

שנת
הקהל את העם

A Chassidisher

Derher

א חסידישער דערהער

**Psak Din
for the World**

BEHIND THE PICTURE

**The Power of a
Chassidisher Story**

DARKEI HACHASSIDUS

מפי עוללים ויונקים

CHILDREN EDUCATE

MARKING FORTY YEARS SINCE "SHNAS HACHINUCH"



IYAR 5776
ISSUE 44 (121)

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IYAR 5776 ISSUE 44 (121)



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Children transcribe the Rebbe's sicha during the Tzivos Hashem rally of 2 Cheshvan, 5743.

Levi Freidin via Jem 208989

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Derher**Editorial**

At the height of the month of Iyar is the yom tov of Lag Ba'omer, *yom hilula* of Rashbi, and a special day known as "*mattan Torah* for *p'nimius haTorah*."

In a *sicha* (printed at the beginning of this issue), the Rebbe draws similarities between Rashbi, the leader of his generation, and the [Frierdiker] Rebbe, leader of our generation. Both saw the tremendous potential of each and every Yid and attempted to bring it to the surface in a compassionate manner. And both dedicated their lives to teaching and spreading the innermost secrets of the Torah.

We, as shluchim of the Rebbe, are charged with the same mission: to spread Chassidus throughout the world.

As the Rebbe taught us, we must never pass up an opportunity to teach and share with others. No person is too great, or too small, to take part in this mission. Even small children who may know very little are also expected to impart what they know to their friends.

In fact, this was one of the main things the Rebbe stressed when launching "*Shnas Hachinuch*"—a year dedicated to the education of children. The Rebbe wanted

the children themselves to become educators in their own right.

This month, we mark 40 years since the Rebbe announced the start of *Shnas Hachinuch*, a prelude to "*mivtza chinuch*," which eventually lead to the annual declaration of "Education Day USA" by the United States government.

In honor of this milestone, we have prepared a detailed overview of the story of this special *mivtza*, highlighting the Rebbe's call for Torah education.

The Rebbe took interest in so many of the intricacies of the *mivtza*, even asking every Chossid to write to him about their accomplishments in this field. "I suggest and I request, that immediately after we finish speaking about this, each and every one here should think about what we spoke, and then find a few minutes to write to me a few lines, describing what they have done about it!

"On the envelope, you should write that this letter has to do with *mivtza chinuch*. When I see the word '*chinuch*' on the envelope, I'll know that this letter has precedence over the other letters I receive.

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"If I do not receive any letter from someone in this regard, I'll know that this means he hasn't done anything to report about!" (Motzei Shabbos parshas Eikev, 5738).

Such strong words from the Rebbe certainly resonate within each and every one of us, calling us to action in this and all of the Rebbe's *mitzvot*.

With all of our efforts, we will speedily be *zoche* to the time when, ולא ילמדו עוד איש את, רעהו גו' כי כולם ידעו אותי למקטנם ועד גדולם.

The Editors

אסחה"פ ה'תשע"ו, שנת הקהל (ופרצת)

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The Living Archive



THE LIFE OF RASHBI THEN AND NOW

Lag Ba'omer is the day we celebrate the life and teachings of Rashbi.

Looking through his life story, it is evident that he was the Rebbe and leader of his generation. In this sicha, the Rebbe draws a parallel between the Rashbi's life and the life of the Frierdiker Rebbe.

Based on Sichas Shabbos parshas Bechukosai, Erev Lag Ba'Omer, 5744

OUR MISSION

The mission that the [Frierdiker] Rebbe charged us each with is a continuation of Rashbi's, being that the Rebbe is the Rashbi of our generation, and we are a reincarnation of his generation.

We were each made shluchim to spread the teachings of the inner part of Torah which has been revealed through Chabad Chassidus.

Rashbi in his times revealed a tremendous amount of the secrets of Torah, but as the generations went on it was only brought to the world in a slow, bit-by-bit process, and there were many limitations regarding its study.

During the lifetime of the Arizal he lifted the ban and proclaimed, "It is a mitzvah to reveal this wisdom." The Baal Shem Tov then explained that it is not only a mitzvah but it is an

obligation for the inner parts of Torah to be studied and disseminated. He did this through introducing the teachings of Chassidus.

With the chain of Chabad Rabbeim, Chassidus was taught in a way that the wellsprings themselves were reaching people on all levels, without the restrictions that were in place before the birth of Chassidus.

The climax of this dissemination occurred with the Rashbi of our generation.

BRING OUT THE BEST

In addition to this parallel between the [Frierdiker] Rebbe and Rashbi, there are also similarities in the way they treated and cared for every single Yid. Rashbi was all about bringing forth *chessed* upon the Yidden of his generation, as he famously said: "כול"



“אני לפטור את כל העולם כולו מן הדין” - “I can relieve the entire world from judgement.” In a similar vein, the [Frierdiker] Rebbe said that his *nesius* is one of kindness.

There is a story that serves as an example for the way the [Frierdiker] Rebbe was very careful to look at everyone with a meritorious eye.

In a letter that he once penned to a Yid who had unfortunately turned from the path of Torah, he began by giving him the title of “Chossid, G-d fearing etc...”

Chassidim who saw this were wondering, “How could this be? How can this person deserve such a glamorous title? When this individual receives the letter, he will proudly proclaim to one and all that he was given these titles by the Rebbe himself!”

In fact, that is exactly what he did; he used it for his own self-endorsement.

The [Frierdiker] Rebbe most certainly knew where this Yid was holding; they had met in the past. His life story was no secret at all; his family was well known amongst Chassidim and he himself had been a

big *lamdan* before leaving the Torah way, yet he still chose to address him this way.

When the [Frierdiker] Rebbe heard about the raised eyebrows the letter had generated, he explained his position based on a *halacha* in the Rambam.

The Rambam *paskens* that it is the true and inner desire of every single Yid to serve Hashem properly; some show this openly while by others it is concealed within them. With this being the case, it is not appropriate to address one Yid with these honorable titles and to omit them by another because they have ventured of the path of Torah. “I have the Rambam on my side,” proclaimed the [Frierdiker] Rebbe.

This approach, of always finding and pointing out the merits of other Yidden, is like that of the Rashbi.

OUR GENERATION

Each of us are shlichim of the [Frierdiker] Rebbe and, being that he is a continuation of Rashbi, we are his messengers as well.

This applies to both men and women alike, because in the area of

loving and fearing Hashem there are no differences.

Before *matan Torah* the decree that “the supernal should not mix with the worldly” was in place and therefore even though the *Avos* fulfilled the mitzvos it was not complete. Only once Hashem nullified that decree, can mankind achieve a completion in the mitzva of ‘knowing’ Hashem.

Gathered around Har Sinai to receive the Torah were all the Yidden, men and women. In fact, the women were told what would happen before Moshe went, and they told the men, as is understood from the *pesukim*.

With this shlichus that we were all entrusted, we must make sure that our efforts in spreading Chassidus should come out in physical action, as this is the ultimate and most necessary goal.

Rashbi himself gives us a clear indication of this. Despite his entire life being dedicated to learning Torah, to the extent that he called it his profession, he nevertheless interrupted his studies to make a lulav and build a sukkah. This is a clear message for how we are to approach the shlichus we were given. **T**



LEVI FREIDIN 198 JEM 271427

Lag Ba'omer 5746

The big Lag Ba'omer parades, with giant floats, hordes of clowns, and thousands of spectators, are the most famous moments of Lag Ba'omer with the Rebbe. Beginning with the Rebbe walking down the red carpet on to the specially constructed stage, as Ani Ma'amin was played by the orchestra, continuing with the *sichos* the Rebbe would say, and then the Rebbe waiving to the children as they passed by.

The *sichos* at the parades were often of a global and far reaching scope; such as the parade of 5727, on the eve of the Six Day War, when the Rebbe promised that Eretz Yisroel would emerge victorious. Or in 5740, when the Rebbe said a *sicha* in Russian, challenging the Soviet authorities to follow their own laws and allow Jewish children

behind the Iron Curtain to receive a Jewish education. The last six of the 12 *pesukim* were also introduced at a Lag Ba'omer parade.

These parades took place whenever Lag Ba'omer fell on a Sunday. In most years however, Lag Ba'omer is not on Sunday. As we have come to know already, no day with the Rebbe was 'just another day;' every day in 770 was special. If you were around the Rebbe, any 'run of the mill' day—even not Shabbos or Yom Tov or a unique calendar day when there was a big farbrengen—was also precious and full of special moments. This was especially true for a day like Lag Ba'omer, which for centuries had been a prominent day in Lubavitch.

Here we will describe one such Lag Ba'omer, 5746, which was a Tuesday.

EVENING OF LAG BA'OMER

For a while before Lag Ba'omer, Mr. Noach Dear, then a New York City councilman, wanted very much to know the Rebbe's opinion on a certain issue he was involved in. As this was a pressing subject, and a vote was approaching, he felt that it was urgent that he speak to the Rebbe about it face-to-face, and not just send a letter. In those years *yechidus* had already stopped, and "Sunday dollars" was not yet a fully established custom, so Mr. Dear was not sure of how he could arrange to speak with the Rebbe. That's when Reb Elimelech Neiman, a Gerrer Chosid who often brought messages from the Gerrer Rebbe to the Rebbe advised him to come to 770, and approach the Rebbe as he was going to his room after *maariv*.

They came to the Rebbe on the night of Lag Ba'omer. R' Neiman introduced Mr. Dear to the Rebbe, who greeted him with a big smile. Mr. Dear then handed the Rebbe an envelope.

On the way to his room, the Rebbe read the contents of the envelope. A few moments later Rabbi Groner told Mr. Dear that the Rebbe wanted to speak to him and he should go into *gan eden hatachton*. Afterwards, Mr. Dear asked the Rebbe that since this was such a sensitive topic, if the Rebbe could please send him a letter with the details of what they spoke. The Rebbe answered him that he had addressed the topic on Purim, and he will send him a copy of the *sicha*. (After the meeting the Rebbe instructed that an English translation of the *sicha* be prepared, which the Rebbe edited.)

When Mr. Dear was done, the Rebbe turned to Reb Elimelech:

The Rebbe: Today is Lag Ba'omer, a yom tov!

R' Neiman: My birthday is Lag Ba'omer, and my name is also Shimon, I'm named after Rashbi.

The Rebbe: If so then today is a yom tov for you as well. Does the Gerrer Rebbe hold any special celebration for Lag Ba'omer?

R' Neiman: I haven't heard of anything. Tomorrow night he will daven *maariv* with the Chassidim (an unusual occurrence).

The Rebbe: But that [tomorrow] is already the 34th Omer, what about Lag Ba'omer, why doesn't he do anything?

R' Neiman: I don't know.

The Rebbe: Since you are his Chossid, for you not knowing [his reason] is enough of a reason. If people here will take issue with Noach Dear for taking my time, you should defend him, and tell them that it's for something very important.

DAY OF LAG BA'OMER

It has long been a custom in Lubavitch, that Lag Ba'omer was a day to receive *brachos* to bear children. Every year, many women would come to the Rebbe for this purpose, and there are myriads of stories of childless women who gave birth after receiving a *bracha* on Lag Ba'omer.

As there wasn't an official time for people to approach the Rebbe, those who needed this special *bracha* would try see the Rebbe whenever possible during the day of Lag Ba'omer. Some would wait outside the Rebbe's house in the hope to be able to ask for the *bracha* when the Rebbe either came or left. When the Rebbe came to 770 that morning, there were many people standing outside 770, including many who were hoping for the chance to request a *bracha* as the Rebbe was arriving from his home.

When the Rebbe arrived, he distributed dollars to the assembled crowd for about half an hour. To one woman who requested a *bracha* for children the Rebbe answered: *bekarov*. To another: *bekarov mamesh*. To many others the Rebbe said: *zara chaya vekayama*.

When Rabbi Yeshayahu Hertzel of Kfar Tavor passed by, the Rebbe called him back with a smile and said: "Don't you usually take for your whole area?" The Rebbe then gave him another dollar, saying: "Take for your area."

When Reb Asher Sassonkin passed by, the Rebbe asked him "Why aren't you smiling?"

A woman said something to the Rebbe about one of the shluchim in Buffalo, and the Rebbe gave her a dollar for him.



LEVI FREIDIN via JEM 271469



At 3:10 the Rebbe left 770 to go to the Ohel. However, instead of making a right turn on Eastern Parkway, towards Queens, the Rebbe's car made a U-turn on Eastern Parkway. The 770 veterans immediately understood that the Rebbe was first going to Prospect Park to observe the children's Lag Ba'omer fair—something he hadn't done in a few years—and they scrambled to get there as fast as possible.

Some of the newcomers, especially those who couldn't understand what was being said as their English wasn't so good, didn't quite know what to make of the U-turn, and took off running after the car. Rabbi Asi Spiegel of Tzfas relates how he and some fellow *bochurim* were standing outside when the Rebbe left to the Ohel. When the car turned left, they were caught completely off guard, and started running down the street to see where the Rebbe was going. When they realized they would never catch up, and not wanting to lose sight of the car, they commandeered a car being driven by a hapless Chosid, and had him follow the Rebbe's car to the park.

When the Rebbe arrived at the park, the car stopped on a hill from where it was possible to see the fair. After that, the Rebbe made one round of the park in his car, waving to children the whole time. There was a lot of trash on the road, and one of the Chassidim felt it was disrespectful for the Rebbe's car to pass by such a mess and began clearing the path in front of the Rebbe's car. When the Rebbe noticed this, he waved his hand dismissively. From there the Rebbe continued on to the Ohel.

AN UNEXPECTED FARBRENGEN

The Rebbe returned from the Ohel in the evening, and encouraged the singing by the crowd of Chassidim waiting in front of 770. *Mincha* and *maariv* took place immediately, and ended at about 10:10. Just after the Rebbe entered his room, Rabbi Groner emerged and informed the crowd that there would be a farbrengen in ten minutes.

The shul at 770 immediately became a hive of activity, as everyone helped set up and prepare for a farbrengen at such short notice. The benches and bleachers had to be set up, the Rebbe's stage arranged, wine and *mezonos* procured, and the whole Crown Heights had to be notified.

Phone calls also quickly went out to communities all over the world to set up the live hookup to the farbrengen. In many places it was already late at night, and people had to be woken up to call in for the hookup. In addition, *bochurim* had gone to sell *sifrei Chassidus* in various communities, and their friends quickly tried to find ways to notify them to return to 770 so they wouldn't miss the farbrengen.

Amazingly, when the Rebbe came down to the farbrengen ten minutes later, everything was set up and ready.

In the first *sicha* the Rebbe pointed out that Rashbi was all about *ahavas Yisroel*. The Zohar describes the story how during a severe drought, Rashbi set everything aside to bring about the end of the drought.

After spending thirteen years in a cave, the first thing he did upon emerging was to inquire if there was anything he could do to help someone. In addition, his composition of the Zohar was also out of *ahavas Yisroel*. As the Zohar tells us, that with this *sefer* we will leave *golus*. In other words, Rashbi wrote it to bring Moshiach and to take the Yidden out of *golus*. Also, the fact that he established his *yahrtzeit* as a day of joy, stemmed from his extreme *ahavas Yisroel*.

Pesach Sheini is often in the same week as Lag Ba'omer. The Rebbe explained how Pesach Sheini is also all about *ahavas Yisroel*:

The people who asked Moshe for Pesach Sheini because they were *tamei*, knew well in advance that they would be *tamei* on Erev Pesach. As we know, they were *tamei* from carrying Yosef's *aron*, which they have already been doing for a year. Yet we find, that they only came to Moshe on the day of Erev

Pesach, to ask what to do. Why did they wait until the last minute?

From here we see the importance of *ahavas Yisroel*, of doing a favor for another person, even for someone that had already passed away. While they were busy carrying Yosef's *aron*, they wouldn't think of their own needs. Only at the final moment, when the rest of *klal Yisroel* was preparing their *korban Pesach*, did they approach Moshe and ask what to do.

The Rebbe then instructed that although Lag Ba'omer has passed already, in the next few days there should still be an effort to make assemblies for children who didn't take part in the Lag Ba'omer programs; to teach them about Lag Ba'omer and the lessons of the day.

WE WANT MOSHIACH NOW

The shiur Rambam of Lag Ba'omer that year was in Hilchos Geirushin. One of the *halachos* there is that it is forbidden to marry a woman with the intent to divorce her later on.

The relationship between Yidden and Hashem is compared to a marriage. How then, the Rebbe asked, can Hashem have left us in *golus*, 'divorcing' us, so to speak? At *matan Torah*—our marriage—He already knew that we would be sent into *golus*. In *parshas Vayelech*, Hashem tells Moshe that the Yidden will eventually sin, and He will place them

in *golus*. How can He violate His own Torah by 'marrying' *klal Yisroel*, while intending to 'divorce' them in the future?

We must say then, that *golus* is not really a 'divorce.' Rather Hashem wants us to cry '*ad mosai*,' until Moshiach will come!

At the end of the *sicha*, someone in the crowd shouted '*ad mosai*' and then everyone started singing We Want Moshiach Now (to the tune of "*Ivadyemi*"). The singing went on for over an hour and a half!

At the start of the singing the Rebbe motioned to Reb Meir Abehsera to whistle, and motioned to another person to say *l'chaim*. For the rest of the singing, the Rebbe looked around silently, and occasionally said *l'chaim* to people.

When the singing finally ended, the Rebbe noted that on Simchas Torah, the *gabbai* announces '*ad kan*' after each *hakafa*, otherwise the *hakafa* would never end. So too here, a *vaad hamesader* is needed to decide when to end the *niggunim*.

After this, the Rebbe spoke about the importance of bringing children to shul for *Aseres Hadibros* on Shavuot; signing them up for a good, Torah-educational camp; and encouraged the completion of the replica of 770 in Kfar Chabad. The Alter Rebbe's *niggun* was sung, followed by several other *niggunim*, and the farbrengen ended at 2:15 AM. **T**





Art

An expression of the soul.



A Tool for Inspiration

While the art of carving certain forms isn't permitted by halacha, there remains an enormous potential for good within art. In this letter, the Rebbe explains the place of the visual arts within Judaism.

