

שנת
הקהל את העם

A Chassidisher

Derher

א חסידישער דערהער

retaining CHASSIDUS

THE RIGOROUS PROCESS OF CHAZZARA
AND HANACHA IN EACH GENERATION

PART 1 OF A TWO-PART SERIES

With Heart and Soul

THE LIFE OF
REB YOCHANAN
GORDON

Moments Before

THE REBBE'S SIDDUR
TO CHASSANIM



ADAR I 5776
ISSUE 41 (118)



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ADAR I 5776 ISSUE 41 (118)



About the Cover:

As we present the first installment of a two-part series on the *chazzara* and *hanocha* process throughout the generations, our cover features a scene of *chazzara* in 770, Motzei Shabbos 8 Tishrei 5736, and a scene of the team of *manichim* at work transcribing the Rebbe's words. The background image features various *kesovim* and "*bichlach*" of Chassidus.

Levi Freidin via JEM 141531-193601

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Derher**Editorial**

One of the accomplishments brought about by the Baal Shem Tov with *Toras haChassidus*, is the emphasis on serving Hashem joyfully, with *simcha*.

The Rebbe asks in a *maamar*: How can one bring himself to serve Hashem with joy, even if he has no pleasure in the Torah and mitzvos he fulfills?

The answer, says the Rebbe, is by maintaining *hiskashrus* to *tzaddikim*, and especially to the *nessi'im*, the leaders of the Jewish people.

"With *hiskashrus* to the *tzaddikim* and leaders of each generation," the Rebbe declares, "and for us specifically, *hiskashrus* to the [Frierdiker] Rebbe, my father-in-law—we can abolish all the concealment (העלמות והסתרים), abolish the *galus*, and the [Frierdiker] Rebbe will lead us to... the *geulah*..." (ד"ה רני ושמחי תשכ"ז)

In this month of Adar Rishon, we mark Chof-Zayin Adar, the day the Rebbe had a stroke, doubling and redoubling the darkness of *galus*.

It is particularly now that we are reminded of just how vital it is to remain steadfast in our *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe, his Torah, and his ways.

And as the Rebbe teaches us, *Hiskashrus* to the Rebbe is first and foremost through studying his Torah.

In this issue, we have included a comprehensive overview on the process of how the Torah of the Rabbeim was reviewed, transcribed, and preserved throughout the generations—the process of *chazzara* and *hanacha*. It is the first in a two-part series. Towards the end of this installment, we will learn how the Rebbe played an active role in the review and transcription of the Frierdiker Rebbe's *sichos*, and how he worked to gather older transcriptions as well.

It is our hope that this will encourage our readers to understand and appreciate the importance of studying the Rebbe's Torah meticulously, and how this is an indispensable lifeline in our lives as Chassidim.



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Alongside this overview and all the other regular columns, we have also included a description of events surrounding the final farbrengen on Shabbos parshas Vayakhel, 5752, just two days before Chof-Zayin Adar.

And as the Rebbe concludes the farbrengen: with each of us implementing the *avodah* of Vayakhel in our own lives [see farbrengen for greater detail], we will bring about the ultimate "Vayakhel"—the ingathering of all the Jewish people in Eretz Yisroel, with the Rebbe at our lead!

The Editors
כ"ב שבט, 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





ESCALATING JOY

IN PREPARATION FOR PURIM

*This month we celebrate the yom tov of Purim Katan. In addition to all its own virtues, Purim Katan also marks thirty days before the real Purim in Adar II. The Rebbe calls on us to utilize this month preparing a *shturem'dike Purim*.*

When suggesting that a focus be put on Purim throughout the preceding month, one often gets an apathetic response. After all, is there a source in Torah or *halacha* for such a concept?

Granted, in a leap year Purim Katan occurs thirty days before Purim, thus injecting the following month with a *Purim'dike* feeling, but is there really a message behind the amount of days in between?

In fact, an argument can be made to the contrary:

In the beginning of Hilchos Pesach, the Alter Rebbe writes: “In the times of the *Beis Hamikdash*, the Chachamim instituted a practice of *darshanim* lecturing about the laws of the upcoming yom tov thirty days beforehand. I.e. from the Fourteenth of Adar one should begin to *darshan* on the laws of Pesach, from the Fifth of Iyar the laws of Shavuos, and on the Fourteenth of Elul we begin to study about Sukkos.”

But there is no mention at all regarding Purim.

In light of the above, is it really appropriate for us to establish a new *minhag* without any precedence?

Indeed, it is worth noting that Yidden have invariably been extremely cautious about instituting new customs or rituals. With all the many commitments that we are already struggling with, wouldn't it be wiser to focus on our pre-existing obligations without adding new ones to the list?

In truth however, we don't need to rush to search for any citations or sources when obvious logic will do, by introducing a simple premise.

The simple fact is, that however great the *shturem* surrounding Purim has been in the past, there is always room for it to grow. It is fair to say that Purim last year saw some wonderful accomplishments—even more than in previous years—and it was certainly



PHOTO: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 10489

לזכות

הילד החייל בצבאות ה' הרך הנולד בן הרה"ת ר' שמואל זוגתו מרת נחמה מטיא פלס
 נולד ד' שבט ה'תשע"ו
 שיגדל להיות חי"ל כרצון כ"ק אדמו"ר

a worthy effort, relative to what came before.

But much of that can be attributed to the accomplishments of those that have come before us. Like in the parable of the “dwarf standing on the shoulders of a giant,” our small and otherwise insignificant contribution, augmented and magnified by those upon whom we stand, can go further than if—and in this case, when—the giant was alone.

Nevertheless, upon reflection one will realize, that even with the limited power that each of us yields, we are still able to do more than what was achieved in the past, even compared to the not insignificant accomplishments of last year.

Consequently, we must ensure that whatever we aim for this year, it should be of incomparably greater magnitude to what preceded it.

Therefore, the suggestion is to begin to involve and excite ourselves with the

spirit of Purim throughout the thirty days beforehand. Indeed, when one is constantly made aware of the greatness of the upcoming yom tov during that period, he can be sure that his actions and achievements will match and reflect his increase in excitement.

In case that answer is not satisfactory; in case one insists on a Torah-based source, this idea is in fact contained—explicitly—in a Mishnah in Maseches Shekalim.

“On the First of Adar, they would begin announcing about the Shekalim. Why on the first? in order to ensure that everyone brings it on time, before Rosh Chodesh Nissan.”

Evidently, the Torah takes into account the tendencies of human nature. Namely, when individuals — both those who are eager and those who procrastinate—have something to achieve, a bit time, in this case thirty days, serves to help get it done. Note that the Mishnah doesn't say

to “speak,” it says to “announce”—a stronger, more emphatic term.

It is obvious what this means for us: We all know what our shortcomings are. [The Rebbe smiled and added:] As I know concerning myself, and presumably others also feel the same. Last year for whatever reason, there was no *shturem* about Purim for the month preceding it.

With all this being said, it is important that the efforts that go into this Purim be exponentially greater than what has been done up until now. The suggestion being: The month leading up to Purim should be full of tumult and *shturem* regarding the specialness of the yom tov, beginning today on Purim Katan.

Certainly, by raising awareness about these ideas in a heartfelt manner, it will have its desired effect in creating an unprecedented passion and excitement in this regard. **T**

(Based on sichas Purim Katan, 5746)



THE REBBE DISTRIBUTES COINS FOR TZEDAKA BEFORE LEAVING FOR THE OHEL, 27 ADAR I 5752.

לזכות הילד שניאור זלמן שי'
לרגל יום הולדתו, כ"ב טבת ה'תשע"ו, שנת הקהל, והכנסו בבריתו של אאע"ה
שיגדל להיות חי"ל כרצו"ק ולנח"ר כ"ק אדמו"ר זי"ע
ולזכות אחיו ואחיותיו שיחיו
נדפס ע"י הוריהם הרה"ת ר' לוי יצחק וזוגתו מרת הדסה שיחיו סלונים

Farbrengen for All Time

SHABBOS VAYAKHEL 5752



INTRO

It was a very unique month. On one hand the Rebbe said a *sicha* almost every night, with the topic inevitably leading back to a demand to increase in *simcha* by leaps and bounds. The Rebbe highlighted that because it is a leap year and there are sixty days in Adar, it means that we can nullify all bad things with the joy of Adar, just as food can be *batel b'shishim*. And the Rebbe's demand for joy increased as each day passed.

The Rebbe's constant insistence to add joy and true expressions of happiness led Chassidim to begin dancing one night in 770. It was the night

after Purim Katan, when the Rebbe distributed the *maamar Ve'ata Tetzaveh*,¹ that *l'chaim* and music were arranged in 770, and the *bochurim* danced. When Rabbi Shmuel Butman submitted a report on the dancing to the Rebbe, the Rebbe answered: "It should be ongoing and increasing. I will mention it at the *tziyon*."

Another point the Rebbe stressed was the fact that every Yid has to be strong and healthy in the practical, physical sense. During Adar, the *mazel* of Yidden is strong, and in a year of two Adars it will become a reality—that every single Yid must be healthy and strong physically, and even wealthy!

The amount of dollars the Rebbe distributed was also extraordinary, giving dollars almost every night following *maariv* or a *sicha*.

But on the other hand it was a very difficult time. On the second day of Adar I there was a tragedy in Crown Heights. A young mother, Mrs. Peshah Leah Lapine was brutally murdered *al kiddush Hashem*. Shockwaves spread through the community. Thousands streamed to the Friday funeral, Chassidim alongside (להבדיל) local African-Americans; reporters and camera crews came to document the event.

The funeral was to pass 770 and a short time before the *aron* arrived, news came out that the Rebbe would be joining the funeral. The Rebbe came out of 770 and followed the hearse down Eastern Parkway and part of Kingston Avenue. Then he waited until the procession continued out of sight.

The effect of the tragedy was extremely devastating. The next Thursday, when *shiva* ended, the Rebbe spoke about the incident. The Rebbe began by saying, “We will talk about a topic that is timely, even though we aren’t opening with a *bracha* as we usually do,” and continued to speak about the amazing merit one must have to fulfill the mitzvah of *kiddush Hashem*. But, the Rebbe continued, we demand that Moshiach must come! A day passes, and another day; a week and another week; over 1900 years and Moshiach has not yet arrived!²

You could feel the Rebbe’s pain and anguish!

In days and weeks that followed it became clear that the Rebbe was visiting the Ohel much more frequently than usual. The Rebbe’s regular practice had been to visit twice a month, Erev Rosh Chodesh and on the 15th. Later, the Rebbe visited every Sunday and Thursday (even later it moved to Monday and Thursday). The only time the Rebbe



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THE REBBE FOLLOWS THE LEVAYA OF MRS. PESHA LAPINE, WHO WAS TRAGICALLY MURDERED IN CROWN HEIGHTS, 2 ADAR I 5752.

visited the Ohel day after day for an extended period, was during the *seforim* court case, and it was obviously because of the case.

But suddenly, this month, the Rebbe visited the Ohel almost every day.

The Chassidim watched in wonder. Something was happening that no one could understand. Constantly urging for more *simcha*, delivering more *sichos*, giving out more dollars, visiting the Ohel more often; it seemed as if the Rebbe was working to counterbalance something.

The effect of the tragedy was extremely devastating. The next Thursday, when shiva ended, the Rebbe spoke about the incident.

SHABBOS VAYAKHEL, 25 ADAR I

For Shabbos, a few different groups of guests arrived. Two groups came from France, led by their shluchim. Rabbi Mendel Raskin brought a group of children from Montreal, and another group came from Pittsburgh.

Friday began with a surprise. After *shacharis*, instead of the usual announcement with the time for *mincha*, the *gabbai* announced that *mincha* will be “When we are ready,” which usually meant “When the Rebbe returns from the Ohel.”

Before going to mikveh, the Rebbe gave the *siddur* to two *chassanim* who were waiting in *Gan Eden Hatachton*³. After returning from mikveh and on the way to the Ohel, the Rebbe gave the *siddur* to a third *chossan*, gave him a *bracha*, and handed to him, his family, and the *mazkirim* present, coins for *tzedakah*.

The Rebbe returned from the Ohel less than 40 minutes before *licht bentchen*. *Mincha* took place in the upstairs *zal*, a few minutes after *licht bentchen*, which was at 5:26 pm.

Signs were posted on the walls of 770 announcing the *mitvza hakholas kehilos*, to take place over Shabbos, in connection with the *parsha*, which speaks of Vayakhel—Moshe gathering the Yidden. The *mitvza* was planned for the neighborhoods near Crown Heights, where Chassidim would go to share words of Chassidus and inspire the listeners. The signs listed the shuls and those responsible to speak at each shul.

After returning from the Ohel, the Rebbe asked if the group from France had arrived.

At Lecha Dodi during *Kabbolas Shabbos* the *chazzan* sang upbeat *niggunim* and the Rebbe strongly encouraged the singing, especially at the end.

SHABBOS MORNING

This Shabbos was a *Shabbos Mevarchim*, so the Rebbe came down for *Tehillim* before *shachris*. After a short break, the Rebbe came back down for *shachris*. There was a lot of singing during *davening*. For *Ho'aderes Veho'emunah* the French March was sung. Not only did the Rebbe urge on the singing by banging on the *shtender*, but even once it ended he continued encouraging for another two rounds of the *niggun*. During *kedusha* the *chazzan* sang “*Mimkomach*” to the tune of *Lechatchila Aribet*, and the Rebbe encouraged the *niggun*, motioning to repeat the middle stanza.

This week was Shabbos Shekalim so there were two Torahs on the *bima*. When the Rebbe went to the *bima* for *maftir*, he kissed the first Torah on the way up.

Before the blessing of the new month, the Rebbe turned around, pulled the *tallis* behind his ear, and faced the *chazzan* on the *bima*, to hear the announcement for the time of the *molad*. This was unusual.

THE FARBRENGEN

As the Rebbe walked into the shul, the crowd sang *Es Kumt Shoin Di Geula*, as they usually did at the start of the Shabbos *farbrengen* during recent months.

At the *farbrengen*, the Rebbe spoke very loudly, and those present recall that one could clearly hear the Rebbe even at a distance away.

(This stood out because ordinarily it was hard to hear the Rebbe during the Shabbos *farbrengens* of those years. With no microphone, and as much as the large crowd—packed into the benches of 770—tried to remain quiet, there was always some background noise. In earlier years, the Rebbe would project his voice over this noise. In these later years, the Chassidim tried to squeeze in as close to the Rebbe as possible, to try and hear the Rebbe's softer spoken tone.)

The *farbrengen* was also exceptionally rich in content, with the Rebbe offering lengthy and

detailed explanations on a wide variety of subjects.

The first *sicha* was very long, over 50 minutes, and focused on the fact that Vayakhel is usually joined with Pekudei, but this year it is separate. The lesson is that we need to focus on bringing Yidden together—“*vayakhel*,” which leads to the ultimate *vayakhel*—the coming of Moshiach, when all Yidden will be gathered to Eretz Yisroel.

In that *sicha* the Rebbe also mentioned that none of the Rabbeim—the Baal Shem Tov, the Maggid, the Alter Rebbe, the Mittlerer Rebbe, the Tzemach Tzedek, the Rebbe Maharash, or the Rebbe Rashab—moved to or even visited Eretz Yisrael. Even the Frierdiker Rebbe, who did visit, only did so because he was unable to visit the Ohalim of the Rebbes’ in Lubavitch and Rostov at the time.

The *sicha* was filled with many other important points and lessons in *avodas Hashem*, touching upon a number of topics:

The need to feel as one with each and every Yid in the spirit of true *ahavas Yisrael*. When influencing the conduct of another Yid, it must be done in a peaceful manner. This is also the reason why the *possuk*, when speaking of *machtzis hashekel*, uses the term “half of a 20 *geira shekel* coin” and not just “10 *geira*”; for each Yid only reaches completion when joining up with another, totalling the full “20 *geira*.”



LEVI FREDIN / VIA JEW 221528

For this reason, we recite “*Hareini Mekabel*” each morning before davening; to unify ourselves with others in a manner of *ahavas Yisroel*.

While on this topic, the Rebbe also spoke at length of the meaning of *Modeh Ani*, recited immediately upon awakening even before *Hareini mekabel*.



In the tradition of singing the *niggun* of the Rebbe's *kappitul* at the beginning of the farbrengen, the Chassidim sang *Shuva* and the Rebbe strongly encouraged the singing. At the repeating stanza, the Rebbe first encouraged the guests, who were sitting to his left, and then to the general crowd; first with just his right hand, and then waving both arms, leading the singing very strongly.

In the second *sicha*, the Rebbe drew a lesson from Shabbos Shekalim, that one should give tzedakah without calculations, and this should be done in a manner where it is as if one is giving away from within his very self.

The *niggun* afterwards was *Vayehi Bimei Achashverosh*.

In the third *sicha* the Rebbe invited those who brought *mashke* to be distributed to come up and receive the bottles. Their "coming up" signifies "*aliya*," an elevation from below upward, and is connected to *simcha*.

After the *sichos*, those who brought *mashke* came to get *l'chaim* from the Rebbe.

Fourteen bottles were lined up on the Rebbe's table, each marking an event during the upcoming week or weeks. For each one, the Rebbe took his *becher*, poured a little into the bottle, poured back into the cup, and poured *l'chaim* to the person receiving the bottle. Some of those who got bottles: Reb Dovid Karpov, for a farbrengen in Moscow. Reb Sholom Duchman, for a *hachnosas sefer Torah* in Florida. Reb Hillel Pevzner (with his son Yosef Yitzchak and a guest from France) for a farbrengen in the Mosdos Sinai school in France. Reb Moshiach Chudaitov for farbrengens in Russian cities. Reb Avrohom Meizlish for a farbrengen in Beit Sefer Lmelacha, Kfar Chabad. Reb Tzvi Steinmetz, for a farbrengen for the descendants of the Tosfos Yom Tov. Reb Fitche Itkin, for Pittsburgh. Reb Menachem Gerlitzky, for the *siyumim* on Rambam. Two *bochurim*, M. Heber and A. Evri for the

bochurim going on shlichus to Morocco. Reb Shmuel Plotkin for a farbrengen in Berditchev.

After giving out the *mashke*, the Rebbe began HoRav Levi Yitzchok's *hakafos niggun* and strongly encouraged the singing.

The Rebbe concluded the farbrengen by speaking again for a few minutes about Parshas Shekalim and the importance of increasing in tzedakah.

Mincha immediately followed the farbrengen. The Moshiach *sefer Torah* was used, and the Rebbe was called up for *shlishi*.

At the end of davening the Lapine children said *kaddish*. In the middle of *kaddish* the Rebbe turned towards them and watched them until the end.

That night, after Shabbos, the *bochurim* danced, as they did the last few nights.

Also that night, the summary of the farbrengen which was usually printed immediately after Shabbos, was edited by the Rebbe before publication. This was highly unusual. This means that as soon as Shabbos ended the editors of the summary made a *chazarah*, transcribed the summary, submitted it to the Rebbe, who in turn edited it and returned it—all in the course of a few hours!

*Due to the many groups
that joined the line and the
unusually large crowds,
'dollars' extended for over
five hours!*

ROEH NE'EMAN

The following day, Sunday, 26 Adar I, the Rebbe davened *mincha* in *Gan Eden Hatachton* at about 1:50 p.m. This was a custom the Rebbe started on Sundays this winter⁴ because the line to receive dollars could stretch for many hours, into the early winter night. Two *chassanim* were present at *mincha* to receive the siddur.

The Rebbe began distributing dollars later than usual that Sunday. Due to the many groups that joined the line and the unusually large crowds, 'dollars' extended for over five hours! Many interesting incidents occurred during that day's 'dollars' (see Derher Issue 29 page 30 for a selection of those encounters).

For the first time ever, several hours into the distribution, the Rebbe asked how long the remaining line was, providing a small clue that not all was well. The distribution of dollars continued until 7:30 p.m.

The next day, Monday, 27 Adar I, the Rebbe went to the Ohel, as he usually would on a Monday. While the Rebbe was at the Ohel, davening and pleading for Klal Yisroel, reading the thousands of letters and *panim* that arrived at his door with requests for *brochos* and *yeshuos*, the Rebbe had a stroke, to the shock and distress of all the Jewish nation.

While we can never know why the Rebbe encouraged certain activities or behaved in a certain way, the month of Adar I 5752 stands out as a time that was disconcertingly different from the Rebbe's regular schedule. All those nights of surprise *sichos* (which with time were no longer perceived as surprising), the many distributions of dollars, the *Kuntres Purim Katan* distributed with lekach and dollars; all of these incidents seemed to implicate that the Rebbe was pouring more and more *hashpa'a* to the Chassidim.

The Rebbe's unusual demand for *simcha*, a *simcha* that would "drown out" all negative things, suddenly took on new meaning. The need for every Yid to have strong health, the unrelenting call for the *geulah* and an end to all tragedy, and all of this with a real sense of urgency; it now bears clearer context.

Chof-Zayin Adar I marked the beginning of the doubled and redoubled dark *golus*; a time that we do not see the Rebbe in his full glory, as we should.

For the short meantime, we hold steadfast in the path that the Rebbe set for us, guided by the principles he spoke of in all these *sichos*. And as the Rebbe teaches in the *maamar Ve'ata Tetzave*, it is our connection with the *roeh ne'eman*, the faithful shepherd of our time, that gives us the necessary capability to carry through with our *avodah* in the darkest times of *golus*.

Until we will ultimately see the day when the Rebbe will return in his full strength, and lead us out of *golus*, may it be *bekarov Mamash!* **🕒**

1. See detailed story in *The Timeless Maamor*, Derher 16 (93), Adar I 5774

2. *Sichos Kodosh* 5752, vol 1, pg 730.

3. See more about this in *Behind the Picture* in this magazine.

4. See *Behind the Picture* Derher issue 21 (98), Tammuz 5774



כתב יד
קודש

Full Alignment

This *ksav yad kodesh* was written in response to parents requesting the Rebbe's *bracha* for their son, who suffered from schizophrenia. The Rebbe explains why specifically the mitzvah of putting on tefillin (by the patient as well as his relatives) will help their son get his life back in order.

The original letter was written on 13 Kislev, 5732. Printed in *Igros Kodesh* vol. 27 p. 279.





[In response to the request for a bracha:] Be **meticulous** about laying tefillin – both the one in need of the bracha, [as well as] his parents, etc.

The connection [to the current predicament] is easily understood (based on [Hashem's] conduct —which is also understandable—of “measure for measure” [that things are orchestrated from above parallel one's conduct on earth]):

The symptom of “schizophrenia” (despite what the cause may be)—is a conflict between the actual reality (of the environment) around the patient, and the way he “sees” and perceives things in his mind.

Hence: 1) He obtains (emotional feelings in line with this mindset) anxiety, fear that someone wishes to harm him, etc. 2) Occasionally, he experiences [irrational] feelings of opposite extremes: [going] from unreasonable fear to an unreasonable exuberance, etc.; [which is a result of a] fragmented personality and outlook, etc.

[The remedy for this issue is the mitzvah of] Tefillin:

Part of the obligation of this mitzvah, and its **virtue**, is to **subordinate** one's heart (emotions) and mind (intellect) to the **True** G-d, about whom it is written, “I am Hashem, who does not **change**.” This **automatically** causes harmony between one's intellect, emotions, and the reality [around him], etc.

