

When something takes place with a sense of urgency and is still done in an orderly fashion, the seder is more recognizable.

YAHRTZEIT OF THE RAMBAM

When the Rebbe entered and began the farbrengen, he emphasized that the farbrengen was taking place on the Rambam's *yahrtzeit*.

"It carries extra significance in light of the recent drive in learning three daily *perakim* of the Mishneh Torah of the Rambam."

The Rebbe then asked with a smile how a farbrengen celebrating the Rambam could be held unannounced. Wasn't it after all the Rambam who wrote his works with the purpose of making a *seder* in Torah? It must be, said the Rebbe, that the value of order is highlighted even more when one allows for the occasional unexpected event!

"When something takes place with a sense of urgency and is still done in an orderly fashion, the *seder* is more recognizable. Indeed, this is an idea that holds especially true with regards to accepting new *hachlatos* upon ourselves."

After this short introduction, the Rebbe went on to discuss a *halacha* from the day's *shiur Rambam*. The Rambam states that "a *talmid* that is exiled to an '*ir miklat*' should be accompanied by his teacher." This is because the Torah stipulates that when someone is exiled to an *ir miklat* he should "(flee to one of these cities of refuge and) live." Since a Torah scholar cannot properly 'live' without the Torah, he must bring his teacher along with him.

To practically apply this concept today, the Rebbe compared Hashem to the teacher, who accompanies his *talmid* into *golus*. Consequently, Hashem must ensure that every Jew has everything necessary to 'live,' and he must do so in an unqualified fashion. Most importantly, though, Hashem should immediately leave exile with each and every one of us—for good!

The Rebbe vigorously encouraged the singing in between the *sichos*, giving special attention to the famous basketball coach, Mr. Abe Sacks.² At one point, R' Sholom Ber Cadaner approached the Rebbe with a tray of fresh cake, and the Rebbe gave him a *yasher koach*.

A YID'S SUSTENANCE

In the third *sicha*, the Rebbe emphasized the importance of all talk to lead to practical action. "The mission of a Jew is to fulfil his *shlichus* in 'lighting up the world.' This is achieved specifically by following the path of Torah, which guides us in every aspect of our lives."

The Rebbe pushed this point further, using the famous parable of the 'fish in the water.' "Just like fish cannot live when they are removed from water,



THE REBBE LEAVES 770 FOR THE OHEL.

JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE ID: 209378 29 ELUL 5745



The police would close the road, psychologists would be brought to persuade him against his plans and they would even falsify facts until he is convinced.

a Yid that is removed from the Torah cannot truly live. If someone were, *chas v'sholom*, to insist that he doesn't care about Torah and mitzvos, he could be compared to a person on a bridge threatening to jump into the water to end his life. Any normal person would certainly do his utmost to stop him—even forcefully—from carrying out his plan. The police would close the road, psychologists would be brought to persuade him to change his mind, and they would even falsify facts until he is convinced. Throughout all this, the police would surely be working out a way to stop him—even forcefully, should it come to that. Nobody is going to convene a session in parliament to discuss what they should do according to the 'democratic law'."

And so the Rebbe continued, "We must take the same approach when it comes to saving a Jew from depriving himself of his own spiritual life.

"You can find Jews who will argue that they see so many *goyim* living full and productive lives. After all, we all come from the same Adam Harishon, and we are all the same. If he can live like that, why shouldn't I be able to as well?"

The answer is very simple, said the Rebbe. "It is just like a fish comparing itself to a mammal. It is obvious that while an animal needs oxygen to survive, a fish must have water.

"Hashem designated each creation with its own necessities and individual abilities. A Yisroel can't do the job of a Kohen; a person's heart cannot control his limbs; and one minister can't fulfil the task of another. Hashem has likewise established separations and differences between us and the other nations. The only possible way to change this dynamic—for a *goy*—is through *giyur kehalacha*. Aside for this, according to the rules set in place by the Creator, there is no way for a *goy* to fulfil the task of a Yid."

And so, the Rebbe explained, the same is true vice versa.

"Someone that was born a Yid, or someone who converted to Yiddishkeit, will remain so eternally. Tonight being the *yom hilula* of the Rambam, the 'guide for the perplexed,' it is an appropriate occasion to set straight those who are confused about this issue. We should remind them that the



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single and only way for a Jew to properly live his life in a meaningful manner, is with Torah and its mitzvos.”

Following the *sichos*, the Rebbe asked that *Sheyiboneh* be sung, and as usual, he ended the farbrengen by distributing dollars to the *tankistin*. To one of the *tankistin* the Rebbe wished “פארט געזונטערע ייט בשורות טובות”.

The farbrengen ended at 9:00 pm, which is earlier than a regular farbrengen would even begin!

As the Rebbe was leaving 770, he turned to the Junik brothers, who were waiting in *Gan Eden Hatachton*, and said: “גלאט אזוי א פארבריינגען... א גלייכע זאך!—A surprise Farbrengen... a worthwhile endeavour.”

REGARDS FROM THE GERRER REBBE

When the Rebbe arrived at 770 on Monday morning, 21 Teves, Reb Nochum Kornwasser, the Gerrer *rosh yeshiva*, approached and introduced himself. The Rebbe said to him, “Your name precedes you in matters of spreading Torah; may you have much *hatzlacha*.”

On the way to *krias haTorah*, the Rebbe gave a coin to someone who was flying that day to Eretz

Yisroel, saying, “*Chap arain* another tzedaka in *chutz la'aretz*.”

On his way out from *mincha* on Tuesday, 22 Teves, the Rebbe blessed a group of Gerrer chassidim present. The Gerrer Rebbe’s driver approached the Rebbe to convey his regards. The Rebbe thanked him and asked him his name. When he answered “Yehonoson Borenstein,” the Rebbe replied with a smile, “That’s your *goyishe* name. What’s your Yiddishe name?”

He answered with his mother’s name, and the Rebbe responded, “You need to give your mother’s name to the Gerrer Rebbe, not to me. I need your father’s name.”

After giving his full name, the Rebbe said, “Kol hamevorech misborech.” In reference to the regards from the Gerrer Rebbe, the Rebbe quoted the Gemara³, “The wine is the Master’s, yet thanks are given to the one who pours it.” T

1. Mivtza Rambam was launched on Acharon Shel Pesach 5744.

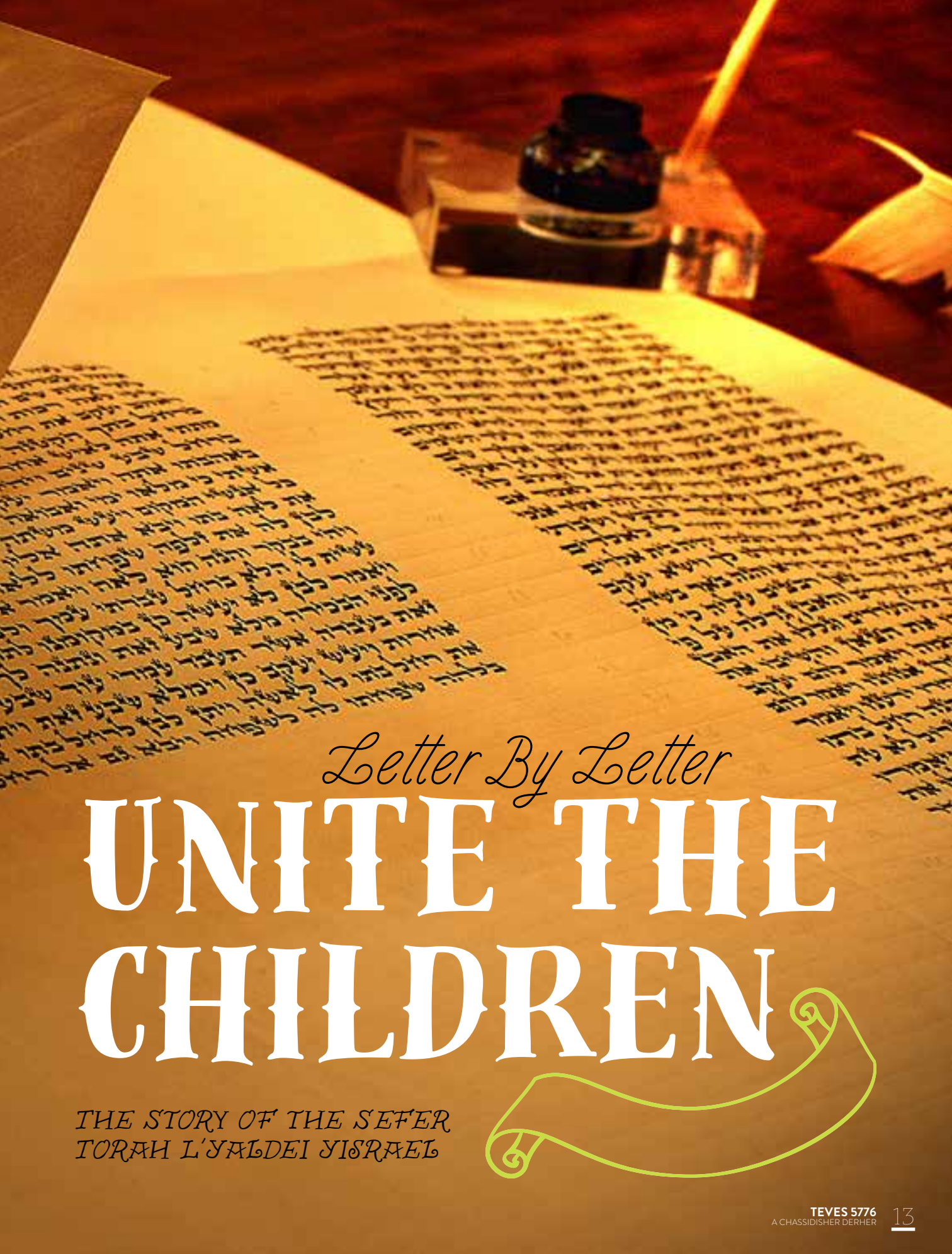
2. Abe was a Jewish basketball coach from Harlem who merited having exceptional *kiruvim* from the Rebbe. See Derher weekly newsletter vol. 1 issue 12 (Emor, 5771).

3. Bava Kame 92, 2.



In the preparation of this article we were greatly assisted by **Rabbi Shmuel Greisman**, director of the Sefer Torah L'Yaldei Yisroel, and the album "Ois B'Sefer Torah".

Photos: Children's Sefer Torah; JEM/The Living Archive



Letter By Letter

UNITE THE CHILDREN

*THE STORY OF THE SEFER
TORAH L'YALDEI YISRAEL*

THE FIRST THREE DAYS

Tuesday, evening of 11 Nissan

Yud-Alef Nissan 5741 was one of those farbrengens. The atmosphere was capable of sweeping you away from this world and transporting you to a higher place. But at the same time, there was hyper-awareness of reality. One of the topics of the farbrengen was the recent attempted murder of President Ronald Reagan, which had left America traumatized and desperately seeking answers. After giving the president his personal *brocha* for a speedy recovery, the Rebbe spoke at length about the lessons that must be learned by the United States as a country, the president as it's leader, and by Yidden as well.

Then the Rebbe said a *maamar*, after which came a *sicha* about the *mivtzoim* and specifically *mivtza Pesach*. Towards the end of that *sicha*, the Rebbe suddenly made an announcement¹:

"We spoke earlier about *ma'alin bakodesh*, growing in holiness. Therefore, after a pause for saying *l'chaim* with *simcha*, *t'rua* and *kol gadol*, we will pick up [the farbrengen] and discuss a new idea." Smiling, the Rebbe continued, "Not a new *gezaira*, *chas v'sholom*, rather a proposal and plea. As will be explained soon, *umitoch simcha vetuv leivov! L'chaim!*"

The assembled crowd was shocked. When was the last time the Rebbe had made such a dramatic announcement? What could the Rebbe have in mind?

After a short pause, The Rebbe's father's *hakafos niggun* was started, and the Rebbe led the fiery singing, repeating the middle stanza over and over. The nervous anticipation grew by the minute.

The Rebbe began the next *sicha* by prefacing that, for the past few



months, he had constantly been speaking "with a *shturem*" about Tzivos Hashem (established earlier that year), uniting all Jewish children throughout the world under a common banner—Tzivos Hashem—and a common goal—to spread Yiddishkeit in their homes, their surroundings, and beyond.

However, the Rebbe said, children live in a physical world where it is difficult to feel this unity. Moreover, there are some Jewish children who may not know about it altogether. For this reason, he continued, other

ideas were proposed to make them feel united; a common uniform, a common symbol, and other similar ideas.

True unity, though, is achieved through Torah. Therefore, the Rebbe announced, we are now proposing an utterly novel *mivtza*: to write a *sefer Torah* written solely for children, boys and girls, before bar and bas mitzva; each child getting their own letter. This will demonstrate to the child in a real, physical way that he is connected to all other Jewish children; and through the Torah.



**THE REBBE'S HAGAHOS
ON A PRESS RELEASE
ANNOUNCING THE NEW
SEFER TORAH FOLLOWING THE
FARBRENGEN OF YUD ALPEH NISSAN 5741.**

appointed the Beis Din Rabbanei Chabad in Eretz Yisroel—"my representatives"—to oversee the writing of the Torah and to work out the halachic details. The main thing, the Rebbe said, is that the Torah should be written with the highest level of *kashrus*, and even more importantly—it should be written as fast as possible.

In order to highlight this idea of unity, the Rebbe said that the Torah should be written in Eretz Yisroel, the one and only Yiddishe land. And more specifically, in *Yerushalayim ir hakodesh*, a city that belongs to all Yidden together, uniting them all as one - as the *possuk* says, "עיר שחבורה לה" "יחדיו".

In order to avoid *nahama diksufa* (meaning that something received for free is not as cherished as something one paid for), each child will pay one U.S. dollar, or its equivalent in foreign currencies, for the letter. The Rebbe

Wednesday, 11 Nissan

In Eretz Yisroel, where they were listening to the farbrengen via live hook-up, it was already daytime. The farbrengen had begun at 9:30 pm Eastern time, which was 3:30 am in Eretz Yisroel. By the time this *sicha* was said, it was 12:30 am in New York, which meant that it was 6:30 am in Eretz Yisroel. The Beis Din



Rabbanei Chabad immediately called an emergency meeting in the Colel Chabad offices in Yerushalayim for that very day. Despite the short notice, and with the rabbanim living all over Eretz Yisroel, every single one of them made it over to Yerushalayim.

The task before them wasn't a simple one: writing a Torah, especially a nice one, is an intense project involving many details, which usually takes months of preparation. But they didn't have time for extensive planning; as the Rebbe said, it had to happen as fast as possible.

During the meeting, the rabbanim chose Rabbi Shlomo Aharon Henig as *sofer*, and they decided that the Torah would be in the Alter Rebbe's *ksav*. As soon as the decision was made, not a moment was wasted. They called Rabbi Henig over to the office and *right on the spot* he began writing the *sefer Torah*. The project that the Rebbe had launched just hours ago was already underway!

When the Chassidim from all over Eretz Yisroel gathered for the yearly Yud-Alef Nissan farbrengen the following evening in Kfar Chabad,

under the fresh impression of the Rebbe's powerful words about the new *mitvza*, Rabbi Mordechai Ashkenazi shared the thrilling news—the writing had begun!

Back in New York, Yud-Alef Nissan was unfolding pretty much like every year. The Rebbe went to the Ohel; after which he returned to 770, davened *mincha*; and then a group of elder Chassidim delivered a special birthday *brocha*.

Suddenly, Rabbi Groner came out of the Rebbe's room looking for Rabbi Hodakov. Rabbi Hodakov went into the Rebbe's room and emerged with surprising news—there would be another farbrengen!

This caught everyone off guard, since there had already been a farbrengen for Yud-Alef Nissan the previous night. It was so out of ordinary that many of the guests that had come to New York for Yud-Alef Nissan had already returned home to prepare for Pesach. The crowd at the farbrengen was quite small, but the excitement was palpable, as the Chassidim waited to see what would happen.

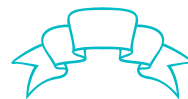
"First of all, we open with good news," the Rebbe began². "Yesterday we spoke about writing a *sefer Torah* for Jewish children... Today the news arrived that the writing of the first *sefer Torah* has already begun, on Yud-Alef Nissan. The first line was already



LEADING RABBANIM OF ERETZ YISROEL MEET IN BEIS SHAZAR IN Kfar CHABAD ON 18 NISSAN 5741, TO DISCUSS HOW TO IMPLEMENT THE REBBE'S NEW MITVZA.



CHILDREN SURROUND THE SOFER, RABBI SHLOMO AHARON HENIG AS THE FIRST SHEET OF PARCHMENT IS WRITTEN.



THEY CALLED RABBI
HENIG OVER TO THE
OFFICE AND RIGHT ON
THE SPOT HE BEGAN
WRITING THE SEFER
TORAH.



JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE

RABBI SHMUEL GREISMAN STANDS NEAR A MAP IN HIS OFFICE, TALLYING THE NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD.

written on a beautiful, high quality parchment.”

The first part of the *sicha* involved the spiritual significance of writing a *sefer Torah*, and then the Rebbe turned to the practical aspects, giving many practical guidelines about the new *mivtza*: how to pick a letter for each child; how to design the certificates; and more.

Thursday, 15 Nissan

The following day, people throughout the world who had heard the Rebbe’s urgent instructions at the farbrengen, were clamoring to buy letters for their children. However, there was a bit of a problem: no one really knew how to go about it, since the *mivtza* hadn’t been officially set up yet. And so, in every community, one person was designated to collect the forms and hold on to the money until they knew what the next step would

be. (The Rebbe would clarify this a few days later, see below.)

That day, the Rebbe again went to the Ohel, and after *mincha* it was announced that there would be yet another farbrengen! Three farbrengens in a row! Although this farbrengen wasn’t a total surprise, since it was Yud-Gimmel Nissan, the Tzemach Tzedek’s *yahrtzeit*, it was still an unprecedented phenomenon.

The shul downstairs had been cleaned for Pesach by now, and the *gabbaim* warned everyone not to bring in *chametz*; in fact, even the ‘*mezonos*’ on the Rebbe’s table were kosher for Pesach. At 9:30 pm Eastern time the farbrengen began.

The first half of the farbrengen was focussed on the *yahrtzeit* of the Tzemach Tzedek, but in the *sichos* following the *maamar*, the Rebbe spoke at length about the new *mivtza*. The Rebbe said that they should make

sure that the writing of the Torah continues on the following day—Friday—so that there would be a full three days, a *chazaka*, of writing before the sofer is forced to break for Pesach. Thus concluded three whirlwind days of farbrengens, inspiration and excitement—and now it was time to get to work.

SETTING IT UP

After witnessing the Rebbe’s urgency for the project, Lubavitcher Chassidim worldwide rolled up their sleeves. Enrollment forms were immediately printed and sent around the world, and as the days went by, more and more people signed up.

The official coordination of the *mivtza* was put in the hands of the Beis Din (who were later instructed that the *mivtza* should not be associated with any other Chabad *mosad*), and they subsequently set up



THE ORIGINAL CERTIFICATE (RIGHT) CONFIRMING THE CHILD'S LETTER IN THE TORAH, DESIGNED PER THE REBBE'S DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS. (LEFT) THE CURRENT VERSION OF THE SAME CERTIFICATE.

the *Vaad L'ksivas Sefer Hatorah Shel Yaldei Yisrael*, asking Rabbi Shmuel Greisman to take charge.

The Beis Din called a meeting of rabbanim and *askanim* in Beis Shazar in Kfar Chabad to discuss how the *mitvza* should be coordinated in the smoothest and quickest way possible. They decided on the basic parameters of the outreach effort, and a few people were assigned to assist Rabbi Greisman in the activities, each taking on different responsibilities; publicity, outreach, finances, etc.