After a long delay, I received your letter, in which you ask how to understand the *possuk*, “You shall not make for yourselves an engraven statue or any image.” You ask, also, whether there is an essential difference between the visual arts and music.

Now, in regard to practical *halacha*, a local *rav* can let you know what is included in the [prohibition mentioned in the] abovementioned *possuk*, with all applicable details.

I will add an essential point: An artist, male or female, has a wide variety of ways to utilize his or her talents to their fullest extent, without trespassing on the laws of

the Torah, which is **the Torah of life**, i.e. instructions for life in this world—life that should be worthy of its name in every way. On the contrary; through the visual arts one can add enthusiasm, as well as a deeper understanding in matters of the world in general, and in particular a deeply-felt understanding of the words of Israel’s composer of sweet songs (Dovid Hamelech), “How great are your works, Hashem. How manifold are your works, Hashem.” In this way, one develops admiration, respect, and awe towards the Creator, in a wondrous way.

In numerous *sichos*, my father-in-law, the Rebbe discusses the impression and deep contemplation of his father, the Rebbe [Rashab], when he saw paintings that were the handiwork of an expert artist; to the extent that despite his every moment being precious, as is well-known,

nevertheless, while he was in Paris, he spent several hours visiting the Louvre, particularly the art gallery. He then told his son and successor, my father-in-law, the Rebbe, concepts in *Chassidus*, the sparks of which had entered his mind while viewing the paintings.

I hope that the fact that you quote the abovementioned *possuk*, which is at the beginning of the *Aseres Hadibros*—the foundation of the entire Torah, up until and including the most recent laws in the Oral Torah—shows that you’re structuring your life to be in fitting with these instructions, and that you do so in a true and deeply-felt way. Especially since this is the goal of a painter, to absorb and transmit the innermost aspects of the subject being portrayed, to the extent that even someone who isn’t an artist will feel the innermost aspects of it.



JEM102975

THE REBBE VISITS THE EXHIBIT OF ARTIST BARUCH NACHSHON AT 788 EASTERN PARKWAY, 6 KISLEV 5739.

May it be Hashem's will that you will influence your surroundings in the abovementioned direction; influence in an appropriate way and with the appropriate words, and in particular, by being a living example.¹

Not Just A Painting

In this letter to an artist who had painted a portrait of the Rebbe, the Rebbe points out the powerful effect that a painting can have on a person.

...This point is also what leads to the next part of my letter—extending my heartfelt thanks to you for the attention you gave to the portrait that you painted and sent me, especially since besides the usual effort an artist would expend, you also had to take a photograph.

In addition to thanking you, I will also use this opportunity to express my hope that—based on the notion

that an artist imbues his painting with his own spirit and soul, and more so, [a work of art] is similar to an intellectual concept, where not only does the intellect grasp the concept, but the intellect is taken by the concept—since this portrait depicts a Jew with a beard, wearing a *gartel* (symbolizing Hashem girding the Jews with strength), with a *siddur* in hand, etc., it is certain that whoever sees the painting will be affected by it, and all the more so, the artist himself [will be affected by it].

However good and complete one's spiritual situation may be, there is always room for improvement in every good and holy thing—the Torah and its mitzvot, since they are infinite, being connected to Hashem who is infinite. From this [perspective] comes the instruction—[an instruction] which also gives a person the ability

to fulfill it—to improve in holiness and to go from strength to strength.

In light of the above, I hope that you will influence your wife, as well as your entire surroundings, in this direction.

May you be blessed with success in all of the above and may you share good news.²

True to Life

Reb Zalman Kleinman's depictions of life in Kfar Chabad in its' early days offer a glimpse into a world that was; a world of genuine chassidic life. In this letter, the Rebbe suggested that these paintings be produced, and explained why they should be as accurate as possible.

Mr. Zalman Kleinman,

I just received a newspaper article accompanied by some paintings of yours. These had an effect on me particularly because they portrayed



The rough draft for the cover of *Moshiach Times* (Nissan 5749) was given to the Rebbe for review. The clock on the draft showed a time that was earlier than the proper time to burn *chametz*. The Rebbe therefore asked whether the time to burn *chametz* was earlier than usual that year, and instructed that they clarify with a *rav* what the exact time would be. The final edition depicts a clock showing a later time.

things as they were—without artifice or even artistic embellishment. It is fitting, and it would be proper, that you create, in this manner, an entire album about Kfar Chabad. Not only [depicting] how it is now, but also how it was when it was first settled, so that this album will showcase the development of the Kfar. The contemporary illustrations will serve the same benefit, since it will hopefully soon develop yet further. If this line of paintings proves successful, it's worthwhile to consider publishing them as a series of postcards or as individual postcards.

The main thing is that the paintings be designed true-to-life, and you should not be swayed if someone says that for such a purpose, a photograph would be sufficient, and no painting is needed. In fact, the difference between a photograph and an expertly-drawn painting, even a true-to-life painting, is obvious.

Of course, if there are expenses associated with producing these

paintings, they will be paid from a special fund, along with compensation for your work. I await your positive response.

It's superfluous to mention that I don't mean [that you should paint pictures of] only the houses and the like [in Kfar Chabad], but rather also—and primarily—depictions of life in the Kfar, from the most spiritual to the most physical aspects.

Accurate Illustrations

In 5746, the Rebbe made a special emphasis that children should be brought to Shul on Shavuos to hear the *Aseres Hadibros*. Following this, Tzivos Hashem made a proclamation calling for children to do so. In the illustration on the proclamation, “modern”-looking men and women were depicted running to shul, and the Rebbe commented that at least one bearded man should be added to the illustration. ¹

1. Igros Kodesh vol. 26 p. 112.
2. Ibid. vol. 32 p. 127.



CHASSIDIC ARTIST ZALMAN KLEINMAN AT HIS STUDIO.

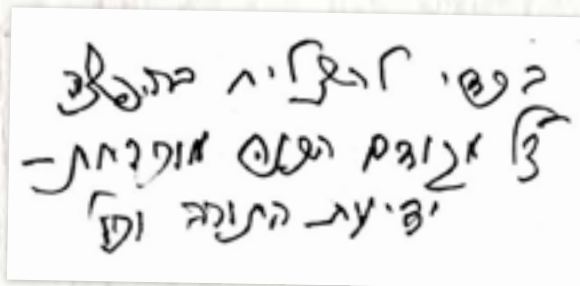


כתב יד קודש

Prepare Yourself

- Teshura Klein-Lazar 5766 -

This *ksav yad kodesh* was written in response to a *bochur* who asked the Rebbe if he should get involved in various outreach projects, or if it is better for him to stay in yeshiva and focus on personal growth:



In order to succeed in spreading [Torah and Yiddishkeit etc.], one must have the necessary preparation - [vast] Torah knowledge etc.

בכדי להצליח בהפצה צ"ל [צריך להיות] מקודם הכנה מוכרחת - ידיעת התורה וכו'.

[See also Likutei Sichos vol. 25 p. 130.]

GRAND
LAG B'OMER PARADE

לזכות
שיינא גאלדא בת ליבא מרים
לרפואה שלימה וקרובה
נדפס ע"י הרה"ת ר' יצחק מאיר ולאח שיחיו שפאלטר

CHILDREN EDUCATE

★40

SHNAS HACHINUCH
5736 - 5776

LAG BA'OMER PARADE 5736, SHNAS HACHINUCH.

In Iyar of this year, we mark **40 years** since the Rebbe's establishing "*Shnas Hachinuch*—a Year of Education, eventually leading to the launch of *Mivtza Chinuch* and the proclamation of Yud-Aleph Nissan as "Education Day - USA." The famous "Twelve Pessukim and Maamorei Chazal"—the trademark staple of every children's rally, were also introduced by the Rebbe during this campaign. Read the story of a revolutionary mivtza with an impact of global proportions and gain insight into the underlying points of this most important endeavor.





INTRODUCTION

Throughout Jewish history, educating and teaching our children has been recognized as the bedrock of our nation's continuity and the secret of our survival, for it is at a young age that the foundations of Yiddishkeit are planted in a person. Although children may not be the deepest thinkers, and will understand their learning much better as they grow older; they often act on the shallowest of emotions, and will perform mitzvos with much more depth once they reach adulthood—it is their early education that influences them for a lifetime, and is the most crucial.

That's one way to view children in Yiddishkeit—as an investment in the *future*; but in the present, a child's actions have little meaning or importance. But there's another way to see children: in addition to being critical to our future, they are important on their own.

Throughout the *nesius*, the Rebbe showed an unprecedented focus on children and their education. When there was a difficult time in the world, he requested that people gather children; when he would enter and exit the shul, he would give tzedakah

to the children; and when they came into *yechidus*, he would quiz them on their learning. The Rebbe's first activities upon arriving in America were dealing with children—Merkos L'inyonei Chinuch, the *mesibos Shabbos* campaign, and the first children's rallies—and, later on, a major focus of Lubavitch's activities was on education. The Rebbe himself created a children's program—Tzivos Hashem—complete with uniforms and slogans.

And unlike any of the previous Rabbeim, the Rebbe spoke directly to children on a regular basis. It wasn't enough for them to get the Rebbe's message as it trickled down through their parents—they had to hear it on their own. Notwithstanding the fact that children could hardly understand the *sichos* on the level of adults, and often didn't even understand Yiddish, relying on the translation that followed; and despite the fact that the children, being children, were not always as focused on the *sicha* as they should have been—the Rebbe took the time to speak to them, presenting the *sichos* in a format that they could relate to. This wasn't only a novelty in Lubavitch: there is not a single known Jewish leader—in this century or in millennia past—that did so.

But the Rebbe's focus on *chinuch* didn't stop with the time and effort he put into children and their education; rather, he articulated new approaches and philosophies to every area of *chinuch*, with the result that *mivtza chinuch*, launched in Nissan/Iyar 5736, is one of the most multi-faceted, rich—and complex—of the Rebbe's *mivtzoim*.

The *mivtza* was officially launched on Shabbos mevarchim Iyar 5736, when the Rebbe announced *mivtza chinuch*—as a general *mivtza*—and designated the remainder of the year 5736 and 5737 as *shnas hachinuch*. Then, the following week, the Rebbe held three farbrengens one after another—Thursday night, Shabbos, and Sunday night—in honor of the new *mivtza*. As with many of the *mivtzoim*, the Rebbe continued developing the *mivtza*, adding different components and *shtureming* about it, throughout the following summer months.

In this article we will attempt to highlight some of the special events at the outset of the mivtza, and the various points that the Rebbe discussed about the approach and necessity of chinuch during that period.



JEM 105683

SELF-EDUCATION

“I was once accosted with a complaint,” the Rebbe said. “How can I say that *chinuch* still applies after bar mitvza, and also regarding *talmidei chachamim*? I answered that there is a *din* in Torah [that in order to begin working in the *Bais Hamikdash*] a Kohen must bring a *minchas chinuch*, notwithstanding the fact that he was already an adult. And even later, after he is a practicing Kohen for many years, in order to rise to the level of Kohen Gadol he must bring yet another *korban chinuch*.¹”

In the Rebbe’s view, *chinuch* is much broader than in the simple sense—*adults* educating *children*. Firstly, the Rebbe believed that it isn’t only about educating others, it is about educating yourself, as an adult.

The need for constant self-education, the Rebbe explained, is because no matter how much knowledge you possess in Torah and in Yiddishkeit, it is inherently finite. Torah, on the other hand, is infinite; and something finite—as great as it may be—has absolutely no significance in comparison to infinity. So no matter how lofty one is, you must always strive to climb higher

LAG BA’OMER PARADE, 5736 - SHNAS HACHINUCH

and higher, to leave your personal Mitzrayim. Just like a child begins his education by entering into *cheder* (his *arainfir*), every person should “*arainfir’n zich in cheder*,” to check himself into “*cheder*.” Your education has just begun!²

Then there is *chinuch* in another sense, the education of others. This, the Rebbe said, is really the overall concept of all the *mitvzoim*: to approach a Yid, explain to him the importance of the *mitvza*, and keep at it until he is actually convinced to do it.³ Nevertheless, the Rebbe said, *chinuch* is important in itself—“*kove’a bracha l’aztmo*.⁴”

Later on, whenever the Rebbe would list the *mitvzoim*, he would begin with *mitvza chinuch* and *ahavas Yisrael*—“the general *mitvzoim*”—since they include the rest of the *mitvzoim* in them.

But on the simplest level, *chinuch* is about children’s education, and

here we come to perhaps the most fascinating aspect of the Rebbe’s *mitvza chinuch*. The Rebbe announced that education wasn’t only about *adults* educating *children* (or other adults)—children can be *mechanchim* as well. This brought into sharp focus his general stand on children—they are not simply keys to the future, but they are inherently important individuals. It is with this theme that the Rebbe instituted the Twelve Pesukim at the onset of this *mitvza*.

The Rebbe brought a precedent from an intriguing Gemara in Bava Metzia. The Gemara relates⁵ that when Rabbi Chanina and Rav Chiya were in a dispute, Rabbi Chanina said to Rav Chiya: “Would you dispute with me? If, *chas veshalom*, the Torah were forgotten from Yisrael, I would restore it with my powers of *pilpul*.” To which Rav Chiya replied: “Would you dispute with me, who achieved that the Torah *shouldn’t* be forgotten from Yisrael?”

“What did I do? I sowed flax, out of which I made nets to trap deers. Their flesh I gave to orphans, and from their skins I prepared scrolls, upon which I wrote the five Chumashim of the Torah. Then I went to a town that contained no teachers, and I taught the five Chumashim to five children, one Chumash to each child, and the six *sedarim* of the Mishna (which was learned by heart at that time) to six children, one *seder* each. I told them: ‘Until I return, teach each other the Chumash and the Mishnah.’ I.e. each child should teach his friends his Chumash or his Seder.

“Thus,” Rav Chiya concluded, “I preserved the Torah from being forgotten from Yisrael.”

The Gemara continues that this is what Rabbi Yehuda Hanassi meant when he said, “How great are the works of Chiya!”

From this story we see, the Rebbe said, that when a child is five years old, the age of learning Chumash, it is already time to make him into a *mechanech*! And not only the *mechanech* of one other person; as soon as he knows Chumash Bereishis, and there are four other children who don’t know it yet, he should immediately begin teaching them!

The Rebbe gave concrete directives in all the various areas of *chinuch*, from conventional *chinuch* in schools and camps, to education at home, and even to children educating their friends.

CHILDREN’S EDUCATION

The first proposal was to get as many children as possible into schools and camps where they would receive a kosher education; and, even more so, an education *al taharas hakodesh*, of solely Torah. Camps, the Rebbe pointed out, are even better than schools in certain respects: First of all, the children don’t have to learn

limudei chol. Additionally, overnight camps have the advantage that the child is within a framework of *chinuch* twenty-four hours a day, for several weeks at a time.⁶

The Rebbe’s proposition was that, from now on, every type of educational institution—yeshivos, day schools, talmud Torahs, preschools, day camps, overnight camps, etc.—should accept ten percent of their children without charge.

The source for this comes from the Gemara, which says, “Take heed to the children of the poor, for Torah

will emanate from them.” The Rebbe noted that if the poor are paying for their children’s education, what is there to take heed to? The Gemara is telling us to be careful—and put in more effort—to help the poor children because they cannot pay.

Just like *maaser* has an effect on the rest of the product, the ten percent of the students that are enrolled for free, will impact the rest of the institution.

The point of this, the Rebbe stipulated, was not to absolve parents of their obligation to pay for their children’s education. Rather, the



THE REBBE DISTRIBUTES COINS FOR THE CHILDREN AT THE CONCLUSION OF A CHILDREN’S RALLY.

aim of this tuition break is to assist people who truly cannot pay—and are possibly even embarrassed to ask for help. But once they know that every educational institution has a quota of children to take in for free, they will feel comfortable signing up. This way, many children will be saved.⁷

Sweeping and broad—and revolutionary—as it was, the Rebbe said as follows: “Regarding the *mosdos* that will do so because I requested, I am asking them with a double request. Regarding the *mosdos* that need more than just a request [from me], may it

be Hashem’s will that they consider the proposal on their own, and eventually arrive at the same decision.”

EDUCATION AT HOME

Here the Rebbe emphasized the value of early-childhood education, beginning at birth. This is sourced in the generations-old custom of hanging a *Shir Hamaalos* near the infant from before birth, and rocking the baby to sleep with lullabies extolling the value of Torah. It is far from just a nice *minhag*, the Rebbe said: Everything an infant sees has an effect for the rest of his or her life; and for those that aren’t ready to accept anything unless others confirm it as well—science has “discovered” this as well.

Parents should also actively focus on this stage of children’s education in other areas. Instead of giving their children toys and pictures of non-kosher animals, like dogs, cats, etc. parents should give their children holy things to look at and play with, like a pushka, a *bentcher*, and the like. Similarly, the entire family—parents as well as siblings—should know that when they rock the child to sleep with a lullaby about Torah, in whatever language it is, it isn’t just another way

to calm him down—it is a vital part of the education.⁸

The Rebbe also asked parents to get their children used to giving *tzedakah*; and here he displayed a unique understanding of the struggles a child has to deal with. Other things, like learning with another child, or teaching another child to fulfill a mitzvah, are much easier for them, because they aren’t losing anything. On the contrary, they feel good about themselves—they feel like teachers and leaders, like their parents. So although it takes time and effort to teach a child to do that, it is not so difficult.

But when a child receives an “allowance” (as it’s called in this country), and is told, “You should give *tzedakah*”—And to whom? To an acquaintance? To a friend? No!—“To a poor person. You don’t owe the poor person anything and you never even saw that person. Yet, because you know that the poor person needs money, go and take your hard earned money—which you received as a prize for learning Torah by heart—and give it away without asking for anything back.”