I will mention this at the Ohel.

דיוק בהנחת תפילין דהזקוקים לברכה, ההורים שלהם וכו'. - ובזה שייכות מובנת גם בפשטות (וע"פ ההנהגה, המובנת ג"כ בפשטות - מדה כנגד מדה):

”סקיצאָפּרעניע בלוית עוד איזה שם ר"ל" (מה שלא תהי' **סיבתה**) **ענינה** - אי התאמה בין המציאות (דהסביבה) כמו שהיא - לכמו שהחולה "רואה" ותופס אותה **בשכלו**. **ובמילא**: (1) נולדו אצלו **מדות** מתאימות לראיית **שכל** (זו), פחד, יראה שרוצים להזיק וכו'. (2) מזמן לזמן **שינויים** ועד להיפך: מפחד בלתי מבוסס במציאות - לרוממות הרוח בלתי מבוססת וכו'; פיצול הנפש וההשקפה וכו'.

תפלין - **חלק** מהמצוה **ו** **סגולת** ה: **לשעבד** הלב (המדות) והמוח (שכל) לאלקים **אמת**, עליו נאמר: אני ה' לא **שנית** - **ובמילא**: התאמה בין השכל הרגש והמציאות וכו'.

אזכיר עה"צ.



Smicha

More than just a certificate



Familiar in all of Torah

In this *sicha*, the Rebbe charges all *bochurim* wishing to become rabbis with numerous requirements, in addition to the rudimentary knowledge needed to pass the test.

I will give practical advice to the *bochurim* who will soon receive *smicha*. Firstly, they must **know** the *dinim well*—not just suffice with merely receiving a diploma. Also, they must realize that one who receives *smicha* becomes a *baal habos* (master) over the world.

In order to bring this about in a practical manner:

1. They must study Chassidus, which will affect that “Fear of Heaven is his treasure.” They will come to the recognition that the entire world’s existence is nothing more than the **G-dly** life-force that

animates and creates it. Thus, they will be able to ascend the natural boundaries of this world and reach the level of *Shem Havaye*, which is beyond nature.

2. Being that the goal of *smicha* is for the individual to be able to make halachic rulings in day-to-day matters, it is not enough to study the material necessary for the *smicha* test. Rather, they must also possess a general familiarity with Torah, so that no matter the question, the subject matter will be familiar to them.

A young man once came to the Rogatchover Gaon to receive *smicha*. Instead of giving him the typical test in *Yoreh Deah*, the Rogatchover surprised him by instructing him to study the laws of *krias haTorah*, and only afterwards would he give him

smicha. The Rogatchover explained, “I see that overall, you’re a G-d-fearing individual, and therefore, if you’re asked a question in *Yoreh Deah* to which you do not know the answer, you will certainly tell the questioner to wait until you have looked into it, or you will ask someone else (or you’ll write to a more knowledgeable rav).

“However, should a question arise in middle of *krias haTorah*, for example, with the *gabbai* and the entire congregation present, you might end up **answering without knowing the true depth of the halacha**, since leaving the Torah on the *bima* until you can finish looking it up would be disrespectful (and you certainly wouldn’t be able to write to *rabbanim* and wait for their answer...). In addition, it is embarrassing to you—the rav. The solution,” concluded the Rogatchover, “is to first study *hilchos krias haTorah*.”

THEY SHOULD STUDY - IN DEPTH - AT LEAST FIVE TO TEN *SUGYOS* IN *SHAS*. THEY SHOULD ALSO STUDY *LEGIRSA* THREE TO FIVE *MASECHTOS* IN *SHAS*.

This also applies to already ordained rabbis; they should endeavor to acquire a general knowledge of the entire Torah.

At the very least, they should study—in depth—five to ten *sugyos* (topics) in *Shas* (ideally *sugyos* from all over *Shas*—“פאָנאָנדערגעוואָרפענע” “סוגיות”—so that their knowledge will be more encompassing.) They should also study *legirsa* three to five *masechtos* in *Shas* (Gemara, Rashi, and some Tosafos). Obviously I don’t mean the small *masechtos*, such as *Maseches Gerim*, or the like.

It should be added—and emphasized—that this applies to the ones ordaining *smicha*. For if the

smicha isn’t done properly, it is the responsibility of the ones ordaining, and “if a student is exiled, his teacher is exiled as well.” So it should be ensured that the *smicha* is proper, and that the one ordaining can say “see the produce that I have grown.”¹

Sedorim in Halacha

In this letter to Reb Nissan Nemenov, the mashpia of Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim in Brunoy, France, the Rebbe explains when, and to what extent, bochurim should study advanced halacha.

Regarding what you wrote about the study of *Yoreh Deah* in yeshiva, it seems from your letter that this subject

is mandatory for all students. They study, as you write, primarily *Yoreh Deah*, with only two hours a day spent studying Gemara.

Were all the students intending to become rabbis, and were they all in possession of a fundamental knowledge of Gemara, such a *seder* would perhaps be appropriate. However, if one of the two conditions is missing, the time spent learning Gemara should perhaps be increased, and they should study the *masechtos* that contain more practical *halacha*. Though obviously they must be familiar with the *masechtos* being studied in the other yeshivos.

...Regarding your question about learning *Yoreh Deah*, I answered in general above, and I would add that in order to receive *smicha* one must know a minimum of several *sugyos* in *Shas* as well as several *inyonim* in *Shas*. Regarding the study of *Yoreh Deah* itself, you are no doubt aware that with



CHESHVAN 5740, LEVI FREIDIN via JEM 194373

the decreased time available for study these days, less time is spent learning the commentary Pri Megadim and others.²

Prerequisite

In this *sicha*, on 24 Teves 5712, the Rebbe explains his public directive that every man should receive *smicha* before marriage.

Now is a good time to discuss the subject of *talmidim* who still need to receive *smicha*.

To the *bochurim* that were spoken to regarding studying for *smicha*, this is not a theoretical speech, rather my intentions are practical.

And even the *bochurim* who were not spoken to about this, if they are capable of it, they too should take this upon themselves. Beginning tonight or tomorrow, they should get to work (“צוטרעטן צו דער ארבעט”)—in keeping to the regular *sedarim*, in *nigleh* and Chassidus, which they must attend—and complete the *smicha*

before Pesach, or at least no later than Shavuos.

The same applies to the laymen who are capable of this. It is very appropriate that they too become proficient in applied *halacha*, and may this bring them blessings.

This *minhag* is a **public directive** (הוראה לרבים)—one must get *smicha* before marriage.

The reason for this is because quite often, various uncertainties in *halacha* arise at home, and you can’t go every few minutes to ask a *rav* (“מ’קען דאך ניט” “לויפן יעדער פאר מינוט צו א רב”). Therefore there needs to be a *rav* in the house.

On these same lines, I add that everyone who wishes to create a “*binyan adei ad*” (an everlasting home)—and this applies to married men as well—should receive *smicha*. This is certainly within the abilities of everyone, especially according to today’s standards.

In the past, in order to receive *smicha*, one had to be a great scholar, proficient in Tur as well as the entire

Shulchan Aruch, or at least two sections of it—*Yoreh Deah* and *Even Ha’ezer*.

Nowadays, the *seder* is that one begins by studying Kitzur Shulchan Aruch, followed by Ba’er Heitev, then Shulchan Aruch with the commentaries of Taz and Shach. And only afterwards, if one has time, he studies parts of Tur and Beis Yosef.

So, my intention is that everyone should receive at least this type of *smicha*, in order to be familiar with proper conduct [in day-to-day Jewish life], which requires proficiency in *Orach Chayim*, *Yoreh Deah*, as well as some knowledge of *Even Ha’ezer*. At the very least, [everyone should be proficient in] the two former sections, which are necessary in order to be familiar with [day-to-day Jewish] conduct, not to transgress the numerous *halachos*, for example in *Hilchos Shabbos*, (as the Alter Rebbe writes in *Iggeres HaKodesh*), and the like.



CHESHVAN 5736, LEVI FREIDIN via JEM 143035

It should be emphasized that [for married men] the actual signed diploma (“די פאפירל”) attesting to the *smicha* of the recipient is not so important, as long as he is **capable** of receiving such a diploma. If one deserves the diploma, then the document itself is irrelevant. In the words of Chazal: “If it is capable of being kneaded, it doesn’t need to actually be kneaded.”³

However, *bochurim* must indeed receive their *smicha* diploma, for with it, it will be known that they have completed their obligation (to study all the applicable *halachos*). It would even be best for them to be tested by someone with strict *smicha* requirement, for that would demonstrate that they have appropriately completed (the study of the *halachos*).⁴

Smicha for Kollel Yungeleit

On 16 Teves 5738, after mincha, the Naroler Rav, Reb Chaim Meir Yechiel Shapiro, paid a visit to the Rebbe. The study of halacha for *smicha* featured prominently in their discussion, excerpts of which are presented here.

The Rebbe: Is Shulchan Aruch studied in the *kollel*?

Rabbi Shapiro: I have instituted that each Shabbos night, the Alter Rebbe’s Shulchan Aruch is studied.

The Rebbe: (smiling) This is “bribery” to me. My intent was to ask whether Shulchan Aruch is studied in the *kollel* that you founded, because according to the information I have, there is a lack of *rabbanim* in Eretz Yisrael.

Rabbi Shapiro: The *kollel* is based upon studying to become a *rav*. Many of the members have already received *smicha*.

The Rebbe: Did they receive both *yoreh-yoreh*⁵ and *yadin-yadin*⁶?

Rabbi Shapiro: Yes, but the primary focus is *yoreh-yoreh*.

The Rebbe: Do they learn Pri Megadim?

Rabbi Shapiro: Pri Megadim as well as Chavos Da’as.

The Rebbe: It is said that the author of the Pri Megadim had a connection with the Baal Shem Tov.

Rabbi Shapiro: I heard that he had a connection with the Maggid of Mezritch and received a *bracha* from him...

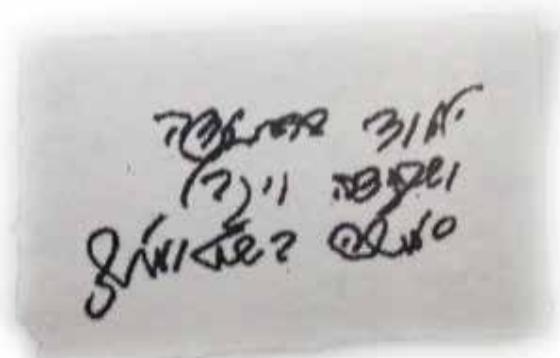
The Rebbe: I am very happy to hear that *smicha* is being studied in your *kollel*.⁷

THE FRIERDIKER REBBE ה"מ WANTED VERY MUCH THAT “WE SHOULD BE LEARNED”. (מ'זאל) (קענען לערנען)

מ'זאל קענען לערנען

Reb Yoel Kahan relates that he asked the Rebbe in *yechidus* (in 5710), “Since the Frierdiker Rebbe would instruct *bochurim* over the age of twenty to study *Yoreh Deah* in the afternoons, should I also do so?” The Rebbe responded that he should “speak in learning” with Reb Mordechai Mentlick, and after a few days - after the Rebbe will speak with Reb Mordechai - the Rebbe will tell him what to learn.

Reb Yoel did so, and in the following *yechidus*, the Rebbe instructed him not to study *Yoreh Deah* yet; rather, he should study Gemara in depth—meaning with the Rishonim up until Shulchan Aruch—



for at least another year or a year and-a-half. He should also study Gemara *legirsah* in the evenings, with the emphasis being on quantity—as much as possible.

The Rebbe added that the Frierdiker Rebbe very much wanted that “we should be learned” (מ'זאל) (קענען לערנען). The Rebbe encouraged Reb Yoel to be diligent, and also to learn Chassidus in depth. The Rebbe said that when it comes to Chassidus, learning in depth is important, but when it comes to davening, what’s most important is to bring oneself to practical *avodah*. At the end of the *yechidus*, the Rebbe blessed Reb Yoel that the *brachos* of the Frierdiker Rebbe to him should be fulfilled, and that he should merit that the goals of the Frierdiker Rebbe should be achieved through him.⁸ ①

1. Toras Menachem vol. 6 p. 70
2. Igros Kodesh vol. 7 p. 102
3. A *Mincha* offering is only acceptable if it contains less than 60 *esronim* of flour, rendering it able to be kneaded. However, once it is *theoretically* able to be kneaded, it’s acceptable even if it isn’t *actually* kneaded. Here, too, being *theoretically* capable of receiving *smicha*—by having the requisite knowledge—is sufficient.
4. Toras Menachem vol. 4 p. 259
5. Ordination to rule regarding *kashrus*, Shabbos, and the like.
6. Ordination to be a *dayan*, a judge in Beis Din.
7. Siach Sarfei Kodesh p. 477
8. Yemei Bereishis p. 158



In preparation for this article, we were greatly assisted by transcripts of conversations with **Mrs. Esther Goldman** ע"ה, and **Rabbi Yisroel Gordon**, יב"ח, which were conducted by Jewish Educational Media's *My Encounter with the Rebbe* project. We extend special thanks to **Rabbi Yechiel Cagen** and the *My Encounter* team for making these transcripts available for our publication.

We would also like to thank the following individuals for sharing their personal memories of Reb Yochanan: **Mrs. Yocheved Baitelman**, **Rabbi Aharon Cousin**, **Mrs. Rische Deitsch**, **Rabbi Yossi Goldman**, **Rabbi Mendel Gordon**, **Rabbi Meir Harlig**, **Rabbi Yosef Katzman**, **Rabbi Moshe Klein** and **Rabbi Shlomo Zarchi**.

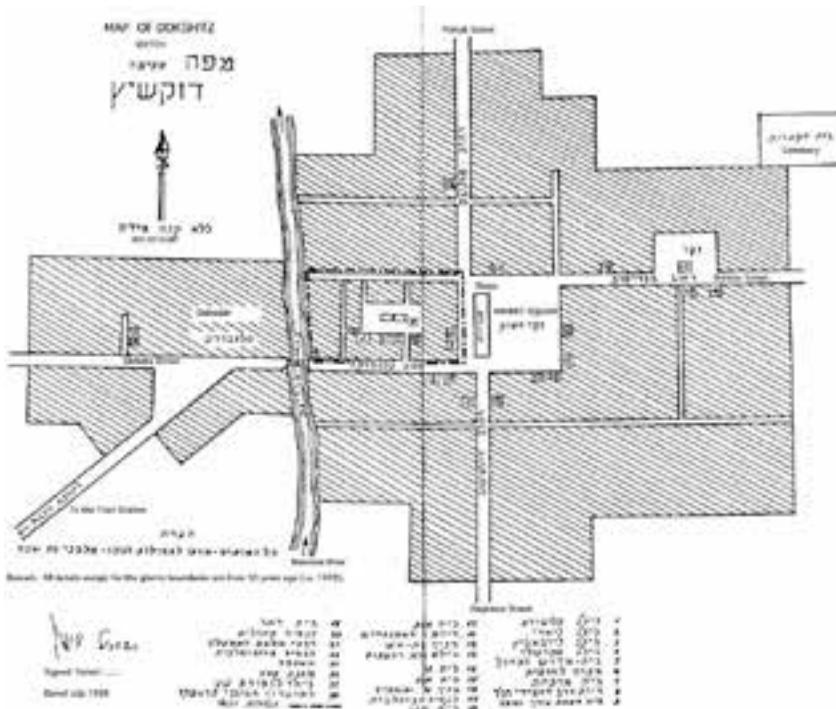
Photos: JEM, Gordon Family, Rabbi Moshe Klein

When the news came to the Friediker Rebbe that the Rebbe and Rebbetzin would be arriving on Chof-Ches Sivan 5701 in the United States, the Friediker Rebbe said that "*di gutte freint*" should be notified. When the *mazkir* asked who the good friends are, the Friediker Rebbe answered "Yochanan Gordon."

Reb Yochanan, who served as the *gabbai* of 770 for many years, was a *Chossid par excellence*; he harbored a deep and enduring love for the Rabbeim, and he was a constant *dugma chaya* of someone who would go to any length to bring the Rabbeim *nachas ruach*. Those who knew him recall a person that lived and breathed *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe and a complete and total devotion to his will, which he carried out with dedication and *gusto*.

In the following article, we attempt to take a glimpse into the life of this unique *Chossid*, from whom we can learn so much.

לזכות
הילד החייל בצבאות ה'
ישראל שי'
לרגל ה"אפשערניש" ביום י"א שבט ה'תשע"ו
שכ"ק אדמו"ר והוריו שי' ירוו ממנו נח"ר רב
נדפס ע"י הוריו
הרה"ת לוי יצחק וזוגתו שי' גאלדשטיין



MAP OF DOKSHITZ.

Dokshitz

Reb Yochanan Gordon, or as some remember him, Reb Yochanan Dokshitzer, was born on 23 Iyar 5654 (תרט"ד), in the *chassidische* town of Dokshitz, Belarus, to his parents Reb Yisroel and Esther. Generations earlier, Esther's grandfather had been sent to Dokshitz by the Mittlerer Rebbe to serve there as the town *shochet*, and the prestigious position was later passed down from father-in-law to son-in-law until it reached Reb Yisroel, and then after him to Reb Yochanan.

Dokshitz, a town with a population of around two thousand Yidden, was inhabited predominantly by Chassidim. Five or six shuls were maintained in the small town, and all besides for one followed *nusach* Chabad.

As a child, Reb Yochanan developed a close friendship with a *talmid* in the yeshiva of Dokshitz by the name of Peretz Motchkin, who

would often join the Gordon family's *seudos Shabbos*, and together they went to learn in Lubavitch.

Yochanan's years spent in Lubavitch made a deep impression on him; developing his personality and molding him into the beloved Chossid and dedicated soldier of the Rabbeim that he remained for the rest of his life.

The *bochurim* in Lubavitch would merit to hear a *maamar* from the Rebbe Rashab every Friday night. Reb Yochanan recalled that a complaint was once lodged against the *bochurim*, that some of them were seen dozing off during the sometimes lengthy *maamarim*. When the complaint was brought before the Rebbe Rashab, he replied; "Sleeping at Har Sinai is also something special."

Aside for the weekly *maamarim*, the Rebbe Rashab would *farbreng* on select few occasions, such as Yud-Tes Kislev and Simchas Torah. Reb Yochanan related that the relationship between the Rebbe and the *bochurim* was such that they would hide

behind the *yungeleit* during those events, lest the Rebbe see them; and if the Rebbe Rashab would somehow happen to glance at them, they would immediately run to conceal themselves from fear of his holiness.

THE REBBE RASHAB REPLIED, "SLEEPING AT HAR SINAI IS ALSO SOMETHING SPECIAL".

Becoming a Shochet

In 5677 (תרע"ז), after a number of years in the yeshiva in Lubavitch and Schedrin, Reb Yochanan married Zishe, the daughter of Reb Nissan Klovnov (a cousin of Reb Chatsheh Feigin). On their wedding day, which was also Shushan Purim, the news arrived that a revolution against the despised Czar had broken out, and the celebration took on a whole new life.

After their wedding, the couple moved back to Dokshitz, and Reb Yochanan learned *shechita* from Reb Bentzion Chanowitz, who was the *shochet* in nearby Glubakeh. A few short years later, his father, Reb Yisroel passed away. The community wanted to appoint Reb Yochanan to take his father's position, but he hesitated; he was afraid to take such heavy responsibilities upon himself.

The rov in Dokshitz at the time was Reb Leib Sheinin, a *tomim* from Lubavitch about whom—it was said—the Rebbe Rashab had declared that he was a *beinoni* of the Tanya. (According to a different version, the Rebbe Rashab had said that establishing the entire yeshiva had been worth it just for him.)

When Reb Leib heard that he had refused to take the position, he asked Reb Yochanan for the reason; Reb Yochanan answered him that he is

The Memuneh

Rabbi Yisroel Gordon, Reb Yochanan's son, relates:

When my father was in Lubavitch as a teenager, about seventeen or eighteen years old, they would have a *seder* on Pesach together with the entire yeshiva, including the younger *bochurim* learning in the *shiurim*. The older *bochurim* would be appointed as *memunim* to oversee the tables of younger *bochurim*, and on that Pesach my father was taking charge of a table of *bochurim* that were thirteen or fourteen years old.

Before the *seder* was to begin, the Frierdiker Rebbe, who was then the *menahel* of the Yeshiva, came in to see how it was set up. When he came to my father's table, he picked up the matzah cover to see what was under it.

Now, there are two types of matzah; there is *matzah shmurah mishaas ketzirah*, which is watched carefully from the time of the harvesting, and there is *matzah shmurah mishaas techinah*, which is only watched from the time it is milled and made into flour. The majority of the matzah in Lubavitch of those days was only *shmurah mishaas techinah*, and when the Frierdiker Rebbe picked up the matzah cover he was surprised to see that my

father had three matzos that were *shmurah mishaas ketzirah!*

He asked my father how he had obtained them, and my father answered that "*ah memuneh git zich an eitzah,*" when you are in charge of the *bochurim* you find a way of getting three of the better matzos. The Frierdiker Rebbe was a bit upset at him for doing this, and he told him that tomorrow he wouldn't be allowed to eat lunch.

Of course my father was terribly embarrassed and ashamed; here he is taking care of the younger *bochurim*, and in the process he is disciplined in front of them and told that he can't have lunch the next day. The next morning, after davening, they *benched* Hallel, *davened mussaf*, and everyone went to eat. My father went to the *taichele*, the small river that served as the mikveh, laundry, and swimming pool, and sat down there to relax. He wasn't there for more than ten or fifteen minutes when two of his friends, later well-known chassidim Peretz Motchkin and Shlomo Chaim Kesselman, came running and calling him by his name, saying that the Frierdiker Rebbe wants him to come have *seudas Yom Tov*.

afraid that he might make mistakes. Reb Leib Sheinin looked at him and said:

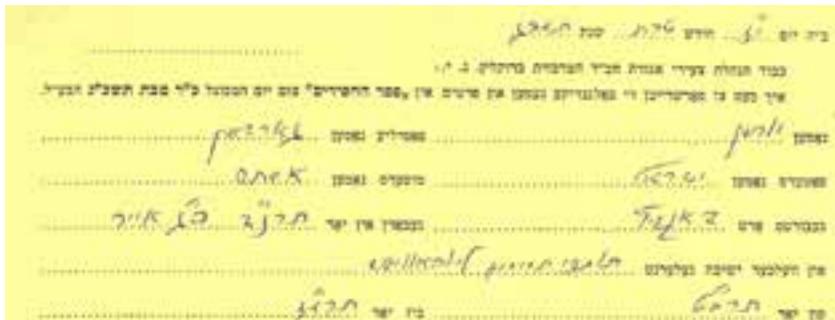
"Whom should I appoint—someone that is not afraid to make mistakes?"

Over the next ten years, Reb Yochanan served faithfully as the town's *shochet*. During that time, three children were born to him and his wife: Nissan, Sholom Ber, and Esther.

Nissan was gifted with prolific writing talents (later in his life, he merited to document the stories of the Rebbe's childhood as he heard them from Rebbetzin Chana). As in many Jewish towns, there was a lively relationship between the Chassidim and *misnagdim*, and young Nissan would utilize his talents to write posters against Rabbi Galinkin, the town's *misnagdisher rov*, and in support of Reb Leib Sheinin. One morning,



REB YOCHANAN IN HIS YOUTH.



