

# Derher

A Chassidisher

א חסידישער דערהער

"וראו כל עמי הארץ  
כי שם ה' נקרא עליך  
ויראו ממך"

**Neshama Unleashed**  
THE POWER OF NIGUNIM

**The Desert Blooms**  
EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH  
RABBI SHIMON LAZAROFF, HEAD SHLIACH OF TEXAS

## Reconnecting

# 50

YEARS LATER, WE TAKE A NEW LOOK  
AT THE REBBE'S LAUNCH OF  
THE FIRST AND MOST FAMOUS  
OF THE TEN MIVTZOIM-MIVTZA TEFILLIN



IYAR 5777  
ISSUE 56 (133)

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## Derher**Editorial**

When we call upon each and every individual to go out and do the *mivtzoim*, some people ask:

“We never saw the [Friediker] Rebbe standing in Times Square and putting tefillin on with Yidden! In fact, the Rebbe was most probably never even in Times Square at all...”

The answer is: Levi, the son of Yaakov, was exempt from carrying Yaakov's *aron* up from Mitzrayim, because his grandchildren were to carry the *aron Hashem*. Instead, Menasheh and Efraim filled in for him. Similarly, the Rebbe has the responsibility to ensure that his children and grandchildren will carry the “*aron*,” he must abstain from certain tasks.

But all other Yidden need to fill in, acting as Menasheh and Efraim; carrying out the *mivtzoim* as the Rebbe's shluchim and representatives! It's not that the Rebbe doesn't do these things at all; he has shluchim who did it in his stead, and as Chazal say, שלוחו של אדם כמותו—It is as if he himself is doing it...

(*Shabbos parshas Va'era* 5740)

This month marks 50 years since the Rebbe launched the first of the ten *mivtzoim*, the one that has since become synonymous with Lubavitcher Chassidim in Eretz Yisroel and the world over—*mivtza tefillin*.

The Rebbe's call for the new campaign came together with his lone-voice of reassurance during a very trying time for the Jewish nation, just before the outbreak of the Six-Day War. When others predicted doom and destruction, the Rebbe foresaw a great victory in the merit of the mitzvah of tefillin, which is especially potent in protecting the Jewish people.

Read the story of the launch of *mivtza tefillin* in this magazine and be inspired to action—as the Rebbe announced shortly after the war was over that the *mivtza* would continue in full-force.

When we do our part in *mivtza tefillin*, the Rebbe will do his part, as he concludes in the above *sicha*:

“The fact that Levi didn't carry Yaakov's *aron* allowed his descendants to abstain from servitude in Mitzrayim, which in turn assured that Moshe and Aharon could bring about

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Rabbi Shimon Sabol  
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the *geulah* from Mitzrayim. In our instance as well; if others do the *mitvzoim* as the Rebbe's representatives, he will be able to bring the *geulah* and take all the Yidden out of *galus!*"

May it be *teikef umiyad Mammosh!*

**The Editors**  
אסחה"פ ה'תשע"ז

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# SHARING OUR DISTRESS

*How can the Yidden cope with the hardships of golus?*

*Rashbi explains, Rebbe Elazar expands, and we transform the darkness to light.*

There are several famous sayings of Rashbi. One of these is “בכל מקום שגלו, שכינה עמהן—Wherever Jews were exiled, the *Shechinah* is with them.”<sup>1</sup> Hashem and Yidden are not separated, us being in *golus* and Hashem in heaven. No, Rashbi says, Hashem is with a Jew always; thus, when Yidden are in exile, Hashem is there with them! Further, not only is He with them, but He also shares the sorrows of the exile, “בכל צרתם לא [לן] צר”—In all their troubles, He is troubled.” When a Jew is pained and distressed

by the exile, Hashem too is pained and distressed. And because Hashem partakes of our difficulties, the help Jews receive from Hashem is surely enough to overcome all difficulties.

Because Hashem shares in the sorrows of Yidden in *golus*, the redemption from that exile comes that much more quickly. As it says in Tehillim, “Not for our sake L-rd... but for the sake of Your Name... Why should the nations say, ‘Where, now, is their G-d?’”<sup>3</sup> If the nations of the world taunt Jews with the impotence of their G-d as evidenced by the fact that Jews suffer in *golus*, how much greater is the mockery when Hashem Himself suffers in the exile! And thus, surely Hashem brings the end of the *golus* quickly.

The knowledge that the *Shechinah* is also in *golus* should affect all Yidden, causing them to cry out from their

depths of their hearts, “How much longer!” When will the *geulah* come, when will Hashem leave the *golus*?!

Yes, Hashem is in *golus* with His people. But do not think that Hashem leaves the *golus* before the Jews, leaving them alone even for a minute. As Rashbi continues: “Wherever they are exiled the Divine Presence is with them. And when they are redeemed the Divine Presence is with them.”<sup>4</sup> Yidden—do not worry, says Rashbi. Every moment you are in *golus*, Hashem is with you; He will not leave *golus* before you, but shall go together with each and every one of you.

But even in *golus*, before the *geulah*, Jews will have light, both physical and spiritual—just as in the first exile in Egypt, where the Jews ceased to work as slaves, and “For all B’nei Yisroel there was light in their dwelling places.”<sup>5</sup>





לזכות  
הת' מנחם מענדל שיחי'  
לרגל הגיעו לעול המצוות  
וחי' מושקא שיחי'  
לרגל הגיעה לגיל שתים-עשרה שנה,  
היא עונת בת מצוה  
נדפס ע"י הוריהם  
הרה"ת ר' משה פינחס  
ומרת עלקא שיחיו  
וואלף



The relationship between Hashem and Yidden in *golus* is described in a parable given by Rebbi Elazar, Rashbi's son. On the *possuk* "When they [Yidden] shall be in the land of their enemies I will not reject them nor will I abhor them to destroy them,"<sup>6</sup> Rebbi Elazar said the following, "If a man loves a woman who lives in a street of tanners, [though] if she were not there he would never go into it (due to the foul smell), but because she is there it seems to him like a street of spice makers where all the sweet scents of the world are to be found. So too 'even when they are in the land of their enemies'—which is the street of tanners—I will not reject them nor will I abhor them'..."<sup>7</sup>

The *nimshal* for this is: The Yidden in *golus* are like a person in "a street of tanners," a foul place. This itself teaches the qualities of a Yid: A Yid

does not become assimilated in *golus*, reconciled to his fate; since the exodus from Mitzrayim the Yid has been a free man, free of bondage to anyone but Hashem. A Yid is merely in a **street**, a public place, surrounded by a foul smell, the smell of exile, but he does not let it become part of him. He remains a Yid, free and proud.

Despite the foul smell, Rebbi Elazar says, Hashem is with Yidden; moreover, because Yidden are there, the exile seems to Hashem like "a street of spice makers where all the sweet scents of the world are to be found." For when Hashem sees that the Yidden, while in a "street of tanners," still observe Torah and mitzvos and educate their children in the same and even more intense spirit—i.e. they transform darkness into light—it is a "pleasant fragrance" to Him. The foul odors have not

deterred the Yidden from properly educating their children; instead, the harsh and unpleasant conditions of *golus* have called forth the innermost powers of parents to give their children a proper education. And such behavior, revealing the qualities of the Jewish people, hastens the *geulah* through *Moshiach tzidkeinu*.<sup>8</sup> **1**

1. Megillah 29a.
2. Yeshaya 63:9. Although the passuk is written as לא צר - He is **not** distressed, it is read as לו צר - it is painful **to Him**.
3. Tehillim 115:1
4. Megillah ibid.
5. Shemos 10:23
6. Vayikra 26:44
7. Zohar vol. 3, 115b
8. Adapted from sichas Lag B'Omer 5744 at the Parade



לעבן מיט'ן רבי'ן

לזכות  
הרה"ת ר' יהודה  
וזוגתו מרת רבקה  
ומשפחתם שיחיו  
שטיינער  
וואשינגטאן די. סי.



YOSSI MELAMED via JEM 118345

# “Saluting the Unity of the Jewish People.”

LAG B'OMER 5747



## THE GREAT PARADE

Amongst the various features characterizing Lag B'Omer throughout the years, the grandiose parades conducted in the Rebbe's presence, stood out.<sup>1</sup> In addition to saying a *sicha*, the Rebbe listened to the children's *pesukim* recital beforehand (from the year 5736 and on, when the 12 *pesukim* were introduced), and

stayed afterward to observe the children passing before him, presenting artistic signs and displays about Yiddishkeit in general, and the mitzvot in particular. The glow on the Rebbe's face was evident, as he lovingly gazed at all the passersby, waving his hands, and saluting. It was obvious that this royal *kiddush Hashem*, in the presence of thousands, generated much *nachas ruach* on the



## THE REBBE'S BRACHA FOR THE PARADE

On Friday, 16 Iyar, the Rebbe communicated the following message to the parade committee:

והצלחה למעלה מן המשוער, וביותר מן היותר.

“[The parade should have] more *hatzlacha* than expected, and even more so.”

Rebbe's part; something that was also expressed in the unique *maanos* the organizers received.

The year 5747 was one of those special years. A grand parade, complete with floats and all, took place. In fact, several months later, Kehos, in conjunction with N.C.F.J.E. and Tzivos Hashem, published “We March as One”: A Photographic Journal of the Lag B’Omer Parade - 5747/1987. This year, marking thirty years from Lag B’Omer 5747, JEM has released newly restored video footage of the parade. We strongly encourage our readership to watch the parade, and “re-live” those special moments.

To that end, we are proud to publish descriptive details of that year's parade. The following account is based largely on an article printed in the Kfar Chabad magazine at the time, a *yoman* written by Rabbi Michoel Seligson, and various other diaries.

## PARADE PREPARATIONS

In the weeks leading up to this colossal show of Jewish pride, the excitement in the air was palpable. Many volunteered day and night for this grand production, which included constructing floats, and decorating 770 and surrounding buildings with enormous banners exhibiting Jewish ideas. Tens of workers toiled on setting up the children's fair on Empire Boulevard, which was set to take place following the parade on Eastern Parkway.

On Motzei Shabbos, the eve of the parade, Crown Heights was abuzz with activity. Students of the various *mosdos* affixed banners to the buildings, and built educational floats atop flatbed trucks. Tens of *bochurim* worked throughout the night on this



year's main attraction: a display of all the various *galuyos* throughout the ages, culminating with this year portrayed by the words “*Ad Mosai?! “Dalo! Galus!”*” “Enough is enough!” This unique idea, the brainchild of Gershon Eichorn, Heshy Rubashkin, and Meyer Preger, displayed all of *am Yisroel's galuyos*, from *galus Mitzrayim*, passing through *galus Bavel* and *Romi*...up through Auschwitz. Standing out was the exhibit portraying Chabad activities in the current *galus*, in the form of mitzvah tanks standing against Manhattan skyscrapers.

In front of 770, others were erecting the main *bima*, on which the Rebbe would stand the next day and participate in the parade.

Shortly after ten o'clock the following morning, the Rebbe arrived at 770 with a policeman sitting inside the car. The Rebbe exited the car, waved to the crowds already assembled for the parade, and entered his room.

*“By now, I’m sure you all know who I’m talking about,” continued Rabbi Hecht, shortly before 11:15.*

## AN UNFORGETTABLE PARADE

Veteran parade opener Rabbi Yosef Goldstein (also known as “Uncle Yossi,”) began by explaining the meaning of Lag B’Omer—*Yom Hilulah D’Rashbi*. This was followed by an Uncle Moishy concert.

Following the show, Rabbi Goldstein introduced the parade chairman and emcee, executive vice president of N.C.F.J.E. Rabbi Yaakov Yehuda Hecht.



LEVI FREIDIN via JEM, 4850





LEVI FREIDIN via JEM, 4866

Rabbi Hecht began: “There is one man in the world today who is acknowledged and recognized as the true dedicated leader of world Jewry. Because of his love and concern for his people wherever they may be, he in turn is loved by the masses...” Rabbi Hecht continued speaking about the Rebbe and the wide-ranging activities of Lubavitch the world over, under the Rebbe’s leadership.

“By now, I’m sure you all know who I’m talking about,” continued Rabbi Hecht, shortly before 11:15. “Although I do not feel worthy of this great honor, I nevertheless have been given the distinct privilege of introducing to you the saintly and revered leader of world Jewry, the *nossi* of our generation, and the Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai of our times—the Lubavitcher Rebbe.”

It was then that the entire crowd rose to their feet in respect. As the band began playing the stirring melody of “*Ani Maamin*,” the Rebbe emerged from 770’s main entrance. Advancing swiftly down the passage, the Rebbe smiled while waving to the crowds, and ascended the tall, decorated *bima*.

As arranged beforehand, children from various yeshivos and day schools worldwide ascended the platform and led the crowd in the recitation of the Twelve Pesukim. All the while the Rebbe stood facing the child leading the *possuk*, his face shining with pleasure as he recited along with the children.

Facing the Rebbe’s *bima* was a raised platform on which reporters and TV crews from all major news networks stood, broadcasting the event. There were also camera operators transmitting the event directly to tens of Jewish communities around the world who were watching the live hookup. It was a real show of *kiddush Hashem*, leaving its mark not only on the multitudes participating in the event, but also on the scores of Yidden watching the live hookup in Chabad Houses around the world.

A special staff of *bochurim* ensured the smooth *seder* that characterized this year’s parade, this thanks to advance planning and preparations.

The entire Eastern Parkway, from Albany to New York Avenues, was closed off from early morning hours by the hundreds of police officers spread throughout the area, ensuring the smooth

performance of one of the biggest *hafatzas* *hamaayanos* events.

### THE REBBE SPEAKS

After the singing of “We Want Moshiach Now,” the Rebbe began the *sicha*. It was split into three, with Rabbi Hecht relaying an English summary between each segment.

This lasted about an hour and a half. The *sicha* included messages highlighting the greatness of the moment; the fact that young and pure Jewish children gather together on such a special day, in a spirit of *ahavas Yisroel*.

The Rebbe also elaborated on the special lesson from the days of *sefiras ha’omer*, which remind us of the Jewish people’s excitement to receive the Torah at Har Sinai, and the lesson we can learn to cherish the Torah—Hashem’s precious gift to us.