This is against a child’s nature and is their greatest *nisayon*. “I can’t do it!” the child cries. “I was able to do all



11 EVES 5739, YOSSIE MELAMED via JEM 286591



27 KISLEV 5737, Y SCHILDKRAUT via JEM 108587

JEWISH PUBLIC-SCHOOL CHILDREN ARRIVE AT 770 FOR A CHANUKAH RALLY WITH THE REBBE.

the other things: I say Shema Yisrael, I say all the *pesukim* and *maamarei Chazal* and passages from Tanya, I also convinced other children to do so, and I was happy to. But when it comes to *mitvza tzedakah*, here is where it gets *farhakt*—I just can't do it!"

So the child must be taught not to be discouraged by this; some things in life are more difficult than others, but if Hashem tells you to do something, it is within your capability. If you work hard enough, you'll be able to fulfill this mitzvah too.

When you educate a child in tzedakah early on, before their obligated in the mitzvah of tzedakah, and possibly even before they have the mitzvah of *chinuch*, the child will learn to empathize with another person's suffering. Furthermore, tzedakah helps in the security of all Yidden, because when Hashem sees that you gave life

to a poor person, He reciprocates in a similar manner.

As an incentive for the children, and in order to make this difficult mitzvah a little easier, the Rebbe said that each child should have his and her own tzedakah pushka, with their own name on it, where they will give tzedakah of their own money, ideally every weekday. When it gets full, *the child* will be the one to call the pushka collector and tell him that they filled up their own tzedakah pushka with their own money.⁹

CHILDREN AS EDUCATORS

All children, the Rebbe said, should get involved in educating themselves and their friends, and, one of the ways to do so is by learning the Twelve Pesukim and Maamarei Chazal. These *pesukim* should be translated in all

languages,¹¹ and it is critical that the children *learn* them—not just memorize them by heart—since the whole point is for them to educate their friends with the *content* of the *pesukim*.

The Rebbe announced that he would distribute three dollars to every child: Two for their activities in *chinuch*, which they could use for whatever they want, and a third for tzedakah, which would bring success to the activities. This should also be done throughout the world—giving the children three coins in local currency, in denominations of one or ten. The point of this is to combine all the worldwide activities, which is accomplished when they are funded by general pools in every location, which all become one, general, worldwide pool.¹²

Then the Rebbe added, that “being that it is all coming from a fund of my father-in-law *nessi doreinu*, the words of the Gemara regarding Iyov—‘he who takes a *pruta* from Iyov is blessed’—apply here as well.¹³ This will bring added *bracha* and *hatzlacha* in all the coins, or bills that will be distributed,” throughout the world.¹⁴

Additionally, since children should be incentivized to do good things—until they get older and do it for the right reasons on their own—prizes should be given out to whoever submits reports of their activities. This should include children after bar mitzvah as well. The first prizes should be given on Lag Ba'omer, the Rebbe said, since it is connected to children. (“Meanwhile,” the Rebbe added, “I haven’t found an explanation in Chassidus for *why* it’s connected to children, but on a simple level it’s because that’s when the students of Rabbi Akiva stopped dying.”)¹⁵

On a more general level, the Rebbe requested that every single person get involved in *chinuch*, in every possible way. “We are asking everyone, men

ONE SINGLE JEWISH CHILD

In parshas Emor, the torah tells us the story of “the son of a Mitzri” who, while fighting with “the son of a Yisraeli”, cursed Hashem’s name. He was upset because when he tried pitching his tent with his Jewish mother’s *shevet*, he was kicked out. He was told that a person’s *shevet* goes by the father, so he couldn’t pitch his tent with any other of the *shevatim* either. When he brought his case to Moshe, he was ruled against, and when he left the courtroom, he cursed Hashem’s name. Since the Yidden had never been taught what to do in such a situation, they put him in jail for the time being, until Hashem would give guidance to Moshe. After Hashem told Moshe the laws of a *mekalel*—which included various details of how he should be stoned to death, and also other laws of *nezikin*—he was taken out of jail and put to death.

Most interesting about this story is the fact that it is a story altogether. Why does Hashem care that a lowly person like that cursed His name? And it’s not as if he went and cursed Hashem’s name randomly; it was at a weak moment, when he was upset. Why is it so very important, to the extent that it takes up entire section in the Torah?

This shows us that every Yid, every child, makes a difference to Hashem. One must never upset a fellow Yid and cause him to rebel; even if you’re right, like in the case of the son of the Mitzri, who was rightfully denied a place by the *shevatim*. Still, one must exert extreme effort to take care of a Jewish child and ensure that he behaves correctly. This story demonstrates just how important every child is.¹⁰



LEVI FREIDIN via JEM 257278

THE REBBE LOOKS ON AS A CHILD RECITES ONE OF THE 12 PESUKIM AT A CHILDREN'S RALLY, CHOL HAMOED SUKKOS 5749.

and women, adults and children, to do everything within their ability to involve the most Yidden possible in *chinuch*.¹⁶ Every adult and child should take upon themselves to do at least one activity for *chinuch* every month—learning one *possuk* by heart, gaining at least one *mechunach*, etc. Once you start, you'll realize that it is not as difficult as you imagined, and hopefully, you'll grow even more the second month.¹⁷

NO COPYRIGHT!

The Rebbe directed his words to every segment of the Jewish world, both those who would be happy to fulfill the Rebbe's directives and also those who would be less enthusiastic. He quoted the words of the Frierdiker Rebbe who, upon arrival on American soil, announced that he didn't want a "copyright" on his activities; to the

contrary, he would be happy if others copied him and did even more! He also didn't need the activities to be done in his name, everyone could do it as his own thing, especially if he adds his own ideas, in which case the additional activities truly are his own, just as it is with patent laws: A person can utterly duplicate an original invention, but if he changes even a single small detail, he can take out a new patent under his own name, and make a *gevaldiken tummel*, that this is his invention now! He then publicizes throughout the world that people should pay him for it, give him honor, rewards, and so on.

It doesn't make a difference why people choose to get involved in the *mitvza*, the Rebbe said, *as long as it happens*, and includes the maximum amount of children, both boys and

girls, and children in years and children in knowledge.¹⁸

Lubavitchers world-wide threw themselves into the new *mitvza*. In New York, *bochurim* met with representatives of the Jewish Federation of New York and convinced them to subsidize children's tuition. Then they went house-to-house talking to parents and recruiting children to Jewish schools. They also spoke to principals in Jewish schools all over New York and asked them to accept children for lower prices or for free, and many agreed. (Tzach of New York also subsidized children's tuition and continues to subsidize the tuition of many Jewish children in the New York metropolitan until this day).

Immediately following the first *farbrengens*, dozens of *askanim* from all over Eretz Yisrael met in Kfar Chabad to discuss practical steps.

Various people took upon themselves tasks related to their field: The director of Beis Rivka in Kfar Chabad (Beis), Rabbi Shmuel Chefer, for example, took upon himself to begin preparing material to learn with the children, and להבחיל"ח Rabbi Moshe Slonim a"h was to put together a list of schools and preschools to visit.

In one of the early farbrengens of the mivtza, the Rebbe singled out people that had experience in *chinuch* to get involved in the *mivtza*, and specifically the shluchim who had recently been sent to Eretz Yisroel. (When they do so, the Rebbe said, they will *schlep* along with them also those who are sleeping, as well as those who argue that they are too old and dignified to get involved).¹⁹

Following the Rebbe's call, the shluchim visited schools all over the country to speak about *chinuch*, eventually reaching 941 schools over a span of a mere few months! They also took a mitzvah tank from Yerushalayim and visited *moshavim*, where some of them fanned out among the houses to check mezuzos and put up new ones, and others gathered children around the tank to learn with them, give them cards with the Twelve Pesukim, *mincha/maariv* booklets, tzedakah pushkas, and pictures of the Rebbe. On Fridays they would visit the army bases. Rabbi Aharon Leizer Ceitlin a"h, one of the shluchim, wrote a detailed account of their activities.

A sample log reads: "16 Tammuz, Kibbutz Kfar Hanavi and Moshav Mishmar Hayarden: 8 mezuzos, a few tefillin, 55 tzedakah boxes, 50 [children in] *mivtza chinuch*, distribution of materials. 17 Tammuz, Metula: 10 *mivtza* tefillin, 3 mezuzos, *mivtza chinuch* with 25 children, 25 tzedakah boxes, distribution of materials." This goes on and on, day after day, as the shluchim marched on to spread the Rebbe's message.

Due to the Rebbe's emphasis on camp being central to *chinuch*, the Machne Yisrael Day Camp was established that summer, with many children recruited from the Released Time program in public schools. Other existing camps were extended for an additional week.

The following Sukkos, 5737, the Rebbe held a special, one-of-a-kind farbrengen for the children who attend the Released Time program in the sukkah adjacent to 770.²⁰

It was that year, at the conclusion of *shnas hachinuch*, when the Rebbe began delivering *sichos* to children's rallies several times a year; when they returned from camp, on Chanukah; and several other occasions. These *sichos* were preceded by the recital of the newly instituted Twelve Pesukim, and followed by the Rebbe distributing

two coins to each child through the teachers and counselors, one for tzedakah and one for personal use.

THE TWELVE PESUKIM

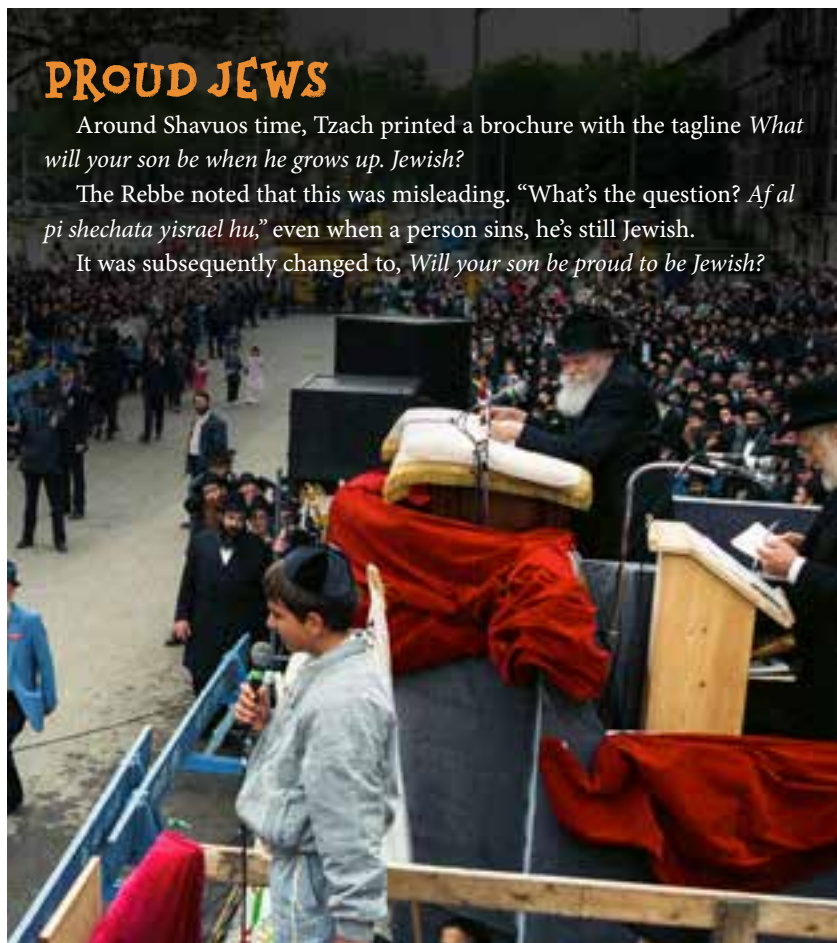
In addition to the importance of *chinuch* as a general theme, the Rebbe also pointed to it as an antidote to the enemies of the Jewish people, as the *possuk* says, "מפי עוללים ויונקים יסדת עוז" — "Out of the mouths of babies and sucklings You have established strength...in order to put an end to enemy and avenger." In the earlier stages of the *mivtza*, the Rebbe highlighted the behind-the-scenes pressure to put a Jordanian flag on Har Habayis. There was also the famous story of the plane with hundreds of Yidden being hijacked to Uganda, and eventually rescued by a miraculous Israeli operation.

PROUD JEWS

Around Shavuot time, Tzach printed a brochure with the tagline *What will your son be when he grows up. Jewish?*

The Rebbe noted that this was misleading. "What's the question? *Afal pi shechata yisrael hu*," even when a person sins, he's still Jewish.

It was subsequently changed to, *Will your son be proud to be Jewish?*



THE REBBE LOOKS ON AS A CHILD RECITES ONE OF THE 12 PESUKIM AT THE LAG BA'OMER PARADE, 5750.

CHAIM B HALBERSTAM via JEM 101585

For this reason, the Rebbe insisted that children be involved in all the *mitvzoim*, especially *mitvza chinuch*, and how it is so important for them to educate their friends.²¹

Children are natural educators, because they naturally make friends with others their age, and when they learn something new, their first instinct is to run and share their

exciting discovery with their friends. They also love boasting to their friends when they find out something that their friends didn't know about, and this impulse, too, can be used for holiness. All you have to do is have a talk with your children—boys and girls—and explain to them that whenever they meet another child, whether at home, in school, and even in the street, they should influence them in Yiddishkeit. And this will motivate the competitive instincts in the other child, that he, too, should learn something new in Torah to share with his friends.²²

The Rebbe went on to propose twelve passages from Torah, *maamarei Chazal*, and Tanya, which every child can understand and explain to his friends—the *Yud-Beis Pesukim U'maamarei Chazal*. The first six were announced at the farbrengon on Rosh Chodesh Iyar, and the next six on Lag Ba'omer at the parade. Through learning these verses, the Rebbe explained, the children would attain the great level (“*inyan nifla*”) of “*Torasoi umnasoi*”, constant learning of Torah. Because throughout the day, whether while playing with friends or sitting at home, the child remembers passages of Torah. Furthermore, they would be tools with which to educate friends as well.

GLOBAL MISSION

The activities weren't limited to the centers of Lubavitch in New York and Eretz Yisroel; it was an international campaign, aimed at reaching Jewish children worldwide. Rabbi Chaim Benyamini, founder and *rosh yeshiva* of Yeshivas Machne Yisrael in Petropolis, Brazil, reported to the Rebbe: “...We announced in the newspapers, in the name of the yeshiva and *michlala*, about our decision to accept financially-disadvantaged students at a 26% discount...and we asked the other local organizations to do likewise. On Lag Ba'omer and the Sunday before, several groups of *talmidim* visited five schools in Riu—2,500 children—where they taught them about learning the *pesukim* by heart and distributed coins for tzedakah. Several of the students are going home for the Shabbos before Shavuot, and they will work in their local cities. We also printed a translation of the letter to parents and students...”

Rabbi Hodakov sent letters from the Rebbe's *mazkirus* to various international contacts, especially shluchim, urging them not to forget about countries in their areas. To Rabbi Ezriel Chaikin, a shliach in Belgium at the time, he wrote: “Surely you have already begun energetically working in the activities of *shnas hachinuch* in your country, both in regards to yourself and in regards to others whom you can influence. I wanted to note that since, in the years past, you have laid a foundation of Yiddishkeit in the Scandinavian countries [—Rabbi Chaikin was a shliach in Denmark years earlier—]...it is therefore your responsibility, and great merit, to quickly concern yourself with spreading the activities of *chinuch* in those countries as well, including Denmark. As is known, the goal is to quickly reach every single child, both in the literal sense, and ‘children’ in knowledge of Yiddishkeit...”

To Rabbi Nachman Sudak, shliach to England: “Do not forget about Ireland; find someone there who will get involved in the activities.”

Rabbi Hodakov also wrote to businessmen with connections in far-flung Jewish communities which didn't have shluchim yet, like Rabbi Hirshel Chitrik (Japan) and Rabbi Mendel Shemtov (Taiwan and Hong Kong). To Rabbi Mendel Shemtov: “..Since, *b'hashgacha pratis*, you have business connections in Taiwan, Hong Kong, etc., you surely understand that you have the responsibility—and great *zechus*—to find out about the situation of *chinuch* in those countries and see what you can do to help.”

A letter was also written to Rabbi Avrohom Gudin, who was Rabbi Hodakov's student in Riga before the war, asking him to arrange a convention of all his former students, in order to encourage them to add in their own *chinuch* and of their families, and to get involved in strengthening Yiddishkeit and *chinuch* wherever they could.



COINS FROM THE REBBE SENT TO ALL JEWISH CHILDREN IN MOROCCO IN HONOR OF SHNAS HACHINUCH; ONE COIN FOR TZEDAKA, AND THE OTHER TWO TO BE KEPT AS A CONSTANT REMINDER TO INFLUENCE OTHERS IN TORAH AND MITZVOS.

RASKIN FAMILY ARCHIVES



THE REBBE CLAPS ALONG AS A GROUP OF CHILDREN PASS BY ON A FLOAT, LAG BA'OMER 5736, SHNAS HACHINUCH.

This brings us to a basic tenet in the Rebbe's philosophy in *chinuch*: never underestimate a child. Don't assume that he can't understand. If you put in the effort to explain it on their level, children can understand even the deepest concepts in Yiddishkeit, and although they comprehend it in 'childish language,' they understand the core concept just like adults.²³ This is true even at the youngest ages, when they're just beginning to learn to talk.

For example, the *possuk* "Shema Yisrael". On a very simple level, it is saying that Hashem is the one and only deity. On a deeper level, as explained in the Beis Yosef—and at length in Chassidus and Kabbalah—it means that Hashem is creator and originator of all existence, as hinted in the word *E--ch--od*: Hashem, hinted in the *Aleph*, creates the seven heavens and one earth, *Ches*, and the four directions of the world, *Daled*.