REB YOCHANAN'S REGISTRATION FORM FOR THE "SEFER HACHASSIDIM" - A LIST OF ALL OF ANASH REQUESTED BY THE REBBE IN 1873.

Hecher Fun Zinen

When the Nazis arrived in Dokshitz, they collected all of the Yidden of the town, and herded them all into the shul, where Reb Leib Sheinin was still in the middle of davening *shacharis* (it was already the early afternoon). Once they were sure that all of the Yidden were inside, they locked the doors and set the building on fire.

The entire shul erupted in a panic; people began scaling walls, and screams and growing wails of terror were heard from all directions. In the midst of all this mayhem, Reb Leib Sheinin turned to his congregation and asked them to be quiet and hear what he had to say.

He told them that just as in the *Beis Hamikdash*, the *korbanos* had to be brought together with the proper thoughts and intention, so to when Yidden themselves are offering themselves as *korbanos* to the Aibershter, they must be sure to keep their minds and hearts pure so that they will be a befitting sacrifice.

With that, Reb Leib—still wearing his tallis and tefillin—began to sing the Simchas Torah *niggun*, and the entire crowd packed into the burning shul joined in. When the Nazis realized what was going on, they were incensed. They broke into the shul and brutally murdered Reb Leib.

A number of Yidden managed to survive the burning inferno by digging a tunnel through the shul's cellar. They remained there until the fire cooled off, after which they escaped and joined the partisans in the forests fighting the Nazis. One of these men later arrived in the United States, and visited Reb Yochanan in his sukkah, where he related to him the tragic events that brought about the end of *Yiddishe* Dokshitz. Upon finishing his description, he sighed, “At the end, Reb Leib *iz arup fun zinen*—Reb Leib lost his mind.”

Reb Yochanan argued; “*Er iz nit arup fun zinen, er iz geven hecher fun zinen*—what he did was not because he lost his mind; his actions were *limailah mitaam vodaas*.”

when Rabbi Galinkin woke up, he saw the town covered in posters, and was overheard muttering, “Oy, Yochanan’s son is already up.”

Yud-Beis Tammuz in Dokshitz

Rabbi Yisroel Gordon relates:

“The Frierdiker Rebbe was arrested on 15 Sivan 5687 (תרפ"ז), and when the news hit the Jewish communities throughout Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Poland, Lithuania and Latvia, they were gripped with intense worry and concern.

“I heard from my older brothers, that in our little town Dokshitz, the rof, Reb Leib Sheinin, announced a *bittul melacha*—that means no work can be done. All stores needed to be closed, and everyone assembled in the largest shul to recite Tehillim together.



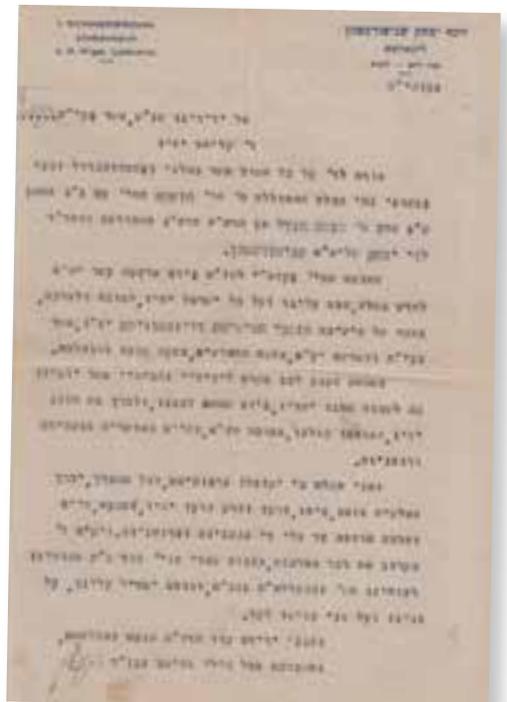
VINTAGE PHOTO OF THE TOWN OF DOKSHITZ.

The *chazan* for Tehillim was my father, Reb Yochanan and he recited it with a lot of emotion and tears.

“The next year, the first anniversary Yud-Beis Tammuz fell out on Shabbos. The custom in Dokshitz, unlike shuls of today, was that *kiddushim* were made in private homes; but this Shabbos a *kiddush* was held in shul. Reb Leib Sheinin and my father—the two individuals that had learnt in Lubavitch—were so happy that they were dancing on the tables. The *simcha* was so great, its intensity equal to the sadness of the year before...”

The Rebbe's Chasunah

In 5688 (תרפ"ח), the news spread that the Frierdiker Rebbe had left Russia and was now living in Riga, Latvia. Eager to see the Rebbe, whom he had not seen for many years, Reb Yochanan borrowed money, and as Tishrei 5689 (תרפ"ט) came around, he traveled to the Rebbe for Rosh Hashanah. While there, he davened



THE INVITATION TO THE REBBE AND REBBETZIN'S CHASUNA SENT BY THE FRIERDIKER REBBE TO THE CHASSIDIM OF DOKSHITZ.

at the *amud* for *shacharis* of Rosh Hashanah, served as the *baal koreh*, and he basked in the presence of the Frierdiker Rebbe, just as he had done by the Rebbe Rashab years earlier.

A short while after he arrived back in Dokshitz, he received an invitation to a wedding: the Frierdiker Rebbe had sent him an invitation for the *chasunah* of the Rebbe and Rebbetzin which would be taking place in Poland. Reb

Yochanan had just gone into debt to pay for his Rosh Hashanah trip, and he didn't think he would be able to afford a whole new journey. In addition to the financial aspect, Reb Yochanan was suffering from a tonsil infection, with a virus and a high fever, to the extent that he could not even leave his bed. The date of the wedding was drawing closer and closer, and he didn't think he would be able to make it.

While he was deliberating his predicament, Reb Leib Sheinin came to visit him. Being that Reb Leib was no man of means, Reb Yochanan had assumed that he would not be making the trip either. To his surprise, Reb Leib told him that he was going, and he expressed surprise when he heard that Reb Yochanan wasn't planning to go as well.

"At the *chasunah* of the Rebbe's daughter to the Rebbe's cousin," Reb Leib reasoned, "all of the Rabbeim, from the Baal Shem Tov and on, will certainly be present¹. When all of the Rabbeim come, I should stay at home?"

There now was no doubt left in Reb Yochanan's mind that he must attend the wedding. Reb Yochanan gathered some strength and went out to borrow some more money. When he returned home, his wife made sure that he slept, drank tea, and took aspirin. After a few days his fever went down a bit and he was able to set out on the journey to Warsaw. Throughout the trip, his fellow Chassidim were dancing and singing with excitement, while he was sick with fever. When they arrived in Warsaw, someone mentioned to the Frierdiker Rebbe that Reb Yochanan was ill. But thankfully, he soon recovered and was able to fully participate in the *simcha*.

For the rest of his life, Reb Yochanan would speak about the celebration and unbounded joy that took place during that week and the great *zechus* he had to attend the



THE REBBE AT THE WEDDING OF REB YOCHANAN'S DAUGHTER ESTHER AND SHIMON GOLDMAN, 28 ADAR 5709.

“AND WHAT I SAW AND HEARD AND FELT WHEN I WAS AT THE CHASUNAH, I HOPE WILL REMAIN WITH ME FOREVER...”

Tanya Ba'al Peh

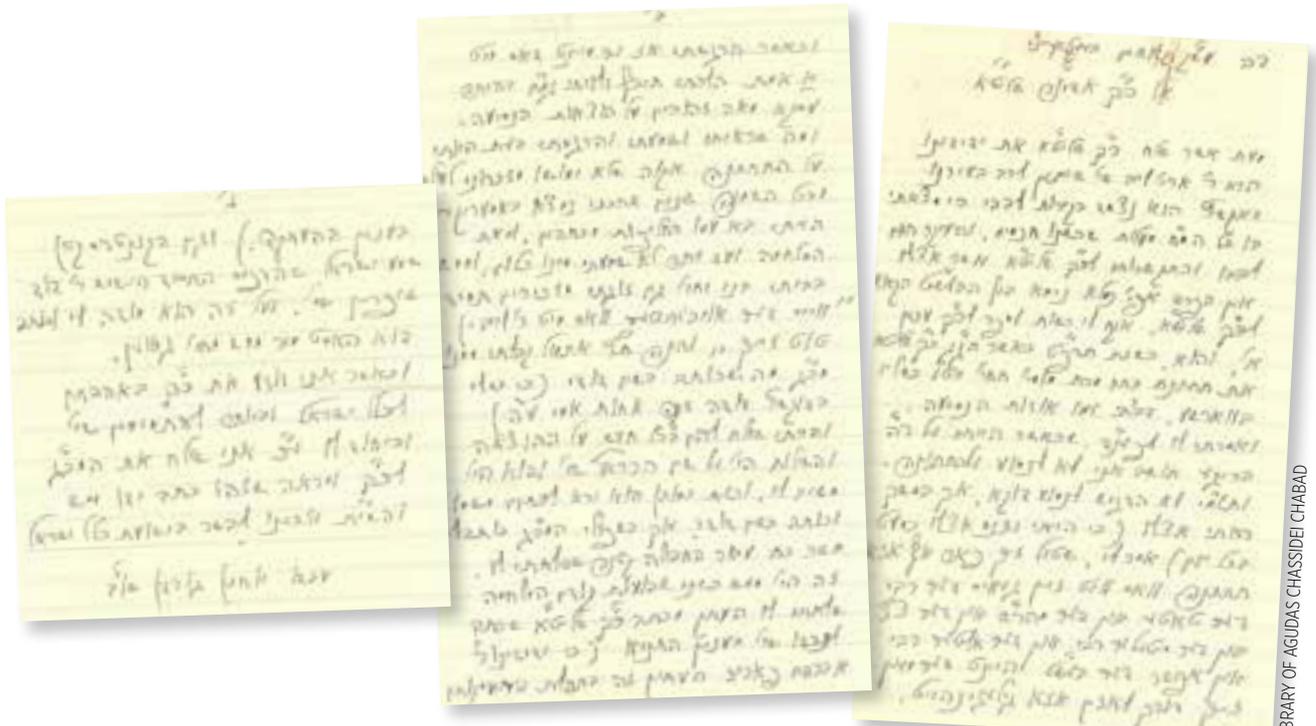
During the period following Tishrei 5691 (תרצ"א), Reb Yochanan's son Sholom Ber, who was a young child at the time, saw his father practicing a poem. He overheard him reciting, "*Onesh hamar al monea bar, vegodel haschar k'maamar raza*." Curious to know what this means, he asked his father to teach the 'poem.' His father seemed surprised.

"What poem are you talking about?" he asked.

"*Onesh hamar*, etc." Sholom Ber answered.

Amused, his father explained to him that he was reciting the *hakdama* to *Tanya*, which speaks of the great merit it is to teach other Yidden whatever you know. He was reciting it because the Frierdiker Rebbe had spoken³ during that Tishrei in praise of learning words of Torah by heart.

People recall how also in his later years, Reb Yochanan would always be *chazzering* words of Torah while walking the streets.



LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASSIDEI CHABAD

A LETTER REB YOCHANAN WROTE TO THE FRIEDIKER REBBE, DESCRIBING HOW REB LEIB SHEININ ENCOURAGED HIM TO TRAVEL TO THE REBBE AND REBBETZIN'S CHASUNA.

Rebbe's *chasunah*. He would often reminisce about how the Friediker Rebbe, in a spirit of elation, had put a towel over his shoulder and walked around pouring *marshke* for all of the assembled, blessing each person with whatever he needed. He knew exactly who needed a blessing for a *shidduch* for his child, for *parnassah*, or for good health, and he doled out *brachos* accordingly.

The above is what Reb Yochanan recounted. Other eyewitnesses would add that Reb Yochanan himself slipped away when he saw the Friediker Rebbe coming, as he could not bear the thought of the Rebbe serving him.

Years later, Reb Yochanan wrote to the Friediker Rebbe about his own deliberations at the time and Reb Leib Sheinin's encouragement. He concluded the letter with a

poignant wish: "I hope that what I saw and heard and felt when I was at the *chasunah*, will remain with me forever."²

Rabbi Yisroel Gordon relates: "When I was younger my father would often tell me how he knows the Friediker Rebbe's children, from when they lived in Lubavitch as little girls; and he knows the Friediker Rebbe's mother, Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah; and he knew the Friediker Rebbe's grandmother, Rebbetzin Rivka, wife of the Rebbe Maharash. He would tell me how special they were.

"And then he would tell me about the new son-in-law, who years later became the Rebbe; this man, he said, is something very special. He is a great scholar in *nigleh* and in Chassidus, *kabbalah*; whatever you want, he is the master of it. He is a young man, and yet he knows *uhn a shiur*, without any limit. He knows everything and he does it all very, very quietly as if he is a plain person. He doesn't like to publicize things; the way he dresses



and the way he walks, the way he talks to people, it is all in a very humble and friendly way.”

Dangerous Birth

When Reb Yochanan’s wife became pregnant in her forties, the couple was worried about the fate of the child, being that she had previously miscarried a few times. She therefore traveled to nearby Vilna, where there was a hospital that could deal with the issue. The expectant mother was examined, and the doctor said that due to her situation, she should come to be admitted into the hospital when she is in her seventh or eighth month. Otherwise, she and the baby will be in serious jeopardy.

Upon arriving home, she shared the worrying news with her husband. He immediately called the Frierdiker Rebbe from the one telephone existing in Dokshitz to find out what to do. The answer that he received was that she should remain home and that the mother and the child will be healthy.

Sure enough, she gave birth to a healthy baby boy whom they called Yisroel—after Reb Yochanan’s father—who later grew to become the Rebbe’s shliach in Worcester, Massachusetts, and later in Morristown, New Jersey.

Moving to America

When Reb Yochanan was a young man, his older three brothers had moved to America, while he remained behind in Dokshitz to care for his aging parents. When his mother and then his father had passed on, his brothers encouraged him to make the move with his family, so that he



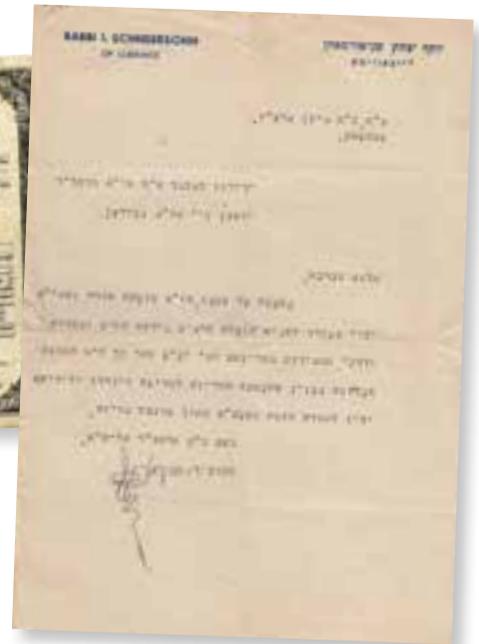
REB YOCHANAN'S CERTIFICATE OF US CITIZENSHIP.

wouldn't have to remain in Europe on his own. He resisted from making the trip, however, for he had heard that his nieces and nephews in the United States were not able to learn in good Jewish educational institutions, let alone *chassidische* ones, and that was not something he was about to compromise for his family.

When the Frierdiker Rebbe visited the United States in 5689 (תרפ"ט), Reb Yochanan’s brothers came for a *yechidus*, and the Frierdiker Rebbe asked them why their brother Yochanan had not joined them and made the journey to America.

The brothers explained to the Frierdiker Rebbe that Reb Yochanan does not want to come due to the sad state of Jewish education in *di goldene medina*. The Frierdiker Rebbe told them that he will instruct Reb Yochanan to go.

When Reb Yochanan visited the Frierdiker Rebbe in Tishrei 5691 (תרצ"א), the Frierdiker Rebbe told him to his surprise that he should move to the United States. When he told the Frierdiker Rebbe that he had heard that America is *eretz ocheles yoshveha*—it ‘consumes’ its inhabitants



A LETTER FROM THE FRIERDIKER REBBE TO REB YOCHANAN CONGRATULATING HIM ON RECEIVING HIS US CITIZENSHIP.

and the people that come there cool off of their Torah and mitzvos—the Frierdiker Rebbe replied by promising him that his children will remain *ehrlische Yidden*. Reb Yochanan was still hesitant. “I want my children to grow up as Chassidim,” he said. The Frierdiker Rebbe answered that they will grow up as Chassidim. Reb Yochanan still held back, saying that he wanted his children to be able to learn in the Rebbe’s yeshivos, which were nonexistent in the United States, and the Frierdiker Rebbe told him that his children will do so.

Armed with the blessing of the Frierdiker Rebbe, Reb Yochanan set out for the United States; first traveling there by himself, during Chanukah 5692 (תרצ"ב), and then joined by his family two years later, on Chai Elul 5694 (תרצ"ד). Rabbi Sholom Ber Gordon a”h later described the scene when his father, Reb Yochanan, left Dokshitz: “All the people from the town escorted him, and the town Jews cried like children,” as they watched him leave.

Sure to the Rebbe’s word, his children all followed in his path, and

SURE TO THE REBBE’S WORD, HIS CHILDREN ALL FOLLOWED IN HIS PATH, AND HIS SONS EVEN MERITED TO LEARN IN THE REBBE’S YESHIVOS.

his sons even merited to learn in the Rebbe's yeshivos. Nissan, the oldest, learned in Tomchei Temimim in Europe, and the rest of them merited to learn in the newly established yeshiva that the Frierdiker Rebbe

opened upon arrival in the United States.

Life in America was difficult. Reb Yochanan worked long hours as a *shochet*, but his hard life did not deter him from doing a Chossid's work.

Each night, on his way home from work, he would stop off at a shul in Brownsville, where he would teach Ein Yaakov to the Yidden gathered there.

In addition to his *shiurim* to men, in 5698 (תרח"צ) Reb Yochanan was appointed by the Frierdiker Rebbe as one of the *shloshes haro'im*—the three shepherds—to take responsibility for the daughters of Chabad Chassidim. A new group was formed called Achos Hatmimim, and the girls were given *shiurim* and experienced farbrengens with these Chassidim. This organization was extremely precious to the Frierdiker Rebbe, and he even asked⁴ to be notified of *shiurim* times.

Every Sunday, Reb Yochanan would give a *shiur* to the girls that learned in Beis Yaakov, an after school Talmud Torah at that time. They would come from Williamsburg, Boro Park, and Bensonhurst on a weekly basis, to learn about Chassidus and the Rabbeim. Those who participated still remember vividly how much they enjoyed those classes.

And in addition to all this, he also taught elderly Jews on a regular basis.

Even in his old age, the Rebbe insisted that Reb Yochanan continue giving the *shiurim* that he had started years earlier. When he complained to the Rebbe that his ears were failing

A True Chossid

Rabbi Yisroel Gordon relates:

“On the first night of Rosh Hashanah during one of the early years in America, the Frierdiker Rebbe davened Maariv in the *zal* at 770 for a lengthy period of time, long after the *minyan* was over.

“Chassidim recited Tehillim in their places, and the sound of the Rebbe's davening, accompanied by intense sobbing, was carried through the *zal*. The cloth on the Rebbe's *shtender* became entirely soaked with his holy tears, which came down without respite.

“After about three hours, the Frierdiker Rebbe finished his davening, wished everyone *'leshana tova tikasev vesechasem,*' and went up to his apartment. One of the Chassidim, who was a *bochur* in Lubavitch, hurried over to the Rebbe's *shtender* and wiped his face with the cloth, explaining his actions by quoting the saying that “דמעות מכבסות” - “tears wipe away *aveiros*.”⁵

““You are cleaning your *aveiros* with the Rebbe's tears?’ my father reprimanded him sharply. ‘You should be cleaning them with your own tears!’”

Reb Yochanan's *hiskashrus* was also expressed in his attitude to *yechidus*. Reb Yochanan once bemoaned that *yechidus* with the Rebbe requires an appointment three months in advance. Going in for *Yechidus* is something that comes from an inner urge, and isn't simply a visit to the Rebbe's room. When a person has such a need, how can he push it off for three months?



REB YOCHANAN SITS BEHIND THE REBBE DURING A FARBRENGEN IN THE 5720S.



him and he could no longer hear the questions that the attendees were asking him, the Rebbe told him that the important thing is that they should be able to hear what he is saying, not the other way around.

Very few Chassidim lived then in the United States, and Reb Yochanan's children have nostalgic memories of the *chassidische* farbrengens that took place in those years. Reb Yochanan's daughter, Esther Goldman a"h, related:

"With my father's occupation as a *shochet*, he would bring home livers and *miltzen* (spleen), and all sorts of 'delicacies,' which my mother would prepare, and the Chassidim would gather to farbreng. Rabbi Yisroel Jacobson, Rabbi Eliyahu Simpson, Rabbi Shlomo Aharon Kazarnovsky, and Rabbi Avner Shifrin were some of the Chassidim living in the area, and these farbrengens would be very special.

"When there were only a few Chassidim, we were all like one family. The farbrengens in our house often ended with crying, the *niggunim* were sung like real *chassidische* niggunim. It brought everyone into the frame of mind that a Chossid should be in."

Reb Yochanan kept up his connection with the Frierdiker Rebbe, who was in Europe, by means of letters. He would also send money to support the Frierdiker Rebbe's activities. In fact, there are letters from Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah to Reb Yochanan thanking him for the money he had sent for the yeshiva in Otwock, and asking him to encourage others to give as well.

WHEN WE CAME AND TOLD HIM THAT THE REBBE IS COMING, HE GOT UP AND STARTED JUMPING UP AND DOWN LIKE A SMALL CHILD; HE LOVED THE REBBE WITH ALL HIS HEART AND SOUL.



REB YOCHANAN STANDS AT HIS FIXED SPOT TO THE LEFT OF THE BAAL KOREH AS THE REBBE RECEIVES AN ALIYA.

JEM 103723

The Frierdiker Rebbe Arrives

The close relationship with the Frierdiker Rebbe continued when the Frierdiker Rebbe arrived in the United States on Tes Adar Sheini 5700 and throughout the years that followed.

Mrs. Esther Goldman related:

"When we were notified that our Rebbe would be coming to America, my father was again sick with tonsillitis; he was burning with fever. When we came and told him that the Rebbe is coming, he got up and started jumping up and down like a small child. He was a very emotional person and this was how he expressed himself. He loved the Rebbe with all his heart and soul."

L'alter L'teshuvah

In 5702, the Frierdiker Rebbe announced a campaign calling for

L'alter L'teshuvah, *L'alter L'geulah*— immediate repentance brings immediate redemption. The campaign came as an answer to the terrible tragedies that were befalling the Yidden in Europe, which the Frierdiker Rebbe called *chevlei Moshiach*, and now was the time for Moshiach to come.

Reb Yochanan's *hiskashrus* to the Frierdiker Rebbe was so powerful that he cashed in his life insurance policy, worth two thousand dollars (a considerable amount of money at the time), and gave all of it to the Frierdiker Rebbe to use it for the campaign. His reasoning was simple; who needs life insurance, if Moshiach is about to come?