If he had been harboring any doubts about his new position, Rabbi Greisman was quickly made to realize what he had gotten himself into. The next day, he received a phone call from the Rebbe's *mazkir*, his brother-in-law, Rabbi Binyomin Klein, with an astonishing message. The Rebbe had told him the following: "Call your brother-in-law—he is involved in the *Sefer Torah*—and ask him how many children have bought a letter. Not how many letters the *sofer* wrote, but how many children bought a letter in the Torah."

Rabbi Greisman answered that he would look at the lists and let him know, and when Rabbi Klein called him back the next day, Rabbi Greisman gave over the tallies. Later on, Rabbi Klein called him back to tell him that the Rebbe had been surprised by the numbers. "This is with the whole *shturem*!?" [I.e. Why isn't there more?] The Rebbe told Rabbi Klein that he should call Rabbi Greisman back the next week for another update. From then on Rabbi Greisman sent Rabbi Klein a weekly *duch* for the Rebbe. In fact, several times when Rabbi Klein went into the Rebbe on Friday, the Rebbe himself asked whether the *duch* was ready yet.

DOWN TO THE LAST DETAIL

In contrast to most other *mitvzoim* and projects that the Rebbe initiated, where the Rebbe would generally give broad *hora'os* and leave the technical details up to the Chassidim, here the Rebbe was involved at every step of the way. Throughout the process the Rebbe displayed an intimate,

empathetic understanding of a child's mindset and inner life, guiding every part of the *mitvza* based on what would excite, motivate, and involve the children.

One issue involved the certificates the children would receive for buying the letters, which the Rebbe addressed at length in the *farbrengen* of Yud-Beis Nissan³. As was often the case, these weren't just simple instructions; rather, in a lively *sicha*, the Rebbe provided fascinating, down-to-earth insight into a seemingly mundane process.

FULL DISCLOSURE?

There is a custom in many communities, the Rebbe began, that when someone buys a letter in a *sefer Torah*, he receives a certificate indicating which letter is his. This is done because without a certificate, the person buying the letter would have no way to discern whether he was actually assigned his own letter or not. The certificate confirms that he actually has a letter.

However, it can happen that when a person receives his certificate and discovers which part of the Torah his letter is in, he is miserably disappointed. *What type of letter did I buy? Look at what word it's in!* The letter that he bought, the letter that belongs to him, *his* letter in the *sefer Torah*, is in a negative word or parsha!

One might argue that it shouldn't really matter; all words in the Torah are holy! These words are just as crucial to the completeness of the *sefer Torah* as Hashem's names. Who cares what letter you received?

And yet, the fact remains that we are dealing with human beings, and you cannot compare having a letter in the words "*v'achos lotan timna*" to having a letter in the name of Hashem. This difference is even recognized in *halacha*; when a *sofer* writes the names of Hashem, he must be in a higher

level of holiness than when he writes the rest of the Torah.

Thus, when you let people know the exact letter they received, it will often cause anxiety and dismay. Besides for causing a Yid pain—which must always be avoided—there is another issue involved: the very fact that a Yid is scared can affect his *mazal*.

Instead, the Rebbe suggested, the certificate should only name the *parsha* that the letter is in—to confirm that a letter was indeed assigned to this individual—without stating the actual word it is in.

Following this proposal, the Rebbe gave another, related *hora'ah*. The decision of which letter goes to whom should not be left up to a person in the office, rather it should be done by *gorel*, which, as we know, is *al pi Hashem*.

It quickly became evident that the Rebbe viewed the certificate, and even its design, as a crucial part of the *mitvza*, spending several *sichos* and many *maanos* giving instructions on every detail. For example, the Rebbe said that the certificate must be beautifully designed, because this would show the children the importance and significance of having a letter, and also encourage other children seeing the certificate to buy a letter for themselves. As such, the certificate must be nice enough that a child should want to hang it on his wall and show it off to his friends. In fact, when the *vaad* sent the Rebbe a first draft of the certificate, he rejected it on the grounds that the color and quality of the paper weren't good enough.

Other instructions included: the certificates should be signed at the bottom (either by one of the rabbanim, or by the *mazkir Beis Din*) in order to emphasize their value and importance; it should include a picture of the *choma* surrounding Yerushalayim,

they should all be in *Lashon Kodesh*, regardless of where they are being sent (with the exception of the children's names, if applicable). The Rebbe also instructed that it include pictures (or drawings) of the *mekomos hakedoshim* in Eretz Yisroel, and specifically placed the picture of the Kosel at the top right side of the page.

THE CHILD HIMSELF

Since the goal of the *mitvza* is that each child should have a letter in the *sefer Torah*, one might imagine that it doesn't matter who actually fills out the form to buy the letter, whether it's the father, mother, sibling, or child himself. However, the Rebbe instructed⁴ that the children should do it themselves, giving two reasons: firstly, this would draw them in and get them involved. Secondly, although a child's intent has no significance according to *halacha*—"a child has no *machshava*"—his action is very significant—and especially when the work is so difficult. "When a child sits down to write," the Rebbe described, "he sticks his tongue out between his

teeth, deliberates to himself, and rolls up his sleeves. Then he looks at his pen or pencil and thinks about how to turn it, after which he labors to ensure that the shape of the letters should come out right. And then there are some children who are *mehader* and want their signature to come out nice, so instead of just signing a regular signature, they draw a picture with a toy, and the like." For a child, writing is a big deal!

This work that the child invests will arouse the deepest fondness from Above, and therefore, although the handwriting may be hard to read, and it might even be difficult to discern whether the child was trying to write an *Alef* or draw a picture of two buckets of water hanging on a stick (as the *melamdim* used to describe an *alef*), it's all worth it. However, the Rebbe added, if after all their labor, the form is still not legible, the parents should add a note clarifying the contents.

Regarding infants and small children, who can't do it themselves, the Rebbe said that all of the steps of



SEPHARDIC CHIEF RABBI OF ISRAEL MORDECHAI ELIYAHU FILLS IN A LETTER AT THE SECOND SIYUM, CHOF AV 5746.

signing up—completing the forms and putting them into envelopes—should be done in front of them. Because, as Torah has always said and science recently concluded as well, even newborns are affected by their surroundings, and they will thereby be included in the *mitvza*.

Women are central to the *mitvza*, the Rebbe said⁵, because as the *akeres habayis*, the mainstay of the home, a mother is more involved with her children than the father. Also, the child should be doing this on his own—spending his own dollar—and a woman is much more effective at convincing and motivating children than a man.

HITTING THE STREETS

The task before the Chassidim was staggering—to recruit over three hundred thousand children; a mind boggling number! The scale of the *mitvza* and audacity of the goal was unprecedented. But after so many spirited *sichos* from the Rebbe, after such urgent galvanizing and encouragement, they got down to business. Final brochures and forms were printed, and chassidim used every avenue available to enlist children, spreading across New York in cars and station wagons with mounted loudspeakers and going door to door in communities, standing on street corners in Manhattan handing out brochures, and publishing advertisements in all the Jewish newspapers.

And this was only in New York. Across the United States and throughout the world, shluchim were signing up all the children they could find, as fast as was humanly possible. When the shluchim in Morocco wrote to the Rebbe that they had managed to sign up 827 children by the 17th of Iyar, they received a remarkably warm *maane*: “At every opportunity (*bichol*



THE ORIGINAL REGISTRATION FORM FOR CHILDREN TO PURCHASE THEIR OWN LETTER IN THE TORAH.

eis mitzoi) I will mention them at the *tziyon*.” Following this, they took a *hachlota* to double and triple their activities going forward.

In Eretz Yisroel, the center of it all, the activities were in high gear; men, women, and children all pitched in to enroll as many children as possible.

The activities weren’t limited to *bochurim* or newly married *yungelait*, or even to shluchim and *baalei batim*. Lubavitcher rabbanim too, threw themselves into the *mitvza*, visiting various rebbes, *roshei yeshivos*, and rabbanim all over America and Eretz Yisroel to sign up their children. *Gedolei Yisrael* from all across the political and religious spectrum signed up their children and grandchildren, and many came out with letters supporting the *mitvza*, encouraging their followers to follow their example. The Belzer Rebbe signed up his child and called to all his Chassidim to do the same; Rabbi Moshe Feinstein signed up not only all of his grandchildren, but all the *talmidim* in his *mosdos*; the Baba Sali published a letter promising his personal *brocha* for every child that signs up; and Rabbi Weiss of the *Eida Hachareidis* in Yerushalayim said that he would make a list of all his grandchildren and send

it in. *Kol koreh*’s encouraging people to join the *mitvza* were signed by dozens of *gedolei Yisroel* and distributed throughout the Jewish world.

The *mitvza* reached so far, that when a group of N’shei Chabad went to meet the Skverer Rebbetzin in New York to ask her to enroll her children, she replied that there was no need—her father, the Munkatcher Rebbe, had already signed them up together with his other grandchildren! Instead, she committed to encouraging the women of Skver to sign up their children. “Only the Lubavitcher Rebbe could come up with such a *mitvza*,” her father, the Munkatcher Rebbe remarked.

Throughout the Jewish world, and even more so in Lubavitch, this was the burning *mitvza* of the month. It was the topic of conversation on everyone’s lips, the focus of all



mitvzoim, and even the subject of their Torah learning. On Acharon Shel Pesach, when the Rebbe delivered⁶ his annual contribution to the Kinus Torah, the topic he spoke about was the mitzvah of writing a *sefer Torah*.

UPPING THE ANTE

Then the Rebbe took it up a notch. At the farbrengen of Rosh Chodesh Iyar, the Rebbe set⁷ the first deadline—the end of the year, so that the Torah would be completed by the end of the *shnas Hakhel*. This, of course, upped the ante for recruiting the children; now they were down to five months to find all three hundred thousand children! But it also created a very practical problem: a *sofer* simply cannot write a Torah in such a short time. So the Rebbe proposed a simple solution: recruit another *sofer*. After the first *sofer* estimates how much he will be able to finish by the end of the year, the second *sofer* can immediately begin writing from that point on.

Following the Rebbe's directives, the Beis Din appointed Rabbi Shimshon Kahane from Kfar Chabad, a *sofer* whose handwriting was similar to Rabbi Henig's—a quality which the

AN AIRPLANE CIRCLED OVERHEAD, DROPPING LEAFLETS AND BALLOONS WITH TAGLINES ABOUT THE SEFER TORAH.



Rebbe had said to look for—to write the second half of the Torah.

The activities of *shluchim*, *baalei batim*, and *bochurim* throughout the world took on a new urgency, as they raced against the clock to recruit enough children to complete the Torah by the end of the year; which came out to about fifteen thousand children a week! Little did they know that this was still only the beginning.

A TIME OF DANGER

On Yud-Gimmel Iyar (a few weeks later) the Rebbe sent out a *michtav klali*⁸ addressed to the entire Jewish nation. The physical and spiritual well being of Jews and Judaism throughout

the world is in danger, the Rebbe wrote, and there is one solution to this crisis: אם בחוקתי תלכו...ונתתי גשמיכם...If we learn Torah and fulfill mitzvos, Hashem will provide us with all we need, and bless us with peace. Specifically, the Rebbe proposed, people should arrange *kinusim* of Yidden, for children too, at every opportunity, where they will add in Torah, tefillah, and tzedaka. The Rebbe then added plea to all of *klal Yisrael*—"a *bakasha nafshis*, in all *leshonos* of *bakasha*, that Yidden should unite by fulfilling the mitzvah of *ve'ahavta l'reiacha kamocha*."

At first, there was no evident connection between these gatherings and the *sefer Torah* for children. Then, a few days later, a directive arrived from the Rebbe's *mazkirus*, stating that it was especially crucial to sign children up for the *sefer Torah* in the weeks between Lag B'omer and Shavuot.

The Chassidim's activities intensified. One remarkable scene was in Meron on Lag B'omer. As people started pouring into the city on Erev Lag B'omer, the Lubavitchers were ready. Dozens of booths were set up all over, manned by groups of volunteers shouting into megaphones and inviting people over. Other volunteers were sprinkled over the entire area, distributing brochures to the milling crowds and directing them towards the booths. An airplane circled overhead, dropping leaflets and balloons with taglines about the *sefer Torah*.

The demand was incredible. Throngs of people congregated around the booths to sign up their children. All schisms and boundaries fell away, as Ashkenazim and Sephardim, blue collar workers and professionals, regular people and prominent public figures, all joined in on the *mitvza*. Innumerable amounts of people were reached and letters sold.



JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE ID: 235133

A FLOAT PROMOTING THE SEFER TORAH L'YALDEI YISROEL PASSES BY THE REBBE AT THE LAG B'OMER PARADE OF 5743.

The activities on Lag B'omer were but one example of the Chassidim worldwide heeding the Rebbe's call. But, as far as the reasoning behind it all—on that the Chassidim were still in the dark. Why the sudden urgency? What was the emergency?

That next Shabbos, and in the following farbrengens, the Rebbe explained at length.

ON THE BRINK

The world is shaking and trembling, the Rebbe said⁹, sitting on the brink of total destruction. One phenomenon he pointed out was the unlimited power of destruction the nuclear bomb had given to individual evil actors. In days bygone, causing major destruction took sophisticated planning and large groups of people. But in today's world, one maniac can destroy the entire planet with the push of a button! When normal people have access to such destruction, you can at least try predicting what they're going

to do next; but when you're dealing with a madman, this is impossible—you can never imagine what crazy idea will fall into his head. The fate of the world depends on the next move of some crazy king in Africa or elsewhere, or some other *meshugene* roaming around ready to sneak into a nuclear bunker.

The Rebbe also pointed to the shooting of the president as evidence of the fraying fear of authority in the world. *The president himself was shot*—and, after a few weeks of excitement in the newspapers, everyone goes back to their normal day to day lives, as if nothing ever happened! *That's an old story*, they say, *there are new stories on the table now; and anyways who cares about what some crazy guy did?* How can you casually brush off what happened when the threat is not gone?! He is likely to be released and do it again!

The situation in the world, the Rebbe concluded, is getting worse

by the week, and no one knows what tomorrow will bring. It is only Hashem's kindness that is saving the world from utter destruction.

Why does Hashem allow this? Why do the madmen of the world have free reign? It must be, the Rebbe said, because Hashem wants the Yidden to wake up and strengthen their fulfillment of Torah and mitzvos.

But, more specifically, the discord of the greater world stems from discord in the Jewish world, in multiple arenas. Some people are engaging in smear campaigns against other Yidden with no regard to the truth or impact of their words. Others aren't satisfied with sticking to their own field of work, instead trampling over other people's work and causing discord among Yidden.

"How much *sinas chinam* can you have?" the Rebbe cried. "*Vifil iz der shiur?*"

What can be done? First of all, the Rebbe said, all Yidden must

IN DAYS BYGONE, CAUSING MAJOR DESTRUCTION TOOK SOPHISTICATED PLANNING AND LARGE GROUPS OF PEOPLE. BUT IN TODAY'S WORLD, ONE MANIAC CAN DESTROY THE ENTIRE PLANET WITH THE PUSH OF A BUTTON!



add in *ahavas chinam*. But this isn't enough. Something more must be done; something to unite all Yidden together, a *mitzva* that will join them as one. And this, the Rebbe explained, was why there was a special push to buy letters in a unity *sefer Torah*.

This unity *sefer Torah* is specifically for children because when older people make a *sefer Torah*, *Beis Din Shel Ma'alah* can always come looking for problems and deficiencies; but when children make a *sefer Torah*, the *Beis Din Shel Ma'alah* has no power, for they are *hevel she'ain boi chet*—breath with no sin. *Al tigu bimeshichoi!* Hashem commands the *Beis Din Shel Ma'alah*, do not touch the *tinokos shel beis rabbon!*

Since this is the way to bring peace to the world, all *hagbalos* and

limitations on the *mivtza* are now removed, and it must be done with the greatest *shturem* and *zrizus*!

ON BLACK AND WHITE

On Shabbos Parshas Naso¹⁰, the Rebbe upped the ante once more. Considering that “fear of flesh and blood” can be more motivating than the “fear of heaven”, the Chassidim would now be held personally accountable to the Rebbe. The Rebbe instructed that every person should compile a list of how many letters were purchased in their area by Shavuos and send it “here, to the *reshus* of the Frieddiker Rebbe, *nesi doreinu*, in the city of his Ohel and *tziyon*.” (Since only a short time remained until Shavuos, another list should be

compiled before Yud-Beis Sivan as well.)

No one wanted to come up short, and the following day, Erev Shavuos, a day of hectic Yom Tov preparations and harried housework, Chassidim did the almost unthinkable and went out to sign children up for the *sefer Torah*. In the late afternoon hours of Erev Shavuos, the Rebbe received the lists he requested. (During the *farbrengen* on Shavuos, after again speaking at length about the *mivtza*, he asked that, aside for the list compiled before Yud-Beis Sivan, another list should be sent in by Tes-Vov Sivan.)

Later on, it was revealed that this period marked a turning point in the history of the Yidden living in Eretz Yisroel. On Erev Shavuos, as Lubavitcher Chassidim signing children up and sending their lists to the Rebbe, a squadron of planes was taking off from Israel to bomb Saddam Hussein's nuclear plants in Iraq. It took only a minute and twenty seconds to decimate the plants completely, and an hour and a half later, all the planes and pilots were back in Israel, unharmed. Saddam Hussein's perverse aspirations were gone forever, and the shadow of nuclear devastation was removed from over Israel for years to come.

As senior military officers would later relate, they were up against incredible odds from every conceivable angle, both military and diplomatic. For example, the planes were sold to them by America solely for peaceful purposes, with Americans standing by full-time to ensure this, and yet, somehow, with all the frenzied preparations, they did not pick up on what was happening. Additionally, the planes were brand new and untested, yet not a single one had failed during flight. Also, they carried the exact amount of fuel necessary to get to Iraq and back, leaving zero room for error; yet every single plane made it back. And perhaps the most famous part of

Throughout this time period, the Rebbe would ask almost every boy and girl who came into *yechidus* whether they had a letter in the *sefer Torah*. If there was a group of children, the Rebbe would ask the first child passing by, “Do you have a letter in the *sefer Torah* for *yaldei Yisroel*?” And then he would ask the following ones, “And you?” “And you?”

These questions were directed at *shluchim* as well: one Erev Shabbos, as the Rebbe was walking into 770, he turned to Rabbi Shlomo Cunin and asked him whether every child in California has a letter yet.

The *mazkirim* related that on many occasions, when families would request a *brocha* for a child's health, the Rebbe would tell them to inquire whether he or she has a letter in the Torah. In one *maane*, the Rebbe writes, “Surely in the merit of their daughter *tichye*, they bought a letter in the *sefer Torah* which is being written in *Yerushalayim Ir Hakodesh*, within the [Old City] walls, and may she have lengthy and good years.”

BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN

No matter the time and context, the Jewish community of the USSR was always on the Rebbe's mind, and this *mivtza* was no exception. Throughout the farbrengens in these months, the Rebbe encouraged people to purchase letters for their relatives living behind the Iron Curtain, since this would unite them with their brothers and sisters throughout the world, transcending all physical barriers and limitations.

In a later *sicha*¹¹, in order to demonstrate the lasting impact of the *mivtza* in general, the Rebbe brought an example from a child living in the USSR who, having no prior knowledge about Yiddishkeit, is approached about buying a letter in the *sefer Torah*. After hearing a speech about how there is this thing called a “*sefer Torah*,” and how this *sefer Torah* has a connection to him, he goes home to his parents and asks them [and here the Rebbe switches to Russian], “*Shta tokaye sefer Torah?*” [“What is this *sefer Torah*?”].