This concept is easily understandable for a young child, the Rebbe said. You can easily explain to him that the entire world that everything he sees—the ground, the sky, the four directions—all come from Hashem; and wherever he looks, Hashem is there. But in this explanation lies all of the deepest explanations of *mussar*, Chassidus and Kabbalah.²⁴

The Rebbe went through each of the Yud-Beis Pesukim, explaining the concept behind them, and, in a fascinating display of empathy, detailed exactly how each one can be explained to a young child, taking into account the concepts he does or doesn't understand. For example, when explaining the *possuk* "Torah Tzivah"—that the Torah is the inheritance of every single Yid, even a newborn infant—the Rebbe

pointed out that a very young child may not understand the idea of birth or a newborn. But since he is at the age when he has just begun talking, he *does* remember that there was a time before he was able to talk. So the way to explain to him this idea of unconditional inheritance is by explaining that even before he began talking, he already inherited the entire Torah.²⁵

Once a child gets into something, the Rebbe added, they do it all the way, wholly investing themselves, with all their emotions, without any limits. So when a child gets excited about Torah, they will immediately run and share it with their friends, and no-one will be able to stop them.²⁶

A WEEKDAY PARADE

In 5736, Lag Ba'omer fell out on a Tuesday, which meant that there was no parade scheduled, since parades were usually only on Sundays, when public school children were off from school. However, following the *shturem* of *mitvza chinuch*, the idea was raised to arrange a parade nonetheless, although there were only a few days left to get ready. The Rebbe answered, "אם אפשר להשיג מספר גדול של ילדים כדאי" - "If it is possible to get a large number of children—it is worth it."

And so they got to work. Some *bochurim* began working on the floats, while others spread across schools all over the New York area to recruit children to come to the parade. A huge banner with the newly introduced Pesukim—there were only six at the time—was hung on the exterior of 770. The weather was terrible all morning, and it looked like the parade might be rained out; but wonders of wonders, it didn't rain the entire time. In the *sicha* during the parade the Rebbe introduced the next six *pesukim*, and afterwards asked that they also be hung outside.



THE ORIGINAL BOOKLET OF THE 12 PESUKIM PRINTED SHORTLY AFTER THE REBBE INTRODUCED THEM.

The Rebbe also announced another initiative: That children in the diaspora should become pen-pals with other children in Eretz Yisroel, which would serve to strengthen the bond between Jewish children everywhere.²⁷

When a booklet of the *pessukim* was later prepared, its cover featured a boy. The Rebbe noted that it should include a girl as well. Later on, at a farbrengen, the Rebbe instructed that the next edition of the booklet should include an empty page for the child to write his or her name on. Another empty page should be left for the child to write the names of other children he or she influenced to study these *pessukim*.²⁸

TAKING IT GLOBAL

As a direct continuation of *shnas hachinuch*, the Rebbe took the

call for chinuch to a global level - campaigning for a moment of silence in public schools and encouraging the government to take more heed to the realm of education.

The first “Education Day USA” signed in honor of Yud Aleph Nissan 5738 actually mentioned the Rebbe’s call of *shnas hachinuch*.

In the “joint resolution” of the US congress they wrote: “...Whereas world Jewry marked in 1977 the seventy-fifth birthday of the revered and renowned Jewish leader, the head of the worldwide Lubavitch Movement, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, who proclaimed on that occasion a “Year of Education”; Whereas the seventy-sixth birthday of this celebrated spiritual leader will occur on April 19, 1978, thus concluding the year of Lubavitch Movement activities

dedicated to the “Year of Education” and the Lubavitcher Rebbe’s milestone birthday: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the President is authorized and requested to issue a proclamation designating April 18, 1978, as “Education Day, U.S.A.”

In the ensuing months, the Rebbe highlighted the importance of education again and again, and requested that each and every person get involved in the *mitvza*. The Rebbe also encouraged other governments to follow the example set by the US and emphasize education as well.²⁹ **T**

1. Sichos Kodesh 5734 vol 2, p. 255
2. Ibid, p. 142, 186
3. Ibid, p. 142
4. Ibid, p. 143
5. 85b
6. Sichos Kodesh 5734 vol 2, p. 120; p. 189
7. Ibid, p. 190-191
8. Ibid, p. 170; p. 185
9. Ibid, p. 444
10. Ibid, p. 284
11. Ibid, p. 150
12. Ibid, p. 153-154
13. Bava Basra, 15b
14. Sichos Kodesh 5734 vol 2, p. 154
15. Ibid, p. 171
16. Ibid
17. Ibid, p. 151
18. Ibid, p. 188-189
19. Ibid, p. 125
20. See story and photographs, Derher Tishrei 5775
21. Ibid, p. 144
22. Ibid, p. 144; p. 146; p. 186
23. Ibid, p. 146
24. Ibid, p. 439
25. Ibid, p. 440
26. Ibid, p. 148; p. 186
27. Ibid, p. 202
28. Yud-Gimmel Tammuz 5736
29. Chof Av, Motzoei Shabbos Eikev, and Motzoei Shabbos Re'eh, 5738



THE FIRST SIX PESUKIM ADORN THE BUILDING ADJACENT TO 770 DURING THE LAG BA'OMER PARADE OF 5736, SHNAS HACHINUCH.

YUD BEIS PESSUKIM UMAAMAREI CHAZAL

The Twelve Pesukim were introduced on two separate occasions, as two sets of six. Each set includes two *pesukim* from Torah, two passages from Chazal, and two passages from Tanya. Over the farbrengens of that period, the Rebbe explained each *possuk* at length, detailing 1) exactly how to explain it to children, and 2) how it should impact their practical life. The Rebbe explained all the *pesukim* twice: When he introduced them (on Rosh Chodesh Iyar and Lag Ba'omer) and on Yud-Beis Tammuz. While some of the explanations were the same, others were quite different. For this reason, some *pesukim* have one explanation and others have two.

{ TORAH }

TORAH TZIVAH

The Torah is precious, and should be cherished and valued.

Also, you inherited the entire Torah as your birthright, much before you were able to talk and begin learning it; you are the *baal habayis* on the entire Torah!

SHEMA

Hashem is one. He creates every single thing in the world, as hinted in the word *E--ch--od*: Hashem, hinted in the *Aleph*; creates the seven heavens and one earth, *Ches*; and the four directions of the world, *Daled*. Everywhere you look, wherever you can see, Hashem is there.

How does Hashem truly permeate the entire world? When you make Him “Elokeinu,” your own, personal G-d.

{ CHAZAL }

BECHOL

A person must always view themselves as if they have just left Mitzrayim, because if Hashem hadn't freed our ancestors, we would still be there today. When you think

about this, it brings a powerful feeling of appreciation, and you'll do anything for Hashem!

Therefore, you should never feel intimidated by your challenging mission, thinking ‘How can I do more than many adults do?’ You have just been freed from 210 years of slavery, and now you can do anything you want! The fact that you didn't do it yesterday means nothing; you're a new person now!

KOL YISROEL

However great your father or mother is, Hashem is much, much greater. Yet, even though He is so great, you have the merit to be Hashem's handiwork, His planting. He rejoices and is proud of you.

You are eternal, since you're going to live in *Olam Haba* forever together with every other Yid. So just like Hashem, who is eternal and created the world, you too have the power to change the world.

Also, if you do what you should in this world, you will sit proudly with the *gedolei Yisroel* in *Olam Haba*. But if you don't, you will sit embarrassed on the side, and your embarrassment will also last forever.

{ TANYA }

KI KAROV

This *possuk* is quoted by the Alter Rebbe on the *shaar-blatt* of Tanya as the basis for the whole *sefer*. Although you're not always in the mood of doing Torah and mitzvos—sometimes you want *tchatchkes* (toys) or to go out and play—it is always within your power to overcome these obstacles by thinking about how important and valuable Yiddishkeit and Torah and mitzvos really are. And you have this power in all areas of your life—in your thoughts, speech and action.

VEHINEI

Hashem is always watching you and checking whether you're doing the right thing. So if you ever feel embarrassed of doing the right thing in front of your friends, remember that someone even greater is standing over you and watching you—Hashem Himself.

Furthermore, the fact that Hashem is standing strong like a king—*nitzav*—is dependent on you and your behavior.

{ TORAH }

BEREISHIS

Don't be intimidated by the big, scary world out there. Hashem is the one who created it, and through Torah, a Yid can influence everything that happens on earth, and also everything that happens in the heavens, since a Yid can get Hashem—in the heavens—to give us *brachos*.

VESHINANTAM

Knowing the importance and value of Torah, a child will demand of his or her parents to teach them Torah, and in a way that they will etch it in their mind and heart; so that at all times and in all situations—at home, traveling, going to bed and waking up—he or she will remember the words and lessons of Torah. Every moment is important.

{ CHAZAL }

YAGAATI

Never feel incapable or unworthy because of previous setbacks; they didn't come from a lack of ability, but from a lack of sufficient effort. You always have the capability to do what Hashem wants. If you ever come to a mitzvah that is very hard for you to do, remember that you are Hashem's handiwork, and that your mission is to make the world a *dira betachtonim*. If you work hard enough, you have the power to do even the most difficult things to fulfill your mission.

V'AHAVTA

These efforts shouldn't be limited to yourself; you work to influence your friends and everyone around you, with the same excitement and energy as when you were working on yourself.

{ TANYA }

V'ZEH

The task of fulfilling Torah and mitzvos is the greatest mission a person can have, since it is the sole reason Hashem created you, and *all the worlds*: To make yourself, your house, and the entire world a *dira betachtonim*, a place where Hashem can be.

Being that this is the purpose of your existence, and the purpose of the entire world, everything in your life—including eating, drinking, and playing—are part of your mission, and nothing in the world can stop you.

YISMACH

When you think for even a moment how great your shlichus is, it will bring you great joy. Furthermore, Hashem Himself rejoices with your *avoda*, and His joy causes you even more joy. When you fulfill your mission with happiness, it breaks down all barriers and walls, and gives you unlimited energy and excitement to share your Yiddishkeit with others.



Tell it Like It Is

Sippurei Chassidim

אין דעם יציאת מצרים פון חסידות, איז פאראן די מצוה פון סיפור יצ"מ בדבור, דערציילען חסידישע ספורים און דערהערען דעם סיפור אין א פנימית דפנימית. מ'בעדארף וויסען אז יעדער סיפור איז א הוראה בחיים. יעדער ספור בעדארף בריינגען א מדה טובה און א חיות פנימי אין א הידור מצוה און דערהערען דעם דרכי נועם פון תורת החסידות.

In the "yetzias Mitzrayim" of Chassidus there is the mitzva of recounting the story of yetzias Mitzrayim verbally, to tell chassidishe stories and to feel and sense ("דערהערן") the story in one's deepest pnimius. One must know that every narrative is a guidance for living. Every story must bring forth [in the listener] a fine character trait, an inner enthusiasm for hiddur mitzvah, and should enable the listener to sense the "ways of pleasantness" of Toras haChassidus.

(היום יום כ"ו מנחם-אב)

Hand-in-hand with the teachings of Chassidus and the *chassidishe* way of life, come the stories of our Rabbeim and their Chassidim.

In fact, in many respects, *chassidishe* stories from the Rabbeim even take precedence over *Toras haChassidus* itself.

The Alter Rebbe once said: "When we heard a Torah from our Rebbe [the Mezricher Magid], we considered it as *Toras She'baal Peh*. But when we heard a story from him, we considered it as *Toras She'biksav*."¹

Chassidic Training

When new *yungeleit* arrived in Lubavitch to learn the ways of Chassidus, the Tzemach Tzedek would often send them to the famed Chossid, Reb Hillel Paritcher for training.

Reb Hillel would assign to veteran *yungeleit* to teach the newcomer the basics of *darkei haChassidus*.

"In addition to that," the Frieddiker Rebbe explains, "their main task was to tell stories to

the newcomers; stories of the Rabbeim and elder Chassidim. Each story was repeated over and over again, until the newcomer understood it well and was proficient in all its details.

“Then they would ask the newcomer what lesson he learned from the story; about fixing one’s *middos*, *yiras Shamayim*, understanding *Elokus*, etc. They compelled the newcomer to exert his mind in this subject as if he was studying a deep concept. They would assist him with this task, and they would tell him what they had heard from their teacher, Reb Hillel about this subject...”

Reb Hillel himself would say stories in honor of the newcomers as well, and then explain the lessons to be learned from them.

“The first thing one must do in *avodah* is bring himself close—אדם כי יקריב מכם, as explained in Chumash Vayikra,” Reb Hillel would explain. “But first, in order to know what an אדם is—what it means to be a person—the Torah prefaces the two *sefarim* of Bereishis and Shemos; composed mostly of stories. First come the stories, then you can learn Torah...”²

Stories First

The Frieddiker Rebbe often quoted the words of Chazal: גדולה שימושה של תורה יותר מלימודה—[the lessons learned while] serving [*talmidei chachamim*] is greater than learning Torah itself. In our instance,



the stories that we hear and relate about the lives and times of Rabbeim and Chassidim are more important than merely learning Chassidus. These stories carry real-life lessons and they teach us how to actually live. They serve as the “*neshamah*,” the life of our *avodas Hashem*.³

In a famous letter written in honor of a *siyum sefer Torah*, there is a story told by the Frieddiker Rebbe about a visit paid by Reb Aizik Hummiller to the *tzaddik* Reb Yisroel Ruzhiner; a *shlichus* on behalf of the Tzemach Tzedek.

While there, Reb Aizik witnessed an incredible occurrence:

Two Chassidim of Reb Yisroel came to Ruzhin to receive his approbation for the *sefarim* they were each publishing. The first Chosid was a renowned *rav* who had compiled a *sefer* of his intricate *chiddushei Torah*. The other was a simpler individual who had collected stories of *tzaddikim* and planned to publish them in book-form.

After having his *gabbai* read from each of the *sefarim*, Reb Yisroel began to extoll and expound on the importance of stories of *tzaddikim* and the profound impression they create in the *tzaddikim*’s chamber on High. Then he turned his attention to the other *sefer*, expounding on the *chiddushei Torah* and adding comments of his own to the *pilpulim*.

Reb Aizik was quite fascinated by the conduct of Reb Yisroel and how he related to each of his students, but he was a bit puzzled by the precedence Reb Yisroel gave the *sefer* of stories over *chiddushei Torah*.

Two days later, while sitting at a *seuda*, Reb Yisroel explained:

“I know that the ‘*Litvisher gaon*’ [Reb Aizik] is puzzled by the fact that we gave precedence to the stories over *chiddushei Torah*.

“In truth, this question is an age-old one. It was asked by Rashi in his first comment on the Torah: Why did Hashem start with Bereishis and not with the first mitzvah of *לכם הזה הזכר*? The reason, explains Rashi, is to demonstrate *כח מעשיו הגיד*—the strength of His deeds, the true *chayus* and life of this world, the *neshama* of the world. Hashem’s ever present hand always creating the world.

“We follow the order that Hashem used in Torah: first *Sefer Bereishis* with the stories of *tzaddikim*, then *Sefer Shemos*, containing the mitzvos.

“Both authors are great Chassidim. The first one’s compilation tells us of the *chiddushim* that he himself composed in Torah. The second one tells us of Hashem’s *chiddushim* in the world; stories of *tzaddikim*...”⁴

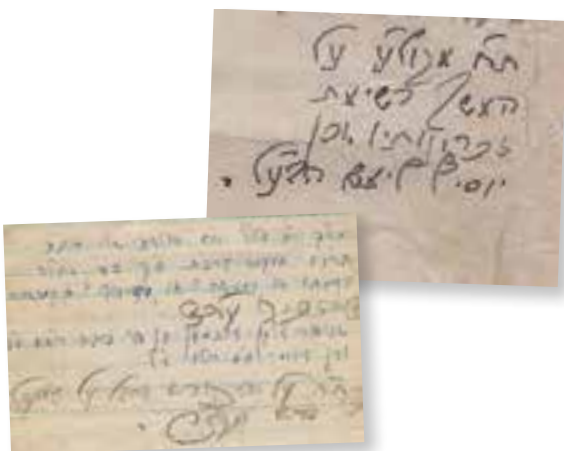
MOST PRECIOUS

I once brought a *sefer* of stories to my father [the Rebbe Rashab]. They were not transcriptions of [talks by] the Rabbeim; they were heard from the “princes” [i.e. members of the Rabbeim’s household]. My father was very pleased, and told me: “I cherish this collection, more than if you’d have brought me a *ksav* from a Rebbe.”

My father’s esteem for a manuscript of the Rabbeim is well known. He went on *mesirus nefesh* to acquire a *ksav yad* from the Alter Rebbe.

Nevertheless, the *sefer* of stories was even more precious to him.

(*Sefer Hasichos* 5704 p. 63)



It’s All in the Details

Chassidic storytelling is an art, the Friediker Rebbe explains.

“When one tells a story, he needs to prepare himself even more than when reciting a deep *maamar Chassidus*. Also the one hearing the story needs to prepare himself more than when listening to a deep *maamar Chassidus*... The storyteller needs to relate it with all its accompanying details, so that the listener will feel as if he is living in that particular state.

“My father [the Rebbe Rashab] taught us how to cherish a story...”⁵

Even the order of the details is of utmost importance:

“Our Rabbeim taught that any story of *tzaddikim* or Chassidim, no matter what the content is, must be related in utmost detail. Even part of a story must be related in the proper order. Even those stories that seem trivial actually carry so much meaning...”⁶

BRIGHTER LIVES

The Friediker Rebbe’s sichos and letters are filled with vivid descriptions of his youth. Fond memories of the life and times of Chassidim of old; both the ones he witnessed as a child, as well as the stories he was told by the elder Chassidim.

These stories bear much significance to our lives as Chassidim, as the Friediker Rebbe once explained in a sicha:

All these stories and recollections, although they mostly account for the personal life of an individual, at the same time they also carry so much Chassidic life with them. They describe how the Chabad *chassidisher* lifestyle illuminated the ordinary good, old-time Jewish homes; during the week, on Shabbos and yom tov, and during Elul and the Yomim Nora’im.

...When telling a story, one who is blessed with eloquent speech and clear delivery arouses the imagination of his listeners, enabling them to envision a real live picture before their eyes.

For Chassidim in general, and Chabad Chassidim in particular, whose words are illuminated (both in the privacy of their homes and in public, at farbrengens) with stories of Rabbeim and elder Chassidim—their homes are brighter and more refined (ליכטיקער און איידעלער).

(*Sefer Hasichos* 5710 p. 357)

The Chassidishe “*Lachluchis*”

The Rebbe often spoke of the importance of *chassidishe* stories, especially when talking to educators about instilling the proper values in their young students.