This endearing faithfulness was also evident in the trust and closeness that the Frierdiker Rebbe showed him. On one occasion, the Frierdiker Rebbe was farbrenging in his apartment on the second floor of 770 and Reb Yochanan stood next to him. Because the crowd was pushing to get closer, Reb Yochanan began to fear that he was getting too close to the Frierdiker Rebbe's personal space, and he began to call out in worry. At that moment, the Frierdiker Rebbe turned to him

Lubavitch ShebeLubavitch

On 13 Nissan 5711, a few short weeks after the Rebbe took on the *nesius*, the Rebbe wrote a letter to Reb Yochanan, expressing his *nachas ruach* for the work he was doing.⁹

"I am observing your activities in a number of areas that the [Frierdiker] Rebbe placed on your shoulders, and I take pleasure seeing that now too, you continue your good work in those areas. Surely you will add even more to your efforts, and without a doubt, Hashem will provide you with the necessary strength, for Hashem does not demand from an individual more than he is capable of."

Later, the Rebbe continues to extoll the great merit for those that do the Rebbe's work, especially regarding his activities as the *gabbai* in the Shul of 770 (Lubavitch shebeLubavitch), his involvement in *maamad*, and *maos chitim*. The letter ends with a *bracha* for his health, and the health of his wife, and that he should see *chassidische nachas* from all of his children and grandchildren.

and told him, "Yochanan, You don't make me uncomfortable".

Another expression of his closeness is seen in the fact that on several occasions the Frierdiker Rebbe chose Reb Yochanan to replace him as *chazan* on the *yahrtzeit* of his grandmother, Rebbetzin Rivkah, and on the *yahrtzeit* of the Frierdiker Rebbe's uncle, the Raz"z; on that occasion, the Frierdiker Rebbe even noted it in his diary.⁶

Gabbai in 770

In 5707, Reb Yochanan was appointed to serve as the *gabbai* of 770, a position he held until his passing in 5729. As a result of this position, Reb Yochanan merited to be around the Rebbe quite often. In 5725, when the Rebbe davened at the *amud* after the *histalkus* of his mother, Rebbetzin Chana, Reb Yochanan never missed a *tefillah*. In general, 770 was

always filled with his happy and witty presence, and the sharp comments that always seemed to be on the tip of his tongue. He would often use these to bring a smile to the Rebbe's face.

On one occasion, Reb Yochanan saw that all of the *bochurim* standing in the small *zal* were trying to look at the Rebbe, who had gone to the sink at the end of the hallway to wash *negel vasser*. He asked them loudly, "What do you think, that your coats will get stolen?" The Rebbe returned to his room with a broad smile.

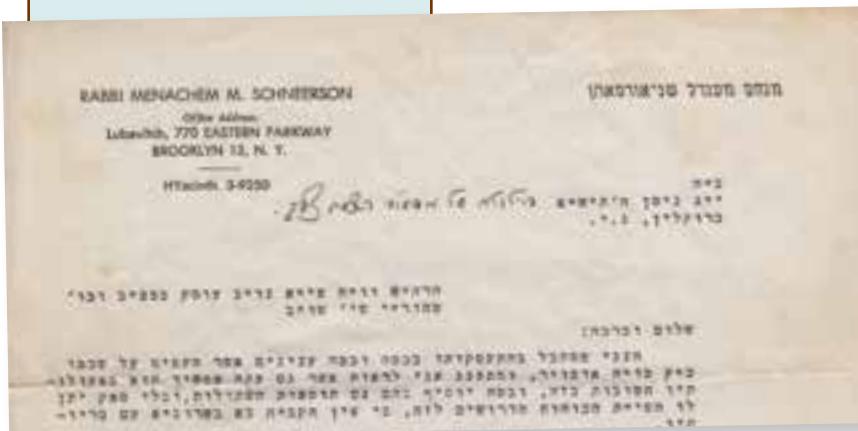
In addition to his duties as *gabbai*, he also served as the Rebbe's *baal koreh* until 5715, when he felt that his voice was weakening and he gave the job to Reb Mottel Shusterman. Additionally, he was also appointed to be the head of *Chevras Bikkur Cholim*, which the Frierdiker Rebbe created (in 5704) as one of the activities of *Machne Israel*, to care for the physical and spiritual needs of injured and ailing *Yidden*.



V'zarach Hashemesh

Early Shabbos morning, Reb Yochanan would go to the mikveh, and on his way back home he would stop off in 770 to make sure everything was ready for the davening later on. On Shabbos Yud Shevat 5710, Reb Yochanan was on his way to 770 when someone broke the terrible news to him, that the Frierdiker Rebbe was *nistalek*. He continued on to 770, and at some point went back to his house. Rabbi Shimon Goldman, Reb Yochanan's son-in-law relates:

"On that Shabbos my wife and I had come to visit and we were staying by my in-laws. The house was on Eastern Parkway, and from the living room window it was possible to see the people entering and exiting 770. When my father-in-law returned, I was standing by the window and I saw from his facial expression that something terrible had happened;



even before he had entered the house. His face was terrifying; he was white as a ghost, he held his hands together and told us, “*Oy vey, oy vey, we have lost our father*”.

A regular person cannot comprehend the feelings of a Chossid at the *histalkus* of his Rebbe. Reb Yochanan was completely broken. The inner *hiskashrus* and profound love he felt for the Frierdiker Rebbe, caused the *histalkus* to break his heart and soul. Nevertheless, the Chassidim immediately looked toward the Rebbe for inspiration and guidance and implored from him to accept the *nesius*, but the Rebbe would dismiss their requests, instead saying with great emotion that the Frierdiker Rebbe is still giving *hashp'ah*.

After the *levaya*, Reb Yochanan told his son Sholom Ber that he is afraid of an *ayin hara*. He had taken part in the *tahara*, and had been granted, by means of a raffle, the job of *roshoi kesem paz*. During the *tahara* of the Magid of Mezritch, the Alter Rebbe had received the same job, and had worried about an *ayin hara*. Therefore, Reb Yochanan said, he is terribly worried and afraid.

A short time later, Reb Yochanan's wife became very ill. His children hid the grim prognosis from their father. One day he met the Rebbe, who asked him how his wife was doing. Reb Yochanan told the Rebbe that the doctors want to do an operation,

and implying that the Rebbe had been refusing to take on the *nesius*, despite requests from the Chassidim added “but there is no one to ask for advice...” The Rebbe answered that he needs to ask the Frierdiker Rebbe, and the Frierdiker Rebbe will surely find a way to answer him.

When Reb Yochanan's children heard about what the Rebbe had said, they entered the Rebbe's room, and disclosed what the doctors had seen. The Rebbe told them to go through with the operation and gave his *bracha*. Sure enough it was successful and she lived for several more years. When she passed away in 5717, the Rebbe came to Reb Yochanan's house to be *menachem avel* the family.

Continual Hiskashrus

Immediately following the Frierdiker Rebbe's *histalkus*, Reb Yochanan accepted the Rebbe as his Rebbe, and was *mekasher* himself to the Rebbe with the same dedication and love that he had felt towards the Frierdiker Rebbe.

Reb Yochanan immediately stopped shaking the Rebbe's hand, as Chassidim do not shake hands with their Rebbe. During the same time



period, one of Reb Yochanan's sons, Sholom Ber went into the Rebbe's room together with one of his young children, and the Rebbe held out his hand towards the child, but the child refused to shake it. The Rebbe responded, “*Oy gevald!* the child already doesn't want to shake my hand...”

In his position as *gabbai* of 770, he merited, on the Shabbos after Yud Shvat 5711, to call the Rebbe up to the Torah as *Adoneinu Moreinu V'Rabeinu* for *maftir*, the aliya customarily reserved for the Rabbeim.

Chassidim recall how Reb Yochanan would call up the Rebbe every year on Simchas Torah for *Chosson Bereishis*, when he would say the Frierdiker Rebbe's name alongside the Rebbe's. During those early years, Reb Yochanan would recite the *nusach* while crying with emotion. He even wrote down the names of the Rebbe and the Frierdiker Rebbe in his *siddur*, so that he would not stumble over them due to the intense emotions that would well up inside of him during the recital.

Since Reb Yochanan was a *shochet*, he merited to *shecht* the Rebbe's *kaparos* chicken every year on Erev Yom Kippur. However, that job came with an additional obligation: The Rebbe instructed that the one that began the work on Erev Yom Kippur in the morning should complete it, and therefore the *shochet* should be the one to administer *malkos* to the Rebbe. As a Chossid, this part of the



REB YOCHANAN WASN'T JUST A COLLECTOR OF STORIES; HE WAS ALSO A MASTER STORYTELLER, WHO WITH HIS WIT AND SMILING COUNTEenance WOULD BRING A SMILE TO THE FACES OF ALL HIS LISTENERS

gemach's management to widen the scope of their activities. Once, during that early period, the Rebbe asked Reb Yochanan if there was any money left in the account. Reb Yochanan explained to the Rebbe that he always leaves a small amount of money in case a donor needed his money back. The Rebbe was not satisfied with this arrangement, and he told Reb Yochanan to lend out everything he possibly could.

Exceptional Kindness

The *gemach* was only one expression of Reb Yochanan's unique sense of caring and sensitivity. The following episode gives us a glimpse into his extraordinary *chassidische midos tovos*.

One summer evening, when the temperature reached above ninety degrees, after he finished his backbreaking job at the *shlachthoiz*, Reb Yochanan took buses and subways to an apartment building in Brownsville. There, he climbed a number of flights of stairs to the apartment of an old woman, to pick up two or three dollars that she had saved up for *maamad*; the traditional fund supporting the Rebbe's household.

This was a trip he would make periodically. Ever since the woman

had complained to him that she is too weak to come deliver the money herself, he took upon himself to go pick it up from her, the hassle notwithstanding.

Reb Yochanan's children protested strongly. They said they would fill in those few dollars, as long as he would desist from the journey, which they reasoned, was very damaging to his fragile health. But Reb Yochanan would not give in. He told them that he wasn't *shlepping* there for the money. He was going there because of the forgotten old woman, who lived alone.

"You should see the look on her face when I show up in her home," he told his children.

A *Shtreimel* and a Torah

On two Shabbosim each year, Reb Yochanan would stand up to make announcements during the Rebbe's *farbrengen*. The first would be on Shabbos Bereishis, when the *minhag* is that the *gabbai* sells all of the "mitzvos" for the coming year—who will pay for the *ner lama'or*, and all of the other needs of the shul. Before conducting the bids, the Rebbe would instruct Reb Yochanan to stand up on the table, don a *shtreimel*, and tell the crowd a *chassidische maise*.

Similarly, on Shabbos Parshas Mishpatim, in which the Torah says "*Im kesef talveh es ami*—you shall lend money to my people," Reb Yochanan would stand up to invite all of the attendees to the *gemach's melaveh malkah*, that Motzaei Shabbos. Then too, after he would make his announcement, he would put on a *shtreimel*, and delight the crowd with a *vertel*.

When Reb Yochanan would speak, the pleasure on the Rebbe's face was evident; it would be the only time,

during *farbrengens*, where the Rebbe would lean back on his chair while listening closely to the story. There were even occasions that the Rebbe himself corrected or added to the story that was being told. After Reb Yochanan's passing, this tradition was continued each Parshas Mishpatim by his son-in-law, Reb Shimon Goldman⁷, who took over the *gemach*, and each Shabbos Bereishis by the new *gabbai*, Reb Shea Pinson.

Reb Yochanan was a treasure trove of stories and *vertlach* of Chassidim and Rabbeim of the previous generations, and he did not keep the information to himself. Many of the stories that we know today about Chassidim of old, Reb Hillel Paritcher and many others, were told over by Reb Yochanan who heard them in Lubavitch from the *mashpia* Reb Shmuel Gronem Esterman.

In 5717, when the Rebbe instructed Kovetz Lubavitch⁸ to send out questionnaires for Chassidim to write about their memories about *der alter heim*, Reb Yochanan replied enthusiastically with much information about Chassidic life in Dokshitz and about the Chassidim that lived there. The Rebbe asked that the editors of the Kovetz send Reb Yochanan additional forms so that he would have enough space to write his extensive memories and recollections.

Reb Yochanan wasn't just a collector of stories; he was also a master storyteller, who with his wit and smiling countenance would bring a smile to the faces of all his listeners.

On one memorable occasion, Reb Yochanan felt faint in the midst of the Rebbe's *farbrengen*, and had to be carried outside where, after a short rest, he came to his senses and felt better. Not wanting the Rebbe to worry about his condition, he stood in the foyer of 770 as the Rebbe was returning to his room. When the Rebbe passed him, he looked at



Reb Yochanan and gestured to him, waiting to hear how he was doing.

“I was *niftar* from the world,” Reb Yochanan told the Rebbe. “But *Gehinom* is closed on Shabbos, and *Gan Eden* didn’t want to let me in. So here I am!”

Upon hearing this ‘report,’ the Rebbe entered his room with a broad smile.

In 5729, when Reb Yochanan got up to speak at the farbrengen, once again, a *shtreimel* could not be found. The Rebbe took the cloth napkin that was covering the cake on the table, and threw it to Reb Yochanan to wear on his head. As it turned out, that was his last time speaking at the farbrengen, as that year, on 29 Menachem Av he departed from this world. **T**

1. It is interesting to note that a similar idea was expressed by the Frierdiker Rebbe during the *chasunah* itself. See Sefer Hama’amrim Admur Rayatz 5689 (תרפ”ט) p. 80.
2. Mibeis Hagnozim p. 370.
3. Sefer Hashichos Admur Rayatz 5691 (תרצ”א), p. 168.
4. Igros Kodesh Admur Rayatz, Vol 4, p. 399.
5. Quoted in Chassidus based on Zohar vol. III 75b.
6. Mibeis Hagnozim p. 51.
7. See the farbrengen of Mishpatim 5752, where the Rebbe calls up Rabbi Shimon Goldman to make the annual announcement and connects his name “Shimon” to the ‘going up’ from *golus* to *geulah* which is emphasized in the saying of *Razal ‘Reuvan veshimon salkin.’* Sefer Hashichos 5752, p. 372, footnote 103.
8. See more about Kovetz Lubavitch in A Chassidisher Derher Issue 35 (112) - Elul 5775.
9. Igros Kodesh, Vol 4, p. 251.

”May you merit to see”

In 5721, Rebbetzin Chana gave Reb Yochanan a donation for 770. Sending her a “receipt” letter, he used the opportunity to give over two *chassidische* stories. He wrote to her as follows:

Chassidim would tell over:

When the Baal Shem Tov organized the *avodah* of the Yidden according to times and occasions, it was set that Erev Yom Kippur, during the time of *mincha*, was a time for *teshuvah tata’ah*, when one makes a *cheshbon hanefesh* of all of his actions over the previous year. In order for this *cheshbon hanefesh* to be a *cheshbon tzedek*, one needs peace and quiet in order that he should not be bothered.

The *mispaelim* in the *beis medrash* of the Baal Shem Tov wanted to stop the custom of ‘plates’ [for collecting *tzedakah*] on Erev Yom Kippur, because it disturbs their concentration. But when they brought their idea to the Baal Shem Tov, he reprimanded them and said:

“What do you think—that by banging your hand on your chest you will confuse the *Satan hamekatreg*?

“No! Rather by throwing coins into the plates, you will create noise that will confuse the *Satan.*”

2. Once, during a farbrengen of the Frierdiker Rebbe—I think it was Yud Kislev—one of the *ziknei anash* by the name of Mr. Prodinsky was present, and he wished, while saying *l’chaim*, that Hashem should give *yeshuos*—salvations—to *klal Yisrael*.

The Frierdiker Rebbe answered him that it should be “one *yeshua*, and a correct one.”

Reb Yochanan finishes off the letter with a wish from the depth of his heart:

“May you merit to see your son, who is from the family of Dovid Hamelech, revealed as the leader of *klal Yisrael* (and the *goel Yisrael*).”



נדפס לזכות החייל בצבאות ה' לוי שי'

נולד ז"ך טבת ה'תשע"ו שנת הקהל

ולזכות אחותו החיילת בצבאות ה' חנה תחי'

שיזכו לגדלם כרצון וכברכת כ"ק אדמו"ר

נדפס ע"י הוריהם הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל וחי' מושקא שיחיו גרינברג

וע"י זקניהם הרה"ת ר' יוסף יצחק ואסתר גאלדע שיחיו גרינברג

Chassidus Reaches the Outside

חזרת
דא"ח

אאמו"ר אמר: בא מיר איז ברור, אז א חסידישער איד זיצט אין בית המדרש, און לערענט אדער חזר'ט א חסידות ברבים, איז א שמחה בא די זיידעס, און זייער שמחה איז מספיק פאר איהם, קינדער און קינד'ס קינדער רוב טוב בגשמיות וברוחניות. (היום יום יג אדר א')

My father [the Rebbe Rashab] said: I am certain that when a *chassidisher Yid* sits in a *beis midrash* teaching or reciting a *maamar* of Chassidus to others, my forebears [the Rabbeim] are filled with joy; and their joy is adequate to provide that Chossid, and his children and children's children, with an abundance of blessing, materially and spiritually.

From the time of the Baal Shem Tov, it has been our charge to bring Chassidus to the furthest reach possible. As Moshiach himself famously promised the Baal Shem Tov—he will arrive when the wellsprings of Chassidus spread forth to “*chutza*.”

Naturally then, our Rabbeim in each generation demanded that their Chassidim utilize every opportunity to teach and spread Chassidus to other Yidden. Thus, the concept of חזרת דא"ח was born.

In our generation, the Rebbe encouraged Chassidim to go out and speak words of Chassidus, taking account for every detail of this project. In letters, *sichos*, and *yechidus*, the Rebbe explained the importance of each person's participation in *chazzoras dach* and reviewed the reports in great detail. In fact, the Rebbe only began publishing the first entries of Likutei Sichos in order to give the Chassidim material to give over in shuls!

Become an Onion!

After the Mitteler Rebbe settled in Lubavitch in the year 5573 (תקע"ג), he set up strict rules: each

yungerman was allowed to remain in Lubavitch for no more than two (or at times, three) months, after which he was required to travel home. On his trip, he would have to stop for a day or two in cities on his route and recite Chassidus—the *maamorim* that he heard in Lubavitch—for those communities.¹

There is a famous story, repeated by the Rebbe on numerous occasions, about one of the Chassidim of the Mittlerer Rebbe, regarding the importance of teaching Chassidus publicly at all costs.

There was a certain Chossid of the Mittlerer Rebbe who had a good grasp on the *maamarim* he heard, and was able to repeat words of Chassidus very well, leaving an ample impression on his audiences. Noticing that his good performance brewed a sense of *ga'ava* within him, he approached the Mittlerer Rebbe with a question: should he continue to teach Chassidus even though it engendered this negative trait?

The Mittlerer Rebbe replied: “א ציבעלע זאל פון” א דיר ווערן, אבער חסידות זאלסטו חזרן [Even if] you

should become like an onion, you must still repeat Chassidus!”

Throughout the years, the Rebbe repeated this story often and explained the significance of the example the Mittlerer Rebbe used—specifically “an onion”—to portray the feeling of *yeshus*. But the lesson was always the same: no matter what may become of you, a Chossid must always teach Chassidus to others.²

The Rebbe is Within You

The Frierdiker Rebbe was once asked: where is the best place for Chassidus to be taught; at one’s private home or in shul?

In a lengthy letter, the Frierdiker Rebbe responded that Chassidus must be taught in shul, in the most public manner possible. “We call the study of Torah עסק התורה; [literally translated as] a business. Torah has to be treated like a business,” he explained. “A good businessman acquires a store for himself at a prime location, where the most traffic passes through. He then devises a plan of how to attract the passersby



to see his product; even those that did not intend to buy any goods. In this way, one out of every ten will come in and purchase from him. In a similar vein, Torah learning must be displayed in a public place available for all; i.e. in the *batei midrash* and *shuls*...”

The Frierdiker Rebbe then goes on to demand that every one of *anash* get involved in Chassidus. Those of *anash* that are *rabbonim* in communities must see themselves as *shluchim* of the Rabbeim to teach Chassidus. And all of *anash* must come and hear the words of Chassidus, even those who feel they don't understand it. The *neshamos* of the Rabbeim grace the presence where words of Chassidus are said; as *Chazal* say, כאלו בעל השמועה לפניו—it is as if the one who originated these words of Torah is standing before you. Imagine what a great *zechus* this is for the one teaching Chassidus, and the obligation for every member of *anash* to join and be present at the time!³

Many years after this letter was written, the Rebbe explained its contents at a *farbrengen*, highlighting the words used by the Frierdiker Rebbe—מאיר הארת—the *neshama* of the Rebbe whose Chassidus you repeat actually shines **within** you. This is more than just the ordinary presence of

a *tzaddik* brought about by repeating his Torah, of which *Chazal* say that בעל השמועה עומד כנגדו. When repeating words of Chassidus, a spark of the *neshama* of the Rebbe shines within you in a *p'nimius*. This is accessible and applicable to each and every one who *chazzers* Chassidus. No exceptions or limitations were put in place.

Imagine how great of a *zechus* this is! Considering the great lengths to which a Chossid will go just to catch a glimpse of the Rebbe's holy face, we can appreciate all the more so having the Rebbe's *neshama* shine within you.

“I am not here to give *drashos*,” the Rebbe concluded. “Everyone must begin *chazzering* Chassidus for the public!”⁴

במשך 33 שנה חזרת פעם אחת?

כאשר באים להתוועדות - צריכים להיות מונחים בעניינים העיקריים, ענייני התורה, מאמר חסידות, וכיוצא-בזה. במשך שלושים ושלוש השנים האם חזרת בעל-פה מאמר אחד לכל הפחות?!...

יש לו “זיכרון חלש” - טוען הוא - ולכן אינו יכול לחזור מאמר בעל-פה!

מכיוון שרבותינו נשיאינו תבעו לחזור מאמרים בעל-פה - בוודאי נתנו את הכוחות לכך, שהרי “איני מבקש כו' אלא לפי כוחי”, ולכן, בוודאי ביכולתו של כל אחד ואחד לחזור מאמר בעל-פה [ובפרט אלו שזכו לראות את נשיא דורנו ולשמוע תורה מפיו כו'], צריך הוא רק רצות זאת! וכפתגם הידוע: “מאז”ש נא גיע חאטשיש” - אתה יכול אך אינך רוצה!...

(ש”פ וישב כ' כסלו תשד”מ)

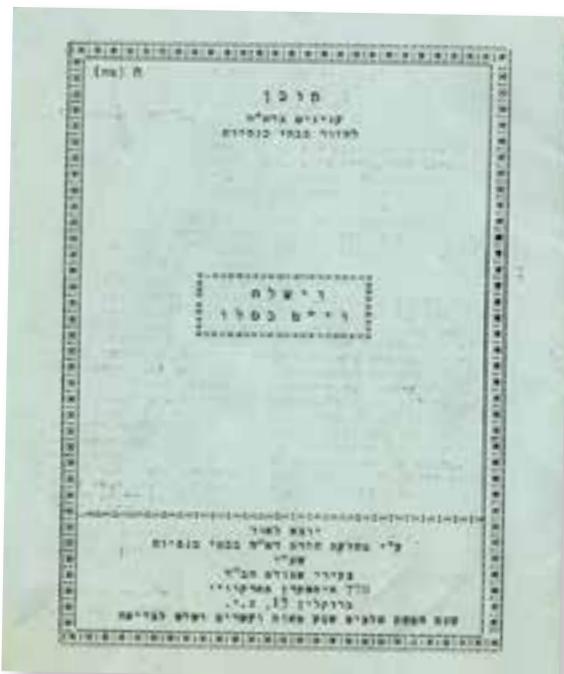
Double Benefit

Our Rabbeim emphasized that teaching Chassidus is beneficial for both the listening crowd as well as the one *chazzering*.