Another lesson the Rebbe taught was from the Torah of Rashbi, about the fact that Hashem accompanies His people in *galus*. This should serve to strengthen us in our mission here, especially the charge to influence all inhabitants of the world to observe the *sheva mitzvos b’nei Noach*.<sup>3</sup>

### JUDAISM ON WHEELS

This was followed by the parade.

The procession began with children carrying the American flag, as well as the flags of Merkos L’Inyonei Chinuch, Machne Israel, and N.C.F.J.E., respectively. Following them was a delegation of NYPD mounted officers who saluted the Rebbe and

received a salute in return. Then came officers of the New York Color Guard who marched with flags.

Oholei Torah’s Tzivos Hashem Marching Band, following a decorated mitzvah tank, continued the procession. Next were several Marine Guard vehicles on which Col. Yaakov Goldstein and members of his unit saluted the Rebbe. All the while, the Rebbe smilingly looked on and clapped energetically.

Then came the clowns! The doors of an oversized Cadillac opened up to release tens of clowns who livened up the crowd.

The crowd stood and remained standing for an hour as the floats went by. Volunteers from the various *mosdos*, including Machon Chana, Oholei Torah, Lubavitcher Yeshiva of Brooklyn, Tomchei Tmimim of Morristown, Tiferes Bachurim of Morristown, Tzach in Eretz Yisroel, Beis Rivka, 770, F.R.E.E., and others, built these decorated educational floats.

As a special truck carrying boys who were celebrating their *upshernish* together with their fathers went by, the Rebbe waved to them, performing a cutting motion with his fingers. Scores of children from various day schools and *chadarim* throughout the greater New York area, representing almost every spectrum of the Jewish community, marched by. Jewish children in public schools who participate in the Released Time program also attended, carrying signs conveying messages of Jewish pride. The Rebbe stood for the duration, waving to the many youngsters passing by.



RABBI JJ HECHT TAKES NOTES AS THE REBBE DELIVERS A SICHA TO THE PARTICIPANTS AT THE PARADE.



A skywriter flying above the parade adorned the bright blue, cloudless sky with the message: “Bais Yaakov of Brooklyn Salutes the Lubavitcher Rebbe.” When Rabbi Groner mentioned this to the Rebbe, he raised his eyes and gazed at the message for a while.

The *talmidim* of Tomchei Tmimim of Morristown built a float portraying the Chabad City in Yerushalayim. (The Rebbe had spoken publicly several times that year about building housing for the new wave of immigrants that would soon be leaving Russia.)<sup>4</sup> The float attracted much attention from the spectators, as the Rebbe began clapping, with the crowd following suit, and motioned to Professor Branover<sup>5</sup> standing nearby, to ascend the float.

Students of Beis Rivkah carrying signs marched along with their teachers, and mothers pushed their baby strollers. The Rebbe’s face shined as he smilingly waved at the children with his hands, occasionally bending his head to see what was written on the banners.

As the Chamah Publishers’ float was going by, portraying their influence amongst Russian Jewry worldwide, the crowd could hear Rabbi Hecht shouting “Hold it, driver...” as the Rebbe was seen motioning to his left. The Rebbe then said in Russian “Say it in Russian!” after which someone shouted “Happy Lag B’Omer!” in Russian, and began singing a song. The Rebbe then began the niggun “Nyet, Nyet, Nikavoh...” As the entire assemblage joined in the singing, the Rebbe vigorously encouraged the crowd.

#### “I LIFTED YOU UP!”

At the end of the parade, Rabbi Hecht thanked Rabbis Bentzion (Benjy) Stock, Sholom Ber Baumgarten and Moshe Katzman, as well as all the

*The Rebbe then said in Russian “Say it in Russian!” after which someone shouted “Happy Lag B’Omer!” in Russian...*

other organizers and volunteers for “one of the most gorgeous parades we have ever had.” Rabbi Hecht then continued: “And I hope the Rebbe is satisfied.” The Rebbe immediately added “And especially the children...” after which microphones were put before the Rebbe, and he continued: “Especially the children, the boys and the girls, b’nei Avrohom Yitzchok v’Yaakov, b’nos Sara, Rivka, Rochel, v’Leah.” The Rebbe then began singing “*Ki V’Simcha Seitzu*” as the crowd enthusiastically joined along, with the Rebbe’s energetic encouragement.

As the Rebbe was about to leave, Rabbi Hecht said to him that he hopes the Rebbe received *nachas ruach* from the parade. The Rebbe answered “Very [much so]. What about your *mara-shchora* [melancholy]?” (Before the parade, Rabbi Hecht had complained that the preparations were not going well). Rabbi Hecht responded, “The Rebbe pulled me out of it,” to which the Rebbe responded, with a swift raise of his hand, “Pulled you out of it? [I] lifted [you] up!” As the Rebbe exited the parade and entered 770, another round of animated clapping followed.



#### AT THE FAIR

With that, the parade was over, and the crowds began heading toward the children’s fair. Once there, they enjoyed the various rides, carnival games, and exhibits displaying Yiddishkeit. Tzach





בעומר תשמ"ד  
הילולא דרשב"י  
השמיטה-שבת לה'

תשמיטת  
השמיטה  
השמיטה  
השמיטה



set up special *mitvzoim* booths, laying Tefillin with many of the thousands of visitors from all over the New York area.

At 3:00 p.m., the Rebbetzin's car arrived on Empire Boulevard via Kingston Avenue with a police escort, and as she drove through, she waved to those participating in the celebrations.

At around 4:20, as the Rebbe's car, accompanied by that of members of *mazkirus* and a police escort, was on the way to the Ohel, it drove down Kingston to Crown and from there to Brooklyn, going through the fair on Empire. All the while, the Rebbe observed the various goings-on, and waved to the children with both of his hands. It was a fascinating sight to behold.

When the Rebbe returned from the Ohel, *mincha* and *maariv* took place. The Rebbe then began distributing dollars to the large crowd gathered at 770, as a continuation of the parade that took place earlier that day.

It was a special end to a successful day.

### PUBLISHING THE SICHA

On Tuesday, 20 Iyar, Reb Gershon Ber Jacobson, publisher of the *Algemeiner Journal*, was speaking with Rabbi Groner in Gan Eden Hatachton. When the Rebbe arrived and saw Reb Gershon Ber, he turned to him, motioning to come inside the Rebbe's room. While the Rebbe stood near the door of his room, he began conversing with Reb Gershon Ber on several matters.

At the conversation's end, Reb Gershon Ber asked the Rebbe if he is planning on editing the Lag B'Omer *sicha*.

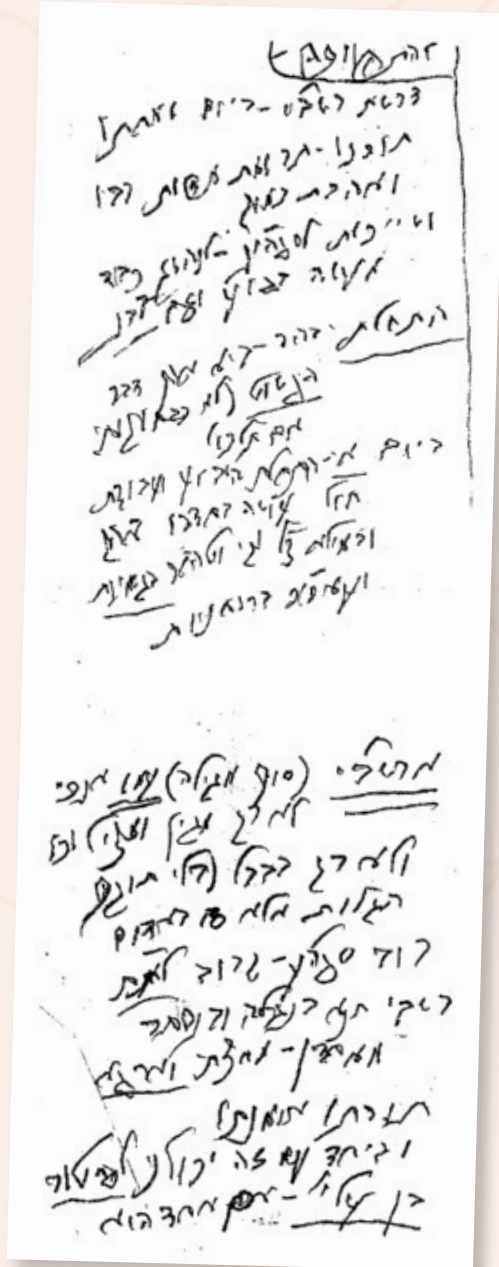
The Rebbe smilingly responded, "Is there a shortage of my *sichos*?" Then turning to Rabbi Groner, he asked, "Is there a *sicha* [written up]?"

Rabbi Groner, pointed to the *sicha* sitting on the Rebbe's holy table. The Rebbe then looked at the *sicha* and declared, "However, it is self-understood that the *sicha* should not detract from the article and pictures of the parade."

Reb Gershon Ber replied "Of course not."

The Rebbe concluded, "I will make an effort to look it over."

And in fact, the Rebbe submitted for publication the edited version of the Lag B'Omer *sicha* that night. **T**



THE REBBE'S NOTES FOR THE SICHA TO BE SAID DURING THE PARADE.

1. For a general overview on Lag B'Omer with the Rebbe, see Derher, Iyar 5774
2. "Enough [of this] Golus," in Russian.
3. The *sheva mitzvos b'nei Noach* campaign was reinvigorated by the Rebbe earlier that year, on Purim. Throughout the following months, the Rebbe continuously encouraged this effort. See Derher Shevat 5777.
4. See Hisvaaduyos 5747 vol 3, pp. 91-105, 147-149.
5. A longtime "refusenik," and Chairman of SHAMIR (Shomrei Mitzvot Yotzei Russia), he was on the committee responsible for these housing projects.



## כתב יד קודש

לע"נ  
השלוחה מרת הינדא גיטל אלטע חי'  
בת ר' עזריאל ע"ה  
שיימאן  
נלב"ע כ"ז אייר ה'תשע"ג  
נדפס ע"י  
משפחתה שיחיו

# Saving Lives

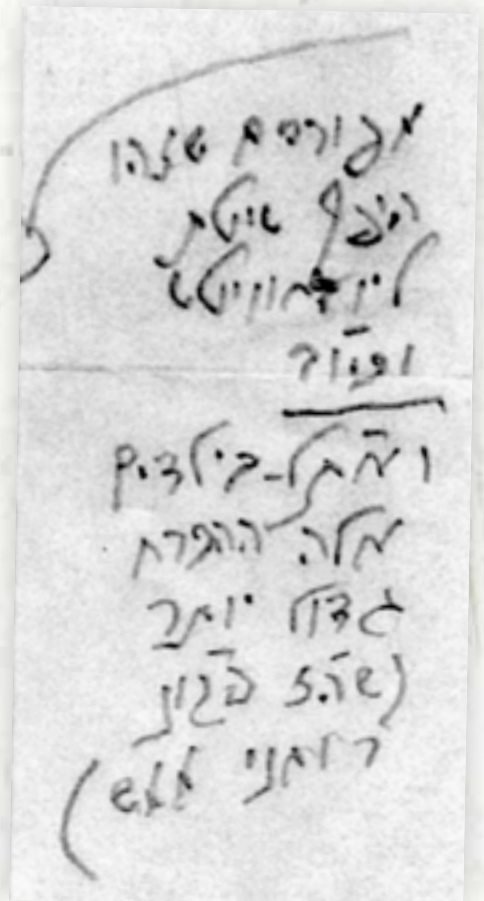
In the following ksav yad kodesh, the Rebbe responds to a rav who wrote about the fact that many frum schools will not accept children from non-frum homes:

מפורסם שזהו היפך שיטת ליובאוויטש וכיו"ב

ואת"ל [=ואם תמצי לומר] - בילדים אלה ההכרח גדול יותר (שה"ז פקו"נ [=שהרי זה פקוח נפש] רוחני ממש)

As is well-known, this is antithetical to the philosophy of Lubavitch and the like [i.e. those who follow and emulate its ways].

As a matter of fact—[the concern for the education of] these children is even more vital (for their situation is spiritually life-threatening).







## INCARCERATION



The earliest historical record of society penalizing criminals through revoking their right to free movement by confining them to a specific location is in Sefer Bereishis: Potifar imprisoned Yosef HaTzaddik in response to an alleged crime. Several years later the royal butler and baker met the same fate for failing to serve Pharaoh properly. Nevertheless, throughout history, humanity has tended to limit the scope of imprisonment as a means of detaining criminals pending their ultimate verdict and punishment. Serving jail time was not generally considered an adequate or appropriate consequence for criminal behavior.

Then, during the 18th century, governments seeking to abolish the excessive use of the death penalty developed the modern penitentiary: designating enclosed structures or areas where criminals are confined for extended periods of time, while providing for their every need and preserving their health.

During the 1970s, due to the soaring crime rates of the 1960s, the War on Drugs and mandatory sentencing rules, the prison population in the United States boomed. Since then, each year, millions of people have been incarcerated in federal, state and county prisons around the country. Today, just under one-quarter of the world's prisoners are held in American prisons!

During the spring of 5736 and the summer of 5745 the Rebbe addressed this phenomenon at length providing a unique Torah perspective.

### A PUNISHMENT WORSE THAN DEATH

The Torah prescribes various forms of punishments for different sins: Financial penalties, *korbanos chatos* and *asham*, corporal punishment (*malkus*) and capital punishment

(the various forms of death penalty). There is absolutely no mention of incarceration as a standard form of punishment within Jewish law.<sup>1</sup>

Superficially, the banishment of an accidental murderer to an *ir miklat* seems similar to incarceration. This

is not the case however, since *halacha* necessitates that the city of refuge be conducive to a fully productive and free lifestyle. Prison life is quite the opposite.

Man was created to fulfill Hashem's desire to have a *dira betachtonim* in this world. Freedom of movement and behavior is critical to accomplishing this mission.