In *yeichidus* with the mashpia Reb Abba Pliskin in 5723, the Rebbe explained the importance of stories of Chassidim in particular:

“The *bochurim* are lacking a לחלוחית [lit. moisture, i.e. chassidishe vitality and *chayus*]. They need to be told *chassidishe* stories about real *chassidishe* Yidden.



"I specifically say Chassidim; not Rabbeim. Because when they hear about the Rabbeim, they don't relate to the concept; they think it's not within their reach. But from a story of Chassidim, they'll actually learn something and apply its lessons!"⁷

Reading the Rebbe's letters, especially in the years before the *nesius*, one finds that time and again, the Rebbe begs of the elder Chassidim to record their memories and stories they heard on paper, saving it for posterity. At times the Rebbe puts out his request quite passionately, and expresses dissatisfaction when the Chassidim would not come through.

After a group of *temimim* settled in Montreal in the 5700s, the Rebbe relentlessly requested that they write down the stories they witnessed and heard. In one letter the Rebbe writes:

"For more than a year's time now, we've been trying to get you to write the recollections, and after all our effort, they were able to send only one installment and that's it! You explain in your letter that he [...] didn't have time for it!

"Imagine if someone else was the writer and you were the reader, how well would that excuse be accepted?"⁸

One of the Chassidim who did fulfill the Rebbe's request and write down his recollections was Reb Zalman Duchman. (These were later printed in book-form as "*L'sheima Oizen*.") The Rebbe constantly thanked him for his writings, and on one occasion, he revealed a startling fact:

"Obviously, the [Frierdiker] Rebbe knows that you are sending your written recollections here, and he told me that this is 'a very appropriate thing.'

From time to time I convey the content of some of your stories, and each time this brings him great *nachas*..."⁹

Not Just Arum

Stories are often referred to as the "*arum*" of Chassidus - that which surrounds Chassidus itself. But the Rebbe explains that in fact, the stories are actually a part of *toras haChassidus*. This is why the Frierdiker Rebbe invested so much effort in disseminating these stories; because they are to be studied and hold lessons just like Chassidus itself.¹⁰

In fact, the Rebbe explains that the practice of giving over stories of past generations is nothing new to Jewish tradition. Moshe Rabbeinu himself told the Jewish people to listen to the tales of members of the previous generation: *שאל אביך ויגידך זקניך ויאמרו* - even though he was talking to the generation of people who stood at Har Sinai, still, they were told to ask of their elders to relate their memories of days gone by.

This is why the elder Chassidim have been asked to record their memories, the things they heard from elder Chassidim, which carry lessons for us all. Moshe Rabbeinu already taught us how important this is.¹¹ **T**

STORIES HEAL

Regarding what you write about the thoughts haunting your grandmother, how she imagines disturbing things in her mind:

The mezuzos of her room should be checked and she should also give a few pennies to *tzedakah* every morning.

Before she goes to sleep, she should read or be told stories of our Rabbeim and stories of Chassidim...

(*Igros Kodesh* vol. 15 p. 13)

1. *Igros Kodesh* Admur HaRaYyaTz vol. 4 p. 65
2. *Ibid.* p. 51
3. See *Sefer Hasichos* 5701 p. 88
4. *Igros Kodesh* Admur HaRaYyaTz vol. 6 p. 76
5. *Sefer Hasichos* 5704 p. 134
6. *Igros Kodesh* *ibid.* p. 220
7. *Heichal Menachem* vol. 2 p. 221
8. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 1 p. 234
9. *Ibid.* vol. 3 p. 34
10. *Sichas Shabbos parshas Vayeshev* 5729
11. *Sichas Yud Shevat* 5725, *Toras Menachem* vol. 43 p. 163

the Momentous Gathering

and its
message today,

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

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

הקהל את העם
האנשים והנשים
והטף

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

HAKHEL INSIGHT COMPOUND INFLUENCE

If two equally strong people can lift ten pounds individually, together they can carry twenty pounds, right? Actually, the Gemara says that the couple would be able to hoist more than just those twenty pounds. There is power in the collective. Exponential strength.

An event as well, when experienced together with a multitude, is much more inspirational. In terms of influence, if one man, woman or child would be affected to a certain degree were *Hakhel* to be an individual event, the effect grows exponentially with every additional participant!

That's what made *Hakhel* so powerful both during the ceremony and subsequently in fulfilling what the *posuk* writes, "And they will guard to do all the words of this Torah."

(Adapted from the *Sicha of Shabbos parshas Tazria* 5741.

Sichos Kodesh 5741 vol. 3, pgs. 15-16)



A TIMELY CONNECTION

PESACH SHEINI: THE POWER OF THE INDIVIDUAL

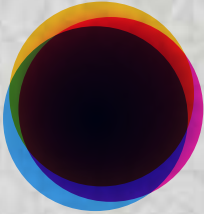
A single, small group of men or women can be so powerful, that they can even affect all Jewish people. “Why must we miss out?” was a call we find twice in Torah. The first instance led, of course, to the establishment of Pesach Sheini and was championed by the men. The daughters of Tzelafchad also made this statement when demanding representation in inheriting their father’s land. Because of these pleas we, the Jewish nation for all the generations, have new mitzvos; Jewish reality has been altered. Again, the power of the individual.

These stories take on even more meaning when coinciding with *shnas Hakhel*. The lesson of *Hakhel* is that every Yid must endeavor that his deeds affect the entire Jewish nation “the men women, and children,” to add in Torah and mitzvah observance.

(Adapted from the Sichah of Pesach Sheini 5748. Hisvaaduyos 5748 vol. 3, pg. 300)

WHAT CAN I DO?

INNER DRIVE



Don’t wait until you are told and reminded about *Hakhel* to accomplish in that regard. Look for opportunities to effect other people through, first and foremost, being a positive influence. Show them what true Jewish life is like and talk to them about its ways. It will be effective if the words come from the heart. After all only “גכנסים אל הלב” succeed in “דברים היוצאים מן הלב.”

You should have an inner drive to gather more Jews, inspire them, and do them a favor. Your involvement in *Hakhel* should not, *chas veshalom*, be the result of coercion. Start with your family and let it spread to your neighborhood and the world. Until the ultimate *Hakhel* when Hashem gathers us all together with the coming of Moshiach.

*(Adapted from the Yechidus of 26 Tishrei 5748.
Hisvaaduyos 5748 vol. 1, pgs. 378-379)*

לזכות
החתן הרה"ת ר' ניסן אייזיק שי' וואגעל
והכלה מרת הינדא רבקה תחי' סימאנדס
לדגל חתונתם בשעתומ' צ'ט' סיון ה'תשע"ו הבעל"ט
נדפס ע"י הוריהם ומשפחתם שיחיו

Rabbi Avrohom Korf, the Rebbe's shliach to Florida, was sent on Shlichus in 5721, meriting to be one of the Rebbe's earliest shluchim. In an exclusive interview with A Chassidisher Derher, Rabbi Korf tells us about the early years of his life; his childhood, his years near the Rebbe in 770, and his first activities in *hafatzas hamaayanos*, in New York and Miami.

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EARLY STEPS

A story of community activism
under the Rebbe's careful guidance

AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH
RABBI AVROHOM KORF

Rabbi Korf, thank you for taking the time to speak to us. Before we discuss your years near the Rebbe and on shlichus, please share with us a little about your personal history.

I was born two days after Simchas Torah 5693, in the city of Kharkov, which is where I grew up until World War II reached our city.

Due to the hardships of life—we are talking about the height of the communist persecution—I received very little Jewish education, in comparison to today's children.

My mother taught us to *daven*, wash *negel vasser*, say *brachos*, etc. and each Shabbos my father would take us to shul. He also hired a *melamed* for us; I remember this *melamed* until today—he was looking to make some money, but he didn't actually know too much.

Every Friday night, my father would tell us stories, *chassidishe mayses*, about Chassidim and *tzaddikim*; essentially, it was these stories that kept us *frum*. I always tell my children that they should tell their children *chassidishe mayses*; it is the stories that they are told when they are young that will become etched in their minds and remain with them forever. My father was worried about us, and he wanted us to remain good Yidden, so he took care to tell us these stories every Friday night.

That was basically the extent of my *chinuch* in those days. Most of my time was spent playing outdoors.

Everything that had to do with Yiddishkeit was very hard to come by; I remember that there was only one set of *daled minim* in the entire city, and my father would take me each morning to *bentch* at the house of its owner.



LUBAVITCHER CHILDREN LEARN GEMARA IN THE POCKING DP CAMP; MUNICH, GERMANY.

The war came to Kharkov in 5702; what happened to your family?

The first effects of the war that reached us were the refugees. Kiev had been attacked, and hoards of people began streaming into Kharkov. It was then that we found out about what was going on.

Then we began to experience the bombings. German planes flew over the city dropping bombs that would wreak havoc and destruction. The Russians were so unprepared that they did not have proper anti-aircraft artillery, and they attempted to shoot down the planes with the most absurd methods.

We moved to a different location in the city. But on the second day of Sukkos 5702 my father came to the conclusion that nowhere in the city is safe, and he obtained train tickets for us to leave on what turned out to be the last train out of Kharkov.

We thus began traveling toward Samarkand. In calmer times it would have been a journey of a few days, but now, during wartime, it turned into a long and arduous journey. Our companions on the train did not make the journey any easier; at one point during the journey, a group of antisemites grabbed a machine that my father owned and used for

his livelihood, and threw it out the window.

When we arrived in Samarkand, there was a terrible hunger in the city; there was very little food to come by. My father rented a house, and along with us—in different rooms—lived other Chassidim. In one room lived Reb Abba Pliskin, and in another were Reb Moshe Katzman and his wife, who both fell ill with typhus (in those days we called it *yenne machleh*). When the illness would pass, the patient would be overcome with a massive appetite, and would need to eat a lot of food, "*azoy vi a leib*"—like a lion. But there was nothing for them to eat, and ultimately they both passed away, leaving two children, Zelig and Hillel. Zelig, who was a bit older, became like Hillel's father, and he would go to the market every day to try to make a few '*kopkes*' so they would have something to eat.

Then Reb Abba Pliskin also contracted the illness. When the ambulance arrived to collect him, my uncle Reb Mendel Futerfas ran to assist him. My father started to berate Reb Mendel; "Are you crazy, you have a family!" He couldn't believe that he would endanger his life by coming in contact with the highly contagious illness. But Reb Mendel didn't listen; "My *chaver* is sick, and I'm not going to help him?" He went with Reb Abba

BUT REB MENDEL DIDN'T LISTEN; "MY CHAVER IS SICK, AND I'M NOT GOING TO HELP HIM?"

to the hospital, took care of him, and with the *Aibershter's* help he actually remained healthy.

My father traveled to a different city, Friginah, and our family followed him there, and while there I once again began to learn a little. Initially I would listen in when my father would learn with his friends, and later I began to learn on my own as well.

By that time the hunger had abated a bit; seeing the easier conditions, Reb Mendel Futerfas and Reb Yonah Poltaver restarted the yeshiva in Samarkand which had withered away during the worst years of the war, and they wrote to my father telling him to send his children. My father allowed my older brothers to go, but I was still young and I was therefore kept at home. I was very jealous of my brothers, and over the next few months I nudged my father about it until he gave in and sent me as well.

The journey back to Samarkand took longer than expected. I arrived in the city as sunset began to fall on Friday night, and I was forced to walk all the way to the yeshiva, leaving all of my belongings behind. I came to the yeshiva with no belongings whatsoever.

When I arrived in yeshiva, I was reunited with my friends that I had gotten to know while previously living in Samarkand; although I was their age, their learning abilities were much more advanced than mine.

The yeshiva consisted of several grades. There were two classes that learned Gemara with my uncle, Reb Moshe Rubinson; one on a higher level and another lower. Most of my friends learned Gemara in the lower grade. When I arrived, Reb Moshe didn't want to allow me into their class, because I did not possess their knowledge, but my pride would not

allow me to be placed in a lower grade than my friends, so I insisted that I know how to learn Gemara just like my friends—although in reality the only Gemara I had learnt was what I had overheard from my father's learning.

Reb Moshe tested my knowledge, and I somehow managed to read the *amud* of Gemara well, and he allowed me into the lower Gemara class. However, my *ga'avah* was not yet satisfied; I worked very hard to excel in the lower class, and after three months I was allowed into the higher class. I worked hard there as well, and after my bar mitzvah I wanted to join yet the higher class, which learned by Reb Avraham Elya Plotkin. He was ready to accept me, but my uncle Reb Moshe didn't like my *ga'avah*, and he forced me to stay in his *shiur* for another half a year.

What are your memories from the escape from Russia in 5707?

A short time before the big escape took place, my uncle Reb Mendel Futerfas came with news that the authorities are about to arrest my father and Reb Nissan Nemanov. Upon hearing the news, they both escaped to Lvov, which is located on the Russian-Polish border. A day after they left left, I remember three KGB officers jumping into our yard and running directly to our house; they came to get our father, but *baruch Hashem* he had already gotten away.

In Lvov my father rented an apartment, and after a short while our entire family traveled there as well. While we were living there, my baby brother Bentzion passed away. When we were sitting *shiva*, our non-religious landlord came to visit us, and he asked my father a question.

Why is it, he wanted to know, that my father—who is religious—has endless *tzaros* and is constantly on the



THE KORF FAMILY, CIRCA LATE 5700S. L-R: PINYE, GEDALYA, YEHOSHUA (SHEA), AVREMEL.

run, but he looks like a young man and does not have any white hair, while he—a non-religious person—who lives well, and doesn't have any major worries in life, has a full head of white hair, even though he is the younger of the two.

I remember my father answering him, that when one is a *frumme Yid*, he has *bitachon* in the *Aibershter*. A non-religious person, on the other hand, constantly has second thoughts—why did I do this, why didn't I do that. But when we trust the *Aibershter*, we know that nothing is in our hands, and therefore we have no reason to worry.

After a short time in Lvov, we joined one of the *eshalon* trains that left Russia for Poland, and with us were two wagons full of Lubavitchers. We were all officially Polish citizens, and yet not a single one of us spoke Polish; we barely remembered our new Polish “names” that were written in our documents. Later we found out that Rebbetzin Chana was also on the train; at the time it was a complete secret, only one or two people knew about it.

When we arrived at the border, we were all literally shaking with fear. Our passports, and literally everything about our trip, was completely illegal, and there had already been a few arrests in the past; we had no way of knowing what was in store for us. What actually took place completely blew our minds.

A NON-RELIGIOUS PERSON CONSTANTLY HAS SECOND THOUGHTS - WHY DID I DO THIS, WHY DIDN'T I DO THAT; BUT WE TRUST IN THE AIBERSHTER AND THEREFORE WE HAVE NO REASON TO WORRY.

With us in our wagon were Reb Avrohom Mayorer and Reb Yisroel Neveler; Reb Avrohom had with him a two liter bottle of *mashke*. When the officer came on to the train, Reb Avrohom offered him a cup, but the officer declined. Reb Avrohom nevertheless insisted, and handed him a full glass of *mashke*, which the officer eventually drank in its entirety. His eyes began rolling, and he walked off the train.

The wagons didn't have a roof, so we were able to see what happened next. The officer got off and told his friend that there is good vodka in the wagon. Not wanting to miss out, the second officer came and drank a full cup as well.

They then ordered all of us to get off the wagon so they can check our documents. By the time we got off, they were both quite intoxicated, and one of them simply looked at his

watch and exclaimed that it is late and we should therefore continue on our way.

We couldn't believe what happened, but later we came to the conclusion that we merited such a miracle only because the Rebbe's mother was with us on the train.

Ultimately we arrived in the Pocking Displaced Persons Camp, where we spent over a year. While we were there, Reb Nissan Nemanov set up a serious yeshiva where we sat and learnt, together with eltere Chassidim such as Reb Yisroel Neveler and Reb Avrohom Elya Plotkin. From Pocking we moved on to Paris, and the yeshiva moved to Brunoy.

In 5710, a few *bochurim* merited to get *reshus* to travel to the Rebbe. Initially Reb Dovid Raskin went, and then four more *bochurim* followed, arriving a very short time before the *histalkus* of the Frierdiker Rebbe.

In addition to the fact that I was still young at the time, the Rebbe would often not allow Chassidim to come to America, instead directing them to Eretz Yisroel or other locations. As the years passed, I felt a growing desire to travel to America to learn near the Rebbe as well, but I couldn't convince my father to ask the Rebbe's permission. Being an *akshan*, after a while I was successful, and to our surprise and delight, the Rebbe agreed.



RABBI KORF ADDRESSES A GROUP OF CHILDREN IN LOD, ISRAEL WHILE ON SHLICHUS TO ERETZ YISROEL, SUMMER 5716.

I immediately began preparing for the trip, and I arrived in New York in Shevat 5713. I had never been to the Rebbe before, so before leaving Brunoy, I went to Reb Nissan to ask him how I should conduct myself when I come to the Rebbe.

Reb Nissan explained to me, that when a Chosid goes into *yechidus*, he needs to be completely transparent; the Rebbe must know everything about him and he must take care not to hide anything. The Chosid also must come in with complete *kabolas ol*—a commitment that he is giving himself over entirely to the Rebbe.

You probably went into *yechidus* when you arrived. Can you share with us what the Rebbe told you?

I will share with you a *hora'ah* that I received from the Rebbe during one of my birthday *yechidusen*. My birthday is two days after Simchas Torah; the Rebbe once asked me if I had an *aliyah* beforehand, and I said yes, on Yom Tov (when everyone gets an *aliyah* anyway). The Rebbe told me that I should get an *aliyah* specifically on the Shabbos before; not just on Yom Tov.

Please describe what life around the Rebbe was like. How often would you see the Rebbe in those years?

In those days, we would see the Rebbe only during *mincha* and *maariv*, and during *krias haTorah* on Mondays and Thursdays. At night, the Rebbe would walk home alone, without anyone accompanying him.

There were instances when the Rebbe would suddenly show up at the Karestirer mikveh (on Eastern Parkway and Brooklyn Avenue), and we would all run out into the boiler room to hide. The Karestirer Rebbetzin told us that sometimes at four in the morning she would see the Rebbe coming to use the mikveh.