“The reason for *chazzering* Chassidus in shuls is for the benefit it brings, which is actually two-fold,” the Rebbe explained. “(1) For the bochurim; in order to recite Chassidus by heart they will need to learn it really well on their own; and (2) for the *baalei-battim*, who are in the shuls...”⁵

As the Frierdiker Rebbe told Reb Yisroel Jacobson: before *chazzering* a *maamar*, one needs to think it over three, four, five, six or seven times!⁶

The *talmidim* will also develop their knack for public speaking in this manner, the Frierdiker Rebbe writes in a letter.



THE REBBE'S EDITED SICHA PUBLISHED FOR PARSHAS VAYISHLACH AND YUD-TES KISLEV 5723 FOR PEOPLE TO CHAZZER IN SHULS. THESE BOOKLETS WERE EVENTUALLY PUBLISHED AS LIKKUTEI SICHOV.

The Rebbe explains that getting the *bochurim* acquainted and comfortable with speaking words of Chassidus will prepare them for their main job. The job of *Temimim* is to be גרות להאיר—illuminating lights, teaching Chassidus and *yiras Shamayim* to those who are not yet of *anash*.⁷

The Neshama Hears

In Hayom Yom 24 Adar I, the Rebbe records a story:

To Reb Hillel Paritcher's question whether to review Chassidus even in towns where the people have no conception of Chassidus, the Mittlerer Rebbe responded: "The *neshama* hears words of Chassidus."

In the original letter from the Frierdiker Rebbe where this story is quoted, he concludes:

"More than 120 years have passed since then, and in the meantime tens of thousands of Jewish people have enjoyed the bright light as taught by those *chazzering* Chassidus, strengthening themselves in *yiras Shamayim* and meticulous keeping of the mitzvos..."⁸

Hear and Understand

Even so, the Rebbe was always insistent that one choose *maamarim* that the crowd will be able to understand and appreciate, without resorting to the fact that "the *neshama* hears..."

When asked which *maamarim* to review in public in order to be easily understood by the crowd, the Rebbe responded in a letter:

בענין מאמרי דא"ח לחזור שיבינו השומעים גם בשכל אנושי - בכלל, נבחרו כבר מאמרים כאלו ונכתבו, ג"כ מטעם זה, באידיש. ונדפסו ב"ס' המאמרים אידיש"

With regards to which *maamarim* should be reviewed [in public] so that the crowd of listeners will understand, also with their humanly minds, these *maamarim* were already selected and written in Yiddish for this reason. They are printed in "Sefer Hamaamarim-Yiddish."⁹

At times, the Rebbe also suggested that the speaker should spice up his words and make it more interesting for the listeners:

"I was very pleased by your proposal to send out the *talmidim* to the *batei midrash* in your area and teach Chassidus or review part of a *maamar* [for the crowd there]. It would be appropriate to do so in a manner that the listeners can understand, and

more so, let them whet the interest of the listeners by beginning with a story or the like (taken from the *sichos*)..."¹⁰

In another letter the Rebbe responds to the question if it is proper to give over Chassidus in a manner that is similar to a speech (בדרך שיחה והרצאה). The Rebbe says that it is not only allowed; it is actually necessary!¹¹

TELL THEM YOU'RE FROM LUBAVITCH

In days gone-by, when *bochurim* went out to visit the *shuls* and were asked "Where are you from?" they would respond, "From Dokshitz," or something like that. They were afraid to say they came from Lubavitch because they thought they'd be thrown out.

Today, we don't need to be intimidated. We can openly say: "We had and we have a great Rebbe, and we come here on his *shlichus*!"

...Tell them the truth that you come on the Rebbe's *shlichus*. Speak with *breitkeit* (boldly) and don't be intimidated. True, you should not be impolite. Speak respectfully; but boldly and without any reservations.

(*Shabbos parshas Nitzavim-Vayelech* 5710)

Trailway of Likutei Sichos

In 5712, the Rebbe started the initiative of making sure that all the *bochurim* in yeshiva would go visit *shuls* to *chazzer* Chassidus.

In a *yechidus* with the members of *Vaad Hamisadder Chazzorach Dach*, the Rebbe asked that they give over to all the *bochurim* that they must go out and *chazzer* Chassidus.

"On the list of *bochurim* given to me who participate every week there are only twenty names, while there are more than seventy-five *bochurim* in yeshiva!" the Rebbe said.

The Rebbe said that they should give over in his name that no excuses will be accepted. If there are not enough *shuls* for everyone to go around, let them *chazzer* Chassidus here in 770 or in the yeshiva building.

The Rebbe concluded that, "If you will really want to, you will succeed in seeing this matter through!"¹²

There were times at *farbrenghens* in the early years when the Rebbe would point to a certain concept discussed in the *sichos* and instruct the *bochurim* that



THE REBBE'S HANDWRITTEN RESPONSE "נתן [קבל] ות"ח" ON TWO LISTS OF BOCHURIM WHO CHAZZERED CHASSIDUS IN VARIOUS SHULS IN THE BROOKLYN AREA. ON TOP OF "PARSHAS SHEMINI" THE REBBE ADDED [תזריע ומצורע] - IN HIS HOLY HANDWRITING.

this should be the material they should give over in the shuls.¹³

Eventually, two of the members of *Vaad Hamisadder Chazzoras Dach*, Rabbi Nachman Sudak and Rabbi Leibel Raskin, wrote to the Rebbe with a request: In order that the *bochurim* will have what to speak when going out to the shuls, they request that the Rebbe be *magiah a sicha* for each week's *parsha*, from farbrengens of previous years.

To everyone's delight, the Rebbe agreed! Shortly thereafter, the Rebbe's *sichos* were published on a weekly basis, making what we know today to be the first volumes of *Likutei Sichos*. On the cover of each pamphlet, the description read: *תוכן ענינים בדא"ח לחזור* — *בבתי כנסיות*—Points of Chassidus to repeat in the shuls.

The Rebbe's wish for *bochurim* to *chazzer* Chassidus was expressed explicitly so many times. His appreciation for those who did so is evident no less. The whole project of *Lekutei Sichos* began thanks to the *bochurim* who taught Chassidus in shuls.

While in a *yechidus* with the members of the *hanhala* of Tomchei Temimim on Hei Teves, 5725, the *mashpia* Reb Shmuel Levitin told the Rebbe that "the *bochurim* are doing *hafatza*."

The Rebbe responded:

"You expect me to be satisfied with that? From the year 5715, the doors are open for Moshiach's arrival. Moshiach told the Baal Shem Tov he will come when the *maayanos* are out in the *chutza*, but there's no one to deal with this!"

Reb Shmuel told the Rebbe that there are hundreds of *yungeleit* at the Rebbe's farbrengens (presumably in an attempt to suggest that the *maayanos* are indeed getting out). The Rebbe responded:

"If those hundreds would go out afterwards and teach Chassidus in the shuls, then Moshiach would come. Every *shul* allows it—there are no more *menagdim*. Even in the yeshivos they allow it! We need only to get out there and spread Chassidus to the furthest *chutza!* Then Moshiach will come and it will all be good..." **1**

FURTHER READING:

See *Yalkut Chazzoras Dach* in the sefer *A Chassidische Bar Mitzvah* by Rabbi Zalman Gopin p. 220 and further.

1. Hatomim vol. 1 p. 36
2. Toras Menachem vol. 13 p. 313; vol. 12 p. 143; et al.
3. Igros Kodesh Admur HaRaYaTZ vol. 1 p. 514
4. Shabbos Bereishis 5724; Toras Menachem vol. 38 p. 153
5. 24 Teves 5712; Toras Menachem vol. 4 p. 253
6. Zikaron L'Bnei Yisroel p. 101
7. Igros Kodesh vol. 4 p. 158
8. Igros Kodesh Admur HaRaYaTZ vol. 3 p. 330
9. Igros Kodesh vol. 3 p. 104
10. Ibid. fn. 7
11. Ibid. vol. 18 p. 342
12. Toras Menachem vol. 4 p. 237; some details from the yoman of Elya Gross
13. See for example: Chai Elul 5711; Shabbos parshas Chukas-Balak 5712

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
בְּחַג הַסִּפּוֹת; בְּבוֹא כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל...

הַקְהֵל אֶת הָעָם
הָאֲנָשִׁים וְהַנְּשִׂים
וְהַטַּף

וְגֵרָה אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעֲרֵיהָ לְמַעַן יִשְׁמְעוּ
וְלְמַעַן יִלְמְדוּ וְיִרְאוּ אֶת ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם
וְשִׁמְרוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת כָּל דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת
(ויקרא, י"ב).

HAKHEL INSIGHT STEP BY STEP

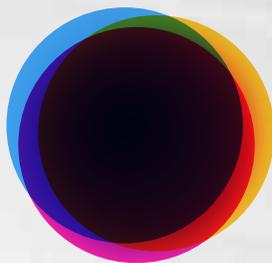
Studying the *possuk* most central to *Hakhel*, we discover an essential insight into our *avodas Hashem*. The Torah says, "Gather the nation, the men, the women, the children, and the converts within your gates." The *possuk* spells out each demographic individually, thus informing us that they weren't all assembled at once. As they entered the *Beis Hamikdash* for the great event, they didn't clamber all over each other. They entered in an orderly fashion, in the sequence that the *possuk* spells out. First the men, then the women, afterwards the children, and then, the converts.

This teaches us the importance of approaching important steps in our lives with discipline and order, starting with what's lightest first and progressing bit by bit. Hashem doesn't ask of us the impossible; indeed, transforming everything in an instant is infeasible. Instead, He instructs us to begin by enhancing the beauty of our mitzvah performance, and continuing to do more until we've accomplished all we can.

However, we must never be satisfied to the point of complacency. The *Hakhel* ceremony would not start until everyone was inside; unless all the people, even the smallest children, were taken into account. We cannot rest until we've literally gathered all the sparks and completely transformed the world. We have to start at the beginning, but in no way may we stop once we've completed the first task.

(Adapted from the *Farbrengen* of Yud-Tes Kislev 5727,
Toras Menachem Hisvaaduyos 5727 vol. 1, pgs. 343-344)

לזכות הילד החייל בצבאות ה' לוי יצחק שי'
לרגל ה"אפשערניש" ביום ט"ו בשבט ה'תשע"ו
שכ"ק אדמו"ר והוריו שי' ירוו ממנו נח"ר רב
נדפס ע"י הוריו
הרה"ת ר' שמואל זוגנתו מרת חנה שיחיו טייכטל



A TIMELY CONNECTION

7 ADAR: AN OPPORTUNE TIME

Zayin Adar is the day that Moshe Rabbeinu was born and passed away. Although among some Jews, the custom was to commemorate the day through a special observance, in Chabad tradition one does not find such a practice. In 5748, however, the Rebbe mentioned that today things may be different because, "In this age of darkness we should endeavor to use every opportunity to add in goodness and holiness."

Specifically, the Rebbe mentioned the idea of performing mitzvos and studying Torah joyfully in connection to that day, Zayin Adar. The Rebbe also highlighted that in this year of *Hakhel* we should utilize the day to gather people and inspire an increase in Torah and mitzvos.

*(Adapted from the sicha of Zayin Adar 5748,
Sefer Hasichos 5748 vol. 1, pg. 280)*



WHAT CAN I DO?

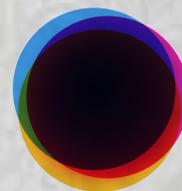
INSTRUCTIONS TO THE BOCHURIM

A *bochur's* job is first and foremost Torah study with dedication and diligence. This year, in addition to that, he should also get involved in promoting unity in line with *Hakhel*. In order for this project to succeed, organization is necessary. Ordinarily, if an authority figure is involved, the students will participate in a larger scale and it will be more structured. The head of the yeshiva or the *mashgiach* should therefore encourage the students in this regard, in a manner that is both gentle yet influential. As the saying goes, "*Taparu da plachu.*"

Sometimes the students need to remind their mentors to speak up and inspire them. The Mishna says, "A bashful person doesn't learn." The *bochurim* should not be ashamed to demand a word of encouragement from their teachers.

Obviously, the *rosh yeshiva* shouldn't feel slighted upon hearing the "reproach." To the contrary, he should give them a *yasher koach* for their enthusiasm. Like a father who is happy at his child's ingenuity and will to grow, an educator should view his disciples as children and be happy at their desire to add in Yiddishkeit.

*(Adapted from the Farbrengen of 13 Tishrei 5748,
Toras Menachem Hisvaadyos 5748 vol. 1, pgs. 163-164)*



Part I

לזכות

החתן הרה"ת ר' חנני' שי' ניאזוף

והכלה מרת צירל מושקא תחי' ברענאן

לרגל חתונתם בשעתו"צ ביום הבהיר י"א שבט ה'תשע"ו

נדפס ע"י הוריהם

הרה"ת ר' אוריאל וזוגתו מרת חנה טויבע ניאזוף

הרה"ת ר' ליפא שמואל וזוגתו מרת מלכה ברענאן

retain CHASSID

THE RIGOROUS PROCESS OF
CHAZZARA AND HANACHA IN EACH GENERATION



in US

In the preparation of this article series, we conducted extensive interviews with many key individuals involved in chazzering, transcribing, and printing the Rebbe's Torah, as well as printing the Torah of the Rabeim.

They are: **Rabbi Chaim Shaul Brook**, director of Vaad Hanachos BLahak; **Rabbi Dovid Feldman**, chozer and maniach and editor-in-chief of Vaad Hanachos BLahak; **Rabbi Simon Jacobson**, chozer and maniach - Vaad Hanochos Hatmimim; **Rabbi Eliyahu Matusof**, senior editor at Otzar Ha'Chassidim; **Rabbi Dovid Olidort**, chozer and maniach and senior editor at Kehot Publication Society.

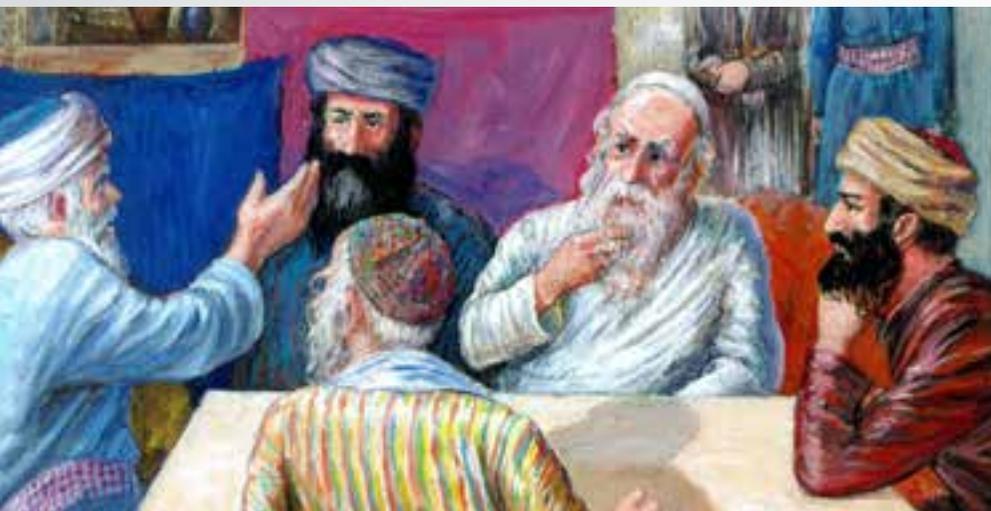
On behalf of our readership, we thank them for bringing their extensive expertise to bear on this vast topic, sparing neither time nor effort in their assistance. זכות הרבים תלוי בהם.

Throughout the history of Chassidus, the spoken teachings of the Rebbeim have been learned and retained through a two-step process, which, over time, developed a lexicon of its own.

First there was Chazzara (repeating), when a chozer (repeater) would chazzer (repeat) the Rebbe's teaching for the benefit of the listeners. A chozer would chazzer the teachings as accurately as possible - which, depending on the Rebbe, could last up to several hours at a time.

Then came the next step, hanacha (transcribing), when a maniach (transcriber) would write a hanacha (transcript) of the Rebbe's teachings.

In this article series, we examine the history, development, and experience of this nearly impossible endeavor.



Ancient History

Although the idea of *chazzara* might seem like a concept invented by Chassidus, it is in fact one of the oldest institutions of Jewish life, intertwined with Torah Shebaal Peh from its earliest beginnings. Today we may take it for granted, but for thousands of years, none of Torah Shebaal Peh, including all the *halachos*, *midrashim*, *limudim* or *pessukim*, *gezeiros* and *minhagim*, were allowed to be written down. Everything from the most exotic story in Midrash about Adam and Chava, to the nitty gritty *halachos* of *tzaraas*, to the *takanos* of Ezra,

had to be memorized by heart, a task of gargantuan proportions.

This was done through a process reminiscent of the *chazzara* we are familiar with today, as can be seen in the Gemara's description of the first transmissions of Torah Shebaal Peh by Moshe Rabbeinu right after hearing it from Hashem. Moshe would repeat the lesson four times, first to his brother Aharon, then to (Aharon and) Aharon's sons, then to (Aharon, his sons, and) the *zekainim*, then to (Aharon, his sons, the *zekainim* and) the rest of the Yidden, all of whom had by that point gathered in Moshe's tent. Then Aharon, his sons, and

the *zekainim*, would each repeat the lesson again, with every single person eventually hearing the lesson a total of four times. This was important not only because it may have taken several times to *understand* the *halachos*, but also because this was their one and only chance to remember the *halacha* and preserve it for perpetuity.

This was how it was done for over a thousand years, as the leaders of each generation passed on this plethora of oral tradition to the leaders of the next generation, and they to the next. And this got harder and harder with each progressive generation, since the material they had to remember kept growing; each generation was *michadesh gezeiros* and *takanos* of their own, which themselves had to be remembered. To be sure, writing wasn't completely out of the question—that would be impossible. Rather, each person would take notes, and based on that he would later share and expound upon in his teachings to his own disciples.¹ Torah Shebaal Peh survived from generation to generation in this manner, as thousands upon thousands of *halachos* and Midrashim were transmitted without the aid of a single official text.

In the time of the Roman Empire, Rabbi Yehuda Hanassi realized that, due to the difficulties of *galus*, the tradition was on the verge of being broken; he therefore decided to write (or gather²) a brief summation of the *halachos* of Torah Shebaal Peh, and this became the Mishnah. He was followed several generations later

by Ravina and Rav Ashi who transcribed the Gemara. (Other Tana'im, also authored the various *sefarim* of Midrashim).

Once Torah Shebaal Peh became a text-based system of learning, the need for memory and *chazzara* became obsolete. From this point on, the major expounders and teachers of Torah wrote their ideas down on paper, beginning with the *teshuvos* of Rabbanan Savoro'i and the Geonim, and continuing with the innumerable *sefarim* of the Rishonim and Acharonim. But there was one exception—Kabbalah.

Kabbalistic Custom

Even after the rest of the Torah had been transcribed, Kabbalah continued to be transmitted orally—and secretly—from generation to generation, as it had been from the times of Moshe Rabbeinu (and before). Although there were some Kabbalah *sefarim*, like the Zohar, they could not completely replace the oral tradition, since they are extremely difficult to decipher without extensive training from teachers.

Furthermore: the few *sifrei Kabbalah* that did exist were not actually written by their authors, but are rather the transcriptions of their Talmidim. For example, the Zohar is the transcripts of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai's teachings by his *talmid* Reb Abba. Centuries later, the Kisvei Ha'Arizal were written down by his students, primarily Reb Chaim Vittal.

This tradition continued after the birth of Chassidus. The Baal Shem Tov didn't write his own Torah. In fact, there aren't really

any official *hanachos* either; his most famous *sefer*, Kesser Shem Tov, is a collection of his teachings that were quoted in the various *sefarim* of his students. The first one to publish Torah from the Baal Shem Tov was his talmid, Reb Yaakov Yosef of Polonoye, known as the "Toldos Yaakov Yosef."

It was in the times of the Maggid that the idea of *hanachos* of Chassidus was born. Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev, Reb Yechiel Michel Zlotshover, and Reb Shmelke of Nikelsburg, were among the more famous *manichim*, and from some of their writings the *sefarim* Maggid Devarav L'Yaakov and Or Torah were later printed.

(It should be noted that the word "*hanacha*" as referring to a transcription is exclusively of Chabad vocabulary; a loose translation of the Yiddish expression "לייגן אויפן כתב" - placing on paper.)

One of the Maggid's *talmidim* recounts how the Maggid asked him to get involved in writing *hanachos*, and their exchange offers unique insight into the value of transcribing the words of a Rebbe:

One time, the Rebbe asked me why I am not writing what I hear. I answered the above answer [[that

the holy words of the Rebbe...are words that stand at the height of the world...which not every mind can comprehend...lofty wisdoms that cannot be said with the mouth...]. I also added that I saw the work of other transcribers, and they fall very short of capturing the Rebbe's intent...He said to me, "Nevertheless, however it is written, it is all good, in order that it be a remembrance for avodas Hashem."

And here we come to the crucial passage:

I said to him, "Why does the Rebbe want and desire this?" And this is what he answered me: "Is it small in your eyes this that Dovid Hamelech asked for [in Tehillim] Agura b'ohalecha olamim [I shall dwell in Your tent to eternity], meaning in both worlds?"²³

The Maggid was referring to Chaza"l's *limud* on this *possuk*, that Dovid Hamelech was asking Hashem that he live in "worlds"—plural—which is accomplished if, after he passes on, people repeat Torah in his name. Dovid Hamelech was requesting of Hashem: "*Ribono Shel Olam! May they repeat teachings in my name in olam hazeh!*" So too, the Maggid was telling his *talmid*, these *hanachos* will serve to perpetuate the Maggid's Torah forever.

Torah Shebaal Peh survived over a thousand years in this manner, as thousands and thousands of halachos and midrashim were transmitted without the aid of a single official text.

Counting Words

THE ALTER REBBE

In the court of his teacher the Magid, the Alter Rebbe served in the role of both *chozer* and *maniach*, repeating the Magid's teachings and transcribing them as well.

Subsequently, when the Alter Rebbe began leading the Chassidim and saying Chassidus himself, he created the official positions of *choizer* and *maniach*, appointing specific Chassidim to each post.

Now, it is important to note that although they may sound interchangeable, a *chozer* and *maniach* occupy two distinct roles.

A *chozer* is someone that has the quick mind to immediately grasp and remember the Rebbe's Torah upon hearing it for the very first time. He also has a smooth tongue and can repeat it to the other Chassidim so they can understand it as well.

The exact demands of this role would change over time: the Alter Rebbe was particular that the

chozrim remember every word of the *maamar*, to guard the *lashon harav*, whereas the Mittlerer Rebbe did not require—or even want—the Chassidim to focus so much on the exact language.⁴

Additionally, since every Rebbe had a unique style of teaching Torah, it often took a different type of person (to understand it and *chazzer* it. Just because someone was a *chozer* in one generation didn't mean he could be a *chozer* for the new Rebbe.