As a *Toras chessed*, every element of Torah—including punishments—enables a Yid to fulfill this divine mission. Incurring financial loss through the various monetary penalties and *korbanos*, or suffering the pain and shame of *malkus*, allows the offender to start fresh with a clean slate. Exile to the *ir miklat* serves as atonement, and while there, he is accompanied by his Torah teacher to ensure his spiritual advancement as well. If the sin is so grave as to warrant the death penalty r"l, the sinner is nevertheless worthy of *Olam Haba*.

It would be inconsistent to keep someone alive in this world, which by definition means that he or she still plays a crucial role in making a *dira betachtonim*, and to limit his or

her mobility and ability to function properly—an impossible situation! From a Torah perspective, this is worse than death, for in the case of capital punishment, Hashem has terminated the sinner's divine mission.

For this reason, imprisonment has no place in the list of Torah punishments.

## HALACHIC JUSTIFICATION

In the absence of the ability for the *beis din* to apply Torah penalties properly, the leadership of the Jewish community is obligated to preserve law and order by all means at their disposal<sup>2</sup> including imprisonment.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, *dina demalchusa dina*—the secular law of the land is halachically binding.

In the modern era, incarceration is a universally accepted form of punishment. In a moral and compassionate country it even provides several benefits.<sup>4</sup> While behind bars, the criminal cannot commit the crime or influence others to follow suit, thereby making society safer. Furthermore, the purpose of imprisonment is to educate, rehabilitate and prepare the offender to live an honest and productive lifestyle upon release, hence the term “correctional facilities.” Fear of incarceration also serves as a deterrent to would-be criminals.

## A KLOTZ KASHE

Torah provides clear guidance for the implementation of many forms of punishment, emphasizing the contrast to the punishment methods of other ancient societies. For example, at the time of *matan Torah*, chopping off the hand of a thief was common practice and the Torah clearly prohibits this behavior.<sup>5</sup>

Incarceration of criminals was common practice in Mitzrayim.<sup>6</sup> Why does the Torah not prohibit this form of punishment so as “not to follow the ways of Mitzrayim?”<sup>7</sup> Contrarily, if imprisonment is acceptable, why are there no guidelines provided?

Based on the above it is clear: The only justification for incarceration is to preserve law and order in unique situations.<sup>8</sup> There is no divine quality associated with imprisonment and therefore the details of implementation are the purview of the authority charged with preserving law and order.

## A CALL TO ACTION

Clearly, incarceration is a tragic and traumatizing experience for the inmates and their families. It is an enormous financial burden on society in general and it is to the shared benefit of all that this program succeeds in its purpose. As we all are affected by this harrowing reality, it is important to appreciate the unique Torah lessons to be applied.

A prisoner must know that the current situation is a stepping-stone

for a greater future. Yosef HaTzaddik's ascent to the pinnacle of power was a result of his imprisonment. By focusing on self-improvement and continued education, the chances for a more productive life after release than before incarceration become stronger. As a result of this experience, the released prisoner will be a more effective role-model for others that crime does not pay. And just as Am Yisrael managed to move on from their painful slavery in Egypt, this too will pass.<sup>9</sup>

It is crucial for wardens, guards and prison staff to remember that the inmates are just as human as they are, deserving of respect and their dignity. Causing them undue pain and suffering is counterproductive. It breeds resentment, bitterness and rebelliousness, greatly reducing the chances for rehabilitation and increasing the chances of recidivism.



We need to have extra compassion for our fellow citizens in such an extraordinarily terrible circumstance. It is imperative to advocate on their behalf, to ensure that they be provided all the necessary resources to prepare themselves to rejoin society. Yidden should be able to learn Torah and observe as many mitzvos as possible and the gentiles should be educated about the *sheva mitzvos b'nei Noach*.

In 5736, the Rebbe called on all Chassidim to energetically arrange *mitvzoim* activities with Jews in prison and to strongly advocate for their ability to observe all mitzvos and Yomim Tovim behind bars. Since then, this has become an integral part of our holy mission of *hafatzas hamaayanos* and *hafatzas hayahadus*.

1. In the two instances in Torah that Jewish sinners were imprisoned (Emor 24:12, Shelach 15:34), they were merely detained until their respective verdicts and punishments were determined.
2. Shulchan Aruch, Choshen Mishpat, Simanim 2, 425.
3. Hisvaaduyos 5745, vol. 4 p. 2358.
4. Contrast this with repressive regimes (such as the USSR) that use incarceration as a means of torturing innocent citizens.
5. Since it would reduce the ability to function and to accomplish the mission of

making a *dira betachtonim*. Sichos Kodesh 5736, vol. 1 p. 615.

6. As evidenced by the possuk (Vayeishev 39:20) "[Yosef was placed] in the prison where the king's prisoners were incarcerated."
7. Acharei 18:3. Especially considering the fact that from the Torah view, imprisonment is a punishment worse than death!
8. Such as *yeridas hadoros* – a progressive recession of righteousness throughout the generations, especially as a result of galus.
9. See the Rebbe's message to an ex-convict in the sidebar.



## MAIN SOURCES:

Purim 5736, Sichos Kodesh 5736 volume 1 page 611. Listen to the recording here: [Chabad.org/552128](http://Chabad.org/552128)

Shabbos Parshas Tzav 5736, Sichos Kodesh 5736 vol. 1 p. 667.

Shabbos Parshas Nasso 5745, Hisvaaduyos 5745 vol. 4 p. 2274.

Shabbos Parshas Korach 5745, Hisvaaduyos 5745 vol. 4 p. 2356.

## FORGET THE PAST

A conversation with an ex-convict at "Dollars":

P: I was in prison, and this rabbi here, and the feeling of you, helped me get through it, and I want to thank you for that.

Rebbe: May G-d A-lmighty . . . you'll soon forget about all this past...

P: I don't forget...

Rebbe: [It is now] *Zman Cheiruseinu* . . . You know what Passover is?

P: Yes.

Rebbe: If the Jews have forgotten about Egypt, it is time for you to forget about your prison, also.

P: Okay.

Rebbe: May G-d A-lmighty bless you. Even if it is difficult [to forget], but try your best.

(Living Torah program 503)





# The Timely Telegram

לזכות  
החיילת בצבאות ה'  
חי' מושקא שתחי'  
ווצ'רשנסקי

לרגל הגיעה לגיל שתיים-עשרה שנה,  
היא עונת בת מצוה

נדפס ע"י  
משפחתה שיחיו



## PRESENTED IN HONOR OF BEIS IYAR—BIRTHDAY OF THE REBBE MAHARASH

"A new decree has been proposed? What now?"

"What now?" you ask. Well they want to pass a bill that will further restrict us Yidden from being able to conduct proper business and they want to harshen up the rules about the ghetto we have to live in."

"Oy! Father in Heaven, who can help in these difficult times?"

Sadly this conversation wasn't unique to two Yidden, it was the feelings of all the Yidden in Russia during Nissan of 5640, who were afraid that they would be further victimized by their cruel anti-semitic Russian rulers.

But there was indeed one person who felt their plight and took it upon himself to

do all he could to prevent these new laws from being passed; the Rebbe Maharash.

The Rebbe Maharash travelled from Lubavitch to Petersburg and began rallying support among cabinet officials and ministers. He spent a considerable amount of time there. And it was time well spent. He made significant progress in convincing the cabinet members to delay the vote and implementation of the new laws until the following year at least.

However, one obstacle stood in his way.

The scheming Jew-hating minister who had designed and authored the terrible decrees had a good friend in the committee and this friend began convincing his colleagues to push the decrees forward and write them into law.

As the days moved on, the Rebbe Maharash had to return home to Lubavitch but his efforts to help Yidden never eased; even from Lubavitch he did all he could by sending letters and messengers to the necessary parties.

On Tuesday, the 2<sup>nd</sup> of Iyar, he called in his son, the Rebbe Rashab, and said:

"From the time I arrived in Petersburg to deal with these decrees, I began saying Tehillim in abundance.<sup>1</sup> Today, when I said the words "כי מִכָּל צָרָה הִצִּילֵנִי וּבְאֵיבֵי רָאָתָה עֵינִי—For He saved me from every distress, and my eye saw my enemies," Bentzion [the attendant] walked in and handed me a telegram with important news. The telegram stated that the evil minister had contracted a sickness and died a sudden death."

The Rebbe Maharash then concluded, "Notwithstanding the good news, I finished the portion of Tehillim."<sup>2</sup> **T**

1. The Rebbe Rashab explained that this meant that his father took upon himself to say the Tehillim the way it is divided for the days of the week, in addition to the portion for the day of the month.

2. Adapted from Sippurei Chassidim - Moadim ; see also Kovetz Michtavim Tehillim, letter 8 Teves 5696






לזכר נשמת  
שיינא גאלדא ע"ה  
בת יבלחט"א ר' מיכאל הלוי גוטלייזער  
נדפס ע"י זקיניה  
הרה"ת ר' יצחק מאיר  
וזוגתו מרת לאה ומשפחתם שיחיו  
שפאלטר



# reconnecting

*The Rebbe's Launch of Mivtza Tefillin*





*Fifty* years ago this month, the Rebbe launched what became perhaps one of the most famous components of Lubavitch outreach—the effort to put tefillin on every Jewish male above the age of 13. Ever since, Chassidim have been on a never-ending mission to help other Yidden fulfill this special mitzvah; at home, at work, at the mall or on a busy street corner.

*To adequately appreciate the story of mitvza tefillin in context, we'll begin with the backdrop of events in Eretz Yisrael, Iyar 5727.*

REB AHARON LEIZER CEITLIN HELPS AN ISRAELI SOLDIER LAY TEFILLIN, 5736.

## Mortal Danger

Since Jews began to resettle in Eretz Yisrael, the surrounding Arabs never accepted the Jewish presence. Over many years, in their attempt to “demand vengeance...[through] Israel’s death”<sup>1</sup> the Arab countries continuously murdered, robbed and pillaged from Eretz Yisrael, employing both military units and *fedayeen*, terrorists.

By the mid-5720s (1960s), the situation was rapidly deteriorating. From the north, Syria was using the Golan Heights, which soar 3,000 feet over the Galilee, to bomb Israeli villages and *kibbutzim*, forcing families to sleep in bomb shelters. The PLO, which had recently been founded by the Arab League to fight Eretz Yisrael, was conducting increasingly frequent terrorist raids. Egyptian President Gamal Abdul Nasser—who was the leader of the largest country near Eretz Yisrael and was leading the efforts against it—announced, “We shall not enter Palestine with its soil covered in sand; we shall enter it with its soil saturated in blood.”

On 12 Iyar 5727 (May 22, 1967), the Egyptians closed the Suez Canal to Israeli ships and cargo, a legal act of war. The countdown to war had begun.

Two days later, in a telegram to the *vaad* of Kfar Chabad, the Rebbe sent a powerful message of reassurance to the Yidden in Eretz Yisrael: “You have the *zechus* to be among thousands of Yidden in Eretz Hakodesh, which “Hashem’s eyes are constantly upon.” Surely the Guardian of Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. May Hashem be at your right hand side, and may [He] watch you, and all *b’nei Yisrael shlita*, now and forever. I am anticipating good news, in a clear and revealed manner, and soon.”

Meanwhile, the situation continued to worsen. Egypt, which had already agreed to join arms with Syria, signed a military agreement with Jordan, effectively tying a noose around Israel’s neck; the Jews in the Holy Land were surrounded by almost half a million soldiers and thousands of tanks and planes. Whereas a larger sized country might retreat and hunker down closer in to the mainland, Eretz Yisrael, especially at the time, was tiny; if its defenses



**May Hashem be at your right hand side, and may [He] watch you, now and forever.**

were broken, the entire country would be overrun within a matter of hours, *r”l*.

All army reservists were called up for duty, while bomb shelters and bunkers were prepared. With the possibility of tremendous losses looming in the horizon, rabbis inspected public parks to be converted into giant cemeteries, with space for twenty five thousand bodies or more. “Our goal is clear—to wipe Israel off the map,” President Abdur Rahman Aref of Iraq announced. To a nation made up largely of

**“You have the great obligation and merit to assist them. When you learn one more *possuk* in Torah, fulfil one more mitzvah...This will save every Jewish person wherever he is from his hardships...”**

Holocaust survivors—which was still a very fresh memory—these words sounded eerily familiar.

As the specter of war came closer, and even more so after it began, Jews around the world began to realize that, come what may, the Jewish people were, once again, alone. Whereas the Arab countries were receiving arms and political support from the Soviet Union, as well as from many other Arab governments including Pakistan and Saudi Arabia—the American government announced that “our position is neutral in thought, word and deed.” Even the French government, which at the time was Israel’s closest ally, enforced an embargo on Israel.

The Israeli government was in urgent need of economic relief, and staggering amounts of money started pouring in from Jews in the diaspora. The speed and magnitude of the response was reported to have been “unparalleled in American Jewish history.” Beyond borrowing in order to make such gifts, some had reduced their estates and inheritances, so that their children in effect are also sharing their contributions, one newspaper reported.<sup>2</sup>

Foreign embassies called on their citizens to leave for safer areas, and many Jews followed their advice. But the Rebbe was absolute in his reassurance, sending a flurry of telegrams and letters to Eretz Yisrael urging confidence. The Rebbe instructed everyone to stay put, and even told a family who had planned on holding their son’s wedding in Eretz Yisrael to go ahead with their plans. In this atmosphere of isolation and fear, at least six Israeli newspapers, from across the ideological spectrum, featured the Rebbe’s encouraging words, many carrying the same headline: The Lubavitcher Rebbe sends Letter of Encouragement.





On Lag B'omer, the drums of war were beating ever closer. In front of 770, the Rebbe was addressing over twenty thousand children and adults at the parade, where he spoke forcefully about the situation in Eretz Yisrael: "Hashem is guarding them and sending them His *brachos* and salvation in extraordinary measure, so that they emerge from the current situation with success."

And, the Rebbe said, they needed help. "You have the great obligation and merit to assist them. When you learn one more *possuk* in Torah, fulfil one more mitzvah...and...influence your relatives, friends and family to do the same... This will save every Jewish person wherever he is from his hardships, and will bring Hashem's *brachos* in extraordinary measure, salvation and success."<sup>3</sup>

A recording of the *sicha* was broadcast on the WEVD radio station in New York; the first time the Rebbe's voice was heard on radio. The *sicha* was also broadcast on Israeli radio with simultaneous Hebrew translation, and the largest newspapers in Israel splashed the Rebbe's assurances on their front pages.