His parents, having grown up in a small Russian *shtetl* under communist rule, don't either know what a *sefer Torah* is. So they, in turn, look for someone else who might know—a *zeide*, *bubbe*, or an older Yid in the *shtetl*—and ask them the same question, “*Shta tokaye sefer Torah?*” This person tells the child what a *sefer Torah* is; sneaks into a shul to show them one in the *aron kodesh*; and explains to him how Torah is a personal *hora'ah* for him, notwithstanding the fact that neither he, his father, nor his mother, have ever seen one their entire lives. Thus, the effect of telling a child about the *sefer Torah* isn't limited to the *sefer Torah* itself - it can be a springing board to spark their interest in Yiddishkeit and its fulfillment.

The Rebbe continued that, unfortunately, these children don't exist only in the USSR. Even in other countries, which are not under communist rule—even in the United States—there are children who have never seen a *sefer Torah*. When they are told that all Jewish children—no matter who raised them, how they were raised, or where their parents belong—have a letter in the *sefer Torah*, it will bring them closer to Yiddishkeit.

the episode occurred as they flew over the Mediterranean. From his yacht, the king of Jordan saw the planes flying overhead and immediately called the Iraqis to warn them, but his warning was ignored. And flying into Iraq and over the nuclear plants, they were expecting to encounter some type of resistance, but not one anti-craft missile was shot their way. These are only the revealed miracles that the Israeli Air Force experienced in planning and executing this daring operation.

Chassidim at the time felt that, perhaps, this was what the Rebbe's *shturem* had been all about. As with the Yom Kippur War and countless times before and after, the Rebbe anticipated the crisis and spiritually prepared the Jewish nation for what was to come.

FINISH IT OFF!

Towards the beginning of the *mivtza*, the Rebbe had set Erev Rosh Hashanah as the goal for recruiting all the children and completing the *sefer Torah*; an extremely ambitious objective. However, as the weeks passed and the Jewish nation got caught up in the storm of excitement, the Rebbe pulled back the deadline, first setting it for the end of Sivan, then for Yud-Beis Tammuz. Ultimately, all the letters were sold



RABBI ZALMAN GURARY ADDRESSES THE CROWD AT THE FIRST SIYUM.



THE SEFER TORAH IS CARRIED OUT OF THE TZEMACH TZEDEK SHUL BEGINNING THE PROCESSION TO THE KOSEL FOR THE GRAND EVENT.

by the end of Tammuz. Less than four months after the Rebbe had first introduced the idea, over three hundred thousand children had signed up for a letter in the *sefer Torah*!

Looking at the lists of children that were included in this Torah, the organizers came to realize the magnitude of what had occurred before their very eyes. The children came from every sector and stratum of the Jewish world—Chareidim, Modern Orthodox, and non-religious; extreme *kana'im* and anti-religious fanatics; Chassidim and Litvaks—there was not a part of the Jewish world that hadn't participated. And they came from all types of communities throughout the world—from big urban cities with large Jewish communities, to small towns without a rabbi; from the suburbs of California to the wastelands of Russia; from New York to Africa to the Arab world.

THE REBBE'S DESIGN

Seeing the *sefer Torah* of *yaldei Yisrael*, one notices that it doesn't look like a regular *sefer Torah*, with two items standing out in particular: the huge, towering crown, and the unique *mantel*. This isn't a coincidence, as both were designed by the Rebbe.

The story of the crown actually began towards the beginning of the *mitvza*. In one of the *farbrengens* where the Rebbe spoke about the *sefer Torah*, he also spoke about giving *tzedaka* in a manner of *lechtachila ariber*. Following this *sicha*, Rabbi Zalman Gurary, a prominent Chassid, decided that he would donate the crown, and when he reported this to the Rebbe, the Rebbe told him that it should be designed like the *sefer Torah shel Moshiach* (which the Rebbe had personally designed years earlier). Rabbi Gurary asked if he could change one thing: the crown on the *sefer Torah shel Moshiach* was only partially made



of gold, and he wanted to make this one of pure gold. The Rebbe agreed.

A photograph was taken of the original crown, based off which a sculptor managed to create an identical crown of gold. Later on, about a week before the *siyum*, the Rebbe gave the *hora'ah*, through *mazkirus*, that Rabbi Gurary should bring the crown to Eretz Yisroel and place it on the *sefer Torah* as his *shliach*.

The story of the Torah *mantel* is even more unusual; the Rebbe designed every detail of it himself, down to the dimensions of the *luchos*

(see sidebar), and gave \$118 for each of the Torah *mantelach*—white and blue—on behalf of himself and the Rebbetzin.

A PERSONAL SHLIACH

During the *farbrengen* of Shabbos parshas Va'eschanan, on 15 Av, the Rebbe announced¹² that the date of the *siyum* had been set for Chof Av, and word got out that the Rebbe would be sending a special *shliach* to Eretz Yisroel, Reb Zalman Shimon Dvorkin, the rov of Crown Heights. On the morning of 17 Av, Rabbi Dvorkin was

Below is a rare document with the Rebbe's handwritten design for the new *mantel*.

On top, the Rebbe titles the page as **design on the mantel**
Both on the white mantel for Tishrei, and on the t'chails

Under that is a sketch of the *luchos*, along with dimensions: on top of each *luach*, the Rebbe writes (**three tefachim**)—which comes out to six *tefachim* widthwise—and on the side, the Rebbe writes (**six tefachim**). Unlike most *mantelach* with *luchos*, where they are merely one element of the design, here the *luchos* cover most of the *mantel*, and stretch around the sides of the Torah.

Under the *luchos*, the Rebbe writes the *possuk* **Torah Tziva Lanu Moshe Morasha Kehillas Yaakov**, adding that **this is only if it's possible to fit it in the width of the luchos and no more**, i.e. if the *possuk* shouldn't extend wider than the *luchos*.

Then the Rebbe added that **On every one of the atzei chayim** should be written **the possuk Aitz... [chayim hi lamachazikim] boh**. And also the *possuk* **Torah Tziva...**[lanu Moshe morasha kehillas] **Yaakov**.

It is interesting to note that at one point an idea arose to fashion the *atzei chayim* out of silver, to which the Rebbe answered, "Aitz chayim is wood, not silver."



called into the Rebbe's room, where he was given a few things to take along on his trip: \$1,200 to participate in the expenses of the *sefer Torah*; \$118 for each of the covers (as mentioned above); money to be distributed as *tzedaka* in Eretz Yisrael; and a bottle of *mashke* from a farbrengen in Russia (which had been sent to the Rebbe earlier). The Rebbe also directed him, as his shliach, to write a letter in the *sefer Torah* that was being completed, as well as in the second *sefer Torah*, which was just being started, and emphasized that he would be going as a shliach—of the Rebbe and of all rabbanim—not as a rov.

When they were done, the Rebbe escorted Rabbi Dvorkin until the door of *Gan Eden Hatachton*, following him with his eyes until he left 770.

That afternoon, Rabbi Dvorkin was sent off amidst song and dance, accompanied to the airport by a group of prominent members of *anash*, including Rabbi Hodakov, Rabbi Mordechai Mentlik, and others. After a short farbrengen in the airport, Rabbi Dvorkin was driven directly to the foot of the plane. (Upon his return, Rabbi Dvorkin went into *yechidus*, and the Rebbe asked about all the various details of the shlichus.)

THE SIYUM

After weeks and weeks of tireless preparation, the big moment finally arrived.

The *siyum* commenced in the Tzemach Tzedek shul in Yerushalayim, where hundreds of Chassidim gathered for the ceremony completing the Torah, which would later be followed by a parade to the Kosel. Dozens of different rabbonim, *roshei yeshivos* and rebbes were present for the celebration, and honored to fill in the letters in the Torah. Afterwards Rabbi Dvorkin, as the Rebbe's shliach, wrote in the final letter. As the rabbonim were completing the Torah

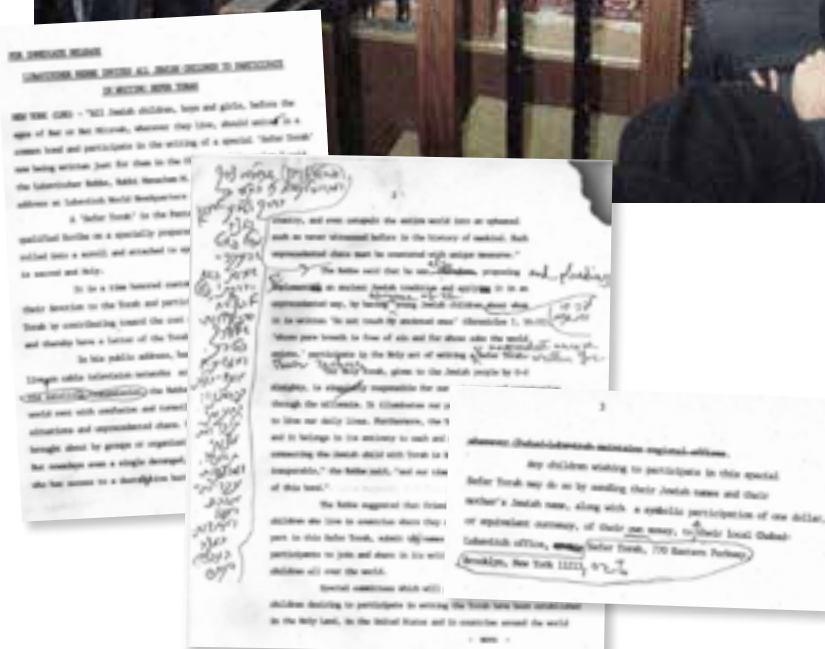


RABBI ZALMAN SHIMON DVORKIN, WHO WAS SENT AS THE REBBE'S PERSONAL SHLIACH TO THE FIRST SIYUM, MAKES A L'CHAIM AND FILLS IN A LETTER OF THE ALMOST COMPLETE TORAH.

11 Scenes of the second Siyum Sefer Torah L'Yaldei Yisroel, Chof Av 5746 11



1. CHILDREN SURROUND THE SOFER IN THE TZEMACH TZEDEK SHUL IN THE OLD CITY OF YERUSHALAYIM, AS THE LAST LETTERS ARE FILLED IN. THE SIYUM IS ABOUT TO BEGIN. 2. RABBI ZUSHE WILMOVSKY, THE PARTIZAN, MAKES A L'CHAIM WITH THE CHILDREN. 3. THE SEFER TORAH IS ESCORTED AMIDST SINGING AND DANCING THROUGH THE WINDY STREETS OF THE OLD CITY OF YERUSHALAYIM TOWARD THE KOSEL PLAZA. 4. THRONGS OF MEN, WOMEN, AND CHILDREN JOIN THE CELEBRATIONS AT THE KOSEL PLAZA. 5. CHILDREN JOIN THE NEW SEFER TORAH ON THE PODIUM. 6. THE DAIS IS FILLED WITH LEADING RABONIM AND REBBES OF ERETZ YISROEL IN CELEBRATION OF THE NEW SEFER TORAH.



THE REBBE'S HAGAHOS ON A PRESS-RELEASE ABOUT OIS B'SEFER TORAH.

inside the Tzemach Tzedek shul, the street outside began filling up with people; by the time the parade was to begin, it was overflowing, with barely any room to move. The gates of the shul opened, a *chupa* was unfurled, and the procession began.

Leading the parade were the children, carrying burning tapers, followed by the rest of the crowd, and accompanied by a marching band and heavy security. They weaved their way through the narrow streets of Yerushalayim until they arrived at the

Kosel, where thousands of people from all over Eretz Yisrael were waiting to greet them. The *sifrei Torah* of the Kosel were taken out to greet the new one, and, following the reading of *Ata Horeisa*, seven huge *hakafos* were made, as tourists and passersby alike joined in the excitement. Tears filled their eyes and joy filled their hearts.

Following a speech by a representative of the children, the Torah was returned to the Tzemach Tzedek shul, where a *seuda* and farbrengen took place. They farbrenged until 3:30 am, when it was time to listen to the hook-up of the Rebbe's Chof Av farbrengen, during which the Rebbe spoke at length about the new *sefer Torah*.

NEW FRONTIERS

At the farbrengen of erev Rosh Hashanah a few weeks later, the Rebbe related¹³ that someone had come to him with a complaint: "*Viful iz a shiur to speak about writing a sefer Torah for yaldei Yisrael? We have to be more concerned about those who are connected to hevel sheyesh boi chet - the adults?!'*"

"This complaint", the Rebbe said, "was accepted [by me]."

Thus, the campaign of *sifrei Torah hakloiyim* began. It turned out that the *sefer Torah* for *yaldei Yisrael* was only the first stage in a project of an even grander scale: that every Yid, no matter their age and even if they have already passed on, should have a letter in a *sefer Torah*. The Rebbe explained that it had started with children because Jewish unity—the goal of the *sifrei Torah*—is easier achieved by children, but upon accomplishing this with children, it could now be taken to the adults.

Unlike the *sefer Torah* for *yaldei Yisrael*, which was under the Rebbe's direct supervision, the Torahs for adults were commissioned by several different organizations, mainly

ON MANY OCCASIONS,
WHEN FAMILIES WOULD
REQUEST A BROCHAH
FOR A CHILD'S HEALTH,
THE REBBE WOULD
TELL THEM TO INQUIRE
WHETHER HE OR SHE
HAD A LETTER IN THE
TORAH.



Tomchei Temimim and Beis Rivka. It is beyond the scope of this article to discuss this wide-reaching *mitvza*, but suffice it to say the Rebbe spoke about it tirelessly throughout the following year, and spent countless *sichos* *shturem*ing about it without rest. It became one of the *mitvzoim haklolyim* mentioned at every farbrengen.

Stressing the importance of acquiring a letter in one of the *sifrei Torah*, the Rebbe quoted¹⁴ the *possuk* in Daniel, ובעת ההיא ימלט עמר כל הנמצא. כתוב בספר. Meaning, although the world is going through difficult times, the Yidden will be okay, for Hashem protects them. But the condition stipulated in the *possuk* is that they be inscribed in Hashem's *sefer*; the *sefer Torah*. (Shabbos parshas Mikeitz 5742).

Sifrei Torah continue to be written today. The office of *sifrei Torah* for *yaldei Yisrael*, which has completed five Torahs to date, is run by Rabbi Shmuel Greisman, and the office for *sifrei Torah haklolyim* is under the direction of Rabbi Moshe Oirechman. The sixth *sefer Torah* for *yaldei Yisrael* is coming close to completion, with less than a hundred thousand letters remaining, and the aim is to finish it by this summer.

Although this is one of the *mitvzoim* in which the Rebbe invested so much time, energy, and effort, it is also one that is easy to overlook, since—unlike the other *mitvzoim*—it

is a one time event, per person. So take a moment and think: Do you have a letter in the *sefer Torah haklali*? Do your siblings or children have one in the *sefer Torah* for *yaldei Yisrael*? Then, aside for your family, reach out to friends, acquaintances, *mitvzoim* friends, and beyond, and introduce them to this opportunity. In addition to fulfilling the Rebbe's directives—the primary motivation in every *mitvza*—the spiritual effects and rewards are tremendous, and it is the greatest gift you can give them. **T**

1. Sichos Kodesh 5741 vol 3, p. 129.
2. Ibid. p. 139.
3. Ibid. p. 145-148.
4. Ibid. p. 188-193.
5. Ibid. p. 487.
6. Ibid p. 315.
7. Ibid p. 423.
8. Likutei Sichos vol 22. p. 321.
9. Sichos Kodesh 5741 vol 3, p. 476.
10. Ibid. 581.
11. Likutei Sichos vol 23. p. 296-297.
12. Sichos Kodesh 5741 vol 4, p. 424.
13. Ibid. P 765.
14. Hisva'aduyos 5742 vol 2, p. 624.

WHERE CAN I SIGN UP?

Sefer Torah for Yaldei Yisrael:

KidsTorah.org

Sefer Torah Haklali:

www.chabad.org/409282

Remember that the forms should be filled in by the children themselves, or, with infants, in front of them.





התוועדות חסידים

Hisvaadus—farbrengen—is one of the foundations of darkei hachassidim v'hachassidus. It is the opening and entryway to the mitzvah of ahavas Yisroel... (Hayom Yom 24 Tishrei)

**“דאס וואס עס קען אויפטאן א חסידישער
פארברענגען קען מלאך מיכאל ניט
אויפטאן...”**

Often described as the “mortar” holding together the many other staples of a Chossid’s life, for generations, a chassidisher farbrengen stood at the helm of *darkei haChassidus*. It serves as the driving force behind everyday *avodas Hashem*, breathing life into the study of *nigleh* and Chassidus, *avodas hatefillah*, and *ahavas Yisroel*; the bond connecting Chassidim with the Rebbe,¹ and Chassidim with one another.

The Frierdiker Rebbe describes the farbrengen as the “salt and pepper” providing flavor and *geshmak* in the Chossid’s *avodas Hashem*.²

Early Beginnings

Chassidishe farbrengens have been in existence as long as Chassidus itself. Perhaps the earliest recorded farbrengen in the form we have come to know it - speaking *divrei hisorerus*, saying *l'chaim* and singing *niggunim*, to strengthen those in attendance in Torah and mitzvos - is in the Frierdiker Rebbe’s “*lainge briv*”—the long letter written to Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka in 5695.³

The Frierdiker Rebbe describes the recollections of a young Simcha Zissel growing up in the city of Kalisk. He relates how a group of *yungeleit* returned to the city after being away for a few years, and they brought with them a new method in *avodas Hashem*. They were happy and upbeat. Their davening was with great passion, accompanied by sweet song and emotion.

Once, in the middle of the night, young Simcha Zissel observed a sight he could barely believe: The *yungeleit* brought out some potatoes they had baked on the stove, along with a bottle of bitter liquor and sat down with the elderly Reb Chaim and began to



TZEISCHEM L'SHOLOM FARBRENGEN IN THE SMALL ZAL OF 770 FOR RABBI SHMUEL LEW, UPON HIS DEPARTURE ON SHLICHUS TO LONDON. L-R: RABBI AVRAHAM ZISKIND, ROSH KOLLEL; RABBI SHMUEL LEW; RABBI MORDECHAI MENTLIK, ROSH YESHIVA OF 770. CIRCA AV 5725.

say L'chaim together. They kissed one another and then they broke out in a dance, singing and dancing for hours on end. Suddenly Reb Chaim sat down at the table and the group began speaking with one another in an undertone. Until Reb Chaim cried out in a tune and again joyous dancing erupted.

A short while later the secret got out: Reb Chaim himself was a *talmid* of the Baal Shem Tov, and he had sent the *yungeleit* to learn the ways of Chassidus.⁴

More than Mal'ach Michoel

Much has been said of the spiritual power of a chassidishe farbrengen. The Alter Rebbe explained it with a *mashal*: Children are by nature self-centered and don't necessarily like to share with others. A caring father will work with his children and hire an educator to set them on the right path. When seeing success in his effort and observing how his children learn to get along and care for one another, setting their own selves aside for the good of another, the father is filled with joy and pleasure. With that, he is compelled to fulfill their wishes and give in to their requests.

Similarly, when Chassidim sit together and bless one another at a farbrengen, Hashem is sure to fulfill their requests.

At one particular farbrengen, the Frierdiker Rebbe related, as the *talmidim* of Reb Mendel Horodoker sat together, one of them cried in agony of the troubles he endured and begged his peers to bless him with

salvation from his bitter predicament. At first the *talmidim* scoffed at him, thinking that they did not possess such spiritual power, but then the Alter Rebbe reminded them: "Did you forget about the note that fell down from heaven (פתקא אשר משמי שמיא) (נחיתא), stating that 'What a chassidishe farbrengen can accomplish, Mal'ach Michoel cannot achieve?'"