A *maniach*, on the other hand, is the transcriber. He requires more of a smooth pen than an easy mouth, and there is less of a need that he remember the entire Torah the first time around, since he can listen to the *chozrim* before transcribing.

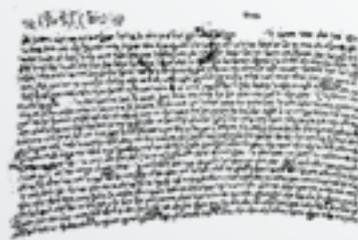
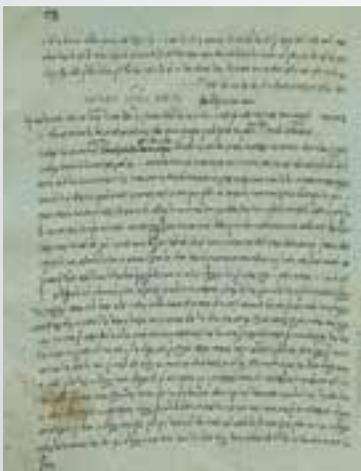
In later generations, the lines delineating these roles became a bit less firm—many of the most talented *chozrim* were also the most prolific *manichim*—but, in the times of the Alter Rebbe, not one of the official *chozrim* was a *maniach*, nor was there a *maniach* that was also an official *chozer*.

Whereas *chazzara* was a constant fixture of Chassidic life from the Alter Rebbe onwards, the role of the *maniach* ebbed and flowed from generation to generation, depending on the need. During the Alter Rebbe's times it was crucial, since, with

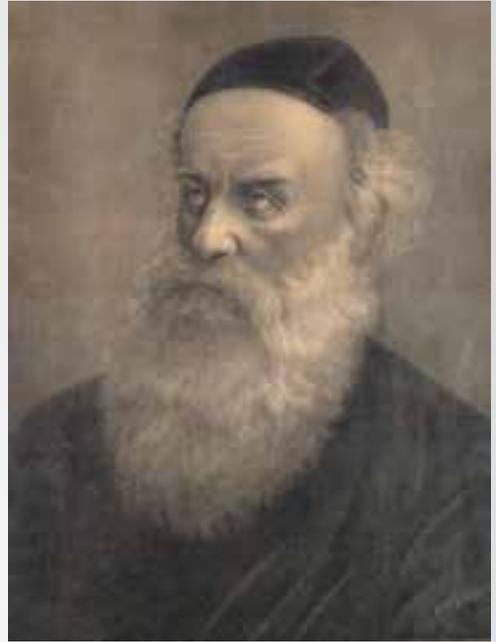
the exception of the Tanya, he didn't write any of his Chassidus himself. (The only *maamorim* written by the Alter Rebbe himself can be found in Torah Or parshas Chayei Sarah and Teruma). He relied solely on the *manichim*: his brother, the Maharil, whom he hired for this task; Reb Pinchas Raizes; the Mittlerer Rebbe; his son Reb Moshe; and the Tzemach Tzedek.

The Frieddiker Rebbe describes *chazzara* in the Alter Rebbe's court:

After the [Alter] Rebbe concluded saying his Torah and left the room, the chozer went up to the bima and repeated the Torah word for word. He would repeat it—bilashon harav—several times, until the participants were able to grasp the Torah, each on his own level. Some understood the whole Torah, some half, and there were some who, even after much effort, were only able to understand a third or a fourth. This was repeated day after day throughout the week, with the chozer repeating the Torah that the Alter Rebbe had said on Shabbos, three or four times a day. Once they fully grasped the maamar, the chozer would begin explaining—according



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to his ability—the ideas said in the Torah.

Over the Alter Rebbe's thirty four years of *nesius* there were three official *chozrim* appointed by the Alter Rebbe, each occupying his position for roughly eleven to twelve years.

Opening The Floodgates

THE MITTELER REBBE

During the Mittlerer Rebbe's *nesius*, the style of saying *maamarim* changed drastically. First of all, the *maamarim* were much longer; the Mittlerer Rebbe would speak for forty five minutes to an hour at a time.⁵ And, unlike the Alter Rebbe who spoke once or twice a month, these *maamarim* were two or three times *every Shabbos*. Furthermore, while the Alter Rebbe would recite one

self-contained *maamar* each time, the Mittlerer Rebbe would often say long *maamarim*, some taking several weeks to complete. For example, the *maamar* *Lehavin Inyan Rosh Hashana* of 5580 was said over three *Shabbosim* and *Rosh Hashana*, and the Mittlerer Rebbe spoke two or three times on each occasion. So one single *maamar* could have spanned six to twelve hours!⁶

Of course, the whole concept of *chazzra* changed then as well. The Alter Rebbe's *maamarim*, especially in the early years of his *nesius* and even later, were relatively short, while the *maamarim* of the Mittlerer Rebbe were much longer and thus harder to remember.

By the Alter Rebbe, the Chassidim focussed on remembering the short *maamarim* word for word, and delving into them during the week. But now it

was a tremendous feat just to wrap one's mind around it altogether.

In this era, *hanachos* by Chassidim seem to have for the most part fallen by the wayside. In fact, no *sefer hanachos* was known to exist until recently (in the 5740s), when a single *sefer* of *hanachos* happened to land in the hands of Lubavitch by way of *sefarim* dealers. Presumably, this was because the Mittlerer Rebbe himself would transcribe the *maamarim* after *Shabbos* for the Chassidim to learn from, making additional *hanachos* superfluous.

But often—primarily in the early years of his *nesius*—the Mittlerer Rebbe's *hanachos* were not of his own *maamarim*; they were *maamarim* from the Alter Rebbe upon which his *maamarim* had been based. For this reason, in the *bichlech*, the binders Chassidim kept of the Mittlerer Rebbe's *maamarim*, there are several



“For tuberculosis it is good to change air. He should come here and hear Chassidus, and then he will have what to speak.”

maamarim titled a “Maamar that the [Mittler] Rebbe said,” but they are really *hanachos* of the Alter Rebbe’s *maamarim*.

For most of the Mittler Rebbe’s *nesius* there was only one *chozer*, Reb Moshe Shlomo, who was actually trained into this role many years earlier.

In the early תתק”ג—about twenty years before he would become Rebbe—the Mittler Rebbe was charged with overseeing the *talmidim* learning in Liozna; he did this together with the Maharil, the Alter Rebbe’s brother. As their *menahel*, he would test the *talmidim* on their knowledge of the Alter Rebbe’s *maamarim* and also give them lengthy explanations of his own. He was very particular that they remember each word of the Alter Rebbe’s short, succinct *maamarim*, but when testing them on his own explanations, he focused only on the content, not requiring that they recall the precise words he used. However, there was one *talmid*, Reb Moshe Shlomo, who—after learning by the Mittler Rebbe for two years and getting used to his style of speaking—managed to *chazzer* even these long explanations, in the Mittler Rebbe’s original words.

Some twenty years later, after the Alter Rebbe was *nistalek* and

the Mittler Rebbe settled in Lubavitch, Reb Moshe Shlomo, who was living in nearby Rudnia at the time, fell very ill with tuberculosis. For a year and a half, he endured tremendous pain, and his father-in-law would constantly send *tzetzlach* to the Mittler Rebbe asking him for a *bracha*. But his condition saw no improvement. On Lag B’omer 578 (which, incidentally, was famous for being the Yom Tov that the Rabbeim, especially the Mittler Rebbe, would perform *mofsim*), the Mittler Rebbe was sitting with the Chassidim for a *seuda*, when the father-in-law approached with a *tzetel*. He was crying from the depths of his heart that this is already the second month that Reb Moshe Shlomo cannot speak due to his weakness.

The Mittler Rebbe looked intently at the *tzetel*, and said: “For tuberculosis it is good to change air. He should come here and hear Chassidus; then he will have what to speak.”

The father-in-law immediately rushed home to Rudnia, and found Reb Moshe Shlomo sitting up in bed in a very good mood. When he asked him why, Reb Moshe Shlomo answered that he himself didn’t know the reason, but out of the blue, he suddenly felt healthier. Upon hearing the Mittler Rebbe’s



words from his father-in-law, Reb Moshe Shlomo was filled with new life.

On a Thursday night, he was transferred into a wagon and set out for the trip to Lubavitch. After arriving, before *licht bentchen* on Friday evening, three *yungeleit* carried him into shul for the *maamar*. Over Shabbos, he *chazzered* publicly each *maamar* the Mittler Rebbe said, and on Shavuos that year the Mittler Rebbe crowned him as the official *chozer*. He obviously went on to have a full recovery.

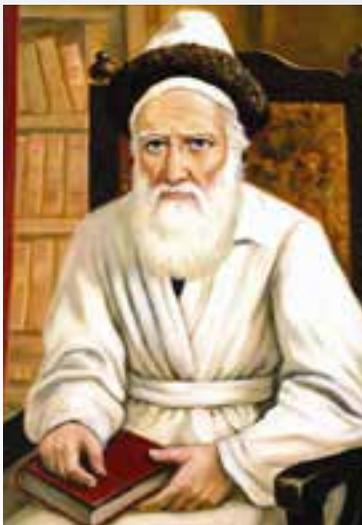
Although there were other people who *chazzered* the Mittler Rebbe's Torah, Chassidim especially enjoyed Reb Moshe Shlomo's *chazzara*, since he managed to retain most of the *divrei harav*—a feat that astounded his listeners.⁷ He remained *chozer* until the Mittler Rebbe's *histalkus*, after which he moved to Niezen, site of the Mittler Rebbe's *tziyon*, where he stayed for the rest of his life, living off of a monthly stipend sent to him by the Tzemach Tzedek.

Some *hanachos* of the Mittler Rebbe's *maamorim* written by the *manichim* were ultimately printed in “Maamorei Admur Ha'emtzoi - Hanachos ז"עקע.”

A Challenging Mix

THE TZEMACH TZEDEK

With the Tzemach Tzedek, the style of *maamarim* changed once again. Unlike any of the Rabbeim before or after him, his *maamarim* are full of quotes from



Midrash, Zohar, and *agadeta*, often explaining each *possuk* according to different *meforshim*. Although all the Rabbeim's *maamarim* are peppered with quotes of Midrashim, these were different. The Tzemach Tzedek doesn't quote the typical Midrashim and Zohars that most people are familiar with. He quotes obscure Midrashim and unknown pieces of Zohar, which are rarely quoted in regular *sifrei nigleh* or Chassidus. Most people would have a hard enough time deciphering these quotes as they're already written in Or Hatorah, for example, let alone remembering them as they were said.

For this reason, in the early days of his *maamorim*, the Chassidim, even those with a very quick grasp and who should have made for very good *chozrim*, had a very difficult time picking up on the *maamarim*, despite the fact that they weren't as long as the Mittler Rebbe's. Even the Tzemach Tzedek's eldest children, the holy Reb Boruch Sholom and Reb Yehuda Leib, were unable to master the *maamarim*. (The Rebbe Maharash was not yet born.) Even after a full year passed by, during

which there was much time to get used to the Tzemach Tzedek's style, *chazzara* still didn't do well. The Chassidim only managed to *chazzer* the general concepts, but not the *divrei harav*, a situation that bothered them terribly.

In honor of Shavuos 5589 (ט"קפ"ט), about a year and a half after the Mittler Rebbe's *histalkus*, many of the greatest Chassidim of the time gathered in Lubavitch, bringing with them a huge crowd of Chassidim from towns far and near. Along with them came a Chossid by the name of Reb Nochum.

Reb Nochum, who had been a young Chossid in the times of the Mittler Rebbe, had been very proficient at *chazzering* his *maamorim* (though he never was an official *chozer*). Now, in general, whenever he would travel to visit the Rebbe, he would stop off at the various cities and towns along the way and urge them to join him on his trip to the Rebbe. On the way back, he would stop off on those same towns to *chazzer* the Chassidus he had heard, and recount what he had seen by the Rebbe. This was the general custom of Chassidim in those days, but since he was such a talented *chozer*, the Chassidim were filled with special excitement every time he visited, treating him with a royal welcome and spending hours and hours hearing Chassidus and *farbrenging* together.

In his first *yechidus*, the Mittler Rebbe told him (among other things) that he should learn *agada*, since this is the way to “know He who said, and the world came

He continued chazzering the maamor throughout the night, until they had to break in order to make kiddush before sunrise.



into being.” Reb Nochum would often recount that during the *kodesh kodoshim tentzel*—the dance following *yechidus*—“the Rebbe’s words from the *yechidus* were ringing in my ears,” and he didn’t waste a moment. “That night, I began learning Midrash Rabba from Bereishis, and Ein Yaakov from Brachos.”

Now Reb Nochum had come on his first trip to the Tzemach Tzedek, for Shavuos, which was a three day Yom Tov, as it fell out on Sunday and Monday.

When the Tzemach Tzedek said the first *maamar*, on Friday night, much of it was based on a *pirush* of the Ibn Ezra, and it contained many references to Nach, Zohar, and Midrash. But, unlike everyone

else, Reb Nochum took it in like a sponge, since—following the instructions of the Mittlerer Rebbe so many years earlier—he was fluent in all the sources quoted in the *maamar*. In fact, unlike most people who were having a hard time following, he enjoyed it tremendously.

Following the *maamar*, Reb Nochum went out to the courtyard with a group of Chassidim, and, standing in one of the corners, *chazzered* the *maamar* word for word, without a single mistake. He continued *chazzering* the *maamar* throughout the night, until they had to break in order to make *kiddush* before sunrise. After eating the *seuda* and going to mikveh, he *chazzered* the *maamar* once more. The same thing happened with all the ensuing *maamarim* over the next days of Shavuos.

Word of his *chazaros* spread like wildfire among the Chassidim, and suddenly he was the most sought after man in town. The great, elder Chassidim—Reb Pesach Malastuvker, Reb Yisacher Ber Mi’Lubavitch, Reb Aizil Homiler, Reb Hillel Paritcher, and Reb Notte Mi’Manastrishtzine—each asked Reb Nochum to visit where they were staying to *chazzer* the *maamar*, and they were astonished by his rendition.

The elder Chassidim decided to ask the Tzemach Tzedek to appoint him as official *chozer*, and thus return *chazzara* to its

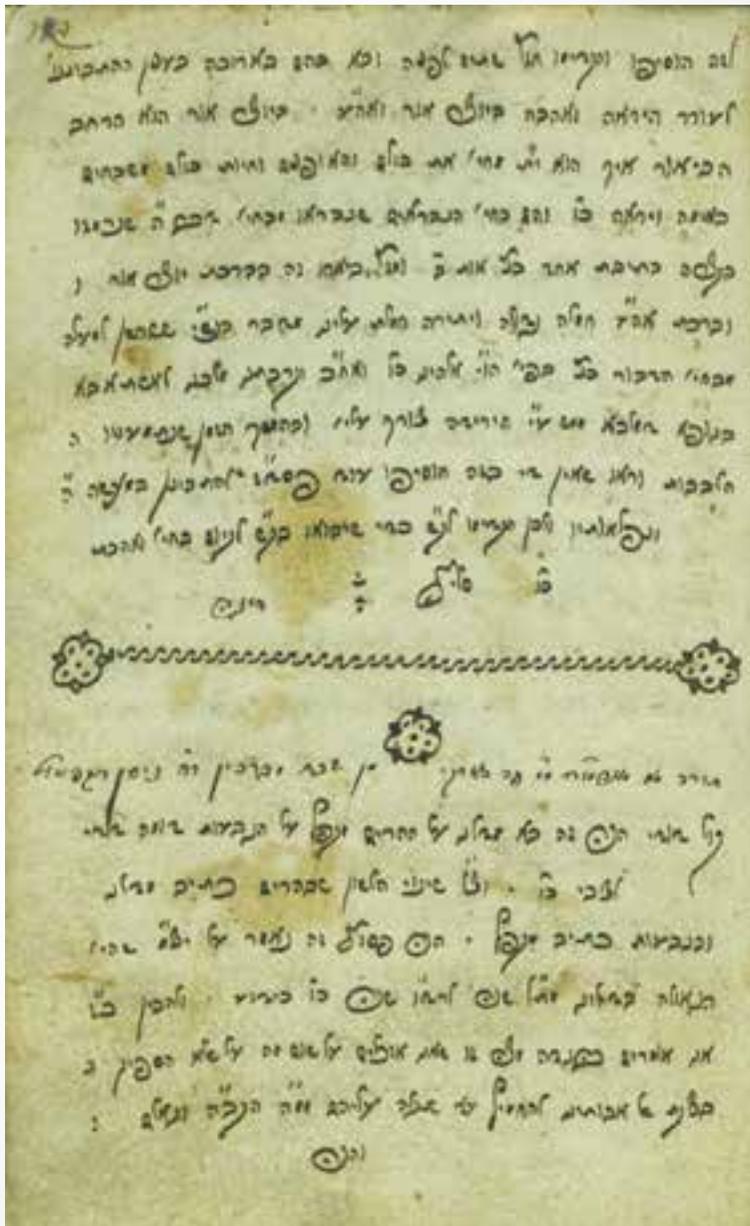
former glory. When Reb Nochum's father-in-law, who had supported him since his marriage, heard the exuberant praises and acclaim for Reb Nochum's *chazzara*, and how he was being proposed for the official job as *chozer*, he offered to continue supporting him if he moved away to Lubavitch to become a *chozer*, in the same

manner as before⁸. The Tzemach Tzedek's sons supported the elder Chassidim's idea to request that Reb Nochum be appointed as *chozer*, and the Tzemach Tzedek agreed. He was the *chozer* for the next twenty eight years, during which time he trained many *talmidim* in the art of *chazzara*. When he passed on, his

appointment was passed to his finest student, Reb Nochum from Homil.

As far as *hanachos*, the situation was similar to the Mittlerer Rebbe; not many *hanachos* were written of his maamorim, presumably since he would give out a *ksav* after Shabbos; and these maamorim were often the Alter Rebbe's, though this was the case primarily in the early years of his *nesius*. Nevertheless, we do have quite a few *hanachos* of his *maamarim*, which constitute a small percentage of Or Hatorah, and the *maamorim* in "Maamarei Admur HaTzemach Tzedek - תרי"ד-תרט"ו," and they also include many more that have not yet been published.

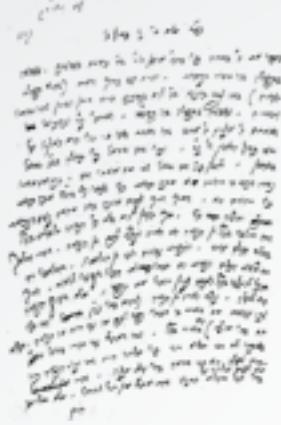
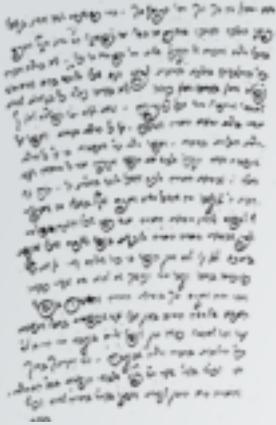
The Rebbe Maharash wrote *hanachos* of his father's *maamarim* as well.



Concise But Deep

THE REBBE MAHARASH

With the onset of the Rebbe Maharash's *nesius*, the style of *maamarim* changed once more. He spoke succinctly and wrote even shorter.⁹ The Friediker Rebbe categorizes his *maamarim* as *miut hamachzik es hameruba* (small but contains much), and the Chassidim treated each word as a source of wisdom, elaborating and expanding upon each nuance. The Friediker Rebbe brings an example to this by saying that he heard *chazzara* of a certain *maamar* from two famous Chassidim, the Radat"z and Reb Dov Zev Kozivnikov, together with their own, long explanations.



But when his father, the Rebbe Rashab, explained this *maamar* in one of his own *maamarim*, it then dawned on him that all the lengthy explanations of these Chassidim were brief relative to what the *maamar* really contained.¹⁰

There is scant information about *chazzara* by the Rebbe Maharash, and *hanachos* were again pretty much obsolete, since he transcribed his own *maamarim* (although there are some *hanachos* from the Rebbe Rashab and other Chassidim, some of which are printed in *Toras Shmuel*). But in the next generation, the need for *hanachos* emerged anew.



The Longest Maamarim

THE REBBE RASHAB

It is generally presumed that the Alter Rebbe and the Rebbe were the only Rabbeim that did not write their own *maamarim*. But this is only partially accurate. Although the Rebbe Rashab wrote prolifically, penning eight hundred and seventy of his *maamarim*,

there are another seven or eight hundred *maamarim* that he did not write, and were either lost or transcribed by *manichim*. His *sichos* were written by *manichim* as well.

His *maamarim* were much longer than his father's. He once commented that although the style of his *maamorim* are like the Mittler Rebbe, he is a Chossid of his father, the Rebbe Maharash.¹¹ But while the Mittler Rebbe would only speak for forty five

minutes to an hour at a time, often saying one *maamar* over several sittings, the Rebbe Rashab would speak for an hour and a half to two hours straight. Reb Shmuel Batumer describes *chazzara* in Lubavitch during the time of *Tomchei Temimim*:

After the Rebbe completed the maamar, everyone davened kabbolas Shabbos, after which most of the talmidim and guests went home for seduas Shabbos. But a number of the talmidim and guests remained and gathered together to chazzer the maamar, which they would chazzer exactly as it was said... [Reb Shilem Kuratin, the main choizer] would begin chazzering the maamar and they [the bochorim that were good chozrim] would help him. It took them a while until they managed to piece together the maamar, and when they were done, they davened and ate seduas Shabbos. Although the hour was late, they were afraid that the maamar would slip from their grasp (since they had only reviewed it once), so they gathered again after the seuda and reviewed it a second time. Then they went to sleep for a bit.

Early the next morning, Reb Shilem and his [chazzara] assistants, together with a few of the prominent guests, would go to the Rebbe's house, where Reb Shilem would chazzer the maamar before the Rebbe.

Rabbi Yisroel Jacobson describes the scene:

The chozrim would go in before davening, at about eight in the morning... They would usually wait in the room where people waited for yechidus, waiting until the Rebbe Rashab would open the door. The people that went in for chazzara were: a few bochurim, the chozrim; some of the guests who were knowledgeable in Chassidus; and yechidei segula.

Every time, the Rebbe would ask: is chazzara necessary? The question was asked differently every time, and sometimes it was with a serious face and sometimes with a smile on his lips. Also, when he would see a new face, he would ask whether every person was truly necessary to be there.

When the Frierdiker Rebbe was in Lubavitch, he would also go in for chazzara, and the Rebbe Rashab would tell someone to call him and notify him that it was starting. The Frierdiker Rebbe would stand in the hallway, behind almost everyone else, so everyone would turn slightly side-ways so that their backs weren't towards him. The door was often locked so no other people could enter.

Reb Shmuel Batumer describes how the actual chazzara worked:

If they missed words or mixed up how things were connected, the Rebbe would remind and rectify

them, sometimes also explaining a difficult inyan in the maamar.

Afterwards, Reb Shilem went out and chazzered the maamar again, since by now he knew it well, chazzering it beautifully... By the end of davening and seudas Shabbos, his helpers were also able to chazzer the maamar, yet everyone wanted to hear specifically from Shilem. Shabbos was passed on the maamar; food and sleep were secondary.