Then, on Shabbos Parshas Bamidbar, 24 Iyar (June 3)—two days before the war—the Rebbe gave more specific instructions. After reiterating that fulfilling mitzvos would elicit the *brachos* of Hashem, the Rebbe added that, furthermore, this would cause Hashem Himself to fight our wars, and that there was a specific mitzvah uniquely relevant to this endeavor: tefillin.

The Rebbe quoted two sources for this. The Gemara in Menachos states that all who lay tefillin will merit long life, as it says in the *possuk*, "השם עליהם יחיו"—those who have Hashem on them; meaning those who wear tefillin, "will have long life." Thus, tefillin ensures the safety of the soldiers and helps avoid casualties.

Furthermore: in Maseches Brachos the Gemara quotes the *possuk* "וראו כל עמי הארץ כי" שם ה' נקרא עליך ויראו ממך—All the nations of the world will see that the name of Hashem is upon you, and they will fear you," and explains that this refers to the head tefillin. Thus, tefillin assists in the war effort itself, in conquering the enemy.

Just as war is a team effort, the tefillin worn by a single soldier has a collective effect on the entire army, and the tefillin donned by any Yid throughout the world helps the Yidden in Eretz Yisrael.

The Rebbe concluded: "My point is not to simply lecture, rather—as in all areas of Torah—this must be brought into action. In connection with the current situation in our holy land, you should endeavor, intensively, that as many Jews as possible should put on tefillin that are checked, kosher, and even *mehudar*."<sup>4</sup>

Right after Shabbos, a very terse telegram was sent to Tzach in Eretz Yisrael: *At today's farbrengen (Shabbos Mivorchim Sivan), the Rebbe emphasized Menachos 35b that tefillin causes terror, "the chieftains of Edom were startled" etc. Working in mivtza tefillin is relevant to every Jew, each person can help another.*

The Rebbe's words that tefillin would bring about a quick victory with minimal casualties, made waves throughout the nation. A letter from Tzach telling the Israeli soldiers about the *mivtza* was printed, and with the help of the Chief Rabbinate, a hundred thousand copies were distributed among the soldiers within a day. Various newspapers carried the message as well.

In Eretz Yisrael, groups of Tze'irei Chabad immediately made their way to numerous military installations and helped thousands of soldiers lay tefillin. Many Lubavitcher Chassidim who had been drafted to serve on the various fronts used every opportunity to offer their fellow comrades a chance to do the mitzvah. And in cities and counties throughout the world, Yidden who had never seen tefillin in their lives were introduced to the concept and

**The Rebbe's words made waves throughout the nation. A letter from Tzach telling the Israeli soldiers about the *mivtza* was printed, one-hundred thousand copies were distributed among the soldiers within a day.**



LETTER FROM TZACH TO VARIOUS RABBINIM IN ERETZ YISROEL RELAYING THE REBBE'S SICHA FROM LAG B'OMER, DATED 21 IYAR 5727.



ISRAEL DESTROYS THE EGYPTIAN AIR-FORCE.

also encouraged to roll up their sleeves for their brethren in the Holy Land.

### Miraculous Salvation

On 26 Iyar (June 5), Israeli fighter jets flew over the Sinai to commence a very risky pre-emptive strike against the Egyptian Air Force. They were successful beyond belief, destroying

most of the Egyptian Air Force while suffering minimal losses.

The Israelis continued winning miraculous victories. "Israeli Forces Destroy Arab Air Might, Rout Their Armies, Liberate Old City, Gaza Strip, Dominate Sinai," the headlines declared. On 2 Sivan (June 10), the war was over. Within a single exhilarating week, Eretz Yisrael had defeated armies on three fronts and tripled in land size. Even the most ardent sceptics—and even the newspapers—celebrated the open miracles that had been witnessed.

The Jewish nation worldwide was in a state of euphoria. A major *his'oirerus* of Yiddishkeit swept over the land. Upon reaching the *Kosel haMa'aravi*, defense minister Moshe Dayan (not known for being particularly religious) announced, "We have returned to all that is holy in our land. We have returned never to be parted from it again."

On the Shabbos following the war, Shabbos parshas Behaaloscha, the Rebbe urged that *mitvza tefillin* be continued in an even stronger fashion than before, in order to channel the unprecedented spiritual awakening.

Hundreds of thousands of Yidden had begun traveling from all corners of the globe to visit the remnant of the *Beis Hamikdash*, and this became the focal point of the *mitvza*. On the first day that the Kosel was opened to the public, over 200,000 people came, spanning the religious spectrum. The Lubavitchers who were there spontaneously began offering people to put on tefillin, and the response was tremendous.

They stayed every single day from then on. A few weeks later, Rabbi Hodakov sent a telegram saying that the Rebbe had suggested that a tefillin booth be set up near the Kosel, and had given specific instructions, including: that Shema cards should be distributed for free; pairs of kosher tefillin be on sale for a minimum cost; and more.

(A meeting was held in Kfar Chabad, and it was decided that every single Lubavitcher would give up one work day each to man the booth, and those who did not wish to take part on their own were welcome to 'redeem' their obligation by donating twenty *lirot* towards the cause.)

With literally millions of Jews flocking to the Kosel from the entire Eretz Yisrael and around the world, by the beginning of the next year, 5728, hundreds of thousands of people had donned tefillin at the Kosel alone. By the middle of 5728, these numbers had reached over a million(!). Some of the most prominent politicians and military men in Israel were photographed wearing tefillin at the Kosel, including: Moshe Dayan, the defense minister and architect of the Israeli war strategy; Ezer Weizman, who as deputy chief of staff, directed the surprise attack on the Egyptian air fields at the start of the war; Ariel Sharon, general of the southern command; and many others.

### A Wake-Up Call

In the farbrengens over the following months, the Rebbe explained why he was continuing to encourage the *mitvza*, even though the war had long concluded. First of all, although the formal hostilities had ended, Eretz Yisrael's dangerous enemies still surrounded her from all sides, their hatred unabated; and the threat from Syria had in fact grown. Following their exhilarating victory, Israelis as a whole hardly registered the continued danger, and the Rebbe wasn't about to sound the alarm—"There is no reason to frighten *b'nei Yisroel Shlita*,"<sup>5</sup> he explained. But it was critical, the Rebbe said, that the Jewish people keep up their efforts of defense by strengthening Torah and mitzvos in general, and specifically with *mitvza tefillin*. (As it turned out, the Yom Kippur War followed only a few years later).<sup>6</sup>

But beyond the safety aspect of *mitvza tefillin*, the Rebbe said that another factor was at play here. In the leadup and duration of the war, world Jewry had deeply felt the plight of their Israeli brethren. There was the horrifying fear that had gripped them in the leadup to the war, and the tremendous relief upon witnessing Hashem's miracles. Although, in retrospect, this seems quite natural—after all, it could have been a repeat of the Holocaust—that explanation fails under scrutiny, the Rebbe said. When the Holocaust was *actually* happening, when millions of Yidden were *actually* being murdered *hyl*'s, world Jewry hadn't really reacted. The



THE REBBE'S HANDWRITTEN HAGAOS ON A KOL-KOREH FROM TZACH ABOUT THE REBBE'S NEWLY ANNOUNCED MITVZA.

**In the leadup and duration of the war, world Jewry had deeply felt the plight of their Israeli brethren. There was the horrifying fear that had gripped them in the leadup to the war, and the tremendous relief upon witnessing Hashem's miracles. When the Holocaust was *actually* happening, when millions of Yidden were *actually* being murdered *hyl*'s, world Jewry hadn't really reacted...**







Jewish awakening at the time of the Six Day War cannot be taken for granted.

The Rebbe said that the explanation for this could be found in a *maamar* of the Frierdiker Rebbe, delivered in 5703. The *maamar* explains that being that we are in the final days before Moshiach, who will effect radical change around the entire globe, the world is being prepared by events that overturn the natural order of things. This is signified by the idea of a shofar, which refers to a powerful tremor that is beyond intellect.

There are two stages in this process, alluded to in two *nevuos* about Moshiach.

ואדנ' ה' בשופר יתקע והלך בסערות תימן:

And *A-dnai Havayah* shall sound the shofar, and He shall go with the whirlwinds of the South.<sup>7</sup>

This occurred during the two world wars, when the entire world was overturned by terrible

wars caused by irrational causes (in World War II, a 'nobody' dominated an entire country and tried to swallow all of civilization), bringing horrifying suffering upon the Jewish people. This is what the *novi* meant when he prophesied that Hashem would blow a shofar—i.e. cause an irrational tremor—"in the whirlwinds of the South," which refers to the nations of the world, and this served as a type of preparation for Moshiach.

2) וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יִתְקַע בְּשׁוֹפָר גָּדוֹל וּבְאָזְנוֹת הָאֲבָדִים  
בְּאַרְץ אַשּׁוּר וְהַנִּדְחִים בְּאַרְץ מִצְרַיִם וְהִשְׁתַּחֲווּ לֵה' בְּהַר  
הַקֹּדֶשׁ בִּירוּשָׁלַם:

And it shall come to pass on that day, that a great shofar shall be sounded, and those lost in the land of Ashur and those exiled in the land of Mitzrayim shall come and they shall prostrate themselves before Hashem on the holy mount in Jerusalem.<sup>8</sup>

The fulfillment of this second *nevua*, which speaks about a wake-up call directed specifically at the Yidden ("those lost in the land of Ashur and those exiled in the land of Egypt"), began during the Six Day War, when specifically the Yidden had been targeted. "We have now entered a new era," the Rebbe announced. "Hashem himself is calling out to the Yidden, even "those lost" and "those exiled," and He has succeeded in shaking them up with "the great shofar." Now Hashem is waiting for the Yidden to answer His call, through utilizing this *hisorerus* to dedicate themselves to Hashem and to strengthen their fulfillment of Torah and mitzvos."

Our job, the Rebbe said, is to approach the Yidden and explain to them what they are feeling—a *hisorerus teshuva* from on high.<sup>9</sup>

## Across the Spectrum

Following the Rebbe's encouragement, Chassidim worldwide threw themselves into the *mitvza*. In Eretz Yisrael, tefillin stands were set up throughout the country, in train and bus stations, airports, malls and central squares in the main cities. Army bases, hospitals, police stations, and homes for the elderly all became regular targets for the *mitvza*.

Soldiers in the IDF, as well as regular travelers, became accustomed to being offered a chance to lay tefillin during their journey.





## Women in Mivtza Tefillin

In a *sicha* on Vov Tishrei 5728, a few months after the *mivtza* was launched, the Rebbe said that he had been approached with the following “question, demand and complaint”: Being that *mivtza tefillin* was being done for safety, which women need just as much as men, what role can women play in the *mivtza*?

The Rebbe said that an idea had not come to him until that very day, Vov Tishrei, when he had been learning Mishnayos for his mother according to the letters of her name. From one of the Mishnayos (in the second *perek* of Sanhedrin, which begins with the letter *nun* from CHaNaH), one can deduce that the mitzvah of tefillin applies equally to men and women. The Mishna says that when any Yid does any *aveira*, the *Shechina* cries out, “I am ashamed from my head, I am ashamed from my arm.” This refers to the tefillin that Hashem wears, which proclaim the praise of the Jews, and thus there is pain when a Yid sins. This applies to men and women equally (as is evident from the Mishnayos there), which means that women, too, are connected with Hashem’s tefillin. And if this is true for a negative aspect how much more so does it apply in the positive. The reason for this, the Rebbe said, is that the men fulfill this mitzvah (as with other *mitzvos aseh shehazman grama*) for the women as well, as is explained in Kisvei Ha’Arizal. But tefillin is unique in that this is specifically emphasized.

On a practical level, the Rebbe proposed that each woman should donate a pair of tefillin (or the equivalent sum), and this would increase their merit of tefillin. In a certain way, this was in an even greater way than the men.<sup>10</sup>

Chassidim began carrying a pair of tefillin in their bags, and others began to utilize breaks in their workday to offer fellow workers the merit to say the quick and simple prayer.

The following is a description of a *mivtzoim* stand, written by an Israeli journalist:

“Friday afternoon, the main bus station in Tel Aviv. The sun is burning in its full force; tens of individuals pass you every minute hurrying on their way. But when you come close to the ‘station’ of Tze’irei Chabad, it feels as if you have entered a different world; perhaps you have bumped into the Kosel, or perhaps a makeshift synagogue.

“A soldier armed with an Uzi stands crowned with tefillin and reads Shema from a special card. Next to him is a tall Mexican tourist, who has not worn tefillin for the past thirty five years or so, but when arriving in the Holy Land he was ‘caught’ by one of the ‘units’ of yeshiva students. The third is a young Moroccan from Dimona, who apologizes that in the army he ‘cooled off’ a bit, but will from now on begin to put on tefillin every day. The fourth, a *kibbutznik*, a native Israeli from Givat Berner, is now wearing tefillin for the first time in his life.

“The yeshiva students tell us that even in cold and stormy weather, they manage to find a dry corner, and there are always hundreds of Jews willing to roll up their left sleeves and wrap

themselves with tefillin. Even in the burning summer days, they travel to do their holy work and no obstacle manages to deter them.

“They maintain that the power and energy for the work comes from the letters of their Rebbe *shlita*, who constantly wants to know about everything being done in detail, and every so often sends a message to stimulate and encourage the tremendous momentum. The Rebbe once told a visitor ‘two and a half million people were saved from annihilation; two and a half million people should be added to the number of tefillin wearers.’”

Regardless of their status or schedule, everyone got involved. “All of the Chabad activists, who busy themselves an entire year with spreading Judaism in different capacities, whether in education, authorship of Jewish-related articles, or in an organizational capacity, were required to set aside specific times when they participate in *mivtza tefillin* with their actual bodies,” one newspaper reported.