In general, the *bochurim* in those days would try to stay out of the Rebbe's line of sight; we did not want the Rebbe to see us. Once, Reb Nissan came to New York and he farbrenged with the *bochurim* that were learning in 770. The next day the Rebbe asked Rabbi Groner what he had spoken about, and Rabbi Groner told him that Reb Nissan explained to the *bochurim* that it is inappropriate for them to stick themselves in the Rebbe's face. The Rebbe responded that he is right.

In those years, the yeshiva was quite small—as was Lubavitch in general—and the Rebbe took an interest in everything that was going on.

There were numerous instances that the Rebbe would walk into the *zal* during *seder Chassidus* in the morning, to see who had woken up on time. On the morning after Reb Yoel Kahn's wedding in 5714, the Rebbe did so, and the only *bochur* sitting there was my brother Pinyeh. The Rebbe looked at him and asked him, "*Du bist a ben yochid in yeshiva?*"—Are you an only child in yeshiva?

There were times that the Rebbe took it a step further. On Shabbos morning, he would walk into the *zal* at eight o'clock and invite everyone into his room to hear a *maamar*. Before starting, the Rebbe would instruct that the door be locked, and whoever showed up late would not be allowed to join.

In those years, the shul in 770 was very small, and when the crowds coming to farbrengens began to grow, the Rebbe began holding them in halls around Crown Heights. While there



NEWSPAPER ADVERTISEMENT FOR THE REBBE'S YUD-TES KISLEV FARBRENGEN AT FRANKLIN AVE. HALL IN BROOKLYN.

was a lot more space in the halls, they would not be set up properly, and the chaos and pushing would often get out of hand.

During one specific farbrengen people were climbing on tables and chairs, there was immense pushing, and the tumult was terrible. The Rebbe said that if this situation will continue, he will stop holding farbrengens. I had an idea how to arrange the hall and 'make a *seder*', but I didn't have enough money to implement it; when I spoke to other people about it, they said that it won't work and I should leave it up to the *Vaad Hamesader*.

I spoke to the *Vaad Hamesader*, and I told them that if they give me a hundred dollars, I can help the situation. They just brushed me off and said that *bochurim* should not be getting involved in the business of the *Vaad Hamesader*.

Later the *vaad* went into *yechidus* to discuss different options. One of the ideas that they suggested was that perhaps the women should not be invited. The Rebbe rejected it immediately, and said that under no circumstances can that happen, saying that he personally knows of homes and families that benefited considerably because the women came to farbrengens.

Then the Rebbe mentioned to them by the way, that they should speak to me, since I might have an idea.

I know this, because later, one of the members of the *Vaad Hamesader* called me over and began to berate me. It was entirely uncalled for, he said, and completely out of line for a *bochur* to write to the Rebbe about the tasks of the *Vaad Hamesader*. Then, after screaming at me for a while, he admitted that the Rebbe had told them to speak to me.

They asked me what I need, and I said one hundred dollars. Since I was inexperienced, and I didn't have help or tools, I did the entire job myself. I wasn't able to take care of the entire room; but I did manage to make a *seder* on one side, and during the *farbrengen*, the Rebbe said that "*m'darf geben a yashar koach*" to Korf.

Those were the early years of hafatzas hamaayanos. Can you share with us some of the activities that the bochurim used to do?

We used to go to different yeshivos to teach Chassidus. I would go to Torah Vodaas, to the Mirrer Yeshiva, and then later Yeshivas Rabbeinu Yitzchok Elchonon.

In Torah Vodaas, when one of the *roshei yeshiva* heard that I was giving a Chassidus *shiur*, he called me over and told me that under no circumstances may I use the lighting in yeshiva; if I do, it will be *gezeilah mamash*. I told my *talmidim* that we can't continue the *shiurim* in the yeshiva, but they didn't want to give it up, so they arranged for the *shiur* to continue in a nearby shul.

In Yitzchok Elchonon, I would teach every Thursday from five in the afternoon until three in the morning. I would conduct a whole range of *shiurim*, for *bochurim* of all ages. One of my *talmidim* there was Rabbi Shlomo Riskin, today the well known rav in Efrat. He later went on to have an extensive relationship with the Rebbe, and he once told me that what began his connection to Lubavitch were those *shiurim* that I would give.

One year, Yud Shvat was on Thursday night, and I told the *talmidim* that there would be no *shiur* that week, because the Rebbe would be davening at the *amud*. In middle of the day, Rabbi Hodakov called me and said, "*Mistamme* there will be a *shiur* tonight."

I responded that I had just cancelled because of Yud Sehvav. When he heard that, he responded sharply:

"You think that the Rebbe would be happy that because he is davening at the *amud* there won't be a *shiur*?"

I didn't have a choice, and I called the *bochurim* back to tell them that the *shiur* would take place as usual.

You were one of the twelve shluchim that the Rebbe sent to Eretz Yisrael after the terrorist attack in Kfar Chabad. What can you tell us about that unique shlichus?

When the Rebbe first spoke about the shlichus, he said that whoever wants to go should submit their names to *mazkirus*. Many people signed up, and I did as well. Some time later, those chosen were told that

they would be going, and the Rebbe mentioned that he had chosen those names while he was at the Ohel.

Before we left, we went into *yechidus*, where the Rebbe gave us a number of instructions pertaining to the trip. First of all, we should be ready the day before our scheduled trip, since we were departing on Shiva Asar B'tammuz, and one is not supposed to begin a journey during the three weeks.

Regarding the actual shlichus, the Rebbe told us that the way the Alter Rebbe conquered the world and brought people closer to *Toras Hachassidus* was initially through *nigleh*, and only afterwards through Chassidus. Therefore, when we are in Eretz Yisroel, we must speak both *nigleh* and Chassidus. Additionally, the Rebbe said that everything we do must be in a legal manner.¹

When we arrived in Eretz Yisroel, the Chassidim welcomed us in full glory; we spent Shabbos, 5 Av, in Kfar Chabad, and the feeling and excitement was indescribable. The village had just suffered a terrible tragic attack and our arrival brought a new life to everyone. In the newspapers they wrote that in Chabad,



A YOUNG RABBI KORF DURING HIS FIRST YEARS IN MIAMI.

THE REBBE LOOKED AT HIM AND ASKED HIM, "DU BIST A BEN YOCHID IN YESHIVAH?"



LAG BA'OMER PARADE, 5717

it's like Moshiach has already come. Throughout the entire trip, we were constantly farbrenging, speaking, and meeting with people; we brought a new life to the Chassidim there. It was after our trip that people began traveling to spend Tishrei with the Rebbe; before that, it was very uncommon.²

While we were in Eretz Yisrael, we went to visit Zalman Shazar (this was before he was the president of Israel). Officially, we had been invited to Eretz Yisroel by the government, and that was something that he had organized. During our meeting, he attempted to convince us to spend one day in the *ulpan*, where new *olim* study Hebrew. The issue was that the Rebbe specifically instructed that we do no such thing under any circumstances. I tried to tell Shazar that we don't have time; that we barely sleep three or four hours a night and we have so many meetings, it is simply impossible. But he had a very hard time accepting our explanation.

Every newspaper ran a different explanation as to why we had come; they were all wrong. One paper wrote that the Rebbe had sent us to be *metaken* the *chet hameraglim*—there

were twelve shluchim corresponding to the twelve *meraglim*. “*Chomoseinu*,” the newspaper of the *kana'im*, wrote that the Rebbe sent us to be *machzir b'tshuvah* the Israeli Chassidim that had become Zionists.

[We later heard from Reb Uriel Tzimmer—who had been a *kano'i* before becoming a Chosid of the Rebbe—that they had once written in their newspapers that they are the real Chabadniks, while the Lubavitchers had become Zionists. A short while later, they received a letter from Rabbi Hodakov. He wrote to them, that since he read that they are the real Chabadniks, he would like to know which Chassidus they learn, and who gives the *shiur*. He also wrote that the person who wrote the article should check his tefillin. The author did so, and he found them to be *possul*.]

Aside for visiting the Lubavitcher *mosdos* and farbrenging with anash, the Rebbe instructed us to visit various prominent rabbanim and rebbes. We visited the Belzer Rebbe, and the Gerrer Rebbe, and the Tchebiner Rov, and as per the Rebbe's instructions, we also went to the *kevarim* of Rashbi, the Arizal, and Reb Mendel Horodoker.

יחזקאל ברוך ש"י יתקין
ורה בדברי מלכות

We were also by chief rabbis, Rabbi Herzog and Rabbi Nissim. Those were the years that travel was mainly by ship, and the Rebbe campaigned strongly against traveling to Eretz Yisroel on the Israeli shipping lines, which were operated by Yidden and would travel on Shabbos.

The Rebbe maintained that it was blatant *chilul Shabbos*, but other rabbanim tried to argue that it is possible for a ship to run automatically for a period of time and therefore they should be permitted for travel. Rabbi Nissim told us that the Rebbe had explained to them why their opinion was wrong, and had requested that they remove the *heter* that they had published in support of the ships, and they did so.

Then we visited Rabbi Tzvi Pesach Frank, who was one of the most elderly and respected rabbanim at the time. We spoke to him about the same subject, and he told us something very interesting: The specialty of the Rambam is in the fact that he was knowledgeable in all areas of wisdom; while most *gedolim* are known for their specific expertise in a certain area, the Rambam knew everything, and therefore his *piskei dinim* carry much more weight. He said that we see the same thing by the Rebbe.

Initially the Rebbe had written to him explaining why *al pi halacha* travel on those ships during Shabbos was forbidden. Then, when he wanted the rabbanim to put out an *issur*, the captains brought them on the ships, and showed them that everything works automatically and therefore there is no *chillul Shabbos*. They wrote to the Rebbe about it, and the Rebbe sent them back a detailed questionnaire for them to show the ship's engineers, filled with questions



about how each part of the ship works, proving that it could not really run automatically on Shabbos. When confronted with the questions, the captains had to admit that the Rebbe was right and it was impossible to run a ship entirely automatically on Shabbos (and yet they still did not publish an *issur*).

The shlichus to Eretz Yisroel was a major success in all areas, and when we arrived back the Rebbe himself said that it was a success '*Ima'alah min hameshuar*'.

One of the main events of *hafatzas hamaayanos* during those years were the Lag Baomer parades, which you were very involved in. How did it all start?

When I was a bochur, we would all partake in the *mesibos Shabbos* programs, which were organized by Berel Shemtov and Moshe Gurkov. As part of *Mesibos Shabbos*, we organized rallies on Lag Baomer

The first parade that I participated in was really a rally conducted in the *shalash* in 5713 (unlike later years, when it was held on Eastern Parkway), and we thought, perhaps we should ask the Rebbe to come speak to the

kids. We proceeded to ask, and the Rebbe agreed.

When the Rebbe was walking back to his room after the *sicha* that he said from the porch, he said to Reb Shmuel Levitin that this is a "*nayer giluy or in hafatzas hayahadus* - a new light in the spreading of Yiddishkeit." When we heard about the Rebbe's reaction, we knew that this was something that had to continue.

The next time Lag Baomer was on Sunday was in 5716. I thought of the idea to make a parade, but when I told the heads of *Mesibos Shabbos* and others about my idea, they started laughing at me. They said that if we do it we will have a maximum of two hundred kids, and the event will be a failure. I didn't agree with them, and I decided to write to the Rebbe about my idea. To my pleasant surprise, the Rebbe wrote back immediately that it is a "*davar nachon b'meod*" (very appropriate thing), on condition that it be run in an organized fashion, with a *seder mesudar*, and that it should be run by the same people running *mesibos Shabbos*; they should not be pushed to the side.

The parade was a tremendous success, beyond all of our expectations; people were amazed when they saw what was going on.

The next year, Lag Baomer was again on Sunday, and we began preparing another parade. This time, I didn't want to put in too much work ahead of time, because the last children's event that we had done, on Sukkos, had taken a large part of my day, and I wasn't able to do anything else—daven with a minyan, etc.

Then the Rebbe had farbrenged, and he had spoken about the greatness of the event and the activities. Then he added that it should not take away from a person's personal *avodah*. For that reason I didn't want to put more than two weeks of work before into it.

I spoke to the others that were involved, Berel Shemtov and Berel Futerfas, and they insisted that I run the parade just like I had done the last time. After arguing back and forth, we decided to go to Rabbi Hodakov. When we spoke to him, he told me in no uncertain terms that I must be involved; he said that since the Rebbe's answer had been to me, I must be involved and if not, there will be no parade.

I didn't have a choice, and I worked on it for a long time. *Baruch hashem* we were very successful and it was even better organized than the previous parade.

I was ultimately involved in three parades. The third one was after my wedding, when I was teaching in Oholei Torah, and I wanted Binyomin Klein, who was a *chosson* at the time, to fill my place. But then again, Rabbi Hodakov insisted that without me, there will be no parade.

The morning of that parade, I was in the Tzach office. It was six o'clock in the morning, and Reb Meir Harlig came running and yelling that it is about to rain and that I must call Rabbi Hodakov. Despite the early hour, I phoned him and said that it seems that it will rain and the whole parade will be a disaster. I guess he then called the Rebbe.

Throughout the entire parade, when the thousands of children were present, it didn't rain one drop. During the parade my mother was standing next to the Karestirer Rebbetzin and my mother was telling her that she is worried that it will start raining and the whole parade will be a disaster. The Karestirer Rebbetzin told her that she has nothing to worry about. "As long as the Lubavitcher Rebbe is outside, it will not rain."

That is exactly what happened. As soon as the Rebbe went back inside, we began to bus all the children out of the area—which took a while, because we were not as organized as the years before. As soon as the last bus pulled away, the skies opened and a downpour drenched us all.

In those days, the Rebbe was deeply involved in the lives of the *bochurim*, which obviously included their *shidduchim*. What can you tell us about that period in your life?

One year, when I went into *yechidus* for my birthday, the Rebbe told me that he had heard that I had refused a teaching position in Oholei Torah, which had opened its doors a few years earlier, and the Rebbe wanted to know why I didn't want the position. I answered that I didn't want to get too involved in anything because I was hoping that the Rebbe would send me on *shlichus*. The Rebbe replied that since I am still a *bochur* and *shlichus* is not yet an option for me, I should begin looking into *shidduchim*. Meanwhile, I should take the teaching job and view it as a temporary *shlichus*.

I threw myself into my new position, and with Hashem's help we were blessed with huge success. I began with a class of seven students, and when they finished elementary school there were over thirty children in the grade, with more that wanted to join but we didn't have room.

I began looking into *shidduchim* and many offers came up, but none of them worked out. The next time I was

in *yechidus*, I wrote in my *tzettel* that I can't handle it anymore. The Rebbe said, "*Nu, itzt vet zein shneller*"—now it will be quicker. The next morning I received a suggestion, which ultimately worked out and we were married.

By the time I got married the Rebbe had stopped attending weddings and being *mesader kiddushin*. However, the Rebbe did make an exception for couples that were prepared to go out on *shlichus*. Thus, my wife and I merited that the Rebbe officiated at our wedding. During the same period, another couple asked the Rebbe to be *mesader kiddushin* for them, but the Rebbe told them that he had already stopped this practice and he could not do it. When the *chosson* said that he heard that the Rebbe would be attending the Korf wedding, the Rebbe replied that it was because they had committed to go on *shlichus*.

A short time later, during the year 5720, an offer came up for a *shlichus*. Moshe Feller had recently returned from Merkos Shlichus in Mexico,

THE REBBE IS MESADER KIDDUSHIN AT THE WEDDING OF RABBI AVRAHAM AND RIVKAH KORF, 13 SHEVAT 5720.





YESHIVA FOR BA'ALEI TESHUVA IN MIAMI. RABBI KORF ON THE FAR RIGHT.

where he had visited the local Jewish communities, and he said that while the Sephardic community has a rabbi, the Ashkenazi shul does not. Rabbi Hodakov called me and asked if I would be willing to move to Mexico; I immediately replied in the affirmative.

Moshe Feller then put a call through to the community to tell them that I would be coming, but then they informed him that another rov—Rabbi Hershberg—had already committed to come. Hearing that, I was told that I would not be going.

The next time I was in *yechidus*, I told the Rebbe that I don't want to teach anymore, because I hope that the Rebbe will send me on shlichus. The Rebbe answered that since the plan of Mexico didn't work out, and there is nothing else as of yet, I should continue teaching, and when the time comes I will be sent on shlichus.

Just a few short months later, Rabbi Hodakov called me and asked me if I would be willing to move to Miami. I agreed on the spot, even though I couldn't even identify Miami on a map, and I had no idea what I would be doing there.

Before moving, we went into *yechidus*, where I asked the Rebbe what my shlichus is. The Rebbe told me that “*Vu s'felt in Yiddishkeit*”—

wherever something is missing in Yiddishkeit—it is my job to fill in the need. Before we left, the Rebbe gave me a Tanya and to my wife he gave a *siddur*.

The Rebbe instructed that N'shei Chabad organize a *tzeis'chem l'shalom* for us before we left, and Merkos sent three letters to Miami, to people who were friends of Lubavitch, asking them to assist us.

A few months after we arrived in Miami, I wanted to make a large Yud-Beis Tammuz farbrengen, which would be our first large event. I arranged to have it in a hotel owned by a local *baal habos*. I prepared advertising, and brought down four *bochurim* and *yungeleit* to farbreng with the crowd. I also wanted to invite the Jewish mayor of Miami Beach, but the Rebbe wrote to me that I shouldn't—it shouldn't look like I am trying to take over the city. In the end, the event was a great success, and over two hundred people came to participate.

Another thing that took place soon after we arrived was the birth of our son Yossi. My father flew to Miami for the *bris*, and when he returned to New York, the Rebbe questioned him in detail about everything that had happened. The Rebbe wanted to know

BUT WHEN HE WAS WALKING UP THOSE STEPS, HE BEGAN TO REMEMBER THE SONGS THAT HE HAD LEARNED DURING HIS ONE SUMMER IN CAMP GAN YISRAEL

which rabbanim had attended, and was interested in every detail of what was going on.