Farbrengens – Toras Sholom

The Rebbe Rashab generally held farbrengens only a few times a year. The *sichos* he said during those farbrengens were not properly transcribed and the only remnants of these precious talks were the journals and transcripts of lone Chassidim who had jotted down the Rebbe Rashab's words from their own memory shortly after the farbrengens. These were scattered about in the private possession of Chassidim, and it was the Rebbe who, years later, took to the task of searching out whatever was available in various locations.

In the 5700s, the Rebbe set out on a project to collect all these *sichos* and publish them in what became "Sefer Hasichos - Toras Sholom."

There was a substantial amount of transcriptions written by the Frierdiker Rebbe himself which served as a basis for the collection, but most of the *sefer* was compiled from the writings of the elder Chassidim. The largest collection of all was received from Reb Eliyahu Simpson who handed



the Rebbe his own notebook full of transcriptions he had written between the years 5662-5666 while studying in Lubavitch.

The Rebbe meticulously edited these notes, comparing the various *hanachos*, and producing the final product.

In his introduction to the published *sefer*, the Rebbe made note of the difficulties he had contended with:

“In many instances, we were unable to ascertain who wrote the transcriptions, and we therefore cannot be certain how accurate they are. Nevertheless, one must bear in mind that the writers were

genuine Chassidim who held every word of their Rebbe as most holy. Hence, it is without doubt that they made their best attempt to stay true to their Rebbe’s actual words without adding or omitting anything.”

The Rebbe, in addition to revising the existing text, also added footnotes where he saw it necessary, and inserted them at the end of the *sefer*. (In subsequent editions, these were included at the bottom of the pages throughout the *sefer*.) Several sections of the transcriptions were not published at the time, as per the Frierdiker Rebbe’s request, and one will

occasionally see the words “לא ניתן להעתיק” (“Not to be reproduced”) in the Rebbe’s emendations of the text.

Even after the *sefer* was published, the Rebbe still requested of elder Chassidim to send in whatever they had written or remembered from the Rebbe Rashab’s *sichos*, to be included in subsequent editions.¹²

The Rise of Sichos

THE FRIEDIKER REBBE

The Frierdiker Rebbe wrote all of his *maamorim*, so in this regard the job of a *maniach* was again obsolete, but *chazzara* continued. But the biggest change in the time of the Frierdiker Rebbe didn’t regard the *maamorim* - it regarded the *sichos*.

Throughout the generations of Chassidus, we do not find an emphasis on the Rebbe *farbrenging* and saying *sichos*. There were only a few solitary *farbrengens* throughout the year—Yud-Tes Kislev, Purim, Lag Baomer—and that was it; and there are few, if any, *hanachos* of these *farbrengens*.

This all changed with the Frierdiker Rebbe, who would *farbreng* much more often, recounting Chassidishe *maasos*, inspiring the Chassidim, and saying over words of Chassidus. The *hanachos* of these *sichos* fill several volumes, some of which were written by the Frierdiker Rebbe himself. Reb Yechezkiel (“Chatche”) Feigin and Reb Mordechai Mentlik were among



the prominent *chozrim* and *manichim* of the *sichos*. Our Rebbe would ensure that all the Frierdiker Rebbe's *sichos* were always transcribed.

The Rebbe's Role

About the Frierdiker Rebbe's years in the United States, Rabbi Shalom Chaskind relates how the Rebbe took charge of the *chazzara*:

"The Rebbe would go over to the bochurim or Chassidim that were able to do *chazzara* and split up the responsibility for remembering and transcribing the *sichos*—"You remember from this point of the *sicha* until this point," etc.

"One Shabbos, Mr. Yosef Palmer was a guest in 770, and the Frierdiker Rebbe asked that I serve the food at the table. The Rebbe and Rashag were also present at the *seuda*. When we went downstairs, the Rebbe turned to me and told me to transcribe the Frierdiker Rebbe's words on Motzei Shabbos, and he *chazzered* the *sicha* for me. But I couldn't keep up, and told him that I wouldn't be able to write a *hanacha* from hearing it only once. So the Rebbe *chazzered* it a few more times until I got it."

The Rebbe also played a leading role in the actual *chazzara* following the *sichos*.

Rabbi Yosef Goldstein relates the following:

"In those days the Frierdiker Rebbe's voice was very weak, and it was very difficult to understand what he was saying at the *farbrengens* [making *chazzara* all the more difficult]. After the *farbrengens*, the Chassidim would gather for *chazzara*, and the



REB CHATCHE (YEHEZKEL) FEIGIN HY"D.

Rebbe would sit there the entire time. Any time a question arose about the precise wording of the *sicha*, the Rebbe was the one who resolved it."

Over the years, the Rebbe worked tirelessly to gather every bit of information on *sichos* of the Frierdiker Rebbe. In countless letters printed in *Igros Kodesh*, we find that when the Rebbe wasn't together with the Frierdiker Rebbe, he would constantly ask various Chassidim to send copies of the *sichos*, and when he was together with him, he would be the one sending out these *sichos* to Chassidim.

In a letter sent to Rabbi Yisroel Jacobson from the year 5698 (תרח"ץ), while the Rebbe was living in Paris, he writes:

"I take this opportunity to remind you about the *maamorim* of Shavuot last year which you borrowed from me; you will certainly return them now. Also, I would greatly appreciate if you would send me a copy of the *maamor* given to you in Perchtoldsdorf... You promised me while in Vienna that... you would search for some remnants of the *sichos* and *maamorim* of the [Frierdiker] Rebbe while he visited



REB MORDECHAI MENTLIK.

the United States [in 5690]. You will certainly fulfill this promise as well..."¹³

While the Rebbe was away in Paris in 5707 to greet his mother, Rebbetzin Chana, he wrote again to Rabbi Jacobson:

"Thank you for the few lines about Shvi'i and Acharon shel Pesach in the [Frierdiker] Rebbe's house; although you were concise where it would have been good to elaborate much more..."¹⁴

Even when the Rebbe was present, he still requested *hanachos* of the Frierdiker Rebbe's talks when possible. In 5708, Rabbi Ezriel Zelig Slonim wrote to the Rebbe of a *sicha* they had heard together in the Frierdiker Rebbe's sukkah in Riga thirteen years earlier. The Rebbe replied:

"You mentioned a story told by the [Frierdiker] Rebbe about the Rebbe Maharash and the Belzer Rav (from the *sichos* in Riga). Would you be able to send me a transcription of the *sichos* on that Sukkot, whatever you remember?"¹⁵

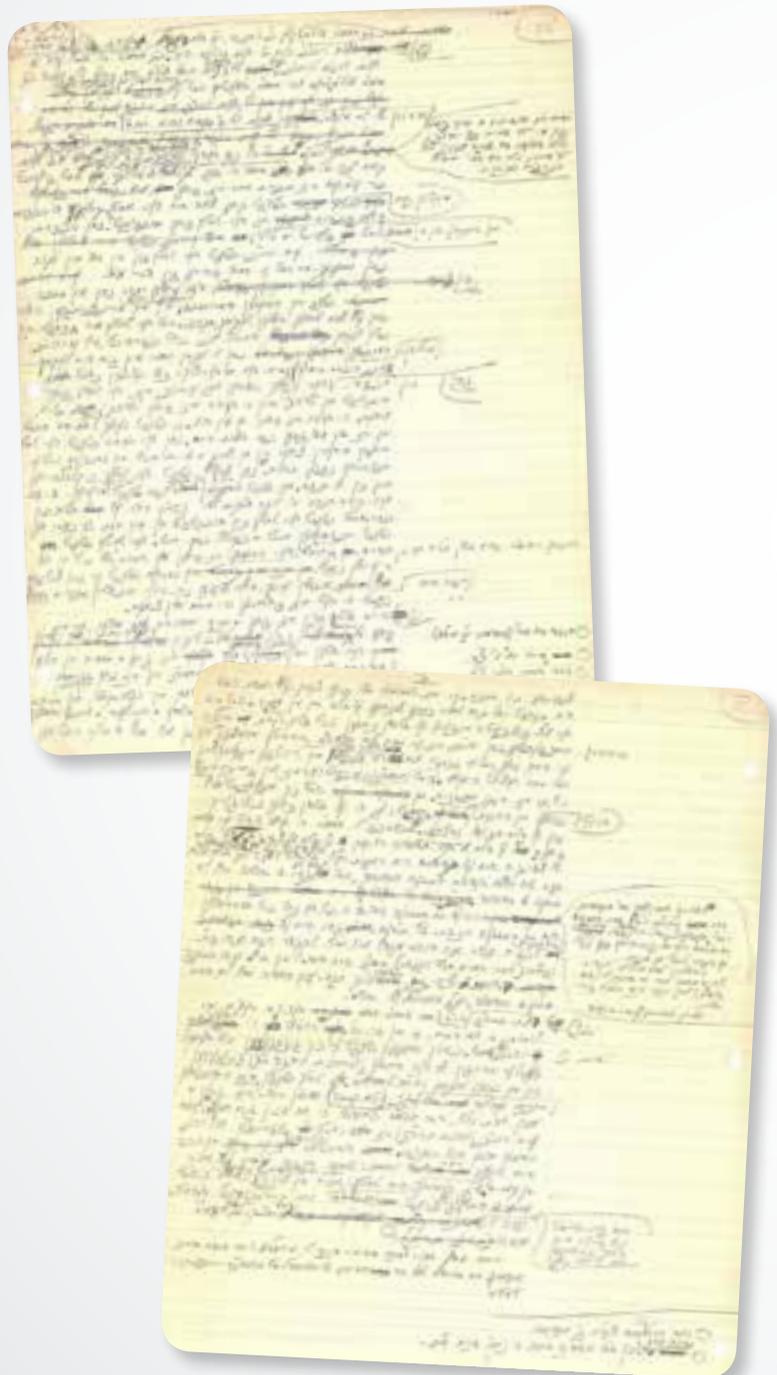
As chairman of Kehos, the Rebbe also sent out all the *maamorim* and *sichos* of the Frierdiker Rebbe to Chassidim and others all over the world. A

I couldn't keep up, and told him that I wouldn't be able to write a hanacha from hearing it only once. So the Rebbe chazzered it another one or two times until I got it.

mere glance at any of the Rebbe's letters from 5702 and on teaches us how the Rebbe really wished for these copies to be taught and disseminated in each community. The Rebbe would often add at the end of a letter: "מוסגר פה קונטרס. ובטח יזכה בו את הרבים" - "Enclosed herein is the *kuntres*... You will certainly please the public with it..." Part of the Rebbe's relentless effort that the *maayonos* of Chassidus should reach every corner of the globe, ushering in the coming of Moshiach. **T**

For the story of chazzara and hanacha of the Rebbe's maamorim and sichos in dor hashvi'i, look out for part II in next month's magazine אי"ה.

1. Rambam, Hakdama to Mishneh Torah.
2. See Likutei Sichos vol. 12 p. 89; Igros Kodesh vol. 25 p. 64
3. Hakdama to Or Torah of the Maggid p. 16.
4. Reshimos Hayuman p. שסג
5. Likutei Diburim vol. 1 p. 192.
6. Ibid.
7. Divrei Yimei Hachozrim, p. 7-9.
8. Though, the Frierdiker Rebbe notes, Reb Nochum eventually had plenty of parnassa from his job as *chozer*.
9. See Bosi Legani 5711 ois vov; Igros Kodesh Admur Mehurayatz vol. 2 p. שכד.
10. Likutei Diburim vol. 3 p. תמט
11. Sichos Kodesh 5740 vol. p. 479
12. See Igros Kodesh. vol. 21 p. 80. More about the story behind Toras Sholom appears in the Derher weekly newsletter Vol. 3 Issue 17-18 (Adar 5773).
13. Igros Kodesh vol. 1 p. 16
14. Ibid. vol. 2 p. 204
15. Ibid. p. 324



THE REBBE'S HAGAHOS ON A HANOCHA OF THE FRIERDIKER REBBE'S SICHA OF 13 TISHREI 5705.



In Loving Memory of Chaim Katzier
On his Ya'artzeit 29 Teves
Dedicated by
Oren and Neally Antebi

Without Any Fear

As the Rebbe prepared the kuntres "Purim 5711" for print, he added a short yet powerful description of the events surrounding the famous maamar "Vekibel Hayehudim." It was said by the Friediker Rebbe in 5687 in the biggest Lubavitcher shul in Moscow, and was an event fraught with real dangers. In his introduction to the kuntres, the Rebbe spells it out:

(Loose translation)

"This is the kuntres for the days of Purim; it includes a maamar and letter.

The maamar was said by the Friediker Rebbe on Purim Katan 5687 in the Lubavitcher shul in Moscow.

The letter is from a rav in Russia who was an activist. It gives us a slight understanding regarding the relationship between the Jewish leadership and the Russian government. [It also gives us a glimpse] as to the great danger of saying such a maamar, especially so publicly."

Here is the story of this maamar and how the government responded, based on the letter printed alongside the maamar:

Mr. Fuchs was a religious Jew living in Moscow and he recalls the events that surrounded the famous maamar of the Friediker Rebbe in the largest Shul in Moscow in the year 5687.

"It was in Moscow, at the beginning of Adar I¹, that I was summoned to the G.P.U for questioning.

"Is it true that Rabbi Schneerson collects great sums of money to support religious institutions and large portions of these funds go to organizations outside the country for the same purpose? Does he recruit hundreds of young men to spread Judaism throughout the country? And is he indeed respected and obeyed by Chassidim and misnagdim alike?' All this they wanted to know from me.



"From the style of their questions and manner of speech it was clear to me that they were investigating the Rebbe and that the situation was quite serious.

"I answered them that I have known Rabbi Schneerson for many years as an activist working to better the situation for Jews. I knew his father, who also dedicated his life to all communal affairs and he occasionally would visit the capital.

"I also remember, when I was still a young student learning in Leningrad, seeing how his grandfather² bravely visited the most terrifying ministers at the time, to discuss the pogroms that had been occurring in Kiev and Niezhin. Through his wisdom, wit, and strength of character he was successfully able to calm the raging storm.

"And the Rabbi Schneerson of present is truly a man of spirit. I assure you that if—and again I don't know of such activities—he is supporting religious institutions it is all in accordance with the law and you will not find anything illicit with his activities. I do know that he is now in Moscow but the reason for his visit is unknown to me.

"By the time I returned home, my friends from the shul were concerned about my wellbeing and they wanted to know which questions I had been pestered with, because

the 'meeting' had taken longer than usual. I did not want to reveal what had really occurred so I brushed them off with some form of an answer.

"[Being quite fearful of the government's evil intentions] I called an individual who was close to the Rebbe and I advised him that the Rebbe should leave the city that very night and return home.

"The next day, Monday, I met this individual and asked him if the Rebbe had indeed departed. He mumbled some sort of answer and I realized that my advice had been ignored; this pained me greatly.

"On Thursday evening, just a few days later, I was taking a stroll with friends, along the streets of Moscow when we noticed that the Lubavitcher *shul* was illuminated with many candles. We understood that something was going on inside. As we got closer we saw that it was packed from wall to wall and the crowd had spilled over into the alleyways and paths leading to the *shul*. When we inquired as to what was going on, we were told that the Lubavitcher Rebbe is speaking from the *bima* and that following the talk there would be a festive meal to honor Purim Katan, which was that night.

"When I internalized what was going on, a shiver ran through my whole body. I immediately thought how the grandson had inherited the strength and conviction of his grandfather, who also endangered his life on behalf of the Yidden's plight and stood up to the wicked government of his time.

"Mr. Vendil and I ventured inside to try and hear what was being said. An amazing sight caught our eyes; the Rebbe was sitting at the *bima* and talking in a powerful captivating tone, discussing the strength the Yidden had in the times of Purim not to give in to the wicked Haman. He continued to explain that this strength originated from the 24,000 young children who were ready to give up their lives for the sake of their Yiddishkeit. It is the purity of these souls that shatters and destroys our enemies.

"The scene was so electrifying and the way everyone was listening had a strong impression on me; this was despite the obvious dangers surrounding such a talk. I was so captivated that I wanted to stay and hear more. Suddenly, a few suspicious looking men caught my attention as being possible informers, so we quickly slipped out of the *shul*.



By the time I returned home, my friends from the *shul* were concerned about my wellbeing, because the ‘meeting’ had taken longer than usual...

“As we walked away from the *shul*, deeply affected by the scene we had just witnessed, my friend Mr. Vendil, who was more familiar with Chassidim and their way of life, explained to me the impact that such an event would have. “That speech, which was full of *toichen*, fits with the situation of the religious Jews right now and will surely leave its mark.” He then continued, “Chassidim review and repeat every speech, which they call a *maamar*, of their Rebbe. They examine every detail and letter and then they even write it down. Many times the Rebbe himself will transcribe it and publicize it everywhere.”

“A week later I met the head of Yevsektzia³, Mr. Litvakov, and we chatted about various things. During the conversation, the topic of the Lubavitcher Rebbe came up and he complained to me about his ongoing religious activities. ‘He continues to recruit and support the “*klei kodesh*”—rabbonim, *shochtim*, teachers, and *roshei yeshivos* throughout the country,’ he said. ‘He works to establish religious institutions such as *mikvahs*. He establishes *shuls* and schools with teachers. Wherever we turn we feel his presence. All over the country, and even beyond, he has messengers fulfilling his wishes.’

“Mr. Litvakov then proceeded to tell me two stories about the vast net of the Lubavitcher Rebbe’s work, and if they are true they stand as testimony to this great organization.

“The first story he told me was about the Jews of Georgia (Gruzia). The community there was setup with a board that would attend to the needs of the Jewish people. However, at that point all religious institutions in the city had been shut down with the rise of the Yevsektzia. One day a young Ashkenazi⁴ Jew arrived in town and began speaking publicly about the need to re-establish the *mikveh*, *chadarim*, and all the other Jewish centers. He spoke with a perfect Gruzian accent as if he had been born there, and he quoted the laws of the land to support

his case. “The law allows every citizen to practice his religion at his own expense,” he pointed out. He travelled from place to place and pleaded his case. At every speech he made, he would praise and laud the government, which recognized and appreciated the work of the laborers, and he would also stress the need for religious institutions.

“At one of the settlements he visited, the young man began as usual to recite the laws. Present at one of these speeches was a member of the “community board,” who assumed that this visitor was a messenger from the government headquarters. He was deeply affected by what he heard and passionately decided that the “board” would cover all the expenses associated with building the *mikvah*. A short while later this materialized and the *mikveh* was built.

“With that he concluded his first story and then went on with the second one.

“Within two years from when the Communist party took control, there was a Yevsektzia office in practically every city and settlement, and they worked quite effectively. Suddenly, however, things began to change. Young men would arrive in different cities and chase out the Yevsektzia, on the grounds that the religious Jews weren’t doing anything illegal and in fact the law allows citizens to practice their religion. From then the tide began to turn and all their work became undone as schools, *mikvehs*, and *shuls* sprouted up throughout the country.

“After spending a few months in rigorous investigations, the Yevsektzia discovered that this was the work of Rabbi Schneerson. He was sending men across the country and supporting their activities with great sums of money.

“I heard Both of these stories from Mr. Litvakov himself. I then asked him, ‘Is it not true that the law allows religious activities? What great crime has Rabbi Schneerson actually committed?’

“At the G.P.U,’ he replied, “we already know his crimes, and,” he added with anger, “we have decided to uproot him from the very source, and we have already acquired the material we need.”

“Following our conversation, I repeated this to someone who was close to the Rebbe. All that was left was for me to worry and hope that nothing bad comes from this.” **1**

1. The year 5687 was a leap year

2. Referring to the Rebbe Maharash

3. The Jewish division in the Communist Party

4. The Jews of Gruzia (Georgia) would call the Russian Jews “Ashkenazim.”



What's Left

Moshiach will come once everyone does teshuva, is that a reasonable expectation?

In the summer of 5750, Saddam Hussein, the president and dictator of Iraq, accused the neighboring country of Kuwait of “economic warfare.” He claimed they were stealing Iraqi oil by drilling at an angle across the border into Iraqi territory. It was obvious to the world that he was just looking for an excuse to invade Kuwait, and indeed, two weeks later, Saddam Hussein’s forces invaded Kuwait.

The Iraqi army, with one million soldiers, quickly overpowered the 20,000 Kuwaiti soldiers. By the end of the day, Kuwait was completely conquered, and Saddam Hussein declared that it was now a province of Iraq.

That whole summer, and through Teves of 5751, world leaders tried

to get Iraq out of Kuwait peacefully, using diplomacy. Saddam Hussein refused, and he declared that if there were attacks on Iraq by any Country, he would fire missiles at Eretz Yisrael, even though it was in no way party to this whole episode. The missiles themselves were frightening enough; one missile alone could cause great damage. But worse was that he threatened to fire missiles filled with poison gas—weapons of mass destruction—which would cause much greater harm than the missiles themselves, r”l.

In Eretz Yisrael at that time, a certain *rosh yeshiva* gave public speeches talking horribly about B’nei Yisroel and claiming that terrible things would happen to them. At a

THE SEDER IS, FIRST WE WILL BE REDEEMED FROM THIS GOLUS, AND THEN OF OUR SINS!

time when the fear of Yidden around the world was reaching its peak, he gave a speech implying that Hashem was going to bring another holocaust on *Klal Yisrael*, r”l.

It was during that time that the Rebbe dedicated a few sichos in response to this rhetoric.

On Asara B’Teves after *mincha*, the Rebbe said a *sicha* addressing these terrible predictions. To preface:

If the world was the way it was meant to be, we would all be in Eretz Yisrael. The *Beis Hamikdash* would be standing, the Kohanim would be bringing *korbanos*, and there would be a king and a *novi* to lead us.

Why is that not how the world looks today? Well, any child could tell you, and indeed we say so every day in davening: “ועתה בעוונותינו, חרב בית” —because of our sins, the *Beis Hamikdash* was destroyed. And as we say in *musaf* on Yom Tov, “ומפני חטאינו,” “גלינו מארצינו”—because of our sins, we were exiled from our land.

Why were we put into *golus*? Why didn’t Hashem allow us to remain in Eretz Yisroel peacefully, with the *Beis Hamikdash*, witnessing the open miracles that happened there every day? The reason is because the Yidden turned away from Hashem, abandoning his Torah, which brought this *golus* upon us.

So it follows, that in order for *golus* to end and for Moshiach to come, all Yidden must return to Hashem, do *teshuva*, and live their lives according to Torah. Then Moshiach will come and we will be returned to our land. Indeed, as the Gemara says, the time for Moshiach to come is here, all we need to do is *teshuva*.

There is however a slight problem with this. We know that we must

wait for Moshiach to come every day. Not only must we wait for him, but we must expect him to come every day. We wake up every morning and state that Moshiach can come today. Children proclaim “We want Moshiach now!” And, as the Rebbe often said at farbrengens, Moshiach could come during this very farbrengen, while we are sitting here, before we even get up to daven *mincha*!

But look around, how can Moshiach come? Did *Klal Yisrael* do *teshuva* yet? Are all Yidden leading their lives according to Torah? It is unrealistic to think that all of a sudden, in an instant, every Jewish person will suddenly do *teshuva*, and Moshiach will come.

In this *sicha* of Asara B’teves, the Rebbe answered this question. He began with answers that had already been given in the past, and then went on to correct all of our notions about Moshiach and *geula*.