Indeed, telegrams and letters were flying back and forth across the Atlantic from 770 to Eretz Yisrael, with Chassidim reporting on their activities, and the Rebbe guiding and urging, sometimes quite sharply, for them to continuously increase. In letters to *anash*, even those that dealt with personal issues, the Rebbe constantly wrote, “Surely you take part (and

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TISHREI 15736, LEVI FREIDIN via JEM, 143470



25 TISHREI 15741, LEVI FREIDIN via JEM, 191492



MITZVA TEFILLIN OUTSIDE 770.

will take part with even more enthusiasm in the future) in *mitvza tefillin*.”

The *mitvza* crossed all political and ideological lines. *Bochurim* from non-Chabad yeshivos, and even their teachers and rabbonim, were involved as well. Rabbi Shmuel Huminer, *mashgiach ruchni* of Yeshivas Eitz Hachayim, one of the distinguished *mussar* leaders of Eretz Yisrael, related the following vignette about his experiences with *mitvza tefillin*: One person he met simply refused to don tefillin, and only relented after a great deal of convincing. This young man, whom his friends knew as someone that had no compunction eating *neveilos utreifos r*”l, suddenly stopped eating non-kosher. The only explanation he could offer his shocked friends and family was that his heart didn’t allow him anymore...<sup>11</sup>

The most prominent leaders of the *frumme* world, both Chassidic rebbes and *oilomische roshei yeshivos*, joined the Rebbe’s call. One newspaper announcement, signed by dozens of rabbonim and rebbes, stated: “We are hereby joining the great call of the Lubavitcher Rebbe *shlita*, and we turn to all those who are *charedim l’dvar Hashem* to gird themselves and participate in these *mitvzoim*.” The Agudas Harabbonim of America came out urging its members to support the *mitvza* as well, and the ‘Hapardes’ journal reported that “the Gerrer Rebbe *shlita* is encouraging the *mitvza tefillin* at every opportunity, and even donated a pair of tefillin for the *mitvza* near the Kosel Hamaaravi...”<sup>12</sup>

In addition to the general *hora’a* to put on tefillin with as many people as possible, the Rebbe gave specific directives. These included: every person should check his tefillin, and if possible check them once a year; to offer tefillin for sale at low prices, specifically at tefillin stands; to offer services to check people’s tefillin; that tefillin stands should have a brochure about *hilchos tefillin* and a picture showing where the tefillin should be worn on the arm and head.<sup>13</sup>

### A Global Phenomena

The *mitvza* wasn’t limited to Eretz Yisrael. Throughout the world, tefillin stands began springing up, and cities worldwide heard microphones from atop vehicles calling out



LETTER FROM AGUDAS HARABONIM SUPPORTING THE REBBE’S MITVZA TEFILLIN.

to passersby and encouraging them to stop by and contribute towards the security of the people in the Holy Land. Chabad Houses placed advertisements in their local newspapers encouraging people to strengthen their observance of the *mitvza*. The following are some highlights:

### New York

From when the *mitvza* began, Chassidim started going out on Sundays (when they were free from work) for *mitvza tefillin*, and the *gabbai* in 770 would make an announcement about it every Shabbos. (In 5740, almost thirteen years later, the Rebbe commented on the fact that the announcement had remained identical over all these years, and that it should be updated once in a while based on the situation...)

The New York Times reported on the *mitvza* in Manhattan:

“The signs were plastered on a big, yellow truck called the Tefillin-mobile that was parked yesterday afternoon in the shadow of



Washington Square Arch-amid the hippies, the peace marchers, the Good Humor men and the hundreds of Sunday wanderers in the warm sun...The sight of a dozen men in long beards and black coats and hats brought flocks of people into the range of the Hasidic missionaries. Lively Hasidic songs and marches blaring from the loudspeaker kept people listening long enough to be approached. 'Are you Jewish?' one of the Hasidim would ask a bystander. The answer would be yes much of the time.

### *Every Single Jew*

In an article describing the trip he took to visit Eretz Yisrael and the newly liberated Kosel, Rabbi Simcha Elberg, the chairman of Agudas Horabbonim of America, described what he found: "What a unique awakening seized our people. Profound religious feeling bubbled up in the hearts of the free-spirited Israel youth. The name of Hashem is carried on the lips of those who in the past avoided even mentioning Him..."

"The truth must be told, and with the strongest emphasis: the expression of this great excitement into action; the manifestation of this *neshama-hisorerus* into physical acts—in this area, the Lubavitcher Rebbe was the first..."

"For about three hours—on 17 Tammuz—I stood by the Kosel and watched the *mivtza tefillin*. How thrilling it was to watch the faces of people saying the *brachos* on tefillin for the first time in their lives, mostly youngsters who are "*tinokos shenishbu*" and who greeted this *mivtza* with joy. With pleasure and excitement they stretched out their arms, their faces full of emotion from their inner spiritual tremor. After they put on tefillin, some of them asked how to acquire their own sets so that they could put them on tomorrow as well. I also saw parents coming with their children; the parents were intellectuals, *apikursim*, and their children were begging them to put on tefillin. Many of them even conceded and put on tefillin, and who knows if this concession might just guide them to true *teshuva*.

"These Chassidim are due great praise; they have the patience of steel, standing there day after day under the burning rays of the sun, trying to convince the passerby with friendly words to do them the favor and put on tefillin and daven near the Kosel. Like soldiers with iron discipline, the Rebbe's Chassidim stand to fulfill the *mivtza*. They are standing at the front; neither heat nor frost will move them from their place. The Rebbe's command is strong and their joy is immense."<sup>14</sup>

"Harold Mosmer, a 29 year old copy editor for Eye magazine was attracted by the trucks sings. 'They're just great', he said, and for the first time in 15 years he put on tefillin...In the first two hours, about 50 people did their mitzvah. "[But] we haven't really gotten too many hippies today,' one of the Rabbis said. 'But we will.'

"Across the park, a hippie sang: 'Shout, shout, shout/Let's drop out.'

"Let them drop into the Old world', Rabbi Schrage said."<sup>15</sup>

### **England**

In an interview with A Chassidisher Derher, Rabbi Aharon Cousin relates: "The day after the farbrengen when the Rebbe first announced *mivtza tefillin*, we held a major meeting of *anash* in England. We came up with different ideas of what to do, and I volunteered to coordinate the campaign. First of all, we contacted all rabbonim throughout England and asked them to speak about the *mivtza* on the following Shabbos. We received an amazing response.

"We also decided that everyone in *anash* would go out to different areas of England, and go from door to door talking to people. We divided up all the streets, two people to every street; some people did it on Sundays, while others did it in the evenings after work. (It gets dark very late in England in the summer, so they had an hour or two after they arrived home.)

"We sold so many pairs of tefilin that the *sofrim* ran out! We began contacting many old shuls around London, who had loads and loads of tefillin from members who had left this world. We found thousands of pairs, some of which must have been over a hundred years old. The *sofer* was very busy working with the tefillin, fixing them, and thus we were able to provide them for people.

"We also arranged a national week of *mivtza tefillin*, and we contacted all the rabbonim and Jewish organizations that they should speak about the *mivtza*.

"I got a personal letter from the Rebbe where he thanked me for my activities. In fact, the Rebbe called me '*rav pa'alim b'mivtza tefillin*'.

"The activities carried on ever since."





MIVTZA TEFFILIN IN ERETZ YISROEL SHORTLY AFTER THE SIX DAY WAR.

### Montreal

The Rabbonim of Montreal (only a few of which were Lubavitchers) held a conference to discuss what they could do, and they came up with some wide-ranging ideas:

“Rabbis Halperin, Zambrovski and Teicher said that when boys are prepared for bar mitzvah celebrations it should be mandatory that they learn how to put on tefillin...Rabbi Denberg proposed that they should approach the “Protestant school board” and request permission to don tefillin at the majority-Jewish high school...Rabbi Hendel proposed that they should go on the radio to speak about it...Rabbis Levitas and Rozner added that they should put out a press release for the Montreal newspapers, and Rabbis Baron and Hirschsprung added that it was important to be publicized in New York newspapers as well...

“Rabbis Zambrovski and Kramer proposed that the week of Shabbos Mishpatim should be announced as a week dedicated to activities in [*mivtza* tefillin]...Rabbi Hechtman said that the Vaad Ha’ir’ would assist with [the expenses of buying new tefillin for those who need]...”<sup>16</sup>

### *Dealing with Opposition*

The response to *mivtza tefillin* was fast and frenzied. On one side, there were hundreds of rabbonim and public figures who supported the *mivtza* at every opportunity, and, even more importantly, the hundreds of thousands of Yidden who put on tefillin. But there were, of course, those who came up with all types of questions, complaints, and problems; ranging from halachic style questions like, ‘How can a person put on tefillin without a *guf noki* (clean body)?’ to belligerent complaints such as, ‘Lubavitch is only doing it for the publicity!’ Some, who were more friendly, wrote these questions into the Rebbe privately. Others spoke against the *mivtza* in public arenas and wrote against it in newspapers. The Rebbe’s *sichos* from that period deal with this subject quite extensively, and his basic approach would be repeated in the ensuing years on various issues, and is something every Chossid should be familiar with.

On the one hand, the Rebbe was very clear on the fact that when dealing with those who were

**“If it truly bothers you that someone is doing it for ulterior motives, then, as a person who does everything *lishmo ulishma*, pack your bags, purchase a plane ticket, travel to the *Kosel HaMa’aravi*, and put on tefillin with Yidden...”**



[illegible]

complaining for the sake of agitating, he knew exactly who he was dealing with. In one *sicha* regarding the complaint that the Lubavitchers were only doing *mivtza tefillin* for the publicity, the Rebbe had this to say:

“If it truly bothers you that someone is doing it for ulterior motives, then, as a person who does everything *lishmo ulishma*, pack your bags, purchase a plane ticket, travel to the *Kosel HaMa’aravi*, put on tefillin with Yidden, and let everyone know that you are from “the group of humble people”—as in the famous story told by the Friediker Rebbe<sup>17</sup>—that you don’t want any pictures, you don’t want to be featured in the newspapers, and you don’t want to be ‘an honorary chairman,’ you simply wish to put on tefillin with Yidden!

“You don’t like tefillin? Then choose some other mitzvah (out of the other 612) and work on it; but do something!

“Instead, you are sitting in America and discouraging people from putting on tefillin. And when you have a doubt—perhaps you will be able to influence one more Yid not to put on tefillin—you make sure to go *lechumra*!

“There is a *yungerman* who, with *mesiras nefesh*, travels “מארצך וממולדתך ומביתך אביר” to the *Kosel HaMa’aravi* and stands for many hours under the burning sun, hoping that he will be able to affect one more Jew to put on tefillin.

“He does not receive a medal nor any honor; he is not appointed to be the ‘honorary president,’ he has *mesiras nefesh* to travel from his house to the Kosel where he stands for many hours, and when he returns home his wife complains, ‘Why do *you* have to travel? In Yerushalayim, not far from the Kosel, there are rabbonim, *roshei yeshivos*, *shochtim*, *mohelim* and yeshiva *bochurim*. Why must you travel from the other end of Eretz Yisrael? It would be better for

Below are excerpts from two letters sent to Reb Aaron Avigdor Cousin of Manchester England, regarding his efforts in Mivtza Tefillin.



ות"ח על הדו"ח והבשור"ט ממבצע התפלין.  
המצו"ב - השתתפותי סמלית בהוצאות מבצע הכי נעלה הנ"ל.  
בברכת הצלחה רבה לכל משתתפי מבצע התפלין.

...AND MANY THANKS FOR THE REPORT AND THE GOOD NEWS REGARDING THE MIVTZA TEFILLIN.

THE ATTACHED [CHECK] IS MY SYMBOLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE EXPENSES OF THIS THE ABOVEMENTIONED GREATEST MIVTZA. WITH BLESSINGS FOR MUCH SUCCESS TO ALL INVOLVED IN THE MIVTZA TEFILLIN.

בברכת הצלחה רבה במבצע תפלין ובכלל.  
בה"פאוסטר" DAILY - כדאי להוסיף "בימות החול" (באנגלית כמובן).

WITH BLESSINGS FOR MUCH SUCCESS IN MIVTZA TEFILLIN AND IN GENERAL.

IN THE POSTER [ABOUT MIVTZA TEFILLIN, WHERE IT SAYS TO DON THE TEFILLIN] DAILY - YOU SHOULD ADD "ON WEEKDAYS" (IN ENGLISH, OF COURSE).

you to stay at home, educate your children, and learn Torah!’

“Yet he does not pay attention to all of these arguments, and leaves his home with genuine self-sacrifice. How do you have the audacity to come and cool him off?”

Nevertheless, the Rebbe answered every single one of the complaints, as irrelevant as some of them were, explaining on at least one occasion that he was addressing this only because otherwise there is a slight chance it will cause weakness in the *mivtzoim*.

The Rebbe’s first and primary answer to all questions was that every Yid has the constant obligation to bring people closer to Torah and mitzvot, an obligation derived from several sources: the mitzvah of *hoche’ach tochi’ach es amisecha*—to influence other people to fulfill Torah and mitzvot; *ve’ahavta lereiacha kamocha*, loving a fellow Yid as oneself; and the concept that *kol Yisroel areivim ze lazeh*, that all Yidden are responsible for each other. *Mivtza tefillin* is only one method of fulfilling these overarching obligations.

The Rebbe answered each complaint separately as well, providing fascinating insight into the preciseness with which he had introduced the *mivtza*, but that is beyond the scope of this article.<sup>18</sup>

### *The Effect of One Tefillin*

The period of the Six Day War marks one of the most significant times in modern Jewish history. The terrible danger and miraculous victory caused a shift in the general Jewish psyche. Many people who grew up then remember it as the time when they began taking interest and pride in their Judaism.

The Rebbe seized on this *hisorerus* and channeled it to Torah and mitzvot; indeed, many historians view this period as the beginning of the *baal teshuva* movement. On Yud-Tes Kislev 5728, a few months after the Six Day War, the Rebbe delivered a landmark address on the state of the youth in America, laying out the roots of the issues plaguing them and the methods that would be effective in bringing them back, and used the symbolism and meaning of tefillin as a centerpiece of the *farbrengen*. *Mivtza tefillin*

quickly shifted from being an initiative mostly focused on Eretz Yisrael to one of the principal methods of *dor hashvi’i* outreach. Indeed, it turned into the one of the most visible symbols of Lubavitch; it marked the beginning of an entirely new era in Jewish activism.