In general, the Rebbe took care of us in the fullest sense of the word. I would often write *duchos* about what was going on, and the Rebbe would advise me on all types of issues.

In the beginning, the Rebbe did not allow me to open a school, because there already was an existing Hebrew Academy, and therefore I was not to create competition. Instead, I decided to open a summer camp. Luckily, I was ready for it because I had been previously involved in Camp Gan Yisrael and in the Oholei Torah day camp, which I had organized.

[A bit later, we did open a school, which my wife - may she have a *refuah sheleima* - put her life and soul into, and *boruch hashem* today it has grown to unbelievable proportions.]

In order to start the camp, I had a *mekurav* who agreed to give me the initial sum of money to buy a property, and I began looking into plots of land. At first we were searching for land in Central Florida,



RABBI KORF WITH HIS NEWBORN SON YOSSEI.

but I was advised by my *baalei-batim* not to go there myself due to my Jewish appearance. (These were the days of racial segregation, and African Americans were not allowed to be in Miami Beach at night. However, the real racial segregation was in the center of the state, and the locals there hated all minorities, including Yidden.) One of them told me that he had a friend that lives in that area, and he will look for me instead.

I wrote to the Rebbe about it, and the Rebbe said no, because you look like a Yid, you should be the one to go. With such an answer, obviously I went without fear, and I began looking into properties. I remember that I came to a place where there were a few Jewish families, who kept a very low profile. When they saw me, they begged me to leave, saying that they live in peace with their neighbors, and my presence will awaken all the antisemites. But since the Rebbe had told me to come, I didn't pay attention.

The camp was very successful, with 40 or 50 children the first year. I will share with you an amazing story that happened because of our camp:

There was a group of students that joined our camp the year before they went to high school, where—this was the height of the hippy movement—some of the boys got involved in drugs. A number of them ended up in a commune in California, from where one of the kids called his father one

day and told him that he is getting married.

“With whom?” his father asked. He answered, “With a human being, with a girl.” The father wanted to know if she was Jewish, and he replied, “What difference does it make?”

The father tried to reason with his only son, but he realized he would be better off talking to a wall. In his distress, he turned to me for help.

Since the boy was thousands of miles away, I told the father that I cannot help much, but I will send a *tzetel* to the Rebbe asking for a *bracha*. A few weeks later the father happily told me that they had broken up.

What had happened?


The young couple had gone to the courthouse to arrange their marriage, and while walking up the many steps to the courthouse, the young man began having memories.

He had studied at the Hebrew Academy for seven or eight years, but that never affected him and this didn't bother his conscience. But as he was walking up those steps, he began to remember the songs that he had learned during his one summer in

Camp Gan Israel—‘Ain't Gonna Work on Saturday,’ and so on, started to ring in his ears—and as he walked through the doors of the courthouse he began to feel intensely sick and dizzy. He turned to his fiancée, and told her that he won't be able to go through with the marriage that day; they should push it off for another time.

He went back to his apartment, and that night, he decided that he would not go forward with the marriage at all.

With the Rebbe's *bracha*, the seeds we planted at our camp were able to awaken this *Yiddishe neshama*.

Fascinating. We thank you, Rabbi Korf, for taking the time to share all of these memories with us. May you continue to see much success in your *avodas hakodesh*. 

1. See full article about the shlichus to Eretz Yisroel in “Transforming Tragedy,” Derher Magazine, Sivan 5774
2. The Rebbe mentioned this at the *farbrengen* of Shabbos parshas Nitzavim-Vayeilech 5716



RABBI KORF WITH SUPPORTERS AT THE YECHIDUS FOR THE MEMBERS OF MACHNE ISRAEL DEVELOPMENT FUND, 7 TISHREI 5751.

CHAIM B. HALBERSTAM via JEM 55855



One Push

At times, the picture of our world looks bleak. It could be hard to imagine how this can all change in one instance. In the following sicha, the Rebbe lays out a beautiful explanation as to how the transformation with the coming of Moshiach could take place at any moment, and why it's all in our hands!

MOSHIACH NOW?

When speaking about our mission to create a *dirah betachtonim*, an obvious question arises time and again. With the world in the dire state it is right now, how can we possibly imagine it bringing *nachas* and joy to Hashem? In fact, the complete opposite seems to be true.

Not a Good Time

The darkness of the *golus* that we find ourselves in now seems to only be getting worse. The hardships and

suffering are affecting both Yidden as well as *goyim*, both the community as well as the individual.

When it comes to natural disasters, in recent times we have witnessed them on a disproportionate level. Earthquakes, tsunamis, places that haven't seen such occurrences before have suddenly been hit. Hundreds of thousands of people have been killed in these terrible tragedies.

With regards to the geopolitical situation, never before have we seen

such a deep divide between two world powers interested in controlling the world.

To be sure, wars between countries took place in the past as well. In fact, in every generation we've seen wars between countries. Recently, though, it seems like the entire world is divided; if you're not on one side then you're on the other. This unsustainable situation cannot go on without allowing for a tragic result, may Hashem protect us.

Naturally, in light of the above, the question arises of how one is to anticipate or hope for redemption during such a precarious time? How can such a dismal world be close to the utopian future that we are promised when Moshiach comes and the entire world will recognize Hashem?

A MATTER OF PERSPECTIVE

The answer to this challenge is really a basic one; an intellectually sound answer that even a non-Jew will be able to understand and appreciate, not some esoteric answer using the secrets of the Torah. The answer should be obvious from the realities of the world itself, in a way that is clear to anyone who only takes the time to perceive it. Incidentally, it is precisely now when this question arises, that the answer has become so clear.

The Zohar says that in the sixth millennium, *Chochma*—both supernal and mundane—will begin to pour forth into the world. That doesn't mean it will then stop, it means that the *Chochma* will pour forth in an ever growing rate until Moshiach finally comes.

Recently more than ever, it has become apparent that even the smallest entities can sometimes achieve the greatest things, at times even leading to an all out revolution. In the past, this wasn't possible; in the past for such a revolution to be

possible you'd need tremendous resources at your disposal.

Suddenly, we see all conventional wisdom being turned on its head. Now, the smallest and most impoverished groups are able to sometimes impact the greatest change.

This idea is yet magnified by new technology we now have available. With a single press of a button, one is able to send a nuclear weapon with much greater impact than with massive amounts of arsenal in years past.

If that is true on the negative end, then how much more is it so for the positive. The Torah says that Hashem created everything in a parallel. Any concept or idea that is negative exists in positive parallel, and the same is true vice versa. Our job is to distinguish between the two, to make the right decision and choose the good. But this is really only a choice if you have both possibilities. If we didn't have both options, then we wouldn't be making a choice; it is only when these two options exist at the same time that we can truly be credited in making the right decision.

Perhaps in previous generations they could have also done these things, but without there being a flipside to the positive; they couldn't really make this choice between the good and bad—the right and the wrong.

So when someone asks how it is possible to impact the world today during these times, the answer is simple. Somewhat ironically, it is specifically in this time of tremendous turmoil that we were shown the capability that we really have within us. If from the smallest action one can make such an impact, then we can begin to appreciate what we can achieve if we harness this power for the good.

TAKE ACTION NOW

The Rambam says that a person should view the entire world as being equally balanced. Therefore, through a single mitzvah, he can tilt the balance of equilibrium towards the good and bring salvation to the world.

But, some will argue, while I, as a Yid can accept that, what about a non-Jew who doesn't believe the truth of everything it says in Rambam?

The answer is that there is no need for any faith to comprehend this. Even a small child can, with no advanced knowledge, impact the world on a scale greater than anybody could in previous generations.

One does not need to be a great scholar or a super scientist. Even if you don't know the first thing about technology, you can make huge impact. This has nothing to do with intelligence or power, it's all about pressing a button!

Now, rekon, if a deranged tyrant can harness this ability to cause such destruction with a nuclear weapon, how great are the powers that Hashem embedded within it to use it for good.

Today, through technology, with a single action, one can impact the world in a massive way. The main thing is actually getting it done.

As mentioned, this isn't a religious argument; it is something that everyone can attest to. So long as you have access to the button and it is connected to the right sources, you will succeed in affecting what you need to. The same is true with the world as a whole; when Hashem will present you with the appropriate "button," [i.e. a one-time action of a mitzvah] it will be that action, that press of the button, that will tilt the scales to salvation. **7**

(Based on *sichas Yud Shevat* 5746; *Hisvaaduyos* 5746 vol. 2 p. 454)



A Higher Power

There was once a Chosid of the Rebbe Maharash who traveled often to visit the Rebbe. The husband of one of the women that helped in his home had been drafted to fight in the Russian-Turkish war of 5638 (1877) and had disappeared in action. Stuck as she was, an *agunah*, she asked the Chosid's wife to request from her husband to ask the Rebbe Maharash about her missing husband.

When the Chosid arrived in Lubavitch he happened to meet the Rebbe Maharash riding in his carriage towards the outskirts of town for his daily walk. The Rebbe saw the Chosid and invited him to join.

As they were riding, the Chosid brought up the issue of the missing man.

The Rebbe Maharash responded:

My father, the Tzemach Tzedek, had formidable power in these types of issues. I, however, don't know how. Let me tell you a similar story that happened with my father.

My mother had a relative whose husband had left her because she was an ugly and mean woman. She came to us and my mother took her as a helper around the house. Many times she asked my mother to speak with my father about her situation, but my father would always avoid her.

Once, not long before the *Yomim Noraim*, my mother insisted, "Does it not say 'ומבשרך לא תתעלם', one must not ignore their own relatives?!"

Father answered her, "You too? Do I not have enough *agmas nefesh* and suffering from all these people who visit me with their sacks of problems, that you must add to it?"

"You have your choice," said my mother. "If you can't help them, tell everyone and they will stop traveling to you.

But if you eventually answer everyone, why will you not answer our relative?"

"But the Dnieper is not burning."

"Fine, but give me some sort of timeframe."

So my father told her that after Tishrei he would see what there is to be done.

During the *Aseres Yemei Teshuva* my father called his *gabbai* and instructed him that when a specific merchant from Orsha would come to Lubavitch during Sukkos, on his yearly trip, he should be sent to the Rebbe immediately.

Upon arrival, the merchant was rushed directly to my father. My father said, "I want you to fulfill a *shlichus mitzvah* for me and deliver a letter to a Yid by the name of Chaikel who lives about 20 mil from your house."

"Of course," said the Chosid. "I would be honored to fulfill this *shlichus*. I will see to it as soon as I arrive home after Yom Tov."

"No," said the Rebbe. "I want you to leave this moment and for Yom Tov you will already be home with your family."

The merchant was obviously not thrilled with this; after all, he had already traveled and settled in Lubavitch for Yom Tov. But when the Rebbe says something, you do as you are told.

He took the letter and began to leave the room, but the Tzemach Tzedek called him back. "Make sure not to mishandle the *shlichus*," he said.

"*Chas veshalom!* Of course I will fulfill the Rebbe's instructions," replied the merchant.

He went back to his inn and told his fellow Chassidim, that he was upset. He had come to be with the Rebbe for

Yom Tov and now the Rebbe was sending him away. The Chassidim rallied around him. “On the contrary!” they told him, this is a *shlichus mitzvah*, there must be something very important in the shlichus. You should be happy, celebrate even, that the Rebbe chose you for such a mission and that you merited this mitzvah. They brought together a ‘*tikun*,’ some food and *l’chaim*, and celebrated with him, uplifted him, and sent him on his way.

All this took place the day before Hoshana Rabba. With Orsha a mere 90km from Lubavitch, riding in a two horse carriage driven by his non-Jewish servant, his trip should have been fairly short. As soon as he left Lubavitch, rain began to pour nonstop soaking him and his driver to the bone.

Arriving at his house soaking wet, the Chosid immediately removed his outer clothing and climbed onto the oven to warm his frigid bones. A few minutes later his servant rushed in, one of the horses had suddenly died!

Oy, he thought to himself, it should be a *kappara*.

A little while later the servant ran back in, the second horse had died! The Chosid was upset, but what could he do, Hashem would fill his loss.

Not long later and the servant returned with more bad news—the millhouse was burning. Suddenly the Chosid realized what is going on. Oy! The letter! Where is the Rebbe’s letter?! This is why all these things are happening! Oy!

What letter? His family is confused. “Bring me my clothing,” he shouted in a frenzy. “It is in one of the pockets.”

They brought him his clothing and he pulled out the letter. He quickly instructed his servant to take a third horse and travel to Chaikel to give him the letter from the Rebbe. The servant was not very happy to go back out into the rain. “I didn’t even dry off from the first rain,” he protested.

But the Chosid promised him a large tip in exchange for making the trip. That, and a large glass of liquor. With these to sweeten the deal, the servant agreed to ride the letter over to Chaikel.

The merchant Chosid added his own note to the letter of the Rebbe, telling Chaikel what had happened to him, the death of his two horses and the fire at his mill. He urged him to follow whatever it was that the Rebbe asked of him and to do so immediately.

The servant rode over to Chaikel and gave him the letter. In it the Rebbe asked him to immediately send the miller

who worked at his mill to Lubavitch in time for the last days of Sukkos. Chaikel did just that; he sent for the miller and relayed to him the message from the Rebbe, that he was to travel to Lubavitch immediately.

The miller was a simple person and demurred. “Why should I go?” He asked, “What do I have with the Rebbe? What does he have for me?” But Chaikel didn’t let him get out of it. Either he travelled to Lubavitch for Yom Tov, or he would not be welcome back at the mill.

Faced with no choice, the miller traveled to Lubavitch arriving on Hoshana Rabba.¹

When he went into the Tzemach Tzedek, the Rebbe grabbed his ears and said “Young man, why did you leave your wife for three years?”

The man was unnerved. “I don’t have a way to support her,” he protested.

“I will write to Chaikel your employer to give you a raise so that you will be able to support her,” said the Rebbe.

“But she is mean and wicked.”

“You say she is ‘wicked’ by which you mean that she doesn’t serve you a good meal. Now that you will have a way to provide for her, you will give her more money with which to buy food and she will make you better meals.”

“But she is ugly!” said the miller.

“Do you need a noblewoman?” answered the Tzemach Tzedek. “Come with me into the kitchen.”

My father brought him to the kitchen and said, “Here is your wife, take her with you and live with her according to the Torah, כדת משה וישראל.”

This, concluded the Rebbe Maharash, my father could do. I don’t have that power.

“So what should I tell that poor woman?” asked the Chosid.

“She should write to the main army office in Petersburg to investigate what happened to her husband,” replied the Rebbe Maharash.

They did so, and they soon received a confirmation that her husband had died. A Beis Din was convened and allowed her to remarry. **1**

Sippurei Chassidim, Story 523

1. As mentioned, Orsha and Lubavitch are less than 90km, a walk of approximately 5 hours



REB SHEA SHAPIRA

דער רבי וועט געפינען א וועג...

The Unknown Benefactor

AS TOLD BY REB TZVI DOV (BEREL) GROSS OF BORO PARK, NY

Approximately three years ago my financial situation took a terrible downturn. I was out of a job and I could not afford my monthly rent, and after four months of being unable to pay, I racked up a bill of four thousand dollars. Not having the means to pay even a fraction of the money, my family faced imminent eviction. The thought of being left out on the street without a roof over our heads had me completely distraught. Still I kept my predicament to myself and shared with virtually no one.

Late one Thursday night I drove with a friend to the Ohel to seek out the Rebbe's *bracha*. We arrived after eleven o'clock and as my partner was in a hurry, I spent no more than five minutes inside the Ohel.

I poured out my heart, begging the very Heavens for a miracle that would save me and my family from our plight. With a considerably lighter heart I returned with my friend to Boro Park.

Instead of going home, I made my way directly to the large Belzer shul on the corner of 15th and 51st, where I regularly attended a Thursday night *shiur* on the entire weekly *sedra* with *pirush Rashi*. It was already twelve thirty when I walked in and the *shiur* was nearing its end.

I was immediately approached by an acquaintance of mine and fellow *shiur* attendee, Reb Shea Shapira.

In a conversation with the Derher Magazine, Reb Shea shared his part:

It was in the middle of our late Thursday night *shiur* in the upstairs of the Belzer *beis medrash* when a man who appeared to be a Satmar Chosid strode in and inquired as to the whereabouts of Reb Berel Gross, a regular *shiur* attendee. I got up to check if he was perhaps in another part of the building and when I couldn't find him, the man—whom I had previously met on a few occasions and knew him only by the name Landau—handed me a thick sealed envelope and asked me to ensure at all costs that Reb Berel personally receives it.

When Reb Berel showed up an hour later I dutifully handed him the envelope and briefly told him what had happened.