Hearing this vort from the Alter Rebbe, all the *talmidim* were aroused with the flame of *ahavas rei'im* and were ready to bless their colleague with a *refuah sheleima*.⁵

TWO FARBRENGENS

Shortly after the Frierdiker Rebbe arrived in America, he explained:

In recent times, the chassidishe farbrengen has taken on a new face.

It used to be that a chassidishe farbrengen was all about discussing the inner meaning of a *chassidisher* vort, or the lesson in *avodas Hashem* derived from a *chassidisher maaseh*. This uplifted Chassidim and placed them on a higher plane.

Nowadays, a farbrengen is all about strengthening Yiddishkeit; *taharas hamishpacha*, keeping Shabbos, setting fixed times to learn Torah, etc.

The latter is obviously very important. These subjects must be discussed and dealt with. But by no means should this take the place of the traditional, authentic *ruchniyus'dike*, chassidisher farbrengen...

(*Sefer Hasichos Summer 5700* p. 44)

Sorely Missed

Throughout the generations, the Rabbeim held the chassidisher farbrengen in the highest esteem and even spoke of how they wished they could have the *zechus* to partake in it.

The Rebbe Maharash once related to his son, the Rebbe Rashab:

"One receives the true *geshmak* in *yiras shomayim* and a true intellectual conviction ("אפלייג") of the concepts of Chassidus through a chassidisher farbrengen..."

"On Thursday, Erev Rosh Chodesh Sivan, 5619 (תר"ט), I went to my father [the Tzemach Tzedek] for *yechidus*. When I came into his room, I noticed he was in deep distress with a worrisome look on his holy face.

“At first, I was so taken aback that I was unable to speak, but then I calmed down and I asked my father what was the cause of this distress. I was sure it had something to do with the attempted decrees against the Jewish innkeepers in the region that my father had worked so hard combatting during the previous winter.

“But then my father explained:

“Today marks fifty years since the last chassidisher farbrengen in Liadi, which took place on Monday, Erev Rosh Chodesh Sivan, 5569 (תקס”ט).”

The Tzemach Tzedek went on to describe how on the preceding Shabbos, parshas Behar-Bechukosai, many distinguished guests arrived in Liadi. A beautiful farbrengen took place on that Motzoei Shabbos and the following Sunday, “Which I truly enjoyed,” the Tzemach Tzedek recalled.

The next day, Monday, Erev Rosh Chodesh Sivan, the Alter Rebbe called the Tzemach Tzedek into his room. It was the Alter Rebbe’s custom each year before Rosh Chodesh Sivan to say a *maamar* privately for his grandson, and bless him. This year being the Tzemach Tzedek’s 20th year, the Alter Rebbe said the *maamar* “*Mi’ben Eshrim*” and gave an extra blessing that he see success in his writing of *nigleh* and Chassidus.

“From then on,” the Tzemach Tzedek continued his story, “whenever I attended a farbrengen, I was treated differently; as the ‘Rebbe’s grandson.’ Later [after the Mittler Rebbe’s took over the *nesius*] I would be treated like the ‘Rebbe’s son-in-law,’ and then from the day I accepted the yoke of tending to *anash* [i.e. the *nesius*] thirty years ago, I have never properly enjoyed a chassidisher farbrengen.

“Contemplating on the unimaginable good I have missed out on over the past fifty years,” the Tzemach Tzedek concluded his story, “I am filled with a heart-wrenching pain from the depth of my heart...”

When the Rebbe Maharash concluded relating this story, he added:

“Imagine how much my father accomplished over those fifty years. He wrote scores of *chiddushim* in *nigleh* and elucidated and explained Chassidus. How many Yidden he invigorated throughout those thirty years of his *nesius*. How many holy visions he experienced.

“This holy man, the son of a holy man, and grandson of a holy man; a *gaon*, a *tzaddik*, close to



RASKIN FAMILY ARCHIVES

seventy years of age, cries profusely from the depth of his heart over the fact that he cannot participate in a chassidisher farbrengen like an ordinary Chossid...”⁶

In his Rebbe’s Chamber

For Chassidim the farbrengen is an opportunity to strengthen their connection with the Rebbe and bring the memories of their time with the Rebbe to mind. In the darkest times of *galus*, when physical contact with the Rebbe was all but impossible, the farbrengen served as a glimmer of hope, rekindling the love to the Rebbe and reassuring themselves that they will see the Rebbe again. Chassidim in the Soviet Union often sang “אז דער אויבערשטער וועט געבן געזונט” און לעבן, וועלן מיר זיך זען מיט אונזער רבי’ן—expressing their certainty that they would once again be reunited with the Rebbe.⁷

In a letter, the Friediker Rebbe describes vividly what he expects the contents of a farbrengen to be, based on the true spirited farbrengens of Chassidim of olde:

“A truly serious atmosphere reigned over the participants of a farbrengen. One Chossid would relate the conduct he observed of his Rebbe, another would describe his Rebbe’s davening that he was privileged to hear at one point, a third would recount the words he heard from his Rebbe in *yechidus* that he is able to share with the public, while yet another would bring to mind the words he heard from the Rebbe that are not to be shared with anyone...

“In those moments, each of the participants in the farbrengen is transported from the time and place he stands to another place in time, many years prior, in his Rebbe’s chamber, looking at the Rebbe’s holy face with fear; while at the same time bearing a deep-felt pleasure, listening to every word of the *yechidus*.

“These are not mere memories of the participant at the farbrengen; he is living in them and reliving them. This experience expresses itself in the *nigun* that suddenly breaks out from the participant all together...”⁸

Hisvaaduyos Pe'ilos

Throughout the years, the Rebbe never missed an opportunity to encourage chassidishe farbrengens amongst *anash*. In the telegrams dispatched to all of *anash* before *yomim tovim* and *yomei d'pagra*, like Yud-Tes Kislev, Yud Shevat, Purim, and so on, the Rebbe almost always extends his *bracha* for “*Hisvaaduyos pe'ilos*”—successful and fruit-bearing farbrengens.

In *yechidus* with Reb Bentzion Shemtov in Sivan 5711, the Rebbe requested that he convey a message to all of *anash* in each community that he visits about the remaining *avoda* of our time, and then the Rebbe added:

“It is worthwhile to arrange chassidishe farbrengens in the spirit of love and unity, and with joy. With a farbrengen you can accomplish a lot more than one who sits and learns from a *sefer* on his own...”⁹

In countless letters, the Rebbe asks Chassidim to arrange more and more chassidisher farbrengens, and he thanks those who report about them.

In this letter to Reb Nissen Nemenov, the Rebbe expresses this point in exceptional terms:

“It is a pity that reporting such good news is delayed—good [news], meaning Torah and a chassidishe farbrengen; a doubled good, לבריית ולשמים... If such news was always appreciated, all the more so it is today, at the end-time before Moshiach.”¹⁰

The Rebbe was insistent that a farbrengen always bears fruit. In a letter to a Chossid in Eretz Yisroel who complained that he does not always see the positive outcome of his farbrengens, the Rebbe assured him that since, “At your farbrengens you certainly speak words of Torah and inspiration; it is therefore impossible that *divrei Elokim chayim* should not have their desired effect. It is well known that our holy Rabbeim taught that ‘the *neschama* hears’—even when the listener is a most simple person...”¹¹

After learning of a tragedy that had befallen a member of anash and his wife, the Rebbe writes:

During the farbrengen of the luminous day of Yud-Tes Kislev... I was notified of the incident ל"ע ול"ע, that occurred to you and your wife *sheyichyu*.

Being that the news was conveyed during an auspicious time (עת רצון)... when tens of Yidden were gathered together rejoicing in the celebration of *nessi Yisroel*, I am certain that your situation will only get better and better...

(Igros Kodesh vol. 12 p. 170)



CHASSIDIM WISH “L'CHAIM V'LIVROCHO” TO ONE ANOTHER DURING A FARBRENGEN CELEBRATING FORTY YEARS OF THE REBBE'S NESIUS, YUD SHEVAT, 5750.



JEW/THE LIVING ARCHIVE ID: 22173 יו תשרי, 5738

RABBI SHLOMO AHARON KAZARNOVSKY (CENTER) AND RABBI SHMUEL DOVID RAICHIK LEAD A FARBRENGEN IN THE SMALL ZAL AT 770.

L'chaim

The Rabbeim offered a number of reasons for the custom of saying *l'chaim* at farbrengens:

Chazal say, גדולה לגיממה שמקרב—drink brings people together.¹²

Mashke is like *sota* water, cleansing the *nefesh*.¹³

Before *shechita*, water is given to the animal to smoothen the lung (or to thin-out the skin). Similarly, the *mashke* works to soften the *nefesh* and make her more *eidel*.¹⁴

Additionally, the Rebbe once explained the reason behind his distribution of bottles of *mashke* at farbrengens:

“Lately, we have been giving out bottles of *mashke* to those who are holding a *seuda* or a *melava malka*, as well as when we send out a shliach to perform *hafatzas hamaayanos*, so that he can make a farbrengen in the place of his shlichus... This

helps him achieve success in his shlichus: if he would merely come there and say *mussar*, perhaps no one would be interested. But when he makes a farbrengen, with food and drink, his words will have a better effect...

“I don’t give out vodka and I have no connection to vodka, *chas v’shalom*! When a shliach is going out to perform *hafatzas hamaayanos*, we give him *mashke*, which is connected to the Alter Rebbe’s saying about future times, when Moshiach comes and the world will be כולה משקה. We therefore give the shliach a bottle of *mashke* to assist in his activities of *hafatzas hamaayanos*.”¹⁵

Less is More

Nevertheless, the Rabbeim stressed that for achieving these goals, only a minimal amount of *mashke* is necessary.

The Friediker Rebbe often repeated the story of Chassidim who would sit through a whole night with *mashke* in their cups, and ultimately poured it back into the bottle when morning broke.¹⁶

Especially in our time, the Rebbe famously spoke over and over, often quite sharply, about not saying *lchaim* on more than four (or three) small cups.

The Rebbe explained that especially today, it is unnecessary and in fact harmful to say *lchaim* excessively.

In a letter to one of the elder Chassidim, the Rebbe articulates the reasons behind this idea:

- a. All the necessary *kochos* were already given to *anash* in the form of so many *maamarim* and *sichos*, which are easily understood. One can easily make an impression upon his listeners without lots of *mashke*.
- b. Being that in the recent past, we are expected to bring the *maayanos* of Chassidus to a *chutza* that has never been reached before, excessive consumption of *mashke* could seriously harm this goal.

The Rebbe adds that he once heard the Friediker Rebbe say while he was in Riga “אין ביין איצטער ווי נאך” — “**I am now** (—meaning not just that particular moment, but that entire period of a few years that he minimized his taking *mashke*—) **as if I was after a bit of mashke.**”

Although the obvious reason was due to health, we as Chassidim know that there is a *p'nimius* to everything as well. This is an indication to us Chassidim, the “body” that follows the “head,” that we are also able to reach such a point of being post-*mashke*.¹⁷

אן א חשבון

וכיון שכבר נכנסו לדירתם החדשה, הנה צריך הי' לסדר בה א חסידישן פארבריינגען כדבעי למהוי, און דערמאנען זיך אויף די אלטע צייטען, אז מען האט פארבראכט אויף א פארבריינגען א חשבון מה יאמר פלוני ופלוני, ומה יאמר צד השמאל שבו או צד הימין, ורק ידעו שהתועדות חסידות, לשמוע חסידות, א חסידישן ווארט, וספור מנשיאנו זי"ע, הנה זה מכנים אור, ומעט אור דוחה הרבה חשך.

(אג"ק ח"ד עמ' שיט)

The farbrengen has always been and will always be a staple in our lives as Chassidim. Especially in

the later years, the Rebbe constantly encouraged the Chassidim to arrange chassidisher farbrengens; *on yomei d'pagra*, on one's birthday, or even without significant cause—כל יום זמנו הוא, as the Rebbe once said.¹⁸

The unique ability of the chassidisher farbrengen to bring Yidden together and bring about the greatest of blessings is abundantly clear from the words of our Rabbeim.

In a special *yechidus* to *anash* of Kfar Chabad at the conclusion of Tishrei, 5744, the Rebbe called on all the inhabitants of the town to live together with *ahavas Yisroel*, remembering that we are all children of the Rebbe—אב אחד לכולנו. Just before leaving the shul, the Rebbe suggested that they hold a farbrengen to discuss how to implement all of the above.

“My participation,” the Rebbe concluded, “will be while I am physically elsewhere, but in spirit—here!” **T**

FURTHER READING:

More on the importance and power of a chassidisher farbrengen:

Sichas Pesach 5694, *Likutei Dibburim* vol. 1 p. 235

Sefer Hamaamorim Kuntreisim vol. 2 p. 806

1. As directed in Hayom Yom 24 Sivan
2. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 10 p. 60
3. Printed in *Igros Kodesh* vol. 3 p. 156; available in English in *The Making of Chassidim* by SIE
4. *Ibid.* p. 171
5. Friediker Rebbe's letter printed in Kovetz Michtavim - Tehillim Ohel Yosef Yitzchak (originally appeared in “HaTomim”).
6. Based on a letter in *Igros Kodesh* Admur HaRaYYaTZ vol. 4 p. 242
7. See *Now More than Ever* in the Derher Magazine - Tishrei 5776 about the farbrengens of Chassidim in the Soviet Union.
8. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 9 p. 246
9. *Toras Menachem* vol. 3 p. 162
10. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 9 p. 85
11. *Ibid.* vol. 16 p. 160
12. See the Rebbe's lengthy explanation, *Toras Menachem* vol. 29 p. 182
13. *Sefer Hasichos* 5685 p. 70
14. *Sefer Hasichos* 5691 p. 184. See lengthy explanation from the Rebbe, *Hisvaaduyos* 5742 vol. 3 p. 1336.
15. *Hisvaaduyos* 5744 vol. 2 p. 1087
16. See *Sefer Hasichos* 5704 p. 84, et al.
17. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 7 p. 58
18. *Hisvaaduyos* 5749 vol. 1 p. 404

the Momentous Gathering

and its
message today,

Insights into the
mitzvah of Hakhel
and its relevance today,
collected from the Rebbe's
sichos and letters

מקץ שבע שנים במעד שנת השמיטה
בחג הסוכות; בבוא כל ישראל...

הקהל את העם
האנשים והנשים
והטף

וגרד אשר בשעריך למען ישמעו
ולמען ילמדו ויראו את ה' אלקיכם
ושמרו לעשות את כל דברי התורה הזאת
(וי"ד לא, י"ב).

HAKHEL INSIGHT A LESSON IN HUMILITY

Imagine this powerful scene: The king in all his finery ascends the wooden *bima* and, from the heightened platform, begins to read the Torah. The atmosphere of grandeur it generates, say *mefarshim*¹, is the reason there is a *bima*. It makes for a more compelling and influential experience. The Rebbe, in a unique explanation about the *bima*'s necessity, teaches a fascinating lesson about a rather tough character trait to master: humility. Tough, because while everyone agrees that in general, humility and its cousin subservience are good characteristics, there are times when these qualities can bring negative outcomes. Choosing to be humble instead of standing up to a challenge can be damaging, and there are certainly times when subservience, if to a less than good influence, would be the wrong path to take.


The king's job while reading the Torah was to instill *yiras Hashem* and submissiveness in the nation. He did so while standing on a *bima*, an elevated dais, to signify that while we ought to be humble generally, we must be tall and strong when faced with adversity or negative pressures. To provide further guidelines, the Rebbe points to the fact that the platform was in the *azarah*, a holy place. Only to defend holiness can we step out of the inconspicuousness of humility and enter the limelight. Also important is the material out of which the *bima* was made, wood, which connotes temporariness. Our short trip to assertive territory is to conclude with our return to humility.

(Adapted from *Lekutei Sichos chelek 19, pg. 328*)

1. Akeidas Yitzchok, Dvorim, 31, 1

A TIMELY CONNECTION

HAKHEL AND ASARA B'TEVES: A TRIAD

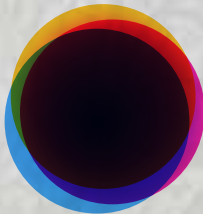


On Asara b'Teves we remember the events of the past and beseech Hashem to bring things back to the way they were. This day sparked the events leading up to Yerushalayim's destruction and we want it to be whole again. Because Yerushalayim is Eretz Yisroel's capital city, with its reconstruction the entire land will be considered complete. This is the hope for *shleimus ha'aretz*, wholeness of the land. *Hakhel* represents the wholeness of the Jewish people, *shleimus ha'am*, as its aim was to gather the nation together. The purpose of assembling the people was to inspire their re-commitment to the entirety of Torah. Thus, *Hakhel* represents *shleimus haTorah*—the entirety of Torah—as well. Herein lies the connection between *Hakhel* and Asara b'Teves: the true wholeness of Eretz Yisroel is dependent on the other two in the triad. Only when *shleimus ha'am* is keeping *shleimus haTorah* in Eretz Yisroel, has it in fact reached its *shleimus ha'aretz*.

(Adapted from *Sichas Asara b'Teves* 5741,
Lekutei Sichos chelek 20 pg. 532)

WHAT CAN I DO?

EVERYONE CAN CONTRIBUTE



Hakhel is something everyone can get involved in. For the adult who already gathered his neighbors and friends, there are always more acquaintances to affect. One such acquaintance can even be himself. *Hakhel* is also introspective, as he 'gathers' lessons learned from others, in consonance with the famous Mishna, "Who is wise? He who learns from everyone." The young boy and girl can also have a part in this endeavor by encouraging their friends to perform more good deeds. And a child has a special influence on his parents as well. After all, which parent wouldn't want to see the cute smile of satisfaction their small son or daughter will have when they agree to do the mitzvah the child requests?

Seems a bit superficial? The child is only revealing what the parent essentially wants, which is to fulfill all of the Torah.

(Adapted from *Sichas Simchas Torah* 5748, *Hisvaaduyos* 5748 vol. 1, pgs. 329-330)



Raising the Next Generation

The Rebbe's advice on being mechanech children



It Falls to the Parents

In this sicha, the Rebbe addresses the necessity of providing for one's child's spiritual welfare as well as his physical needs.

Unfortunately, there are parents who concern themselves primarily with the material needs of the child, i.e. food and drink, clothing, toys, and the like. However, due to their occupation with making a living and so on, they do not pay attention to other aspects [of the child's upbringing], beginning with the most important aspect—that he grows to be a *mensch* worthy of that title; one who acts appropriately. [These parents] rely upon the school to provide all of this.

Therefore, the Torah, תורה, אמת ותורת חיים, emphasizes that the primary responsibility for the education of a child falls upon the parents. The school merely serves as

their *shliach*. Therefore, even when the parents send their child to school, the responsibility [of setting the child on the proper path] remains on the shoulders of the parents.

Certainly, the school must also provide education... but at the same time, one cannot suffice with what a child is taught in school. Instead, the parents must also provide the child with as much as they are able.¹

Jewish Pride

Growing up as a frum Jew in the U.S. wasn't always easy. Kids would often be made fun of for wearing a yarmulke and tzitzis and keeping Shabbos and kashrus. In the following letter the Rebbe addresses this issue:

The essential point is this: Jews have always been a minority amongst nations; they are a minority within the United States as well. Notwithstanding

the democratic principles that are proclaimed in this country (the U.S.), emphasizing the values of acceptance [of all types of people], it is natural for it to be difficult for a minority to be accepted by the majority. Therefore, it is necessary to plant in a Jewish child, from an early age, a feeling of pride in the heritage and traditions of his parents and ancestors, together with a strong sense of Jewish identity, so that instead of hiding his or her Judaism, the [child] will be able to be proud of it, without any personal insecurity, despite any mockery from the non-Jewish neighbors. [To accomplish] this matter, what is necessary above all is to instill within the child the proper feeling toward true Jewish values—including prioritizing the spiritual over the physical².