But the method of *mivtza tefillin*, the first of the *mivtzoim*, was starkly different than any type of outreach that had been done before. This *mivtza* isn’t about *educating* the person, it isn’t about *teaching* him about the importance of Torah and mitzvot, it’s about offering him to do one single mitzvah—with no immediately clear long term effect. This idea was revolutionary and many people couldn’t wrap their heads around it. (Interesting to note is that even today, when the Rebbe’s approach to *kiruv* has been almost universally adopted by the *frumme* world, with many hundreds of non-Lubavitch couples going out to be *mekarev* people, the idea of *mivtzoim* as an ends to itself is still beyond them, as of yet.)

In explaining this, first and foremost the Rebbe always quoted the *psak din* of the Rambam: A person must always look at himself as equally balanced between merit and sin and



THE FAMED GABBAI AT 770, REB MOSHE PINCHAS KATZ PARTICIPATES IN MIVTZA TEFILLIN IN ERETZ YISROEL SHORTLY AFTER THE SIX-DAY WAR.



the world as equally balanced between merit and sin...If he performs one mitzvah, he tips his balance and that of the entire world to the side of merit and brings deliverance and salvation to himself and others. Thus, every mitzvah a person does has infinite significance.<sup>19</sup>

Furthermore, the Rebbe explained: That single action, though it may seem meaningless and empty—that is what will bring them to do more mitzvos, since *mitzvah goreres mitzvah*, one mitzva drags another along with it. He may have started with a relatively easy mitzvah, but *hamaase hu ha'ikar*, and this action will eventually lead to many other mitzvos.

To illustrate this, the Rebbe related the following story:

“There was a Jew who was accustomed to publicly consuming non-kosher food. They tried to convince him to put on tefillin, but he refused to give in; they spoke to him again and again, until he finally agreed. Afterwards, when dinner time arrived, he announced that they should not give him any non-kosher food...”<sup>20</sup>

The Rebbe added another reason as well, which is specific to tefillin: Through donning tefillin even once in his lifetime, a Yid is taken out of the category of a *karkafta d'lo manach tefillin*—a skull (head) that never donned tefillin, thus enabling the Yid to enter *olam haba* (as the Gemara says). By helping someone put on tefillin even once, you are giving him eternal life!<sup>21</sup>



As a result of the Rebbe's call, *yeshiva bochurim* have been on the streets every Friday afternoon, while *ballebatim* go out on Sundays, assisting their fellow Jews to fulfill the mitzvah. Millions of Yidden have reconnected with Yiddishkeit and taken the moment to submit their hearts and minds to their Creator, as a result of the Rebbe's call.

The Rebbe himself attested to the great successes of *mitvza tefillin*, stating that “this campaign has seen *bracha v'hatzalcha* right from its inception, and it has only grown ever since, bearing fruit and setting off a chain reaction (פירות ופירי פירות)...” **ד**

1. Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser, August 31, 1955
2. JTA June 11 1967
3. Toras Menachem vol. 49 p. 414
4. Toras Menachem vol. 50 p. 427-434
5. Igros Kodesh vol. 25 no. 9,435
6. See sichas Shabbos Korach, Toras Menachem vol. 50 p. 118.
7. Zecharya 9, 14
8. Yeshaya 27,13
9. Shabbos Bereishis, Toras Menachem vol 51 p. 211; Yud Tes Kislev 5728 Toras Menachem vol. 51 p. 386
10. 6 Tishrei 5728, Toras Menachem vol. 51 p. 84
11. Hapardes issue 4 year 42



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12. Hapardes issue 4 year 42
13. See e.g. letter to Rabbi Binyomin Gorodetzky, 28 Teves 5728; telegram from mazkirus 21 Sivan 5727.
14. Hapardes, Tishrei 5728
15. New York Times, May 27 1968
16. Hapardes issue 7 year 42
17. Sefer Hazichronos vol. 1 end of chapter 56
18. One famous compilation of answers was edited by the Rebbe and published in Lekutei Sichos vol. 6 p. 271.
19. Shabbos Parshas Bereishis, Toras Menachem vol. 51 p. 224
20. Shabbos Vayishlach 5728, Toras Menachem 51 p. 289
21. See Shabbos Parshas Bereishis, Toras Menachem vol. 51 p. 224; 11 Nissan 5743, Hisvaaduyos 5743 vol. 3 p. 1210

### *It's in the Deed*

In *yechidus* with the Rebbe, an Israeli general asked a question: "Why isn't it enough to recite Shema without putting on tefillin?"

The Rebbe smiled, and said, "I'm surprised that you, a military general, would have such a question. As Jews do, I will answer your question with a question. Why is it that soldiers go through training regimens and practice?"

"The answer is simple," he replied. "If they don't go through training, they won't know what to do at the moment of truth on the battlefield."

"But why," the Rebbe pressed, "isn't it enough to study the rules of war? Why must they physically train?"

"You cannot compare theories to actual training; it's an entirely different thing!"

"The same is true spiritually," the Rebbe said. "Reciting Shema without putting on tefillin is like studying without training. True, "*Shema Yisrael*" is an expression of *emunah*, but the true expression of *emunah* is in actual deed."

*(Hiskashrus issue 215)*





# DAYS OF MEANING

EXPLORING SPECIAL DATES  
ON OUR CALENDAR

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## 2 IYAR

*Rebbe Maharash's Birthday*

On 2 Iyar 5594 (תרי"ד), the Rebbe Maharash was born in Lubavitch.

During the *seuda* of the *bris*, one of the Tzemach Tzedek's sons, Reb Yehuda Leib, asked the Tzemach Tzedek, "Who was the child named after? This name (Shmuel) doesn't seem to run in our family. Was it perhaps after Shmuel Hanavi?" The Tzemach Tzedek replied, "[He was named] after a water-carrier from Polotzk, who was named Shmuel, for a wise man is better than a prophet [*chacham adif minavi*]." (Sefer Hatoldos Admur Maharash p. 7).

### {IN THE REBBE'S PRESENCE}

In 5710, the Rebbe held a special farbrengen on this day for the *bochurim*.

In 5736, the Rebbe farbrenged on 2 Iyar, as a continuation of the Rebbe's initiative of *mivtza chinuch*, which he announced a few days earlier. (Read more about this farbrengen, Derher Iyar 5776 "Children Educate.")

## 13 IYAR

*Passing of the Rebbe's Brother,  
Reb Yisroel Arye Leib*

On 13 Iyar 5712, Reb Yisroel Arye Leib, the Rebbe's youngest brother, passed away in Liverpool, England at the young age of 45.

As a young child, Reb Yisroel Aryeh Leib had an incredible memory, was acute and one who delved into study. He absorbed the *chassidische* atmosphere of his childhood home, as well as much Torah knowledge. His diligence was so strong, that his mother, Rebbetzin Chana, often had to tear him away from his learning to make sure he ate.

For some time, Reb Yisroel Arye Leib was in Leningrad in the Frierdiker Rebbe's court, and the Frierdiker Rebbe was very fond of him. The Chassidim liked him as well, often surrounding him and discussing various questions of *nigleh* and Chassidus with him.

Reb Yisroel Arye Leib left Russia and settled in Berlin in 5690 (תר"צ). In 5694 (תרצ"ד), he moved to Eretz Yisroel and settled in Tel Aviv, where he married. In 5710, he moved to Liverpool, England, where he passed away a few years later. As per the Rebbe's request, his *aron* was brought to Eretz Yisroel, and his resting place is in the Chabad part of the Cemetery in Tzfas.

When the Rebbe was told about Reb Yisroel Arye Leib's passing, he asked that it be kept a secret from their mother, Rebbetzin Chana. The Rebbe took great effort to make sure that she wouldn't be informed about this, continuing to do so until her passing, 13 years later.

The Rebbe sat shiva in his room that week. At the end of the week, the Rebbe said a *sicha*, and gave money for a farbrengen in Reb Yisroel Aryeh Leib's memory.

### {IN THE REBBE'S PRESENCE}

The Rebbe said *kaddish* on this day every year.

In the later years, in *sichos* around the time of the *yahrtzeit*, the Rebbe spoke about the *hora'ah* in *avodas Hashem* that can be learned from his name.

Rabbi Levi Bistritzky of Tzfas informed [the Rebbe] that most of the *anash* in Tzfas visited Reb Yisroel Aryeh Leib's *kever* to recite Tehillim and give tzedakah on his *yahrtzeit*, 13 Iyar.

The Rebbe wrote in response: *Tach tach* (Many thanks). May it be [Hashem's] will that all of the *tefillos* should be accepted among the *tefillos* of all of B'nei Yisroel *sheyichyu*, "and they should accomplish everything."



# HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS



The Rebbe draws lessons from occurrences on dates in Jewish history:

## 20 IYAR

וְיָהִי בַשָּׁנָה הַשְּׁנִיית בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁנִי בְּעֶשְׂרִים בַּחֹדֶשׁ נִגְלָה הָעֲנָן מֵעַל מִשְׁכַּן הָעֵדֻת:  
וַיִּסְעוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְמִסְעֵיהֶם מִמִּדְבַּר סִינַי וַיִּשְׁכְּנוּ הָעֲנָן בְּמִדְבַּר פָּאָרֹן:  
וַיִּסְעוּ בְּרֹאשְׁהָ עַל פִּי יְהוָה בְּיַד מֹשֶׁה:

“And it came to be, in the second year, in the second month, on the 20th day of the month, the Cloud rose from atop the *Mishkan*, and the Jewish people set off on their journey from the Sinai Desert... this was the first journey by Hashem’s word through Moshe.” (Bamidbar, 10,11-13)

The 20th of Iyar is the day on which the Jewish people were commanded to travel onward from Har Sinai towards Eretz Yisroel.

At a children’s rally that took place on 20 Iyar 5740, the Rebbe taught a profound lesson from this *possuk*:

For part of the day, a Yid is “at Har Sinai”—during davening and learning. Then there are times that he must rest, eat, and drink. One might think that since he cannot learn Torah during these times, he is separated from the Torah, *chas veshalom*.

The Torah teaches that going away from Har Sinai doesn’t mean going away from Yiddishkeit, *chas veshalom*. On the contrary, the journey was done as the **Torah** directed—“according to Hashem’s word through Moshe.”

This is the lesson that 20 Iyar teaches every generation, in every place, including here and now.

Every Yid must be aware that for part of the day, he is at “Har Sinai,” learning the Torah and doing the mitzvos, which we received at Har Sinai...

But also when one must rejuvenate himself by eating, drinking, and sleeping—because he is hungry, thirsty or tired, and needs to regain the strength to continue learning Torah and doing mitzvos—he must know that these needs, too, were created by Hashem. And here, too, Hashem directs the person through the Torah, how he should conduct himself, what and how he should eat, drink and sleep.

וְיָהִי בְּנִסְעֵי הָאָרֹן וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה קוּמָה | יְהוָה וַיִּפְצוּ אֱבִירֵי וַיִּנָּסוּ מִשְׁנֵאִיךָ מִפְּנֶיךָ:

“When the *aron* traveled, Moshe said, ‘Rise up, Hashem, and let Your enemies be scattered, and may those who hate You flee from before You.’” (Ibid, 10,35)

When the Yidden traveled through the desert, the *aron* traveled at the head scaring away the enemies.

When the “*aron*”—the Torah—leads us, we can follow with tranquility the path that Hashem shows us. Anything that disturbs the person, that dislikes the person, is scattered and flees.

The Yid can go on his way with confidence, tranquility, and joy, acting as a Yid should, until he reaches Eretz Yisroel, with the ultimate *geulah*.

## 14 IYAR

*Pesach Sheini*

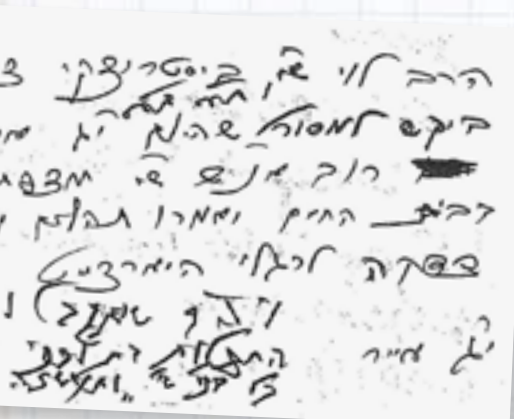
The Rebbe farbrenged a number of times on this day, especially in the 5740s. The Rebbe would speak about the Friediker Rebbe’s message, that “עס איז נישטא קיין פארפאלן—there’s no such thing as too late,” one can always make up what’s missing.

## 21 IYAR

*Birthday of the Rebbe’s  
Brother, Reb Yisroel Arye Leib*

Reb Yisroel Arye Leib, the Rebbe’s youngest brother was born in 5666 (תרס”ו) in Nikolayev.

The date of his birth was only publicized recently, when the *pinkas*—ledger—of the Nikolayev community was discovered.





לזכות  
הרה"ת ר' יהודה אריה לייב  
וזוגתו מרת שרה גוטל שיחיו  
פערלמוטער

בקשר עם נישואיהם  
כ"ט אדר ה'תשע"ז

נדפס ע"י הוריהם  
הרה"ת ר' אברהם אלי  
וזוגתו מרת עלא שיחיו פינסאן  
הרה"ת ר' אברהם אבא  
וזוגתו מרת חנה שיחיו פערלמוטער



# Neshamah Unleashed

*The Power of a Niggun*

“א חסידישער ניגון שטארקט די תקוה ובטחון,  
בריינגט שמחה, און שטעלט אוועק די הויז מיט  
דער הויז געזינד אין קרן אורה.”

**“A chassidisher niggun fortifies hope and  
bitachon, brings joyousness, and places the  
home and family in a state of light...”**

(היום יום כ"ב תמוז)

Once, while still a young man before going to Mezrich, the Alter Rebbe was invited to a wedding in Vitebsk and asked to say a *pilpul*. The Alter Rebbe delivered a deep founded *pilpul* professing thought provoking theories, speaking very quickly, leaving an ample impression on the crowd. Then the Alter Rebbe said: “Speech is the pen of the heart.”