Reb Berel continues:

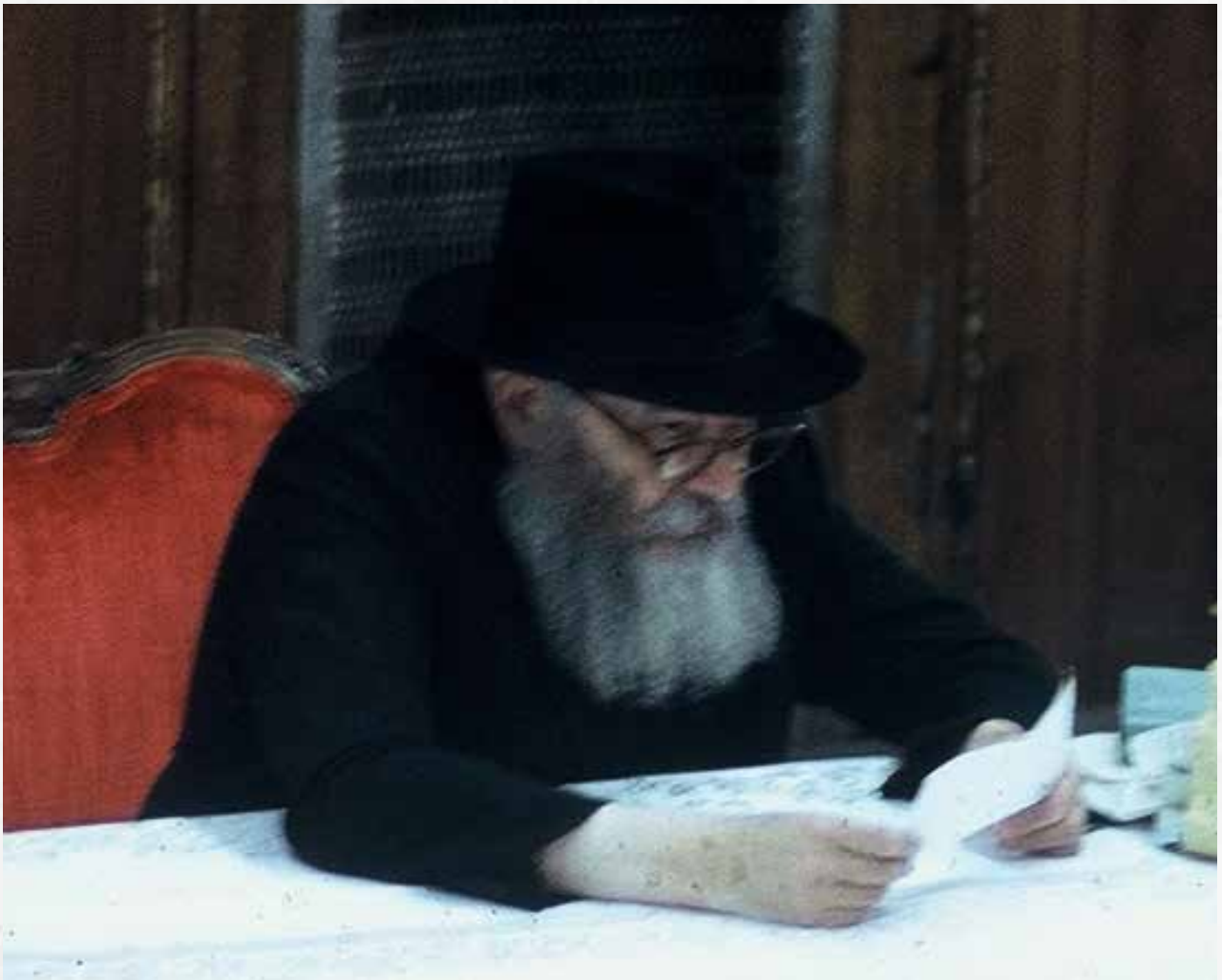
Reb Shea handed me a thick envelope and told me someone had come an hour ago and delivered it for me. I went off to the side to inspect the mysterious envelope's contents and lo and behold the envelope contained a wad of bills amounting to three thousand dollars, enough to cover three quarters of the debt I owed my landlord!

Utterly shocked, I rushed back to Reb Shea and interrogated him as to the identity of my mysterious benefactor; but other than the fact that his last name was Landau, he himself didn't know much about him. I personally was not acquainted with anyone by the name Landau, and I certainly could not fathom how he would possibly be aware of my predicament as I had told almost nobody about it.

A quick calculation brought me to the realization that this stranger had delivered the envelope a mere fifteen minutes after I left the Ohel. The next few days I went about in a mixture of disbelief and immense joy at meriting such a swift *yeshua* from the Rebbe. ❶

YOUR STORY

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



Y MINKOWITZ





A Psak Din for The World

10 SHEVAT 5736

JEM102938

Standing at the forefront of the battle for the sake of *shleimus haAretz*, *shleimus ha'Am* and *shleimus haTorah*, the Rebbe spent countless hours addressing the most burning issues that endangered the Yidden and Yiddishkeit both physically and spiritually. Many of the nations of the world missed no opportunity at demanding territorial concessions from Eretz Yisroel, which would lead to *sakonas nefashos* of millions of Yidden. And unfortunately even among our own people, there were those trying to implement or uphold policies, that could eat away at the very core of our spirituality as the Jewish nation.

One occasion, when the Rebbe poured forth his concern for the state of affairs in Eretz Yisroel and steered the attention of the masses to what needed immediate mending, was the farbrengen of Yud Shevat 5736.

The shul at 770 was filled to capacity, the joy and spirit was contagious and the Rebbe delivered a number of lengthy *sichos*.

In the fourth *sicha* the Rebbe dwelled on the dangerous prospects of territorial concessions that were being discussed at the time, touching upon the issue of *Mihu Yehudi*, the perilous law under which non-Jews could classify as Jews, with non-halachic conversions being accepted as legitimate. After that, the Rebbe discussed the affront that is when the world nations attempt to determine who Eretz Yisroel belongs to.

Since the United Nations passes resolutions by means of a vote among its member states, we will precede their resolution, in the spirit of קדמו לשקליהם and pass our own psak din in favor of *shleimuz ha'aretz*, explained the Rebbe. And as there are 70 nations, which together with



their chief representatives of Eisov and Yishmoel add up to 72, and similarly we find the number 72 in regards to *sanhedrin*, the Rebbe said that there should be 72 *rabbonim* participating in the *psak din*. Since a *psak din* in Torah has the power to alter and to determine reality, the rabbonim at the *farbungen* should issue an unambiguous *psak*, stating that according to Torah, Eretz Yisroel belongs to Yidden, and no one else has any jurisdiction over it. This will in turn impact the reality that it should indeed be so.

The Rebbe paused and asked the rabbonim to come up to the dais and make the *psak*, even moving his own microphone to be used by the various rabbonim.

The first to speak was Rabbi Efraim Eliezer Yolles, *av beis din* of Philadelphia, who began to talk about the greatness of the Rebbe. The Rebbe interjected, reminding him that he was called up to speak about Eretz Yisroel, not about the Rebbe.

The next speaker was a rov visiting from Eretz Yisroel, who expounded upon the theme that the entirety of Eretz Yisroel is a *yerusha*, a bequest to the totality of the Jewish people, for them to keep according to Torah.

After him spoke Rabbi Hirschprung, *av beis din* of Montreal, affirming the concept of Jewish ownership of Eretz Yisroel according to Torah, followed by Rabbi Simcha Elberg of Agudas Harabbonim.

Then the Rebbe asked that the rov of this shul, Rabbi Zalman Shimon Dworkin, to give his *psak* on the matter. After that, the Rebbe said that seeing as the Friediker Rebbe's first communal position under his father was administrator of Tomchei Tmimim, it would be appropriate for the *roshei yeshiva* of Tomchei Tmimim, both past and present, to also address the topic. Rabbis Berel Rivkin, Yisroel Yitzchak Piekarski and Mordechai Mentlik², followed suit and came up to address all the assembled.

After all the rabbonim had finished speaking, the Rebbe asked that someone count and write down the names of the 72 rabbonim participating; faithful to the Gemara³ that describes the vetting process of a *psak din* in Sanhedrin before it is issued.

Indeed Reb Dovid Raskin and Rabbi Leibel Groner, wrote down the names of the participating 72 *rabbonim*, and submitted it to the Rebbe. Then the Rebbe concluded by speaking



JEM 102940



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of the importance of this *psak din*, apologizing, as it were, to those rabbonim who didn't have an opportunity to speak.

The rare episode concluded with the Rebbe asking that everyone say *l'chaim* and sing a lively *niggun*, echoing the *minhag* that was observed by Sanhedrin to hold a lavish festive meal after issuing an important ruling. **T**

1. See Megillah 13b. This refers to Chazal's *takanah* of issuing a proclamation to remind Yidden of the impending mitzvah of *machtzis hashekel*. The day of the proclamation was set annually for Rosh Chodesh Adar, which precedes Haman's plan of paying 10,000 shekalim to Achashverosh for permission to do away with the Yidden, *chas vesholom*, by 13 days. Hence, the Yidden's *shekolim* precede Haman's 'payment' thus counteracting his plans.

2. As a basis for his ruling, Rabbi Mentlik drew upon a sicha from the Rebbe in Vol. 5 of Likutei Sichos

3. Sanhedrin 36b

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.



Illustration

Dear Editors,

Thanks you for what you are doing; this is simply amazing. Personally, I treasure 'reliving' being in 770 during the various times of the year, also, there are new things that I learn and [maybe most importantly] every edition is a full farbrengen with mekurovim - to be able to show and explain what it was like with the Rebbe.

Question: I was wondering: in the article about Purim 5718 ["The Legendary Purim", Derher Adar II 5776]—are the pictures printed there all from that farbrengen?

When publishing pictures within an article, it is very important to identify if they are just for 'illustration' or relate directly to the content.

Again, I totally love the publication.

Rabbi Shmuel Posner
Boston, Massachusetts



Dear Rabbi Posner,

We greatly appreciate your feedback.

In answer to your question:

Actually, none of the pictures in the article about Purim 5718 are from

that farbrengen. We apologize for the confusion.

The Editors



On the Way to Work

Dear Editors,

I would like to thank the Derher editors for the great article about Purim 5718 ["The Legendary Purim", Derher Adar II 5776], as it prompted me to listen to the farbrengen on my way to and from work. In the article it was mentioned that the farbrengen took place at the "Albany Terrace hall" on the corner of Rutland & Albany. I noticed how appropo it is, being that, *b'hashgacha pratis*, I pass that location on my way to work every day. What a great opportunity it was to listen to the farbrengen!

Binyamin Gordon
Brooklyn, New York



Shabbos After Purim 5718

Dear Editors,

I would like to point out a small inaccuracy that seems to have fallen into the published story that I related about the Shabbos

after Purim 5718 [“The Legendary Purim”, Derher Adar II 5776].

Reb Shmuel Zalmanov was not afraid to ask the Rebbe to farbreng, as that was part of his responsibility as a member of the *vaad hamesader*. However, it was unusual for the Rebbe to farbreng in those years on a regular Shabbos unless there was a good reason to. Being that there was an *ufruf* that week of Reb Boruch Brikman, Reb Shmuel felt that this was a good enough reason to ask the Rebbe to farbreng, even though the Rebbe had farbrenged for so many hours just two nights earlier.

Also, when he asked the Rebbe to farbreng, he didn’t ask in the name of my father, rather, he asked in the name of both of the *mechutonim*, my father and Reb Isser Brikman.

Rabbi Sholom Ber Chaikin
Cleveland, Ohio

”

Tanya In Egypt

Dear Editors,

Thank you for including a section in last month’s Derher about the printing of the Tanya in Egypt, which I was involved in [“Tanya to the World”, Derher Adar II 5776].

Regarding the account of the printing, I would like to add a few corrections and notations:

1) Taking a look at the *sicha* on Shavuot 5744 when the Rebbe spoke about the printing that had just taken place, the Rebbe said that activities of Yiddishkeit are not “the norm” in Egypt (עניני יהדות אינם “מקובלים” כ”כ). But when it came to printing the Tanya, not only did they agree; they said that it is a privilege to have the Tanya printed in their country! However, the Rebbe did not say that Egypt is a hostile country towards Yidden.

2) Regarding a meeting with the Egyptian consul to discuss the idea of the printing, I checked my notes again and the following are the Rebbe’s words:

”לכאורה היתה צריכה להיות הכנה מתאימה של הקונסול שבעירו קודם שידברו איתו רשמית ושלא יחשוש שיש בזה משהו נסתר וכו’ ובטח ישנם כמה שהם ביחסי ידידות איתו יסבירוהו גודל העיר שפעל בה הרמב”ם שדר בה וכו’”

“It would seem that the consul should be properly prepared in advance of your official meeting with him, so that he should not suspect that there are any hidden [motives] in this. There are certainly people who have friendly relations with him; they should explain to him the greatness of the city in which the Rambam worked and lived etc.”

3) The following is the Rebbe’s *maaneh* regarding the participation of my uncle, Rabbi Avraham Hecht, in the meeting with the Egyptian ambassador in Washington:

”ואולי דודו ש” שזה עתה פתח אסיפת הקאנגרס בתפלה ונתפרסם ברעקארד ישתתף בזה או גם ישתדל בסידור הפגישה וכו’.”

“Perhaps your uncle, who just opened a session of Congress with a prayer that was published in the Congressional Record, should participate in this; [perhaps] he should also try to arrange the meeting.”

4) The Tanyas that were printed during the Yom Kippur War were not printed in “Mitzrayim”—Egypt proper—but in the Sinai Peninsula (in Port Said and other locations.)

Rabbi Yosef Hecht
Eilat, Eretz Yisroel

”

Tanya Printing In the United Kingdom

Dear Editors,

I read the article about the printing of the Tanya worldwide [“Tanya to the World”,

Derher Adar II 5776], including the printings in Egypt, Grenada, Brazil and many other locations, and I found it very interesting.

As I took a leading role in the printing of 48 Tanyas throughout the United Kingdom, I would like to share my own personal memories from that period, when the Rebbe came out with the campaign in 1984 and in the years that followed.

In those good old fashioned days, it was not easy to just do a printing anywhere. I had a truck that carried a printer weighing half a ton. We would pull up in different towns, search for the Yidden that lived there and invite them to join us at the location of the printing (usually the local shul if there was one).

We started off with the larger cities; London, Birmingham, Leeds, all the way down to small and remote towns like Oldham, Rochdale, Bradford, Chatham, and Worthing. Many of the towns that we went to consisted of just a handful of Yidden. Following the printing, we would study from the Tanya as per the Rebbe's *hora'ah* and make a *l'chaim* with the assembled.

Reb Binyomin Klein told me that when he handed the album with pictures of the printings and the Tanyas that I brought to the Rebbe, the Rebbe placed the Tanyas on the side and turned the pages of the album with great interest, looking intently

at the pictures. The Rebbe sent me \$20 for each Tanya (as you mention in the article in regards to other printings), all together \$960.

Following the terrible tragedy in 1988 of the Pan Am flight bombing over Lockerbie, Scotland, where 259 passengers including 38 Yidden were killed, we decided that we would print a Tanya in Lockerbie at the location of the crash. This Tanya was the first Tanya ever to include the דפוסֵי תניא—the list of all the places where the Tanya was printed—in English. For three months, we reached out to many shluchim and *askanim* that had printed the Tanya in different locations across the globe to find out exactly how each city and town is spelled in English. When we brought the Tanya to the Rebbe during “dollars,” Rabbi Hertz said to the Rebbe that this is the Tanya printed in Lockerbie. The Rebbe turned to the back and asked us what exactly the English words were. When Rabbi Hertz said that it is the דפוסֵי תניא in English, the Rebbe looked at the pages closely.

I am very grateful that I had the *zechus* to bring the Rebbe *nachas* through the printing of the Tanyas across the UK.

Thank you for all the great work you do.

Avrohom Weisz
London, England

”

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

לזכות הת' מנחם מענדל שיחי'
לרגל הכנסו לעול המצוות בדור"ח אייר, ה'תשע"ו - שנת הקהל את העם
יה"ר מהשי"ת שיגדל להיות חסיד ירא שמים ולמדן
ולזכות אחיותיו ואחיו שיחי'
נדפס ע"י הרה"ת ר' שלום דובער וזוגתו מרת אסתר שיחי'
ליין
ולזכות זקניהם שיחי'

IN HONOR OF THE 40TH BIRTHDAY OF
RABBI **AVRAHAM HAKOHN BERKOWITZ**
&
WISHING HIM ABUNDANT BROCHOS AND CONTINUED HATZLOCHA
IN HIS AVODAS HAKODESH
DEDICATED BY HIS WIFE **LEAH** AND THEIR CHILDREN:
ROCHI, MOUSSIE, MENACHEM MENDEL, SARA AND ELLA

לעילוי נשמת
הרה"ח הרה"ת עוסק בצ"צ וכו' ר' יהודא ליב ז"ל
בהרה"ח הרה"ת ר' יעקב יוסף שו"ב ז"ל
רסקין
שליח כ"ק אדמו"ר זי"ע במדינת מרוקו
למעלה מארבעים וארבע שנים
בקשר עם יום היאהרצייט שלו הי"ב ביום י"ב אייר
נדפס על ידי ולזכות משפחתו
שיחיו לאורך ימים ושנים טובות

לזכות
בנציון טוביה
ומשפחתו
שיחיו
קאזין

לזכות
החתן הרה"ת ר' משה יהודה שי' סיימאן
והכלה מרת חי' מושקא תחי' גאלדשטיין
לרגל חתונתם בשעטומי"צ ר"ח סיון ה'תשע"ו הבעל"ט
נדפס ע"י הוריהם
הרה"ת ר' לוי וזוגתו מרת בילא רישא שיחי'
גאלדשטיין
הרה"ת ר' אפרים וזוגתו מרת נחמה דינה שיחי'
סיימאן

לזכות הילדה בצבאות ה' מירל שתחי'
שתגדלה לתורה לחופה ולמעשים טובים,
ושהוריה ירוו רוב נחת ממנה
נדפס ע"י הוריה ר' ישראל ומרת רות שיחיו קוגל

לע"נ הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' דובער בן הרב ר' נפתלי ע"ה יוניק
זכה לשמש את כ"ק אדמו"ר קרוב ליובל שנים
בקשר עם יום היאהרצייט שלו הי"א ביום ט' אייר
ולזכות יבלחט"א זוגתו מרת פרומא שתחי'
DEDICATED BY **DOVID** AND **CHANIE JUNIK** AND FAMILY

מוקדש לזכות
הרה"ת ר' לייביש משה
וזוגתו מרת רינה
וילדיהם קיילא באשא, בנציון דוד,
אליהו איסר, רבקה שיינדל אלטא שיחיו
גולדהירש

לזכות החתן הרה"ת
ר' יעקב חיים חנה שי' אברמס
והכלה מרת רחל תחי' צירקינד
לרגל חתונתם בשעטומי"צ
ט' סיון ה'תשע"ו הבעל"ט
נדפס ע"י הת' ראובן שיחי' ליצמן

לזכות
הת' אברהם שיחי'
לרגל הכנסו לעול המצוות ח' אייר, ה'תשע"ו
נדפס ע"י הרה"ת ר' שניאור זלמן משה
וזוגתו מרת ליבא לאה שיחיו
קוגל

לע"נ
הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' בנימין
בן הרה"ח הרה"ת
ר' שמואל הלוי
לעוויטין
נלב"ע ח' תשרי ה'תשע"ד

A Chassidisher Derher
Vaad Talmidei Hatmimim



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