IT'S NECESSARY TO PLANT IN A JEWISH CHILD, FROM AN EARLY AGE, A FEELING OF PRIDE IN THE HERITAGE AND TRADITIONS OF HIS PARENTS AND FOREBEARS

Residence, Business, and Chinuch

An excerpt from a conversation between the Rebbe and Mr. and Mrs. Meir Jungreis and their daughter, following a yechidus klolis for members of Machne Israel Development Fund. The Rebbe's words are in regular font; those of others are italicized.

Mr. Jungreis: We have to decide about the move —if we should go back to Miami or stay in Monsey?

What is the reason to move from Monsey?

Mr. Jungreis: The only reason is the business in Miami, to which I commute every week. You know, I travel every week from Monsey to Miami.

You can't transfer the business to Monsey? It is not advisable, or too costly?

Mr. Jungreis: It's too costly, it is already established there.

In that case you should consider... If your wife consents to move to Miami, since the business is there, and your livelihood is there, then the owners will also be there.

Mr. Jungreis: In Monsey there is a higher standard in Education and Judaism.

Today Miami has good Jewish schools; if you inquire you will find out where they are. Rabbi Korf is here from Miami and he can advise you on matters of kosher food, schools, etc. You have no peace of mind when your business is in one place and you are somewhere else.

Mr. Jungreis: The problem is that I like Monsey and I'm comfortable there. On the other hand, this weekly commute is a bit hard. That's the problem, it's hard to decide.

Mrs. Jungreis: The main concern is for our children's Yiddishkeit, that's why we moved to Monsey, and I am constantly afraid that if we move back to Miami their Yiddishkeit will not be as we would like.

[Your husband] mentioned that several of them attend school in Miami.

Mrs. Jungreis: Now the year is split—he travels, so half of the week he's away and I stay with the children.

Mr. Jungreis: We thought that we would move in the summer, but the house was still being renovated. However, we had already enrolled two children in school there.

They study there, in Miami...?

Mr. Jungreis: Yes

Then you should consider moving there. It's easier to move in the summer, it's warmer, etc, etc.

And little by little, you'll prepare yourself mentally for life in Miami. May it be in an auspicious time.³

Playing vs. Learning

Many children prefer play over study. In this letter, the Rebbe explains which subjects to prioritize, and to what extent learning should be encouraged.

You write about [a certain child], whose teachers are dissatisfied with his [lack of] diligence in learning, since he prefers playing to learning, particularly with regards to *limmudei chol*.

In general, it is typical of youth that they prefer playing to learning, even at an older age than your brother. Therefore, you shouldn't be overly concerned, although obviously you need to impress upon him, in a pleasant way [to increase in his diligence]. The main [way to accomplish this] is through competition and comparison with the friends his age who are more diligent. You should also lessen, if not cancel entirely, the time he spends studying *limmudei chol*, for it may be that this is hinting that he doesn't want to



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YOU CAN EXPLAIN
TO HIM THAT
BECAUSE HE
BECAME OLDER
AND WISER, YOU
HAVE FOUND FOR
HIM A SCHOOL
THAT IS FOR HIS
POSSIBILITIES
NOW, WHICH HE
WAS NOT ABLE TO
ACHIEVE HALF
A YEAR AGO.

study *limmudei chol* (even though he doesn't yet understand the true reason [not to]). This will automatically have an effect on his *limmudei kodesh*⁴.

Keeping Promises

In the following Sich'a, the Rebbe stresses the importance of keeping a promise made to a child as a reward for good behavior.

If a child is promised something for his studies, the promise must be kept. *Seforim* teach that one must take care not to leave a promise to a child unfulfilled. They emphasize that [keeping one's word] applies even with regard to [promises made to] a child. Contrary [to what one might think], especially with regard to a child, there must be extra care [to keep promises]. Sometimes it is permissible to modify [a promise made] to an adult for the sake of keeping the peace, and the like. A child, though, doesn't understand compromises, and as soon as a child realizes that promises made are not kept, he loses his trust in the teacher, having seen untruth in him⁵.

Instilling Self-Confidence

In the following conversation the Rebbe addresses the hardships of moving a child from one school to another. It is an excerpt from a conversation between the Rebbe and Mr. and Mrs. Reuven Pollock, following a yechidus klolis for members of Machne Israel Development Fund. The Rebbe's words are in regular font; those of others are italicized.

Mrs. Pollock: We're moving our children from the Hebrew Day School to Breuer's yeshiva in Washington Heights. I have a first grade girl, but my son is in third grade, and he's behind in Hebrew, and it's going to be difficult for him. So I would like a blessing from you that we're doing the right thing by him—he's nine years old—to move to Breuer's. He's doing okay where he is now, which is [at] the Hebrew Day School, but I feel he'll get more of a Torah way of life if he's at Breuers, and that's why we want to make the move. But he's going to have to go there without friends, and socially he's going to have to start again, which is going to be difficult for him, but we want to do the right thing.

It is possible for him? Does he have strong enough force to achieve it?

Mrs. Pollock: Do you mean academically? We might have to tutor him; he might be behind in the Hebrew, because the Hebrew may not be the same.

Maybe it is advisable to take a helper for him—a teacher from time to time—maybe once a week, to help him take upon himself the additional load of the new school. Then it is advisable, and you can explain to him that because he became older and wiser, you have found for him a school that is [on par] with his possibilities now, which he was not able to achieve half-a-year ago. ...To incite his self confidence to do so. May G-d Almighty bless you to have much *nachas* from all the children, and much *nachas* from yourself. In an easy way, and a healthy child.⁶



YOUNG CHILDREN DAVEN IN 770, TISHREI 5750.

JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE ID: 153411



THRONGS OF CHILDREN WAIT NEAR THE DOOR OF GAN EDEN HATACHTON TO RECEIVE A COIN FROM THE REBBE, 13 TISHREI, 5745.

Exercise Restraint

Rabbi Shmuel Lew asked in *yechidus* how he can prevent himself from getting angry at his children. The Rebbe told him:

You write that you get angry. One of the solutions for this is to contemplate the fact that every Jew is Hashem's child ("בנים אתם לה" "אלוקים"). They're Hashem's children as much as they're yours, and to hit Hashem's child? The hand will tremble! You wouldn't strike someone else's child, all the more so Hashem's. The imposing of reverence [that a parent] must occasionally accomplish must never happen out of anger.

May Hashem grant you and your wife that just as you had success in the past, in both personal and general matters, may it be so in the future, and even more so.⁷

Yaldei Hashluchim

For a young *shliach*, it can be difficult to study in the local school, where he has few, if any, *chassidishe* friends and the level of *chinuch* not always up to the standard of a Lubavitch school. The alternative—leaving home to study in a city with an established Jewish infrastructure—can be very difficult as well. The Rebbe's advice depended on the circumstances of each case.

The following *maaneh* was written to a *shliach* who asked whether to send his 11-year-old son to learn in a different city, where there was a *mosad chinuch al taharas hakodesh*:

It is preferable that he continue learning in school [locally]—as of now, for another year.⁸

When a *shliach* from Europe wrote to the Rebbe that his son had no

friends in their *makom hashlichus*, the Rebbe wrote the following *maaneh*:

It is therefore not suitable [that he remain in his hometown].

It is preferable that he come to New York (or its surrounding cities) [to study]—since numerous people from [his hometown] live here or visit often.⁹ ①

1. Toras Menachem Hisva'aduyos 5744 vol. 3 p. 1434
2. Moreh Ledor Navuch p. 177
3. chabad.org/212428, Living Torah Disc 2 Program 5
4. Igros Kodesh vol. 10 p. 293
5. Sichos Kodesh 5736 vol. 2 p. 277
6. chabad.org/2139958, Living Torah Disc 111 Program 443
7. Vigler - Lew Teshura, 10 Adar I 5763 p. 16
8. Mikdash Melech vol. 3 p. 155
9. Ibid p. 155

A CHALLENGING TIME

AN ETERNAL VICTORY

In honor of the yom tov of Hei Teves, the day we celebrate the Rebbe's victory in the *sefarim* case, and a day of utmost significance to us as Chassidim of *dor hashvi'i*, we present the following exclusive interview.

As cited at length in last year's Teves magazine, the Rebbe compared this trial and ultimate victory to that of the Alter Rebbe's arrest and liberation on Yud-Tes Kislev, and established this day as a *yom segula* and *eis ratzon* for all time.

In this spirit, A Chassidisher Derher brought together three shluchim who lived through the story as *bochurim* at the time, to recount their own recollections of how Chassidim experienced these events in the Rebbe's presence. **Rabbi Mordechai Glazman** of Riga, Latvia; **Rabbi Yosef Greenberg** of Anchorage, Alaska; and **Rabbi Avrohom Sternberg** of New London, Connecticut.

לזכות

הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל וזוגתו מרת רבקה ובנם מאיר שלמה שיחיו מינקוביץ
בקשר עם נסיעתם בשליחות כ"ק אדמו"ר זי"ע לאוניברסיטת אלון, צפון קרוליינא
ולהצלחה מופלגה במילוי שליחותם
נדפס ע"י משפחתם



HEI TEVES THROUGH THE EYES OF THE BOCHURIM





THE SEFORIM THAT HAD BEEN STOLEN FROM THE LIBRARY.

Let's start from the beginning. The first time the Rebbe mentioned the issue of the sefarim was during the farbrengen of Yud-Beis Tammuz 5745. What are your recollections from that occasion?

Rabbi Greenberg:

To give some context to the story, let me say a few words about the change that we felt and the difference in the atmosphere that occurred with the onset of the mishpat.

I came to the Rebbe from Eretz Yisroel in 5742. In my mind, 5742, '43, '44, and '45 were one period of time; and from Yud-Beis Tammuz 5745 on, it was as if there was an entirely new Lubavitch.

The early years of the "Mems" (5740s) were exceptionally *geshmake* years. The Rebbe's farbrengens were long and beautiful, and they were held much more often than before—almost every Shabbos.

The Rebbe's reach was global. The weekday farbrengens were broadcast live on television and the Rebbe spoke openly to the non-Jewish world about *sheva mitzvos b'nei Noach*. The campaigns that the Rebbe initiated were of global proportions - Tzivos Hashem, *Sifrei Torah Haklali'im*, Rambam, etc.

On the one hand, Chassidim, and especially the bochurim, felt less of a personal connection with the Rebbe. There was no more personal *yeichidus*, 'dollars' had not yet begun, and the only time one could come in close contact with the Rebbe was by panim, lekach, kos shel brocha. But on the

other, the Rebbe's *nesius* reached an entirely new page, impacting the whole world—literally. That was the feeling until Yud-Beis Tammuz.

With the onset of the court case, we began to feel a personal connection with the Rebbe again. Firstly, the Rebbe began the regular distribution of dollars, which was an opportunity to approach the Rebbe. Additionally, the entire experience brought about a sense of closeness between Chassidim and the Rebbe, as we shall explain later on.

Rabbi Sternberg:

In the days preceding the farbrengen of Yud-Beis Tammuz 5745, I became aware that Agudas Chassidei Chabad had been called in to the Rebbe for a *yeichidus*. At the time we didn't know that it was Agudas Chassidei Chabad; rather we knew that a select group of *Chassidim* were called into the Rebbe's room on Rosh Chodesh Tammuz.

The reason I knew about it was not because it was the talk of town, at least not among my age-group of friends—I was fifteen at the time—but rather because my grandfather, Rabbi Zalman Gurary, was among those who were called in. He didn't speak to us about the *yeichidus*; he just said that the Rebbe was going to talk about the subject discussed in the *yeichidus* at the Yud-Beis Tammuz farbrengen.

While the *yeichidus* wasn't public knowledge and there were various layers to what people knew, there was an awareness amongst some Chassidim that something major was going to happen during the Yud-Beis Tammuz farbrengen.

When the Rebbe spoke at the farbrengen, I immediately understood what the Rebbe was referring to. Even those who didn't grasp the meaning initially, understood within a day or two, after hearing the Rebbe spoke about it at the *yeichidus klolis* on the eve of 15 Tammuz, and then again at the farbrengen the next day.

Rabbi Glazman:

As an example of the type of shock it was, many bochurim didn't go to sleep

We felt like we are sitting in the Rebbe's dining room, *un er gist ois di hartz* to his children, about a deep and painful issue...

the night after the Yud-Beis Tammuz farbrengen. First it was decided that we have to watch over the library, so that no one comes to steal—the Rebbe had just spoken about the library, and technically the perpetrator could return that very night and continue removing books!

We didn't know the details of the story yet, which *sefarim* had been stolen and from where. The Rebbe had mentioned the Baal Shem Tov's siddur, which we knew was located in the Frieddiker Rebbe's room, so we watched over the library located in the Frieddiker Rebbe's room. We would sit for full nights, learning *b'chavrusa*, in the hallway above *Gan Eden Hatachton*. This went on for a few weeks.

During the *yechidus klolis* to the guests that had come to spend Yud-Beis Tammuz with the Rebbe, the Rebbe asked that a property should be bought and a building should be built in Kfar Chabad, which will bear the name of the Frieddiker Rebbe.

The next day, on Tes-Vov Tammuz, the Rebbe held another farbrengen, during which he spoke at length about the issue, and used terms that he hadn't during the farbrengen of Yud-Beis Tammuz.

However, even after these three *sichos*, the sharpest of all had yet to come:

On Shabbos Parshas Pinchas there was a very long farbrengen. The Rebbe would usually speak while looking directly forward, but during the *sicha* about the *sefarim*, he turned his head to his left side. I stood to the far right of the Rebbe's farbrengen place, so when the Rebbe turned toward his left and spoke quietly, I wasn't able to hear well. Additionally, the Rebbe sat completely back on his chair, which was very unusual, and his hand was on top of the table—also unusual for a farbrengen—banging at times, while speaking about the *sefarim*.

Rabbi Greenberg:

That Shabbos, was a relatively empty Shabbos, since many *bochurim* had left to the camps. During the farbrengen, when the Rebbe once again spoke about the *sefarim*, it was in a most extraordinary and heartfelt



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BARUCH EZAGUI

THE FRIEDDIKER REBBE'S YECHIDUS ROOM ON THE SECOND FLOOR OF 770, WHICH CONTAINED SOME OF THE MOST PRECIOUS CHAFOTZIM OF THE LIBRARY, INCLUDING THE BAAL SHEM TOV'S SIDDUR.

way. The feeling we had was that we are sitting in the Rebbe's dining room, *un er gist ois di hartz* to his children about a deep and painful issue that was confronting Lubavitch.

The sight of the Rebbe's pain at that farbrengen is too difficult to describe. The Rebbe spoke out with an expression that spelled sadness and disbelief, that "I try to prepare a Rashi, but I can't concentrate

because I'm thinking what's going to be with the *binyan* [770]!"

Since the Rebbe was going through a very difficult time, and we saw how it affected the Rebbe with personal *agmas nefesh*, many of the *bochurim* who were in 770 during those years developed a special feeling of closeness to the Rebbe; something that the *bochurim* in 770 in the years before then probably didn't experience, since in their years everything was relatively calm, and there were no extraordinary issues.

The *agmas nefesh* and the pain that we saw during those farbrengens was something that we never saw before. We all knew that it was about the essence of the Rebbe's *nesius*. It wasn't about *mihi yehudi* or *shtachim*, or some other issue which we knew that the Rebbe, as *manhig Yisrael*, was dealing with.

This issue was so personal, and about the Rebbe himself, that it had a profound effect on us. It pained us terribly that the Rebbe, who dedicates day and night to strengthening and spreading Yiddishkeit and taking care of people from all corners of the world, is suddenly being disturbed so terribly by this issue that he feels unable to prepare a *sicha* on Rashi, and must turn to the Chassidim and pour his heart out about it.

We were also able to notice how this entire *parsha* negatively impacted the Rebbe's health.

During the months following Yud-Beis Tammuz, there were nonstop farbrengens in 770 continuously discussing the situation.



A NOTE FROM AGUCH DATED ROSH CHODESH KISLEV 5746 REPORTING TO THE REBBE ON THE HACHLOTOS THAT CHASSIDIM UNDERTOOK IN THE WAKE OF THE COURT CASE.

SICHA OF 15 TAMMUZ 5745

This issue lies on the shoulders of all of the Chassidim, since a *sefer* of a Yid, and even more so, a *nosi*, is a part of his life! His life does not consist of the bread he eats or the water he drinks, etc. but his spiritual life. For this is what the Alter Rebbe rules in Igeres Hakodesh, explaining that his life is the *emunah*, *ahavah*, and *yirah*. From where does the *tzaddik* take the *hisbonenus* for *emunah*, or *ahavah* and *yirah*? He takes them from the *sefarim* he studies!

And here all is silent; people are taking walks, learning Chassidus, learning the Chassidus of the Friediker Rebbe. They see what is going on but no one says anything!

...I give it over to every Chossid and all of the Chassidim *ad sof kol hadoros*! As I said before, I have done my part; I have spoken in this regard three times, and I have said privately that they should know that they are bothering—*zei tschepenen zich*—with the Friediker Rebbe, the *nosi hador*, and with every Chossid and all of the Chassidim *ad sof kol hadoros*!

We felt that there was a fire burning in 770; a fire of a struggle for the Rebbe, and a fire of deep profound feeling for the Rebbe's pain. Everyone felt that this was a *milchama* of *Amalek* and *klipah*; *es hut gebrent*!

What do you remember from the period between Yud-Beis Tammuz and the onset of the trial?

Rabbi Sternberg:

At the time, as young *bochurim*, we didn't know what we could do. Beyond seeing the major *agmas nefesh* that the Rebbe was going through and saying Tehillim, we didn't know very much about what

was going on during the summer months following Yud-Beis Tammuz.

If I remember correctly, I became aware that there is an imminent court case, perhaps shortly after Tishrei. As Kislev came, we became more and more aware of the situation.

During that Tishrei (5746), we saw that things were beginning to change in the Rebbe's *hanhaga*. Throughout Tishrei, the Rebbe said a number of *maamarim*, the last one taking place on Shabbos Bereishis. During the Shabbos farbrengens in following weeks, however, the Rebbe only recited *maamarim k'ein sicha* (the content of a *maamar* but in a tone similar to a *sicha*). We didn't think much of it, since during those years, the *maamarim* during Shabbos farbrengens would be *k'ein sicha* more often than not.

When the farbrengen of Yud-Tes Kislev came around, and then too, the Rebbe did not say a *maamar* with a *niggun* prior, it came as a big shock; we understood that something serious was going on.

At the same time, we witnessed special *giluyim*. In the end of Cheshvan the Rebbe was *magiah* the *maamar* “*V'avraham Zaken*,” which came as a total surprise¹.

I remember during the Rosh Chodesh Kislev *seudas hoda'ah* that Rabbi Meir Harlig organized, a few of the members of Agudas Chassidei Chabad—Rabbi Moshe Pinchas Katz, and perhaps Rabbi Mordechai Mentlick too—shared with the Chassidim what had happened during the *yechidus* that had taken place a few days earlier. They recounted how the Rebbe had banged his hand on the wall and emphasized that this wasn't just about the seforim from the library, but a *milchamah* against the Frierdiker Rebbe, the Rebbe Rashab, and went on and named all the rabbeim until the Baal Shem Tov.

This was the first time that I heard it spoken about in public, in such an open forum, in front of a packed shul. Up until then, there had been quiet meetings and discussions, but never in such a public way. The words spoken that night had a tremendous effect on the audience.

During the days leading up to the court case, there was a possibility that the Rebbe would be asked to give testimony for the court. What can you tell us about that period?