After that, they asked the Alter Rebbe to sing a *niggun*. They knew that the Alter Rebbe sang very well. Hearing his singing while davening or learning, one was mesmerized and couldn't leave his presence.

The Alter Rebbe indeed sang a *niggun*, and then said: “Speech is the pen of the heart; song is the pen of the *nefesh*.”

Later, when the Alter Rebbe came to Mezrich, he learned that *niggunim* are actually a part of *avoda* according to Chassidus.<sup>1</sup>





## New Life in Song

Chassidus did not come to add, or *chas v'shalom* to diminish, from the existing truths of Yiddishkeit, but only to infuse life and joy in its everyday practice.

And so did Chassidus do to Jewish song.

Music has been a part of the fabric of our nation throughout all of our ancient history. But with the bitter hardships of *galus*, our song was sucked dry and lost its sense of life.

The Baal Shem Tov and his *talmidim* awakened this sleeping *neslama*.

The *niggun* became the catalyst, allowing the Chossid to reach further in his *avodas Hashem*. Some of the most important teachings of Chassidus are the emphasis on joy of the heart and “*d’veikus*”—a heartfelt connection to Hashem, expressed by a longing and yearning to our father in heaven.

It is the *niggun* that will help drive the Chossid in this direction, lifting his heart up the steps of the spiritual ladder.

Chassidus Chabad took the *niggun* a step further.

For Chabad Chassidim, the *niggun* expresses a deep-founded connection to Hashem as a result of hours-long contemplation and enlivened davening. Chassidim are not so meticulous about following the musical “rules” and structure with their songs. The *niggun* is an expression of the *neslama*, and therefore cannot be subject to these restrictions. Likewise many of the *niggunim* are wordless tunes. For words would only restrain the boundless message conveyed by the *niggun*.<sup>2</sup>

So powerful is the *chassidisher niggun* that Reb Hillel Particher summarized it: “One who has no ‘sense’ for music (חוש אין נגינה) has no ‘sense’ [understanding and feeling] for Chassidus.” Or in a slightly different variation: “One who has a ‘sense’ for music also has a better understanding and feel of Chassidus.”<sup>3</sup>

## THE GATEWAY

A *niggun* shows the Chossid where he stands in *avodas Hashem*; where he should be and where he can be. It reveals the essence of his being, the *etzem haneshama*.

The *niggun* is a gateway to reaching the place where he needs to be.

(*Sefer Hasichos* 5706 p. 52)

The Alter Rebbe said:

A *niggun* has the power to *shlep* one out of the deepest “mud.”

(*Ibid.* p. 47)

## A Different World

When the Rebbe Rashab founded Tomchei Tmimim, a structured system was put in place for the *talmidim* to learn and sing *niggunim* regularly. “*Seder niggunim*” took place twice during Shabbos, on Friday night and Shabbos evening (“רעוא דרעוין”), where a special group of “*menagnim*”—talented singers—led the singing of heartfelt *niggunim*.

Reb Nochum Shmaryahu Sassonkin, who studied in Tomchei Tmimim Lubavitch, later recounted:

“The Rebbe [Rashab] used to come out to the *zal* every Friday night and deliver a *maamar*. Before he arrived, we prepared the *zal* with four long tables forming a square across the entire room. On the northern side, a chair was set for the Rebbe.

“After everyone had their places, the group of *menagnim* began their song. The *niggunim* included some heartfelt ones, some joyous, and others were ‘*niggunei ga’aguim*’ (expressing a sense of yearning).

“These *niggunim* lifted our souls; we felt like we were being transferred from the weekday mode to a holy one (מחול אל הקדש). I remember the first time witnessing this scene; it was awe inspiring! The holiness of Shabbos shined on the faces of everyone present, as their hearts were captivated by these beautiful *niggunim*. For a moment, I soared to another world and couldn’t even realize where I was!

“Then the Rebbe’s footsteps were heard and total silence fell on the room. Everyone’s eyes turned eastward watching the Rebbe as he walked in, like an angel appearing from heaven.”<sup>4</sup>





## Cleave to Hashem

Being that *neginah* is such an integral part of *avodas Hashem*, naturally, some of the most profound *niggunim* are those sung by Chassidim during davening. When a Chassid contemplates deeply on the concepts he studied in Chassidus and strives to be closer to Hashem, his *neshama* is aroused, and she expresses herself in the notes of a *niggun*. It is the faintest call of the *neshama* trying to free herself of the mundane everyday life and live a higher, more spiritual life.

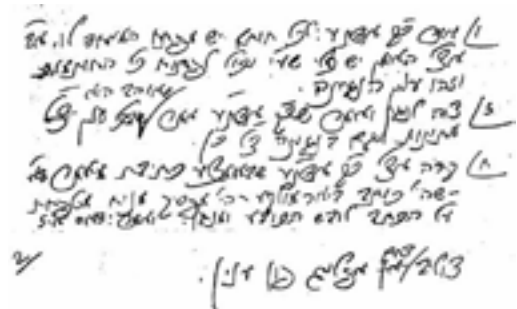
But it's not only during davening.

The power of a *chassidisher niggun* sung by Chassidim at a brotherly *farbrengen* should never be underestimated either. The *niggun* has the capability of transforming a person to an entirely new being. Chassidic legend is full of stories describing how

many lost souls found their way back to Torah and Yiddishkeit, pulled by the heartfelt tunes, the *chassidishe niggunim* sung at *farbrengens*.<sup>5</sup>

## THE MASTER KEY

This *ksav yad kodesh* was written by the Rebbe; a “*hanacha*” transcribing the *sicha* of the Frierdiker Rebbe on Shabbos parshas Noach 5706. The Frierdiker Rebbe had elaborated on the significance of *neginah*. (Printed in *Yemei Melech* vol. 2 p. 602).



ו. אמר כ"ק אדנ"ע: לכל חותם יש מפתח המיוחד לו. אבל אצל האומן יש כלי שע"י יכול לפתוח כל החותמות וזהו ענין הנגינה.

ז. צוה לנגן ואמר שכ"ק אדנ"ע אמר שאוהב הוא בכל ענין מתינות וגם בנגינה צ"ל כן.

ח. קרה אצל כ"ק אדנ"ע שבאמצע כתיבת מאמר דא"ח – שה"י כותב ביארמולקע – ה' מפסיק, מניח מטפחת על הכתב, לובש הכובע ומנגן. ואמר: דאס איז צוליב דעם אפלייג פון ענין.

6. The Rebbe Rashab said: Every lock has a specific key to open it. But a craftsman may have a “master key” with which he can open any lock. The [master key] is *neginah*.

7. [The Frierdiker Rebbe] instructed to sing, and he said: The Rebbe [Rashab] said that he likes it when things are done slowly and attentively. *Neginah* must also be approached as such.

8. It happened at times that the Rebbe Rashab was in the midst of writing a *maamar*—which he would do in his *yarmulka* [i.e. not with a hat or *shtreimel*]—he would stop, place a cloth over the manuscript, put on his hat, and began singing. He said: This is so the subject at hand will be [better] instilled.

## Two Stories

To adequately sum up the power of a *chassidisher niggun*, we turn to a *sicha* the Rebbe said at a Purim farbrengen one year, relating two stories and drawing a connection between. And of course, as always, concluding with a powerful lesson:

a) In his younger years, the Alter Rebbe had the custom that when he traveled home from Mezrich, he made stops on the way in towns and cities where Yidden lived, to spread the teachings of Chassidus and influence them to be *talmidim* of the Maggid.

On one such visit in the city of Shklov [a stronghold of many prestigious *Litvishe ge'onim*] he entered the central *beis midrash*. When the locals began bombarding him with many questions in *nigleh*, the Alter Rebbe said that instead of directly addressing their questions, he'll sing a *niggun*.

The Alter Rebbe had a special way with song. As he sang the *niggun*, members of the crowd felt that their previous questions had suddenly faded.

b) When the Tzemach Tzedek stood in staunch opposition to the Czarist government's decrees against the Jews, he was asked, "How can you put your life in danger like that when you know there are so many Yidden who need you and depend on you for guidance?"

The Tzemach Tzedek replied: "I'll give you one answer, then an alternate. The answer is: I rely on my sons to carry on my work. The alternate: the *achdus* of Chassidim will lead them towards Moshiach."

The Rebbe explained:

As the story of the Alter Rebbe demonstrates, the power of a *niggun* is such that it can eliminate a question in Torah. Since everything in our world is based on the Torah (for the Torah is the blueprint for the world), it can be said that any difficulty in the world can also be eliminated with the power of a *niggun*.

True, we don't have the power of a *niggun* like the Alter Rebbe would have sung. But applying the words of the Tzemach Tzedek in the second story above—we can sing a *niggun* with *achdus haChassidim*.

Let us sing a *niggun* together, and with our singing we will eliminate all the obstacles that stand in the way of our *avodas Hashem*, allowing each and every one of us to fulfill the shlichus and bring the *geulah*.<sup>6</sup> **T**

1. Sefer Hasichos 5702 p. 121
2. From the introduction to Sefer Haniggunim—Chabad by Reb Shmuel Zalmanov
3. Sefer Hasichos 5697 p. 221
4. Zichronosai p. 46
5. Sefer Haniggunim *ibid*.
6. Purim 5720; Toras Menachem vol. 27 p. 457





לעילוי נשמת  
הרה"ח הרה"ת עוסק בצ"צ וכו'  
ר' יהודא ליב ז"ל  
בן הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' יעקב יוסף שו"ב ז"ל  
רסקין  
גלב"ע י"ב אייר התשס"ד  
נדפס על ידי ולזכות משפחתו  
שיחיו לאורך ימים ושנים טובות



# THE DESERT BLO



An exclusive interview with  
**RABBI SHIMON LAZAROFF**



# OMS



THE REBBE WISHES "MAZAL TOV, MAZAL TOV" TO ZALMAN LAZAROFF UPON HIS BAR MITZVAH, AS RABBI LAZAROFF STANDS BY HIS SIDE.

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Rabbi Shimon Lazaroff — Shiminkeh, as he is fondly known — is a respected and beloved figure amongst the senior shluchim. Always lively, with a witty comment quick off his tongue, the head shliach to the state of Texas is unceasingly ready to delight young and old alike with simple yet keen messages about the life of a Chossid in general, and a shliach in particular.

Rabbi Lazaroff was born in Russia, and his childhood followed the path of many Lubavitcher Chassidim of his day; crossing the border, emigrating to Eretz Yisroel, and ultimately being a *bochur* near the Rebbe in the early years in 770. Later, he merited to be sent by the Rebbe—as one of the first shluchim—to the state of Texas.

The staff of A Chassidisher Derher was honored to sit down with Rabbi Lazaroff for a comprehensive interview about his early life, and most importantly, his years as a *bochur* near the Rebbe, and his shlichus to Detroit and Texas. Presented here is a selection of some of the *hora'os* he was privileged to receive from the Rebbe and some of those riveting stories and important lessons we heard.

As one who merited to receive guidance from the Rebbe at every step of the way, his life story is a source of inspiration and direction for all.

*In preparation for this article, we were greatly assisted by Rabbi Chaim Lazaroff, who graciously provided us with many pertinent pictures and documents.*



A YOUNG SHIMON LAZAROFF, APPROX. FIVE YEARS OLD.

## KUTAI SI. PARIS

I was born in Kutaisi, Georgia, in the midst of World War II, where a large number of Lubavitcher Chassidim had gathered. A few months before I was born, my father, Reb Eliezer Gershon Lazaroff *hy"d*, was drafted into the Russian Army and sent to the German front, never to return.

After the war, the famous Lubavitcher escape from Russia took place, through the border city of Lvov. The Lubavitcher community of Kutaisi joined the great escape as well, so I, along with my mother and sister, made our way to Lvov, and we crossed the border into Poland. From there we traveled through Czechoslovakia, and then we reached France. The Rebbe's mother, Rebbetzin Chana, also left Russia together with our group.

After crossing the border we traveled until reaching Paris, where we attempted to settle down for the time being, until we would be able to continue to our final destinations. Shortly after that, our Rebbe—then the son-in-law of the Frieddiker Rebbe—arrived in France (from the United States) to arrange immigration papers for his mother, Rebbetzin Chana. My mother's brother, Yankel Lipsker, was tasked with arranging the food for the Rebbe during his stay, and he, in turn, asked my mother to cook the food;



so my mother merited to cook the Rebbe's food during those months.

The Rebbe would stay, especially on Shabbos, in Reb Zalman Schneerson's house, and I was one of the few children that would be present while the Rebbe was there.

Now, the Rebbe had known my father, as well as my grandfather, Harav Shimon Lazaroff, from Russia. In fact, in 5687 (תרפ"ז), the year of the Frierdiker Rebbe's arrest, the Frierdiker Rebbe had held two important meetings in Leningrad, and there had been a total of three participants: The Frierdiker Rebbe, our Rebbe, and my grandfather, who served as the *chassidishe* rov of Leningrad.

So the Rebbe knew me, so to speak.

During his three month stay in Paris, the Rebbe held a number of *farbrengens*, and as customary by many *chassidishe* *farbrengens*, at the conclusion, the participants would dance. I was a five year old child, so I would hold onto the Rebbe's jacket, and dance along. On one occasion, the Rebbe even held my hands and danced with me.

## ERETZ YISRAEL

From France, the Chassidim began moving to different parts of the world, according to the instructions of the Frierdiker Rebbe. Many Lubavitchers traveled to Eretz Yisrael, while others went to Australia, England, Canada, and the United States. The largest group emigrated to Eretz Yisrael, and in 5708 my mother received instructions from the Frierdiker Rebbe to travel to Eretz Yisrael as well.

When we arrived there, I joined the Lubavitcher *cheder* in Tel Aviv led by Rabbi Fulle Kahan. My family then moved to Lod. The Lod yeshiva at the time had only five students: two Lipskers—Zalman and Eli, two Kaplans—Boruch and Nochum, and

me. That was the beginning of the yeshiva in Lod.

Being that we were the first *chassidishe* yeshiva with a dormitory, the yeshiva began to grow. There actually were *bochurim* from *chassidishe* (non-Chabad) backgrounds who joined us as well.