First of all, the Rebbe said, it is indeed possible that *Klal Yisrael* can all do *teshuva*. The Zohar says that *teshuva* can be done “in one moment.” So it is realistic that in one moment everyone will do *teshuva* and Moshiach will come.

Furthermore, there is a *psak-din* in Rambam, that if someone says to a woman “I am marrying you on condition that I am a *tzadik*,” they are considered married and he must give her a *get* if he changes his mind. Even if he was a sinner all his life, we cannot say that the condition was for certain not met. It is possible that at that moment a thought of *teshuva* entered his mind, and that alone would make him a *tzadik*.

Every Yid, at one point in his life or another, entertained the thought of doing *teshuva* and returning to Hashem. Perhaps it was only for one second, and maybe he never acted on it at all, but the fact that the thought entered his mind is enough to cause Moshiach to come.

Then the Rebbe went a step further.

Every Yid descends from Yaakov Avinu. No matter which *shevet* he is from, and more so, no matter what he did all his life. *Rachmana litzlan* to disparage any Yid, saying this one has this *yichus*, and this one another. The *yichus* of every Jewish person is that he is the child of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov. And when one belittles another Jew, it is as if he is starting up with the pupil of Hashem’s eye!

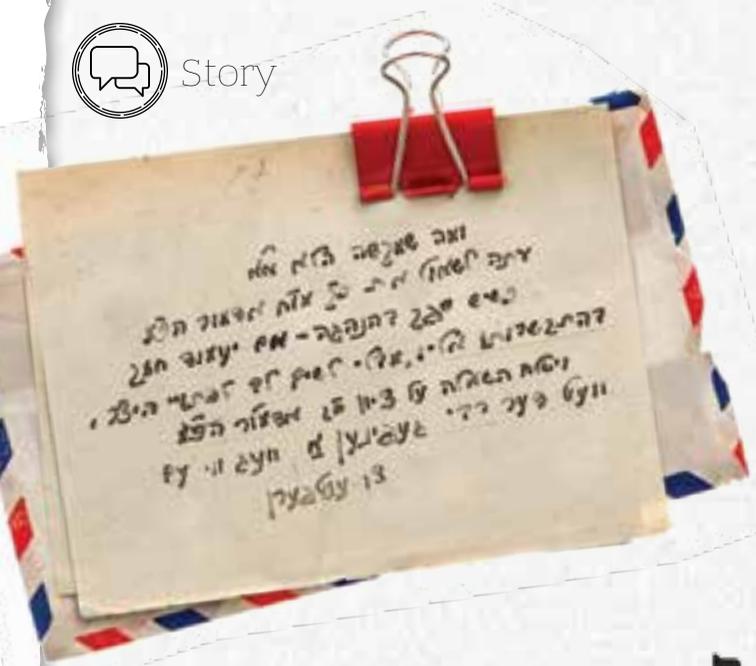
For an indication of how Hashem will treat the Yidden, we can take a look at the daily davening. We say in *tachnun* “פדה אלקים את ישראל מכל” —“צרותיו”—Hashem should redeem the Yidden from all their troubles. And then immediately afterwards we say “והוא יפדה את ישראל מכל עונותיו”—He will redeem them from all their sins.

This tells us what the order of the *geula* will be. First Hashem will redeem us from *golus*; not just from some of our troubles, but of ALL our *tzaros*.

He will take us out of *golus*, every individual the way he is—*tzaddikim*, *beinonim*, and the third type—and only then will he redeem us of our sins.

Hashem does not have to wait for Yidden to do *teshuva*. Not for one specific person, or two specific people, or for the whole *Klal Yisrael*. That’s not the *seider* that Hashem chose to implement. Rather, first we will be redeemed from this *golus*, and then of our sins.

May we merit the *geula shleima* speedily in our days. **1**



מוקדש על ידי ולזכות
הרה"ת ר' שניאור זלמן וזוג' מרת נחמה דינה טייכטל
ולזכות ילדיהם
מינא ברכה, מענדל, יוסף אברהם מאיר, לוי יצחק, ישראל,
סימא חסיה, ואסתר רבקה שיחיו
שיגדלו להיות חסידים ויראי שמים מקושרים לאילנא
דחיי כ"ק אדמו"ר ושילכו בדרכיו אשר הורנו נס"ו

דער רבי וועט געפינען א וועג...

Miracle at Midnight

AS TOLD BY MRS. BAT-SHEVA LESTER (LEEDS, ENGLAND)

Our third child was born on Chof-Ches Sivan 5773. Although pregnancy and labor were as smooth as could be, our new little bundle of joy was blue, and in need of oxygen. The midwife hurriedly took him to get some oxygen and thankfully after a few minutes his normal color returned. We had our cuddles and sent out the text message that everyone dreams of writing, announcing the news that we were once again the proud parents of another boy.

We were moved into the postnatal ward and about four hours after birth, the nurse arrived for a routine check-up. She found that his heart rate and breathing were quicker

than usual and the rasping sounds he produced indicated an unusual amount of mucus in his system.

The nurses grew anxious and took him into a side room to give him more oxygen, and it was then that they figured he possessed some kind of infection. Before I knew it, our baby was whisked away to the high dependency unit (HDU) where he was attached to a ventilator and various other monitors. Needless to say, the emotional strain was difficult to bear.

The situation spiraled rapidly. At first the doctors increased his oxygen intake and when that proved



insufficient he was attached to a more powerful machine. This repeated itself a few times and throughout the day he was transferred from one ventilator to the next.

It was at this point that we began spreading the word, asking people to daven for our baby's speedy recovery.

That night, as I attempted to catch a few hours of much needed rest, two doctors appeared with grim news. Our baby's situation was drastically deteriorating to the point that he was transferred to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) and placed on life support.

Going to see him for the first time since the change, was heartbreaking.

Two days later, on Erev Shabbos, we sent out a message asking women to daven for a *refuah sheleimah* as they lit the Shabbos candles that evening. We also asked some of our acquaintances, who we knew didn't regularly light, to do so this week in our baby's merit.

That Shabbos was Rosh Chodesh Tammuz and a very good friend of ours, Rabbi Michoel Danow,¹ who is a shliach here in Leeds, had gone to New York to be by the Ohel for Gimmel Tammuz. He was well aware of our situation and assured us that before Shabbos he would enter the Ohel and ask the Rebbe for a *bracha* on our behalf.

Shabbos had begun and our baby was still on life support. The hospital didn't have any stronger machines and if the current one wouldn't be sufficient we would have to be transported by helicopter to a different hospital.

At approximately midnight there was another knock on my door. Seeing my nurse enter the room I was petrified,

as over the past few days she had never been the bearer of good tidings...

Instead of relaying another piece of terrible news, she asked if I would like to go and see the baby. She informed me that they were able to reduce the amount of oxygen our baby was receiving through the machine.

Ecstatic, I jumped at the chance to go and witness our baby's improvement, albeit minor, with my very own eyes. From that moment the situation improved tremendously.

By Shabbos morning, the nurses had taken him off life support and were able to use a machine that requires the baby to breathe for himself; and by the end of Shabbos he was back onto the smallest ventilator with a minimal amount of oxygen flow.

That evening we were finally able to hold him for the first time in two days. The doctors were amazed and attested they have never seen such a quick and steady turnaround before!

By Sunday afternoon our baby was no longer on any machines and the doctors had ceased all medications.

In the meantime we were trying to decide on a name for our baby. Names like Nissim and Boruch came up, and we were undecided.

This problem was solved soon enough.

On Sunday evening Rabbi Danow's wife paid us a hospital visit. She related that her husband had entered the Ohel on Erev Shabbos at seven o'clock pm, and as he had promised, he included in his *tzetel* a request for a *bracha* for our baby's complete and speedy recovery.

A quick calculation of the time difference between New York and England brought us to the realization that he had been in the Ohel at the stroke of midnight here in Leeds, precisely the moment our baby had begun his miraculous recovery!

Two days later we were in the transitional ward, and another three days after that we were completely discharged from the hospital. Now arrangements for his *bris* were able to take place.

After such a miracle there was no more doubt as to the name we would bestow upon our new child. One week from that Sunday a belated *bris* and *seudas hodaah* for our precious Menachem Mendel took place. **T**

1. Rabbi Danow was contacted by the Chassidisher Derher Magazine and he verified the details of this story.

YOUR STORY

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



החתן הרה"ת חיים מאיר שי' גרינבערג

והכלה מרת חי' מושקא תח' גראנער

לרגל בואם בקשרי שידוכים ביום כ"ד טבת ה'תשע"ו

נדפס ע"י הוריהם

הרה"ת ר' יוסף יצחק וזוגתו מרת מאריאשע בדנה שרה שי' גראנער

הרה"ת ר' ישראל וזוגתו מרת חנה שי' גרינבערג

Moments Before

THE REBBE'S SIDTUR TO CHASSANIM

In the pictures presented here, dated 19 Shevat 5750, we see the Rebbe descending from the second floor of his house for *mincha*, holding two *siddurim* (one mostly obscured from view). One is the Rebbe's personal *siddur Torah-Ohr* from which he davened each day, and the other is a special *siddur* that the Rebbe generally lent to *chassanim* to daven *mincha* from on their wedding day. A *chosson* is seen accepting the sacred item with both hands directly from the Rebbe.

THE LAST MINCHA

One's wedding day, in addition to being a very joyous and happy occasion, is a very solemn and serious time as well. Many have the *minhag* (cited by Rema in Shulchan Aruch) to fast during that day¹, to increase in *tzedaka* and other such activities.

Indeed, the *chosson* recites *viduy* in *shemone esreh* of *mincha*, just as one does on Erev Yom Kippur, seeking Hashem's *brachos* for life ahead.

Naturally then, it is also a time when *chassanim* and *kallahs* seek to strengthen their *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe, to receive his *brachos* as well.²

Perhaps this is how a long standing *minhag* evolved; one that began even before the Rebbe officially accepted the *nesius*.

Chassanim made a point to daven the last *mincha* before the *chupah* from a special *siddur*, which they would personally receive from the Rebbe, along with a brief *bracha* and encouragement "זאלסט אויסבעטן אלע גוטע זאכן".

THE SIDTUR

The exact origin of this particular *siddur* remains somewhat of a mystery. Many speculate that it was given to the Rebbe as a gift from the Frierdiker



Rebbe, and perhaps had been designated for this task precisely for that reason.

One thing that we do know is that this *siddur* was used by the Friediker Rebbe and it contained a typographical error which the Friediker Rebbe himself corrected by hand, with his *ksav yad kodesh*—and which was later made famous in a *sicha* of the Rebbe³—in the *siddur*, the *sefira* corresponding to Pesach Sheni had been erroneously printed as being *Hod ShebeChesed*, instead of the correct *sefira*, *Chesed ShebeHod*.

HOW IT WORKED?

While the logistics of this time-honored tradition changed over the years, the core idea remained the same. A personal moment for a *chosson* to receive the Rebbe's *bracha* and daven from his holy *siddur* before embarking on his life's journey.

For many years, the practice was that *chassanim* waited for the Rebbe in *Gan Eden Hatachton*. The Rebbe would then emerge from his room with two *siddurim*, and would hand the *chosson* the second one. As was the case several times, when two *bochurim* were getting married the same day, the Rebbe handed the *siddur* to one, who would then pass it on to the next. To determine who would be *zoche* to receive the *siddur* directly from the Rebbe, the Rebbe would ask if any of the *chassanim* was a Kohen. If neither was, then the Rebbe would ask whose wedding was first⁴. Alternatively, it would be handed in alphabetical order of the *chassanim*'s last name.

In the earlier years, along with the *siddur* the Rebbe would also lend the *chosson* a *gartel* that had been passed down from *rabboseinu nesienu*—since the *minhag* is to begin donning a *gartel* starting from the last *mincha* before the *chupah*. But that was ultimately discontinued because the *gartel*, which was very old and thin, started coming apart and eventually loosened.

Over the years, it became more commonplace for the parents and grandparents of both the *chosson* and the *kallah* to accompany the *chosson* to receive the *siddur* from the Rebbe, making this

moment an opportunity for the extended family to receive the Rebbe's *brachos*.

The Rebbe would give each person present a coin for *tzedakah* along with his personal wishes for the occasion.

WHEN

As the Rebbe left his room at 770 to go to *mincha*, usually around 3:15pm, he would hand the *siddur* to the *chassanim* waiting in *Gan Eden Hatachton*, the hallway right outside the Rebbe's room. For the duration of much of the year after the *histalkus* of the Rebbetzin, on Chof-Beis Shevat 5748, the Rebbe remained at his home on President Street. During that time, "Lubavitch" relocated from 770 to the Rebbe's house, where all weekday *tefilos*, *sichos* and dollar distributions took place. It was there too, that the Rebbe would give the *siddur* to the *chassanim*—this took place at the landing of the staircase, as we see in these pictures.

However, when the Rebbe would go to the Ohel—which meant that *mincha* would be postponed pending the Rebbe's return—*chassanim* would receive the *siddur* as the Rebbe left for the car. When leaving from his house, *chassanim* would receive the *siddur* in the kitchen which led to the back door of the house, where the car would wait.

EXCEPTIONS

As it was not out of the ordinary for Lubavitcher weddings to take place out-of-town, making it difficult for the *chosson* to daven *mincha* on the day of his wedding in New York, those who had no alternative would receive the Rebbe's *siddur* at the latest possible time, before departing.

While the Rebbe generally gave *chassanim* a *siddur* other than his own, as mentioned above, there were times that the Rebbe did give his personal Torah Ohr *siddur*.

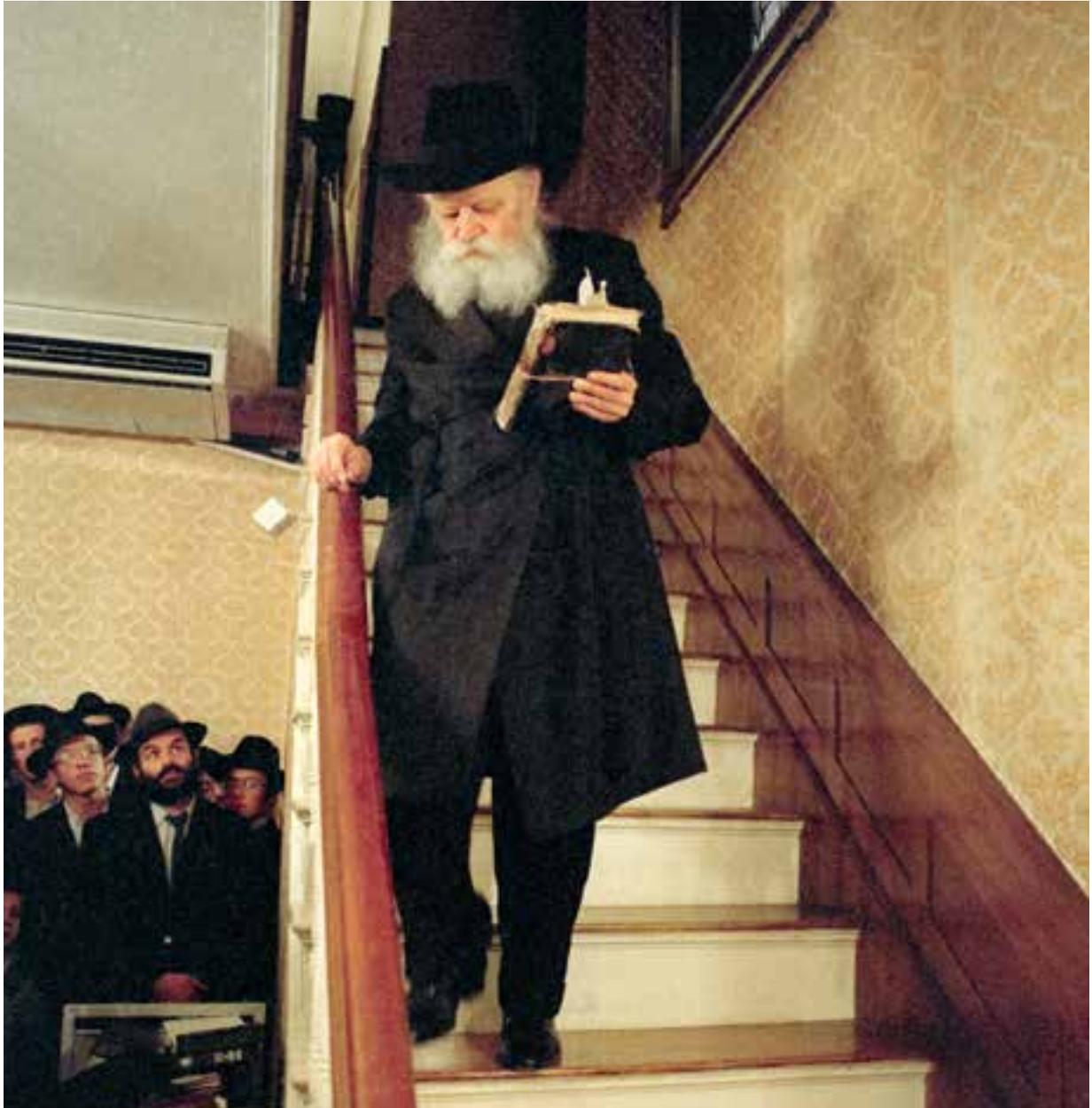
One such occasion was on 3 Nissan 5741, when two *chassanim*—Reb Hillel Dovid Krinsky and Reb Moshe Goldstein—were both waiting in *Gan Eden Hatachton*. As the Rebbe came out of his room with the regular *siddur* for *chassanim*, he asked which of them was going to be married first. When

Reb Hillel Dovid replied that he was, the Rebbe gave him the *siddur* and continued on to mincha. Returning a short while later, this time with his own *siddur* in hand, the Rebbe went ahead and gave it to the Reb Moshe (after first removing from it the loose papers interspersed throughout).

After 27 Adar I 5752, the *siddur* was generally given to *chassanim* through a member of *mazkirus*. On the days that the Rebbe participated in the *minyán* for *mincha*, *chassanim*

were able to receive the *siddur* from the Rebbe himself, in the specially outfitted room at the back of 770. ¹

1. Rema Even Ha'ezer 61:1
2. Until 5723 the Rebbe personally performed the *siddur kiddushin* at the marriage of many Lubavitcher couples, and before the *hascholas hanesius* in 5710, occasionally participated in the dinner as well. See "A Chassidisher Derher" issue 6 (66) p. 30 for more on this.
3. See Toras Menachem Hisvaaduyos 5710 p. 47.
4. See below regarding out-of-town weddings.



LEVI FREIDIN via JEW 240761

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.



Mivtzoim In Baltimore

Dear Editors,

In this month's Derher there was a very inspiring article about the *Mivtza Ois B'Sefer Torah* ["Unite the Children" Derher Teves 5776] and how it saves the world from disaster. It highlighted the need to add in *ahavas Yisroel* and that one of the ways of doing this is through including children from all over the world to buy a letter in a *sefer Torah* written especially for them.

Because of this there was a tremendous *hisorerus* in our yeshiva, Yeshivas Lubavitch of Baltimore. We felt that the best way for us *bochurim* to spend *nittel nacht* would be by meeting with Yidden in the community and offering them the chance to buy a letter for their children in the sixth *sefer Torah*.

Baruch Hashem and with the Rebbe's *brachos*, the *bochurim* were *matzliach* and all together we signed up over 150 children in 3 hours!

Thank you for being the catalyst for this *hisorerus* and for all your good work,

Tzviki Prus
Baltimore, Maryland



The Crowns in Lubavitch

Dear Editors,

I enjoyed reading your article about the Sefer Torah L'Yaldei Yisroel ["Unite the Children" Derher Teves 5776]. I would like to add several details, as told over by my mother, Mrs. Esther Sternberg, whose father, R' Zalman Gurary, was the one who donated the crown for the first *sefer Torah*.

On page 25, the article mentions that the crown for the Sefer Torah L'Yaldei Yisroel was the initiative of R' Zalman, who was also its sponsor. The Rebbe instructed that the crown be a replica of the one from the Sefer Torah L'Kabbolas P'nei Moshiach, which the Rebbe had hand picked eleven years earlier. R' Zalman suggested that the crown be made of gold, to which the Rebbe agreed. He later instructed R' Zalman to bring the crown to Eretz Yisroel for the *siyum sefer Torah*.

Regarding the actual crafting of the crown, an inaccuracy crept in. The article states that the crown of the Sefer Torah L'Kabbolas P'nei Moshiach was photographed, and this photograph was used to create a replica. This is incorrect.

My mother related what actually took place: When R' Zalman said that he

would sponsor the crown, he was told by *mazkirus* that in the next few days he will be given exact guidelines as to how it should be made.

A few days later Rabbi Hodakov called and said that they should come and pick something up from the office. R' Zalman came immediately to the office and was quietly handed a big bag by Rabbi Hodakov. Carefully wrapped inside to hide it from prying eyes was the crown of the Sefer Torah L'Kabbolas P'nei Moshiach. (The fact that the crown was being removed, albeit temporarily, from 770, would have caused quite an uproar had it become known, as this never occurred before, hence the secrecy.) A mold was made of the crown, and the manufacturer used it to replicate the golden crown.

My mother related another interesting anecdote: When the crown was complete, the Rebbetzin asked to see it. My father, R' Nochum, brought it to her, and the Rebbetzin commented that in Lubavitch there were numerous crowns donated by the “*kantenistin*,” (Jewish children forcibly drafted into the Czar’s army) which adorned the *sifrei Torah*, and that this crown resembles those.

Avrohom Sternberg
New London, Connecticut



The Rebbe’s Guidance

Dear Editors,

As always the Derher is wonderful, and I especially appreciated that the most recent issues arrived so promptly.

I don’t usually give feedback but I would like to express my thoughts about an article that you published a few months ago, which I enjoyed thoroughly. The interview with Rabbi Yitzchok Meir Gurary [“והנה ה' נצב עלי”]

Derher Iyar 5775] where he spoke about the guidance he received from the Rebbe in *yechidus* and letters, etc. clarified many things that I thought about over my years as a *bochur*.

If there is ever a chance in the future to include similar articles which show the Rebbe’s detailed involvement and instruction in a person’s life, I would enjoy it very much.

I also noticed that many times on the side of an article there is a *michtav* or a *ksav yad*, and they are often too small to read. For example, in the Teves issue from this year, on pages 46 and 47 the images are very small. The same was last month with the Rebbe’s letters to the the president of the JCC in Teaneck regarding the public menorahs [“Towers of Light” Derher Kislev 5776]. One needs a magnifying glass to read them and sometimes even that doesn’t help. I think it would be worthwhile to have a place on your website where one can read these in full size.

Yasher koach to the Derher team,

Pinchas Adler
Person Harbor, Florida



Favorite Article

Dear Editors,

I would like to thank you for the magazine that you put out. I read it every single month in yeshiva and I really appreciate it. It gives me a lot of great information that I didn’t know before. My favorite article this month was the one about ספר תורה לילדי ישראל [“Unite the Children” Derher Teves 5776]. Keep up the great amazing work and thank you so much,

Mendy Steinmetz
Oak Park, Michigan

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

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גולדהירש

DEDICATED BY
MR. AND MRS. EPHRAIM SHIZGAL AND FAMILY

לזכות
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A Chassidisher Derher
Vaad Talmidei Hatmimim



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