Rabbi Greenberg:

In the days leading up to the ruling on this issue, we felt a terrible fright; we felt as if we were going back to the days of the Alter Rebbe. It seemed, in our imagination at least, the fact that the Rebbe, who is the *nasi hador*, will be forced to testify, was almost akin to arrest, *r”l*; the thought was incomprehensible.

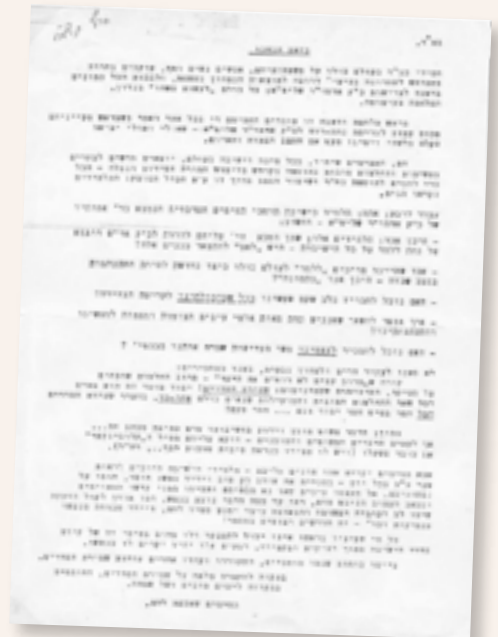
Therefore, when the news came on Yud-Gimmel Kislev that the Rebbe is not going to testify, the *simcha* was out of this world. In my mind it was much more than the entire *simcha* of Hei Teves. As much as the *simcha* on Hei Teves was bigger and more established, the *simcha* on Yud-Gimmel Kislev was in a way much stronger, due to the terrible foreboding of a bad outcome that we had felt beforehand.

We danced and said *l'chaim* that entire day and night, and on the next night, Rabbi Avraham Shemtov, who was very involved in the preparation and presentation of the case, came to farbreng with us. It was only during that farbrengen that the realization of what had happened began to sink in, and we farbrenged joyously through the night.

Rabbi Sternberg:

When we heard that the court would rule on the issue of the Rebbe's testimony on Yud-Gimmel Kislev, the Chassidim accepted a half-day fast upon themselves.

At 11 o'clock in the morning, we heard that the Rebbe would not have to testify. We immediately began dancing and a whole



A NOTE DATED WINTER 5746 CIRCULATED AMONGST THE BOCHURIM ENCOURAGING THEM TO ACCEPT HACHLOTOS TOVOS UPON THEMSELVES.

This was the first time that I heard it spoken about in public, in such a public forum, in front of a packed shul; their words had a tremendous effect on the audience.

string of celebrations began. First, that night there was a farbrengen in Oholei Torah, then the next night Rabbi Avraham Shemtov farbrenged in the small *zal*.

Even after Rabbi Shemtov left the farbrengen—at two or three in the morning—we continued sitting for the rest of the night. Farbrengens were also held every night throughout the following week.

Rabbi Greenberg:

When I think about the events of Yud-Gimmel Kislev, then three weeks of the court case—beginning with the farbrengen of Yud-Tes Kislev—culminating with the events of Zos Chanukah, those three weeks of the *mishpat* had an immense impact on us. We really became connected to the Rebbe by living through this entire period of time in his presence.

Almost every day of the court case the Rebbe went to the Ohel. When the Rebbe would go to the Ohel, he would fast until he got back, usually in the evening, which meant that the Rebbe fasted for most of the days during those three weeks. Meanwhile we, the *bochurim*, would go to court, where we would sit quietly and with discipline, listening closely to the proceedings. Of course, many older chassidim would also come to the court, like Rabbi Mordechai Mentlick, who would sit during the entire proceeding with a *kapota* and *gartel*. Those *bochurim* who understood English would jot down notes, which they would pass on to us foreigners. The courtroom was set

up almost like a shul, filled mostly with Lubavitchers; men—who were the majority of the crowd—on one side, and woman on the other.

We filled up the room to the point that there was almost no space left for anyone else, and the opposing side requested that the judge ban us from attending. The judge responded that he has no reason to do so; on the contrary, he said, they are sitting so respectfully...

Each night the bochurim would farbreng, and overall, there was an immense feeling that each and every one of us is fighting for the Rebbe, our father.

Then came Chanukah; Zos Chanukah was a milestone, it was history *mamash*.

That year Zos Chanukah was on a Sunday. Earlier during Chanukah, the Rebbe asked that the Chassidim should farbreng so a farbrengen was arranged for Motzoei Shabbos, the eve of Zos Chanukah. On Shabbos afternoon, the Rebbe held a farbrengen.

Then, towards the end of the farbrengen, the Rebbe surprised everyone and said that he is going to farbreng on Motzaei Shabbos and that the Chassidim should farbreng instead on Sunday morning. That was unheard of; it never happened in 770 before, that a farbrengen should start in the morning and go on all day.

The next morning we began farbrenging, and we continued throughout the day until the Rebbe returned from the Ohel and came



LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASIDEI CHABAD



RABBIS SHOLOM BER LEVINE AND YITZCHOK WILHELM REVIEW THE DOCUMENTS TO BE USED IN THE COURT-CASE.

in for *mincha* and *maariv*. After *maariv* we heard that the Rebbe would soon come in for yet another farbrengen.

That night 770 looked as it usually did after a whole night of farbrenging. When the Rebbe came in, there was such excitement in the room; the crowd was after *l'chaim*, it was like Simchas Torah.

Then, during the farbrengen, the Rebbe compared the situation to Yud-Tes Kislev, and spoke about the *taanos limalah*. In our eyes it took the *mishpat* to a much higher level².

There was a full year in between the trial and the victory on Hei Teves; can you share with us what exactly took place during that period?

Rabbi Sternberg:

Throughout the long wait, the *sefarim* were constantly on our minds. We were always imagining to ourselves what the celebration would look like, when we finally arrived at *didan notzach*.

On Shabbos Mevorchim Adar Sheni, when the Rebbe came down to shul on Friday night, we saw that he was in terrible pain. Before the end of *maariv*, the *bochurim*

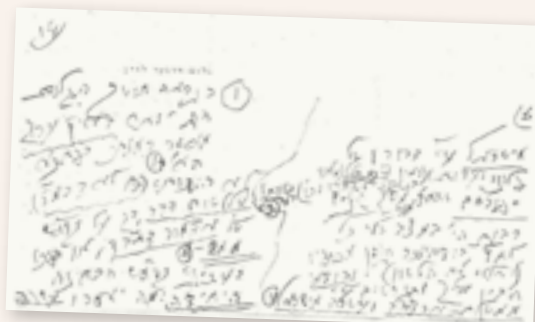
set up tables along the *shvil* so the Rebbe would be able to lean on them on his way out. The next morning it was decided that *shacharis* would take place in the small *zal*.

But despite the pain, the Rebbe came down to farbreng, and said an unusually long and profound *hadran* on Rambam—for about an hour and a half—in honor of the *siyum harambam* on the second cycle, which took place during that period.

Rabbi Greenberg:

That year was a very stressful period; we constantly farbrenged, sitting for entire nights discussing what will be, when is it going to be, will it be a full victory, etc. The judge had said it will take three months for a verdict to come out, then he postponed it for another month and then another month. Meanwhile we were losing our patience; we didn't know what was going on.

At the time, rumors were



SOME OF THE REBBE'S HANDWRITTEN NOTES TO RABBI SHOLOM BER LEVINE, INSTRUCTING HOW TO PROCEED WITH THE COURT CASE.

LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASIDEI CHABAD

circulating that courts side more often with the individual against corporations, and therefore there is a strong possibility that the ruling will not be in our favor. This was despite there being all the proofs in the world for our case, and Rabbi Berel Levin producing over 10,000 documents from the library. We were equally concerned about how the non-Jews at the court will view this; for after all, they may not grasp what a Rebbe is, etc.

During this same period, the Rebbe spoke at farbrengens after farbrengens, with the biggest *shturem*, about the importance of going on shlichus and building *Batei Chabad*. The Rebbe spoke, most significantly on Zos Chanukah and on Hei Teves, that the claim of the opposing side that Chabad is not active should be answered by adding and doing more activities of *hafatzas hamaayanos*, to the point that it will be incomparably more - (באין ערוך) than before. It was at that period that the book of recording the Chanukah menorah lightings of Chaunkah 5746—Let There Be Light—was published at the Rebbe's request,

and many other new initiatives were started as well.

Rabbi Glazman:

For that entire year we lived with it. At every *chasunah* that took place then, the *chosson* would speak about it; there was even a *bochur* that was constantly collecting *mashke* for when the *didan notzach* would happen; and there were others who said Tehillim every day. Everyone was anxiously awaiting the outcome.

The Rebbe's *sichos* during that period, in which he spoke time and again about shlichus, had a tremendous effect on the *bochurim*. It is safe to say that ninety percent of the *bochurim* my age that were in 770 during this period went on shlichus.



THE ALBUM "LET THERE BE LIGHT", PRINTED AT THE REBBE'S BEHEST, HIGHLIGHTING CHABAD'S ACTIVITIES OF CHANUKAH 5746.



SOME OF THE HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS USED FOR THE COURT CASE.
LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASIDEI CHABAD

Rabbi Greenberg:

It wasn't just because of the Rebbe's talk; it was because of the personal feeling that people felt for the Rebbe, so what the Rebbe said affected them in such a deep way. The Rebbe had spoken many times about shlichus, but nevertheless some people still felt that shlichus was not necessarily a way of life for every Chossid. During the years of the *mishpat*, however, the *oilam hot zich ufgehoiben*—we were uplifted—specifically as a result of the way the Rebbe shared this struggle with us. We developed that deep connection; we connected so strongly with the Rebbe that even the 'regular' guys felt the need to go on shlichus.

On Yud-Alef Nissan that year, the Rebbe didn't farbreng as he usually did. Instead, when he came back from the Ohel, he started distributing dollars. There had been a number of occasions during the winter that the Rebbe had suddenly began giving out dollars, and whoever was in 770 then had merited to receive them; but this is

when the Rebbe started giving out dollars on a weekly basis.

It was a long year of waiting and waiting. Yud-Tes Kislev 5747 came closer and we were sure that by then the victory would be sealed, for that had been the day—*b'hashgacha pratis*—that the court case had begun the previous year, and it was a day of *nitzachon* for Chassidim in general. However, we were sorely disappointed. At the time, the new Rabbonim had been installed in Crown Heights. One of their first actions was to sign a *kol koreh* encouraging all *anash* to come and say the whole Tehillim on Yud-Tes Kislev morning.

That year Yud-Tes Kislev fell out on a Sunday, and the whole Crown Heights came to 770. The shul was packed, and everyone recited the entire Tehillim together.

Then, by the farbrengen, we saw from the Rebbe that *didan notzach* was imminent. At the end of the farbrengen, the Rebbe urged the building of more and more *Batei Chabad*, saying that it should be in a manner of "*Didan notzach, holech v'kovesh*, to the last corners of the world." That gave us a feeling that victory isn't too far away.

Let's move on to Hei Teves...

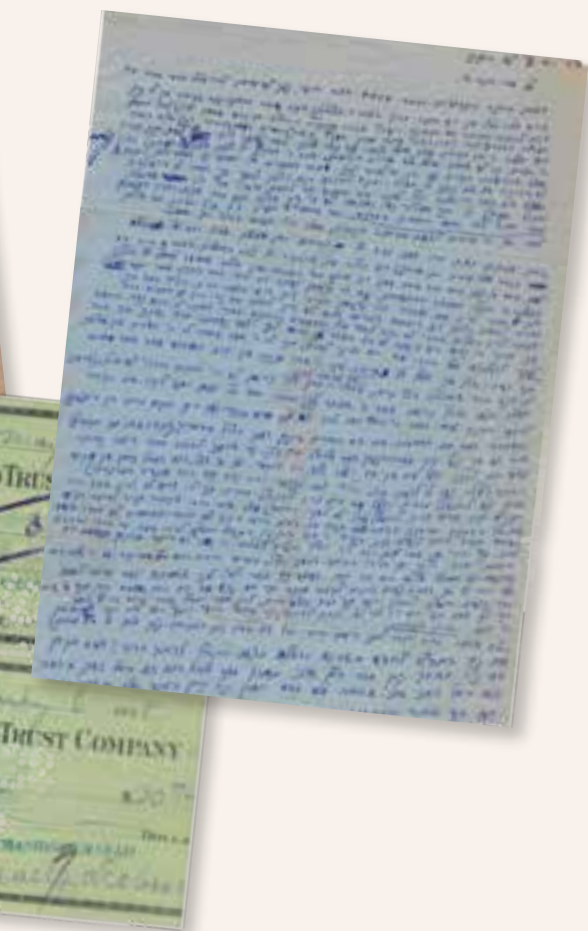
Rabbi Glazman:

On Hei Teves I was in the dining room of the yeshivah, and there was a rumor that there was a ruling from the judge, and it was *didan notzach*. We ran to 770, some other bochurim and I, and we went straight to the *mazkirus* office and asked Rabbi Binyomin Klein if it was true. He looked at us as if he didn't know anything; I think he knew already, but he didn't want to say.

Outside people already started dancing. It was a very small crowd but it was very lebedik; as time passed more and more people came, and the *oilam* grew bigger. Never in my life Have I experienced such *simcha*; it is very hard to describe the feeling of happiness and the *simcha* that we experienced on that day.

Later, we danced days and nights, and while there were many other days of *didan*

During the years of the *mishpat*, the *oilam hot zich ufgehoiben*, and we connected so strongly with the Rebbe that ninety percent of us went on Shlichus



notzach victories, the *simcha* of that day was just extraordinary; it was out of this world.

Rabbi Sternberg:

On the morning of Hei Teves we were in yeshiva, preparing for a test. The Rebbe had spoken on Shabbos Chazon about the importance of *aseh lecha rav*, and the need to be tested from time to time on what you learned. Therefore our *hanhala* at Oholei Torah had introduced tests to *zal* age bochurim; for *mesivta* it was already quite common, but in *zal* it was previously unheard of. That morning, we sat down, received a paper, and before we had a chance to write anything, someone ran in shouting “*Didan notzach*”. We immediately ran out of the room and starting racing towards 770. As we passed the store of WLCC, we heard the blasting music, and then we knew it was for sure true. (Earlier there had been a number of false alarms, so we were initially in doubt as to whether this time it was true or not.) When we arrived at 770, people were already dancing outside, and before we knew it there was live music and *mashkeh* on sight.

At *mincha* the Rebbe came downstairs to daven in the big shul. We assumed

something would happen, although we didn’t know exactly what. We were singing *Ashrei*, but many people thought that perhaps it wasn’t appropriate, and that the Rebbe didn’t approve, so they began ‘shushing’ the singing. All of a sudden, the Rebbe turned to Rabbi Groner and asked him for a Chumash, which basically confirmed that there would be a *sicha*. After that, the singing continued unabated.

Chazoras hashatz was said with a *yom-tov’diker* tune, and afterwards the Rebbe said a *sicha*.

Rabbi Greenberg:

Right after the *sicha*, a few friends and I went on *mitzvoim*. Because in the *sicha* the Rebbe had said clearly that he wants there to be *taparu da plachu*—actual *maaseh b’poel*—we took a taxi to the public library on Eastern Parkway to put on tefillin with Yidden. We were there until *shkiah* and then returned to 770 to start farbrengning.

Rabbi Sternberg:

We danced all night, and the next day there was no *seder hayeshivah*. However, it wasn’t clear yet that the celebration would continue. They had announced that on Thursday night there would be a full *seudah*,



THE REBBE LEAVES 770 FOR THE OHEL.



AFTER THE NEWS OF DIDAN NOTZACH ARRIVES, HEI TEVES 5747.

but that day it looked like things were back to normal.

Then, on that Wednesday afternoon, the Rebbe came back from the Ohel, and as usual davened *mincha* upstairs in the small *zal*. Suddenly, after davening, the Rebbe started talking. Due to the fact that the *sicha* was a surprise, there was no microphone on site for the first few minutes. In that *sicha*, the Rebbe spoke about the time being an *eis ratzon*, and that everyone should write and bring in *panim* which he will bring to the Ohel. So many people from all over the world sent in *tztelach*, that when the Rebbe went to the Ohel the next day, he took fourteen full sacks with him. After such a special *sicha*, the dancing and farbrenging obviously continued that entire night as well.

The events of Thursday night had already been planned, and by then, many guests had arrived from Eretz Yisroel and other places. At the farbrengen on Shabbos, the Rebbe made a somewhat veiled reference to the

victory, and on Motzoei Shabbos there was also singing and dancing all night.

What stood out in my mind was the fact that in middle of the *sicha* on Sunday, which was Asarah B'Teves, the Rebbe thanked all those who had come to join in the Rebbe's *simcha*. That to us was an indication that the *simcha* isn't yet over, so immediately after the fast we danced again through the night.

Then came Monday night.

In the *sicha* on Monday night, the Rebbe said that with a month left to Yud Shevat, everyone should begin the preparations and proper *hachanah*; every *bochur* must take three tests, which would be submitted to the Rebbe. That whole week leading up to that *sicha*, the Rebbe said a *sicha* each day, and all the energy behind the great rejoicing had been with the Rebbe's encouragement; then on Monday the Rebbe told us it was now time to continue back on our regular schedule.

During those few weeks, the *shemiras hasedarim* was unbelievable. *Bochurim* were



CHABAD'S ATTORNEY MR. NAT LEWIN JOINS THE FESTIVITIES IN 770 IN THE WEEK FOLLOWING HEI TEVES 5747.

learning like they never learnt before, and the general atmosphere was very serious and special.

Meanwhile, we found out that an appeal was being filed. During the entire following year, there was tension in the air. Although we were not nearly as involved or worried as before, people were still nervous about what would happen.

There were a few times over that period that the Rebbe spoke about the *mishpat*; sometimes just hinting to it, and on other

occasions more clearly. On Shabbos parshas Vayikra, in Nissan 5747, was the main occasion that the Rebbe spoke very strongly about the issue, and then the Rebbe gave it over to the shluchim. After that Shabbos, the Vaad Hashluchim got involved, and started dealing with the issues that the Rebbe had spoken about.

At the time, I remember that the Rebbe sent out a bottle of *mashkeh* with Rabbi Krinsky, saying that since the shluchim are here, they will probably farbreng.

One of the ideas that the shluchim came up with was to print a book about Lubavitch and its accomplishments around the world, to be able to present to the judge, and to show the world in general.

It was right after Pesach, and a lot of *bochurim* got involved with the preparations for the Lag B'omer parade. The *bochurim* that weren't involved in that, got involved in preparing the book.

When the shluchim wrote to the Rebbe about their plan, the Rebbe wrote to them that such a book would take a very long time to publish, and in the meantime something should come out within *yomim echadim*—a few days—so that by the time the professional book comes out, in a year or two, there will already be something.

The shluchim received many instructions from the Rebbe regarding the book. At one point, Rabbi Berel Shemtov, who was involved in the Vaad, had us call every shliach in the world to create a database of statistics—how many shluchim there are, how many children he reaches, how many institutions he has, etc. We also calculated how many *sefarim* Kehos printed throughout the years. We were planning to include all the statistics in the book, along with a worldwide total.

By the time we had finished, we had gathered what we thought was an extremely impressive list of Lubavitch *mosdos* and a great number of people who participated in the *peulos*. But when we submitted it to the Rebbe, we received an answer stating that basically there is nothing worth publishing. The Rebbe said that there are so many more Jewish children in the world; the numbers

need to be much greater, being that there are so many more Jewish children who do not yet receive a Jewish education. There was still a lot more work that needed to be accomplished.

All in all, that “*yomim echadim*” book took over a year to be published, and was called ‘Lamplighters.’

Tishrei 5748 passed, and then, on Thursday, Chof Cheshvan, the Rebbe distributed the *Kuntres Heichaltzu* of the Rebbe Rashab. The next Tuesday, we suddenly heard that there was another *didan notzach*; that the appeal had been won, and the *sefarim* would be coming back. Unlike the doubt and uncertainty we felt the first time around, this time it was clear that this is going to be a celebration. We danced the whole night Tuesday, and the celebration went all the way to Shabbos, which also happened to be the first Kinus Hashluchim Haolami.

The scene of that Shabbos is something I will never forget. First, the look on the Rebbe’s face on Friday night when he entered the shul for Kabbalas Shabbos. Then the farbrengen the next day, during which the Rebbe spoke in beautiful terms about the shlichus of our generation, and he also said that he will give money towards the debt of all of the shluchim. When the Rebbe left the shul after *maariv*, the crowd didn’t want to leave. For an hour and a half we were standing in our places dancing to the *Rosh Chodesh Kislev Niggun*. It was an unbelievable *gehoibener* atmosphere; it is difficult to describe the feeling and the electricity in the room on that evening.

The next day, the Rebbe handed the *Kuntres Rosh Chodesh Kislev* to all of the shluchim. By then we were already thinking about the return of the *sefarim*, which was scheduled to take place the next day.

At some point, we heard that Agudas Chassidei Chabad had wanted to hold a parade and a massive event with the *sefarim*’s return. But the Rebbe had stated that just as the second set of *luchos* were given בַּחֲשָׁאֵי, so to the returning of the *sefarim* should be done quietly.

Nevertheless, we were still anticipating a big farbrengen that night, and Reb Berel Lipsker was collecting money for *mashke*; there was much excitement in the air.

In the morning, we were all standing around waiting for the *sefarim* to arrive, and for the Rebbe to leave to the Ohel. Reb Michael Teitelboim was running around in 770, trying to send anyone he recognized from Oholei Torah back to *seder*. But we didn’t listen; who wanted go to *seder* when the *sefarim* are about to return...

Rabbi Greenberg:

Since the Rebbe had written that the return should be quiet, Reb Dovid Raskin was also going around telling the 770 *bochurim* to go inside and learn. He obviously understood that the Rebbe did not want us standing around when he came out to leave to the Ohel. However, we couldn’t contain ourselves. In addition, all the yeshivos had come in for the occasion, and those who hadn’t yet arrived were in the process of doing so as quickly as possible.

Rabbi Glazman:

The Rebbe came out, and began giving out tzedakah to the children there. Suddenly, we saw the Rebbe walk passed

When the Rebbe left the shul after *maariv*, the crowd didn’t want to leave; we were standing in our places dancing to the tune of the Rosh Chodesh Kislev Niggun, for a full hour and a half!



THE REBBE HANDS OUT “KUNTRES ROSH CHODESH KISLEV 5748” EXCLUSIVELY TO SHLUCHIM AT THE KINUS HASHLUCHIM.

When a
chossid
learns the
Rebbe's
Torah, and
lives with
the Rebbe's
hora'os,
the Rebbe
lives within
him, in the
Rebbe's
words,
"ad sof kol
hadoros!"



RABBIS AVRAHAM SHEMTOV, YEHUDA KRINSKY, AND SHOLOM BER LEVINE (L-R) IN THE COURT WAREHOUSE TO RETRIEVE THE SEFORIM, BEIS KISLEV 5748.

the open car door, towards the *bochurim* gathered around, and he began to speak in very strong terms about the fact that we had been waiting outside for so long and how this is so different than the true meaning of *didan notzach*. The pain on the Rebbe's face was evident; the Rebbe had never, throughout all the years of the *nesius*, expressed himself this way to the *bochurim*.

In fact, as soon as we realized what was going on, most *bochurim* made it their business to disappear from the scene as soon as possible, scattering in all directions to be out of the Rebbe's line of sight.

(The next Shabbos the Rebbe referred to this occurrence, saying that he had been asked why he had to express himself so harshly.)

Needless to say, no one was around when the *sefarim* came back. I happened to be passing by on my way back from lunch in 1414 to 770, and the entire area was empty of people.

All the celebrations that came afterwards were on a much smaller scale. This was due to the Rebbe's words on Beis Kislev, as well as the fact that the appeal that took place wasn't publicized, and the majority of the

Chassidim didn't even know about them while they were going on.

The main day of celebration, which became etched in the calendar of the Chassidim, was Hei Teves. This was actually established by the Rebbe himself, both through the *sichos* that day and in the days following, as well as the next year, when the Rebbe mentioned it by the *farbrengen*.

(Right before Shabbos, Hei Teves 5748, a few *bochurim* had put up a large sign on the back wall of 770, marking the celebration of the *yom tov* of Hei Teves. Some of the elder Chassidim were unsure if the Rebbe would appreciate it due to what had happened on Beis Kislev. In the end, during the *farbrengen* the Rebbe spoke about the *nitzachon*, and from then on Hei Teves has been engraved in the calendar of every Chossid).

Rabbi Greenberg:

In truth, even the strong tone in which the Rebbe expressed himself to us on Beis Kislev gave us a certain sense of closeness. The fact that the Rebbe expressed himself to us in that way gave us a feeling that we have a close bond, like a father who corrects the way of his child. "I told you this morning



BEIS KISLEV 5748, THE STOLEN SEFORIM FINALLY RETURN HOME TO 770.

not to do this,” the Rebbe was almost explaining to us. “Tell me, do you think this is the meaning of *didan notzach*? Does this really make sense to you?”

Looking back at those years, how do you think the story of Hei Teves affects us after Gimmel Tammuz?

Rabbi Greenberg:

Looking back at the years of the *mishpat*, it is clear that the essence of the court case was about the future.

Now after Gimmel Tammuz, we can have a better understanding of what the Rebbe was speaking about during the entire case.

At the time, the Rebbe was constantly emphasizing that “*hu bachayim*,” the Frierdiker Rebbe is here with us and still guiding us. It was not understood why the Rebbe went to such great lengths to explain this concept in so heartfelt a manner, emphasizing it again and again. When the Rebbe spoke of the seforim, he spoke about this point of “*hu bachayim*” more than anything else, when in fact this explanation wasn’t even used in court.

Now we are able to understand what this was all about.

The Rebbe was teaching us that a Rebbe is *nitzchi*, everlasting, and that his *hashpa’ah* continues even many years after the *histalkus*. He was telling us that the future of Lubavitch and 770, and all that comes with it, is still in the Rebbe’s hands, and can continue to grow and become *b’ein aroch* to what it was before, even though today we cannot see the Rebbe physically.

In other words, it was like a שטר שיצא עליו ערעור, which is ever stronger after it is confirmed. We received guidance on how to carry on that *hiskashrus* to times and situations that we had never imagined would exist.

The concepts of *nitzchius* and *hu bachayim* were established and made clear during *didan notzach*, to the point that even a non-Jewish judge established—within *olam hazeh hagashmi*—that the Rebbe *lebt*. That is what is so important and special about Hei Teves.

The Rebbe taught us then, and in numerous *sichos* in the following years, that Lubavitch will continue, and that every Chossid has the opportunity to be an extension of the Rebbe. The Rebbe explained that since there are those that do not believe in “*hu bachayim*,” the Aibershter



FIRST ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF HEI TEVES, 5748.

places, within *olam hazeh*, representatives of the Rebbe, who act as hands and feet in his stead.

Those *sichos* tell us that the Rebbe lives on through his *sefarim*, his *chafeitzim*, and his Chassidim. When a Chossid learns the Rebbe's Torah, and lives with the Rebbe's *hora'os*, the Rebbe lives within him—in the Rebbe's words—"ad sof kol hadoros!" **1**

1. During the following years, the Rebbe would often edit a *maamar* on the occasion of yom tov and *yomei d'pagra*; however, at the time it was totally out of the ordinary.

2. To see more on the Rebbe's comparison between Yud-Tes Kislev and Hei Teves, see *A Chassidisher Derher Magazine* Teves 5775.

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All those that have just declared *didan notzach* surely had in mind that the '*didan*' is the [Friediker] Rebbe *nessi doreinu*. Therefore they must remember that everything that comes as a continuation to *didan notzach* is the *nitzachon* of the *nosi hador*.

...And this is the *hora'ah* from the words of the Midrash:

How can we be victorious over, and eliminate the evil spirit? When Yidden gather together to help each other...and shout *didan notzach*. For without this, they may have not won over the evil *ruach*. But through declaring "*didan notzach, didan notzach*," as per the will of the *nosi hador*, we are able to overcome and completely eradicate the *ruach*.

This concept is quite simple, and does not need to be elaborated upon. Especially due to the fact that the celebration comes as an outcome to everyone's feeling that the [Friediker] Rebbe, the *nosi hador*, has been victorious in his battle, and they must therefore dedicate themselves even more to fulfill his directives.

TIMELINE OF THE EVENTS CONNECTED TO 'DIDAN NOTZACH'

ראש חודש תמוז תשמ"ה

The Rebbe calls a yechidus with Agudas Chassidei Chabad, speaking for the first time about the stolen sefarim.

י"ב תמוז תשמ"ה

The Rebbe speaks publicly about the case for the first time, and continues to speak about it during the yechidus klolis on ליל ט"ו תמוז, the farbrengen of ט"ו תמוז, and Shabbos parshas Balak and Pinchas.

י"ג כסלו תשמ"ו

Didan Notzach! The Rebbe is not required to testify.

י"ט כסלו תשמ"ו

The trial begins.

ה' טבת תשמ"ז

Didan Notzach! The court rules that the sefarim belong to the Chassidim, initiating seven days of celebration. The decision was appealed by the other side.

כ"ה חשוון תשמ"ח

Didan Notzach! The appeal is overruled.

כ"ז חשוון תשמ"ח

The judge rules that the sefarim should be returned to 770.

ב' כסלו תשמ"ח

The sefarim are returned to 770.

כ"ו תשרי תש"נ

The judge rules that the Rebbe does not need to testify in the case following the appeal.

י"ט טבת תש"נ

Didan Notzach! The final court case ended.

כ"ח אלול תש"נ

The last remaining sefarim are returned to the library.



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כלו כל הקיצין Moshiach Times

כלו כל הקיצין ואין הדבר תלוי אלא
בתשובה

“*Kolu kol hakitzin*—All the end times have passed, Moshaiach’s coming now depends entirely on *teshuva*.” This is an oft repeated phrase in the sichos of the Rebbe, sourced in Gemara Sanhedrin 97b.

A *ketz* is a date given by a *tzadik* by when Moshiach must arrive. And if a certain year is a *ketz*, then Moshiach will have to come by the end of that year. So stating that all the *kitzin* have passed means that we don’t need to wait a specific date for Moshiach to come, he can arrive at this very moment.

Interestingly, if the Gemara says that all the *kitzin* have already passed, it would seem unnecessary to establish another *ketz* in the future, after the time of the Gemara. And yet we find that many *tzadikim* over the course of time did not follow this rule, and did establish a *ketz*, an end time by when Moshiach has to come. Examples of this are found in Rashi¹, Rambam², Zohar, and many others.³

We also find that the Rabbeim set specific times as a *ketz*. The Alter Rebbe, in a *maamar* titled *Ve’es Ha’elef Usheva Meois*⁴, establishes the year 5608 as a *ketz*. The Rebbe Rashab also mentioned that 5666 is a *ketz*.⁵

YET WE FIND THAT MANY TZADDIKIM OVER THE COURSE OF TIME DID NOT FOLLOW THIS RULE AND ACTUALLY ESTABLISHED A KETZ.

So if all the *kitzin* ended by the time of the Gemara, why were more *kitzin* established at later times?

Even more perplexing is that the Gemara there proclaims “Let the bones of the *ketz* calculators blast.” And the Rambam quotes this as *halacha*⁶: “One should not try to determine the appointed time for Moshiach’s coming. Our *chachamim* declared: ‘May the spirits of those who attempt to determine the time of Moshiach’s coming expire!’ Rather, one should await and believe in the general conception of the matter, as explained.”

Essentially we have two questions, and by clarifying them we will unravel the mysteries of the *ketz*.

- a. What is the point of a *ketz*?
- b. Why do we still talk about *kitzin* after so many of them have passed?

We can understand this by the following story of the Rebbe Maharash and the Tzemach Tzedek. Once, at a *simcha*, the sons of the Tzemach Tzedek were sitting at his table. The Rebbe Maharash (obviously before he was Rebbe) asked his father, “Was there not a *ketz* in the year 5608? Moshiach did not come?!” The Tzemach Tzedek answered “The Lekutei Torah was printed that year!” The Rebbe Maharash then responded,

“But we want Moshiach in reality, *lemata measara tefachim*.”⁷

If in all stories of the Rabbeim every detail is important and can teach us a lesson, this story is an illustration of that principle. While on the surface this seems like a simple exchange, once we examine the details we will uncover new information.

~

The Rebbe⁸ explains that there are two stages, or two directions, in the coming of Moshiach—*lemaala* and *lemata*. A *ketz* means that *lemaala* the path is clear for Moshiach to come. Because Hashem may have connected the coming of Moshiach with a specific time, it is possible that we’ll have to wait until that time passes. Before coming out of Mitzrayim, Hashem “recalculated”—חשב את הקץ—to bring the *geula* closer.

The great pleasure that Hashem derives from our *avodah* during *golus* is another reason to have a *ketz*. Were it not for a deadline put in place by Hashem, there may *chas v’shalom* never be an end to the *golus*, because the enjoyment of our *avodah* is so powerful.⁹

כלו כל הקיצין means that as far as *lemaala* is concerned, the path is clear. All we need to do is the other half, *lemata*.

And this depends on our *teshuva*. If we are worthy for Moshiach’s arrival,

then he will come. But so far we are still waiting.

When the Tzemach Tzedek and the Rebbe Maharash had the conversation, both understood that the *ketz* had come and gone and Moshiach had not yet been revealed. So what was the conversation?

The Rebbe Maharash was asking, why didn’t Moshiach come, if a *ketz* had happened?! So the Tzemach Tzedek replied, a *ketz* means that Moshiach was revealed; true, it was only *lemaala*, but he was revealed. And this revelation of Moshiach was actualized in the printing of the Lekutei Torah.

The Rebbe Rashab once said, that when he sits in a room and learns Lekutei Torah, he feels *Atzmus uMehus*¹⁰ ידעתי הייתי. In the world of a *nosi*, who lives in the heavenly worlds just as he lives here in this world, Moshiach came with the arrival of the *ketz*! Where did he come? In the Lekutei Torah!

The Lekutei Torah was the fruit of thousands of hours of the Tzemach Tzedek learning and reviewing the *maamarim* of the Alter Rebbe; determining which *maamarim* that would go into Lekutei Torah. Publishing this *sefer* and making it available to the general public was a great advancement in the revelation of Chassidus. This is evident in the way

THE WORDS OF THE REBBE ARE THE REVEALED INNER LIGHT AND ARE A SEGULA FOR THE REVELATION OF THE NEFESH.

that the the Frierdiker Rebbe records the Tzemach Tzedek's answer:¹¹ "You know what Moshiach is, Moshiach will reveal the depth of *penimiyus haTorah*, and everyone will appreciate its light. Now that the Lekutei Torah was revealed, the words of the Rebbe are the revealed inner light and are a *segula* for the revelation of the *nefesh*."

The reply of the Tzemach Tzedek wasn't simply an easy way out of the question. It was the full truth—Moshiach came in the upper worlds and here is your proof.

Still, says the Rebbe Maharash, we need Moshiach למטה מעשרה טפחים. We need him in this world.

Why *asara tefachim*? In *hilchos Shabbos* we learn about a רשות הרבים and a רשות היחיד. One of the requirements for a רשות הרבים is that it only starts 10 *tefachim* off the ground; higher than that is a *mekom petur*. In Zohar the רשות הרבים is considered the place of *kelipa*. רשות היחיד is where the unity of Hashem is felt, where *Elokus* is revealed. But רשות הרבים is a place of discord, of evil.

This was the demand of the Rebbe Maharash: true, the revelation in the Lekutei Torah is a *giluy* of Moshiach, but we don't want Moshiach *lemaala*, we need Moshiach where we can see him, with our own eyes, in the רשות הרבים, lower than ten *tefachim*.

And this needed to come from the Rebbe Maharash who wasn't the *nosi hador* at the time; rather he was the intermediary¹² between his father, the Tzemach Tzedek, who was the *nosi hador*, and the regular *Yidden*. He had

to point out that while Moshiach had indeed come *lemaala*, for us regular people we need him down here.

Although the Tzemach Tzedek was aware of the level of his generation, he still wanted to hear this request for Moshiach articulated clearly. Like *davening*, this makes the request much more powerful.

We find this approach to *kitzin* in the Rebbe Rashab's *hemshech* of *Samach Vov*. תרט"ו was a *ketz* year and that's why the Rebbe Rashab said the *hemshech* then; as *Hemshech Samach Vov* is a another great advancement of the understanding and revelation of Chassidus, thereby making it a step closer to Moshiach.

This is also the reason that the *minhag* of drinking four cups of wine at *Seudas Moshiach* started that same year, 5666; because a *ketz* means that Moshiach has come closer *lemaala* and it is therefore a step nearer to Moshiach's revelation *lemata*, below 10 *tefachim*¹³.



From this story we have extracted three reasons for the existence of a *ketz*:

1. It tells us that Hashem is not bound to keep us in *golus* past that time. Also Hashem is setting a limit to how long He will allow His enjoyment of our *golus avodah* to last.

2. It indicates that *lemaala* the path is clear for Moshiach to come.

3. It is an actual revelation of Moshiach. When the path is clear for Moshiach, it means that in the upper world Moshiach has already come, to a certain extent. This affects our world as well, albeit not in the ideal form.

There is yet another explanation that can be found in Lekutei Sichos chelek 29 p. 9. There the Rebbe explains that the primary purpose of the *ketz* is to motivate *Yidden* to add in their *avodah* to bring Moshiach by the time the *ketz* comes.



The first time the Rebbe retold this story was a few weeks after the *histalkus* of the Frierdiker Rebbe.

In the other sources that this story appears, the one asking the question is either Reb Levik, the Tzemach Tzedek's son-in-law, or the Maharil. But the Rebbe told the story with the Rebbe Maharash. Additionally, the last part of the exchange, the answer of the Rebbe Maharash, was only told to us by the Rebbe.

In the *sichos* of the Rebbe this story is usually used to illustrate the meaning of "*lemata measara tefachim*"¹⁴. "It seems that the Rebbe was taking this concept to the next level, saying that although after the *histalkus* we still have a Rebbe, it is nevertheless somewhat *beruchniyus*, in the abstract. But we really want—and need—to have our Rebbe here with us, *lemata measara tefachim*. ①

For more about the Ketz see Lekutei Sichos Chelek 20 p. 228 and Chelek 29 p. 9

1. Daniel 8:14
2. Igeres Teman Chapter 3
3. See *Shu"t Min Hashomayim* Siman 72, in the footnotes, for a comprehensive list.
4. Printed in Maamarim of the Alter Rebbe, Parshiyos Vol. 1 p. 419
5. See Reshimas Hayoman p. 331, Lekutei Sichos in f.n. 13 Other years that had a *ketz* are 5701 and 5704.
6. Hilchos Melachim Chapter 12 Halacha 2
7. Lekutei Sichos Vol. 6 p. 80 n. 70, Toras Menachem vol. 1 p.18 see there.
8. Yud Shvat 5737
9. Acharon Shel Pesach 5734 end of farbrengen. Sefer Hamamarim of the Frierdiker Rebbe 5708, p. 151
10. Shabbos Naso 5742; Hisvaaduyos 5742 vol. 3 p. 1652
11. Igros Kodesh of the Frierdiker Rebbe Vol. 1 p.485
12. Hisvaaduyos, Shabbos Vaeschanan 5745 page 2691
13. Lekutei Sichos Chelek 7, page 209 and note 28 there.
14. See sicha in f.n. 8



A Life Changing Glimpse

The Friediker Rebbe describes the *avoda* of the Chossid Reb Zalman Arsher, a Sofer Sta"m in Lubavitch, and the glimpse he caught of the Tzemach Tzedek through a crack in the door of his room that changed his life and made him a Chossid.

Tzemach Tzedek's Tefillin

In Lubavitch there was a chassidisher *sofer* named Reb Zalman Arsher, who davened and did *safrus* work in the small *zal*. He was the *sofer* that proofread the *sefer Torah* that my uncle Raz"l wrote when I was eight-years-old.

Once, on my way home from *cheder*, I passed the small *zal* and saw Reb Zalman taking off his tefillin and kissing them with tears pouring from his eyes. I asked him why he was crying, and he motioned that he was still davening and couldn't speak. When he finished, he told me that he had been by the Tzemach Tzedek towards the end of his life when only selected Chassidim were allowed into *yechidus*. Passing the Tzemach Tzedek's room, he saw through a crack in the door the Tzemach Tzedek taking off his *shel rosh* and looking at it intently for a while before putting it away.

"That sight 'set me on my feet,'" Reb Zalman said. "What do we have from the *grobkeit* of *velt*?"

Reb Zalman Arsher was a Chossid of the Rebbe Maharash and later the Rebbe Rashab, but seeing the Tzemach Tzedek concentrate on his tefillin was what "set him on his feet" as a Chossid.

A Rov, a Mashpia, and a Dyadke

When the Rebbe Maharash sent Rav Yaakov Kupisker to be the rov in Moscow, he also sent and a Chossid from Polotzk¹ to be the *mashpia*.

Once, when a Chossid called Manevitz came to bid farewell to the Rebbe Maharash at the end of a visit to Lubavitch, the Rebbe Maharash said to him, "In Moscow you have a rov and a *mashpia*, but you still need a 'dyadke'—a training coach. No one can replace him [the *dyadke*]; even a colonel cannot be a training coach..."

Reb Zalman Arsher was a man of fine character, he would daven *geshmak* and was generally a *geshmaker Yid*. Chassidim would call him a "*tzichtiger*"—"clean one"] because he wouldn't eat meat.

[A Chossid of the Rebbe Maharash once went into *yechidus* when he was in Petersburg and complained that there was no kosher meat in the city. The Rebbe Maharash replied, "It says that 'עם הארץ אסור לאכול בשר', literally translated as 'an ignoramus may not eat meat.' The word '*assur*' means tied down. An *am ha'aretz* is '*assur*'—"tied down"—to eating meat. You can survive without it.]

A Favor for a Yid

When I was in Petersburg in 5682 Reb Zalke Persitz came to me and said, "Today is 25 years from the day I became a Chossid.

"25 years ago I went into the Rebbe Rashab and he told me that just as every Yid is obligated to put on tefillin, he is obligated to set aside fifteen minutes a day to contemplate what favor he can do for another Yid in *gashmius* or *ruchnius*. I asked the Rebbe Rashab how I'll be able to keep up with this habit and he told me to find a *dyadke*. I asked who I should take as a *dyadke* and the Rebbe told me to take Reb Zalman Arsher. This *yechidus* is what made me a Chossid."

Reb Zalke was a Muscovite, one who didn't know of any *kuntzin*. At the end of every day Reb Zalke would write down the favors he had done for others that day. When he didn't find anyone to help, he would go to *shul* and discuss the situation of his *avodas Hashem* with Reb Zalman Arsher. ①

(ספר השיחות תש"ד ע' 60)

1. The precise name is absent from the *reshima*.



דער רבי וועט געפינען א וועג...

Drastic Transformation

AS TOLD BY RABBI SHOLOM BER TENENBAUM (GURNEE, IL)

It was towards the end of the year of 5774. As we neared the start of a new year, my wife was reaching out to families with which we once had contact, but have since lost touch with over time, to wish them a good new year.

When reaching out to one particular family, who had sent their kids to our Hebrew school, a grandmother picked up the phone; Mrs. Tammy Klein*. She was grateful to be receiving a call from Chabad, as her husband, Richard, had recently been suffering from a medical issue, and she poured out her heart to my wife.

I made a note on my list to get in touch with this family again at a later date, but I ultimately only reached them

after the busy Tishrei season. We set a time to meet, and I sensed that they were looking forward to our meeting.

When we met, Mr. and Mrs. Klein told me what was on their minds. The doctors recently discovered that Richard had a serious heart condition, and it seemed that he would need to undergo a risky heart transplant. The couple was deeply troubled, both by the shocking news, and by the uncertainty of how to proceed. Should they go ahead with the transplant or not?

They were scheduled an appointment with a cardiologist for a few weeks later, who would assess the situation and help determine how soon he needed the transplant.



As the need for transplants is great, and the amount of hearts available is far-less, the list of patients waiting for a transplant is ordered in level of priority, with the most critical cases on the top, and those with longer estimated time to live lower down.

Now, a heart transplant is no simple thing. The procedure involves many risks with tremendous dangers. Mr. and Mrs. Klein were considering if it was even worthwhile to treat the heart condition or just leaving it as is and hoping for the best.

Seeing their troublesome situation, I explained to them that they should write a letter to the Rebbe and send it to be placed at the Ohel. I advised them to write about everything that was going on, and that they should ask for a *brocha* that all cardiac issues be resolved. Additionally, I suggested that they take on a mitzvah, and recommended that they check the mezuzah of their home, as the Rebbe often instructed people in similar situations.

They had never heard of such a concept before, but after I explained it to them, they agreed, and sat down to write a letter in which they described their situation and asked the Rebbe for a *brocha*. I immediately faxed it to the Ohel. We also gave the mezuzah to a sofer who found that

unfortunately it wasn't kosher; a disappointing piece of news for them. I offered to order a new mezuzah for them and they were very grateful.

It was, *baruch Hashem*, a very busy season; I had two weddings to attend out of town, and I only got back to them with the new mezuzah a few weeks later, on Thursday of the Kinus Hashluchim. Tammy told me that since we had sent their letter to the Ohel, she spent time reading about the Rebbe, learning more about the Rebbe, and watching videos of the Rebbe online. She was very excited to relate to me that although they had never met the Rebbe, she felt a real connection.

In the meantime, the Klein family was understandably nervous as to how the situation would develop. I tried easing their anxiety, saying that they did their part—writing into the Rebbe asking for a *brocha* and fixing their mezuzah—and, G-d willing, it will turn out okay.

I headed straight from this meeting to the airport to fly to New York for the Kinus Hashluchim.

The next day, Friday, he was scheduled to meet the cardiologist to determine how serious his case was and at what level he would be placed on the list to receive a new heart. When I opened my phone on Motzei Shabbos, I saw that I had received a long text message from Mr. Richard:

“Good news! At this point in time I am not being placed on the transplant list. Physically I am in good health. My stress test results are better than my symptomatic condition indicates. They are going to run another test in order to try and determine where the inconsistency lies. Everything will be reevaluated after the test. Even if I were to be placed on a list I would be a low priority unless my condition were to worsen. The wait would be at least a year plus.

The Rebbe? Our new mezuzah? I am grateful beyond words.”

When he went for additional testing later that week, it was further confirmed that the major issue simply disappeared! The doctors had no explanation and could not reconcile their initial concern with what they were now seeing. They saw no need for him to undergo a heart transplant. The situation had transformed for the better, as the difference of night and day.

The Kleins are deeply thankful to the Rebbe, as they witnessed in their own lives how the Rebbe's *brocha* changed the situation from one extreme to the other. **T**

* Before publishing this story, all the details were once again confirmed for accuracy by the Kleins.

YOUR STORY

Share your story with A Chassidsher Derher by emailing feedback@derher.org.



Behind *the* Picture

Honor In Place

THE REBBE'S SHABBOS PLACE

Ed. note: For easier navigation of the various locations described throughout this article, please refer back to "A Chassidisher Derher" Issue 30 (107) pg. 40 and the diagram on pg. 42.

The Rebbe had various places in *shul* for davening; for some *tefillos* the Rebbe would be at one place and for others at a different place. And of course, over the years, the Rebbe's place changed several times; either due to the various expansions or other events at 770.

From the beginning of the *nesius* until 5748, the Rebbe generally davened the weekday *tefillos* in the upstairs *shul*, also known as the small *zal*. During

those years, the designated place for *mincha* and *maariv* on weekdays was the northeastern¹ corner of the room; between the *aron kodesh* and the door of the *zal* leading to the foyer of 770.

One of the exceptions to this, was *mincha* on *erev Shabbos*, which—as we see in the colored picture here—the Rebbe *davened* at his Shabbos place, in the southeastern corner of the room, which is along the wall between the *zal* and the *cheder sheni*. ▶▶▶





JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE

IMPROPER CONDUCT?

As the space in 770 was always maximized to serve in many different capacities, the *zal* upstairs served primarily as the main study hall of the yeshiva of 770. It was abuzz with voices and discussions at all hours of the day and night, only pausing for² *tefillos*, many of which the Rebbe attended, either in part or entirely. Before the Rebbe entered, the bochorim sitting at the table where the Rebbe would sit for davening, quickly got up and cleared away the *seforim* for the Rebbe. After davening, the room naturally reverted to its former form, and along with it the space the Rebbe used during *mincha* and *maariv* on weekdays would once again be filled with bochorim learning, and their *seforim*.

In 5742, a guest who had come to spend the month of Tishrei with the Rebbe, noticed this, and wrote a *ha'orah* in the kovetz *Haoros Hatmimim V'Anash* of Morristown, New Jersey, in which he raised the halachic question about a *talmid* not sitting in the *makom kavua* of his rav.

“MY MAKOM KAVUA”

The guest may not have been aware, but the Rebbe would often read many of the haoros written by bochorim and anash, and would later quote some of the discussions by farbrengens; either expounding on their questions, challenging them, or even answering them.

Shortly after Tishrei, at the farbrengen on Shabbos Parshas Lech Lecha 5742,³ the Rebbe introduced the above discussion of whether or not it was permissible for a *talmid* to sit in the place of his rav and offered a fascinating explanation.

The crux of the explanation was that of the two places—the Shabbos place in the south-east part of the shul, and the place for *mincha* and *maariv* on weekdays—it was only the Shabbos place on the southeastern corner that could be considered a true *makom kavua*, and thus subject to the regulations enumerated in Shulchan Aruch, such as not occupying it while the rav is not present, etc.

Whereas the *mincha* and *maariv* place, the Rebbe explained, was not an actual *makom kavua*, and was chosen simply out of technical need—to avoid having to walk across the room, causing “*tircha detzibura*,” inconvenience for the public (since everyone would naturally stand as the Rebbe was walking).

Then the Rebbe added that studying Torah must be conducted in a state of physical comfort and with ample space. Seeing as the student body is a large one and the room is not quite as much, designating a certain spot to be off limits would create discomfort and lessen the already limited space available for the *bochurim*, thereby being uncondusive to proper *limmud haTorah*; it would counter the will of the very individual whose place is being guarded (i.e. the Rebbe), and would thus be defeating its own purpose.⁴

WHY SOUTH?

The Rebbe explained, that those⁵ who were meticulous about maintaining a consistent place for davening, had their *makom kavua* on the southeastern side of the room. Drawing from the Zohar on the *parsha*, the Rebbe elucidated the connection between *darom* (south) and *shacharis*,

which is the main *tefillah* offered on Shabbos in that space.

Nevertheless, preempted the Rebbe, the reason for sitting at *darom* according to *kabbalah*, is no implication that all must do so. Rather, it is a practice reserved for select few, and not to be adopted by the masses; instead, for the sake of decorum each must continue to occupy the place he’d had thus far, across the entire shul. **T**

1. Any references to the points of the compass, is on the understanding that the side of the *aron kodesh* is *mizrach* (east); the wall between the *zal* and the *cheder sheni* is *darom* (south); the wall with the *chatzer* is *maarav* (west), and the wall between the *zal* and *cheder mazkirus* is *tzafon* (north).

2. For many years, the Rebbe sat on a bench for *mincha* and *maariv* (until a removable cushion was added), which further underscores the difference between this place and the place used on Shabbos, where the Rebbe used a chair, brought there especially for him.

3. See Hivaaduyos 5742, Vol. 1 pg. 393

4. The idea the Rebbe explained is that the urge to protect the Rebbe’s space stems out of a drive for *kavod* to him, but since “רצונו של אדם זה הוא כבודו” “[The execution of] one’s will [affords] him his true honor,” it follows that the way to offer *kavod* to the Rebbe, is by allowing *bochurim* more space to learn.

5. *Ed. note: probably referring to Rabboseinu Nesienu.*



Derher**Letters**

A forum for readers to send their feedback, add to, or ask any questions about articles. Submit your letter to feedback@derher.org.

Submissions may be slightly modified by our editorial staff before publishing.



Glimpse at Conversation

Dear Editors,

I was looking through the Cheshvan magazine when I came across a picture of Rabbi Chaim Yitzchok Poupko [Behind the Picture, Issue 37, Cheshvan 5776] having a conversation with the Rebbe outside 770; a very uncommon occurrence, and you bring part of the story behind this.

I was present when this took place, as I came to spend Shabbos Bereishis with the Rebbe. I would like to add a detail to the story, which wasn't mentioned in the article.

Reb Levi Freidin, the photographer, and Rabbi Binyomin Klein, the Rebbe's *mazkir* (my brother-in-law), stood nearby and followed part of the conversation. Afterwards they repeated what they heard.

The Rebbe had just arrived by car from his house. As he got out, Rabbi Poupko passed by. Right away, the Rebbe started talking to him about *shleimus ha'aretz*, in which he was very involved. At that point it started to rain a bit and Rabbi Poupko suggested that "maybe we should go inside." The Rebbe replied "א שאד יעדער מינוט", meaning that this is an urgent issue and every minute that passes is a delay.

Menachem (Menny) Wolf
Kfar Chabad, Eretz Yisroel

”

Kuntres Heichaltzu

Dear Editors,

Firstly, I want to thank you for such a wonderful magazine, full of very interesting articles, pictures, etc.

In the Cheshvan magazine [Leben Mitten Rebben, Issue 37, Cheshvan 5776] you wrote about the *kuntres* the Rebbe gave out on 20 and 21 Cheshvan 5748. I wanted to add something that wasn't mentioned. In one detail, this *kuntres* was different than other *kuntreisim* that the Rebbe gave out in the following years.

The Rebbe asked to announce that it is only for boys over 12 years of age, and girls over 11 years of age.

The Rebbe asked a number of boys, even some that were wearing hats and jackets, if they were over 12. I was 12-years-old, and when I passed to get a *kuntres* on Friday morning, 21 Cheshvan, the Rebbe asked me "*Shoin noch tselv?*" To which I answered "yes," and then the Rebbe gave me a *kuntres*.

There was one other time that they announced that a *chalukah* was only for boys over 13 and girls over 12, that was on Yud-Alef Nissan 5749.

In that case the Rebbe did not give any notice beforehand, so no extra *kuntreisim* were printed. Between *mincha* and *maariv* the Rebbe said something to Rabbi Groner, who then left the shul and returned with a box

from the Rebbe's room. It was a box with *Kuntres Ahavas Yisrael*, which was printed 12 years before, in 5737.

When the box was finished, they rushed to find more; somewhere another box was found. Only the people in front of shul were *zoche* to receive this *kuntres*. (After the *kuntreisim* were gone, the Rebbe continued to give out dollars to the rest of the crowd.)

I was 13 at the time and *boruch Hashem* I had the *zechus* to receive a *kuntres* from the Rebbe.

Bentche Korf
Miami Beach, Florida

”

The Rebbe's Hora'os

Dear Editors,

I just want to say *yasher koach* to all those involved in writing and putting together the Derher. Each publication is a masterpiece. I really enjoyed the interview with Rabbi Lew. Derher is not only geared for *bochurim*, but also for *yungeleit*, and all Chassidim for that matter. Thank you for the hours and hours that go into this; it's really appreciated.

Nochum Greenwald
Montreal, Canada

”

The Rebbe's Handwriting

Dear Editors,

Thank you for continuing to produce this incredible and important magazine each month. They are masterpieces, which keep on bringing the Rebbe to whoever reads them.

I particularly enjoyed reading the interview with my father, Rabbi Shmuel Lew ז"ל, featured in the Cheshvan Derher [The Road to 770; Issue 37, Cheshvan 5776].

It seems that an error made its way to the caption on page 28. It states there that the Rebbe crossed out the Merkos address and wrote "c/o S. Lew". It is true that "c/o S. Lew" is indeed in the Rebbe's handwriting, it was my father, however, who crossed out the Merkos address.

My father relates that he received the envelope from the Merkos office - since the Merkos office always had envelopes, and most people didn't walk around with plain envelopes. People, therefore, often received an envelope from the Mazkirus in which to send a letter to the Rebbe.

My father included a letter from someone else together with his own. The Rebbe was instructing the mazkirus that the answer should be sent through my father.

Note that the words לכ"ק אדמו"ר שליט"א were written (by my father) in the same blue ink as the line across the Merkos address.

Wishing you much Hatzlochoh,

Yossi Lew
Peachtree City, Georgia.

מוקדש לחיזוק ההתקשרות לכ"ק אדמו"ר זצוקללה"ה נבג"מ זי"ע

מוקדש
לחיזוק ההתקשרות לכ"ק אדמו"ר
בקשר עם יום הבהיר ה' טבת – "דין נצח"
נדפס ע"י
הרוצה בעילום שמו

לעילוי נשמת
הרה"ת ר' משה אהרן בן הרב ר' בנציון ז"ל גייסינסקי
נפטר ג' טבת, ה'תשנ"ב
ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.
נדפס על ידי ולזכות משפחתו שיחיו לאורך ימים ושנים טובות

לזכות שלוחי כ"ק אדמו"ר שיחיו בכל אתר ואתר
שיצליחו במילוי שליחותם הק' מתוך הצלחה גדולה והרחבה אמיתית בגו"ר
נדפס ע"י
הרוצה בעילום שמו

לזכות
מוקדש ע"י ולזכות
הרב משה וזוגתו מרת קריינדל
שיחיו
קליין

לזכות
החתן הרה"ת ר' אברהם שי' קוגל
והכלה מרת הדסה שתחי' ליפסקר
לרגל בואם בקשרי שידוכין בשעטומ"צ
ביום הבהיר י"ד כסלו ה'תשע"ו
נדפס ע"י הוריהם שיחיו

לזכות
החתן הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל שי' קראסניאנסקי
והכלה מרת מושקא שתחי' ניו
לרגל בואם בקשרי שידוכין בשעטומ"צ
ביום הבהיר י"ג כסלו ה'תשע"ו
נדפס ע"י משפחתם שיחיו

לזכות
החתן הרה"ת ר' דובער שי' פלטיאל
והכלה מרת אסתר שתחי' לוסטיג
לרגל נישואיהם בשעטומ"צ
ביום י"ד שבט ה'תשע"ו
נדפס ע"י משפחתם שיחיו

לזכות
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והכלה מרת דאבא גיטא שתחי' אלפרובין
לרגל בואם בקשרי שידוכין בשעטומ"צ
ביום ו' כסלו ה'תשע"ו
נדפס ע"י משפחתם שיחיו

לזכות
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וזוגתו מרת רינה
וילדיהם
קיי"ל באשא, בנציון דוד,
אליהו איסר, רבקה שיינדל אלתא
שיחיו
גולדהירש

A Chassidisher Derher
Vaad Talmidei Hatmimim



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