Then, the Yemenite Jews arrived in Eretz Yisrael, and no yeshivos wanted to accept them into their institutions. The Rebbe insisted that Chabad accept their children, even though the yeshiva was in dire financial straits. The Yemenite group was so significant in the Rebbe's eyes, that the sub-title of Tomchei Temimim in Lod became "*Olei Russya, Olei Teiman*—Russian Immigrants, Yemenite Immigrants."

Those were very special days. We were located in the depths of an orchard (the "*Pardes*"). The *mashpia* was Reb Shlomo Chaim Kesselman, the *rosh yeshiva* was the *gaon* Reb

Boruch Shimon Schneerson, and there was a wonderful atmosphere. It was very spiritual; the *nigleh*, the Chassidus, it was all very special.

My class, over the next few years, was very blessed by this inclusiveness; my classmates were Reb Yossel Uminer, Reb Meilach Zweibel *a"h*, Reb Mottel Ashkenazi *a"h*, Reb Zushe Feldman and Reb Nochum Sternberg; besides for Rabbi Ashkenazi *a"h* and יבלח"ט Rabbi Feldman, none of them were from Lubavitch families.

As I grew older, many of my friends began traveling to the Rebbe. Nachman Sudak *a"h* and יבלח"ט Gershon Mendel Garelik, Yisroel Friedman, etc.—they were all going to New York, so I wanted to join as well. My mother said that I was too young; I was only fifteen years old, how could I travel to the Rebbe on my own? I, on the other hand, would tell her that if I

I WAS A FIVE YEAR OLD CHILD, SO I WOULD HOLD ONTO THE REBBE'S JACKET, AND DANCE ALONG. ON ONE OCCASION THE REBBE EVEN HELD MY HANDS AND DANCED WITH ME.



CLASS PICTURE OF THE YESHIVA IN LOD, 5715. SHIMON LAZAROFF STANDING ON FAR RIGHT.



was too young to go alone, she should travel along with me...

Sometime later, due to the economic situation in Eretz Yisrael, my mother sent a letter to the Rebbe saying that she would like to leave Eretz Yisrael and come to America (obviously together with her children). The Rebbe answered, that if she could manage to arrange the appropriate documents, it should be "in a *mazeldiker sha'ah*," in an auspicious hour.

My uncle Yankel Lipsker was living in America, and he arranged an affidavit for my mother. She bought tickets for the three of us to travel to Paris, and in addition, she bought herself a flight to the USA, where she proceeded to work on procuring affidavits for us as well.

We left Eretz Yisrael on 7 Cheshvan 5718. My sister Batsheva (Shemtov, now in Philadelphia) and I spent six months in France and when my mother obtained affidavits for us, we traveled to New York.

## ARRIVING BY THE REBBE

My first Shabbos with the Rebbe was Shabbos Mevorchim Sivan 5718. That week, I heard my first *maamar* from the Rebbe, "*Lehavin Inyan Sefiras Ha'omer*."

It so happened that my birthday was approaching and I would be going into *yechidus*, so my mother and my sister used the opportunity to enter *yechidus* together with me.

I was coming from Tomchei Temimim in Lod, where I was under the tutelage of Reb Shlomo Chaim Kesselman, so I understood that a *yechidus* was a very serious thing, to be prepared for by fasting and *Tanya bal peh*, and I was understandably very uptight before and during the *yechidus*.

We arranged that we would all enter *yechidus* together, and then my sister and I would leave and my mother would speak to the Rebbe privately for a few minutes. We did so, and later, as my mother exited the Rebbe's room, I noticed that she had an amused look on her face.

## "I REMEMBER HIM AS A LEBEDIKER CHILD." THE REBBE SAID, SO WHY WAS I SO UPTIGHT?

I asked her what was so amusing, and she said, that as we left the room, the Rebbe had asked her what happened to her son.

"I remember him as a *lebediker* child," the Rebbe said, so why was I so uptight?

From then on, my relationship with the Rebbe was like that of a father. Whenever I needed guidance, I would quietly write a note, a *tzetl*, and when the Rebbe would return from home in the afternoon, I would hide in Gan Eden Hatachton, and hand the Rebbe my *tzetl*. The Rebbe would take it with him inside his room, shut the door lightly behind him, and a short while later the Rebbe would come out and answer my question. He would always end off the answer with, "*Gei lern*,



RABBI LAZAROFF (SECOND FROM BOTTOM-LEFT) AS A BOCHUR AT THE REBBE'S FARBRENGEN, 29 ELUL 5722.

JEM 110555

*un zei beshimcha*—go learn, and be happy.”

This happened a number of times, when I was sixteen and seventeen. No one ever found out that I would do that. This was the sense of closeness that I felt from the Rebbe.

## HORA'OS IN AVODAS HASHEM.

Once, I told the Rebbe in *yeichidus* that I was experiencing *machshavos zaros* during davening. Other *bochurim* with similar problems had been told by the Rebbe to study Tanya from the beginning of *perek mem alef* until “*hamelech*” by heart. To me, the Rebbe said that I should memorize beginning from the words “*Vehinei Hashem nitzav alay*,” until the word “*hamelech*” on the following page, and every time I have a stray thought, I should think about those words. Additionally, the Rebbe said that I should think about those words before *Hodu*, and before *Yotzer Or*, which I do religiously until today.

Another time, I wrote the Rebbe a depressing letter, about how I am failing in my *avodas Hashem* and so on. The Rebbe wrote back, that I should learn Kuntres Hatefillah, Kuntres Ha'avodah and Kuntres Eitz Hachaim, “then you will know how a *tomim* has to be.”

## EVENINGS IN 770

When I arrived in New York in 5718, Lubavitch was very small. There were many *bochurim* in 770 that were from *frumme* homes, but not necessarily Lubavitcher ones.



RABBI LAZAROFF (L) WITH RABBI LEIBEL ALEVSKY (FAR RIGHT) AND A FRIEND DURING HIS SIX-MONTH STOPOVER IN FRANCE EN-ROUTE FROM ERETZ YISROEL TO THE US, WINTER 5718.

Most of them were from Boro Park, Bensonhurst, and Flatbush.

Being that I was still quite young, the *hanhalah* told me that I was too young to learn in 770, and my place was in Bedford and Dean. I went there, and I saw, on the first evening after *seder*, that all of the students went to play baseball and so on, and it was all totally foreign to me. So the next day after *seder*, I ran away; I went back to 770 where I was able to spend time with all of the older *bochurim*, and I slept there on a bench. The next morning I took the bus back to Bedford and Dean for *seder*, and I would do that again every single day.

Meanwhile I was really enjoying my days, because I was spending much time with the older *bochurim*. I remember how Leibel Raskin, Nachman Sudak, and יבלח"ט Boruch Shalom Kahan would farbreng every Thursday night, and I was able to participate and join them as well. The motto of their farbrengens was that the Rebbe is our commander, we are his soldiers, and we must be ready to go through fire and water for his sake. Those nights sleeping on the bench in 770 were the best days of my life...

Those were the early days of Lekutei Sichos; the Rebbe edited the first one for Shavuot 5718. In those days they were called *tochen inyanim* for *chazzering* Chassidus in shuls. The *bochurim* in 770 were the ones publicizing them, and I became their marketing man: before the Rebbe's big farbrengens on Yud-Tes Kislev and so on, I would go around and sell the booklets for five cents, and that is how they covered the cost of the printing.

## SHLICHUS IN FRANCE

In 5722, the Rebbe sent *talmidim hashluchim* for the first time (for some reason, a common perception is that the first group was the shluchim to Australia in 5727, but in truth, we were sent five years earlier). Ten *bochurim* were sent to Eretz Yisrael and six were sent to Brunoy. I was one of the six that were sent to Brunoy. Before we left, we went into *yeichidus*, and when we left 770 to the ship harbor to board the Queen Elizabeth, the Rebbe came out to see us off.

Two weeks after we arrived in France, we received a letter from *mazkirus* saying that we should send a report of our activities at least once every two weeks. Additionally, we

were instructed that every week, two of us should leave yeshiva and spend Shabbos strengthening Yiddishkeit in a different city, while switching off: one week in Paris, and one week in a different French city. I was the one responsible to organize the trips and procure the funds, and I would write the *duchos* as well.

In those days, with minimal travel and communication available, many of the youngsters in Brunoy did not know much about the Rebbe, and weren't aware of how Chassidim in *dor hashvi'i* should act—in regards to *hafatzas hama'yanos* and so on. Before we came to France, the Rebbe was a distant concept, but we made it real to them. That is what was so special about being there on shlichus.

One of the cities that I visited was Metz, where there was a large

population of Algerian Jews. I farbrenged with them an entire Shabbos, and after Shabbos, I got them all to write a *pan* to the Rebbe, that they would start keeping Shabbos and eating only kosher. Approximately thirty families signed.

About two weeks later in Brunoy, I received a letter from the Rebbe. I opened the envelope, and inside was a special letter from the Rebbe to those Jews in Metz. I was to go back and deliver it to them, and I did so.

The next year, Reb Bentzion Shemtov was in *yechidus*, and the Rebbe spoke about the activities of the Chassidim in France. The Rebbe told him that he sent a group of six *bochurim*, one of them was the son of Menucha Lazaroff, and he went to Metz and accomplished amazing things. Chassidim have been in France

for many years, and we needed to wait for youngsters, to come and do something...

During Elul of that year, having spent almost a whole year in France, we received a letter from *mazkirus*. In the letter we were told that our shlichus in Brunoy had concluded, and the time had come to return to New York. We were instructed to leave a copy of our reports with the Lishkah (Reb Binyomin Gorodetzky), so that our work should be able to continue on.

One of the main *bochurim* involved in continuing our work was Reb Mule Azimov *a"h* whom I was especially close with. He continued our work and took it to new heights, developing the infrastructure of Lubavitch and *hafatzas hama'yanos*, as it would later become well-known.



LETTER FROM MAZKIRUS TO THE TALMIDIM HASHLUCHIM DATED 14 ELUL 5722 NOTIFYING THEM TO RETURN TO NEW YORK.



THE REBBE ESCORTS THE GROUP OF SHLUCHIM TO FRANCE, 12 ADAR I 5722.



THEN THE REBBE ADDED  
THAT HE SHOULD SEE  
TO IT THAT I LEARN TO  
BECOME A DAYAN...

## YADIN YADIN

We returned to New York, where I spent a few more years in the Rebbe's presence. Some two years later, I married my wife Chiena, the daughter of Reb Levi Itche Schapiro.

After our *chasuna*, I learned in *kollel* for two years. In those days we learned *hilchos treifos*, and we were tested by the *rosh yeshiva* of 770, Harav Yisrael Piekarski. He tested me very thoroughly; he asked me all sorts of complicated questions, and he was very impressed; I knew every single Taz and Shach and all the commentaries.

Every so often he would go into *yechidus*, and give over a report to the Rebbe from the various *bochurim* and *yungeleit*. In *yechidus* some time after my test, he excitedly told the Rebbe that he had tested me, and that he was very impressed with my knowledge.

The Rebbe told him that it was no wonder; I was a grandson of Harav Shimon Lazaroff, the rov in Leningrad. Then the Rebbe added that he should see to it that I learn to become a *dayan*.

The next day, I heard that Harav Piekarski was looking for me. I came over to him, and he told over the whole story, and ended off that the Rebbe had instructed him to tell me that I should learn Choshen Mishpat and become a *dayan*. So, over my second year in *kollel*, I studied for "*yadin yadin*."

## MY FIRST SHLICHUS

Our first shlichus was in Detroit, Michigan, under the head shliach,



THE REBBE'S LETTER TO THE ALGERIAN COMMUNITY IN METZ, FRANCE. THE REBBE INSTRUCTED IN HANDWRITING THAT THE LETTER BE SENT IN AN ENVELOPE TO RABBI LAZAROFF:

"להניח במעטפה ולשלוח להת' שמעון לרוב ש" (בריונא)."





Rabbi Shalom Dovber Shemtov. In the first letter I received from the Rebbe while living there, the Rebbe wrote, “בטח נואם מזמן לזמן בבתי כנסיות שבעיר, —Surely you lecture in the shuls throughout the city from time to time, and not only in Chassidus, but also in *nigleh*.”

From then on, I would very often go to shuls, go over to the rabbi, and ask if I could give a speech. That way, I spoke before many of the rabbonim and *frumme* Yidden in the city, in Young Israel, etc.

During those years, my main responsibility was to run Camp Gan Yisrael of Michigan. In my *duchos* at the time I would emphasize the existence of the camp as a *mosad* for itself, in addition to Lubavitch in Michigan in general.

In response to one of my letters to the Rebbe regarding camp, the Rebbe wrote, “הרי הקעמפ אינו מלכות בפני עצמו, אלא חלק מהפעולות, ע”כ יתדבר עם הרשד”ב —שם טוב על כל הנ”ל. אזכיר על הציון The camp is not a kingdom of its own, rather it is part of the general activities [of the *mosdos*]. You should therefore [before taking any steps], discuss it with Rabbi Sholom Dovber Shemtov,

[the head shliach]. I will mention it at the *Tziyun*”.

## LOOKING FOR A CITY

I had always dreamt of being sent on shlichus, to open *mosdos* of the Rebbe in a new city, where there had never been a shliach before; so while I lived in Detroit and I traveled around to enroll children in camp, I would look around in different cities for various options. One city I knew well was S. Louis; I had traveled there as a *bochur* on Merkos Shlichus, and I had seen much *hatzlacha* in my work there. I felt that it might be a place where we could move on shlichus.

On one of my trips, I was together with the *shadar* Rabbi Shmuel Dovid Raichik and he mentioned to me that he had heard from “inside sources,” that Merkos wanted to send a shliach to Texas. So he suggested that when I go into *yechidus* to ask the Rebbe about S. Louis, I should mention Texas as well. (In those days, the Rebbe didn’t tell us specifically where to go anymore. One would suggest different places, and the Rebbe would choose one of the options.)

Some time later I went into *yechidus*, and I included those options in my *tzetl*.

The Rebbe read my *tzetl*, and said to me that S. Louis was the only city in America that had a chief rabbi. If he admires the work of Lubavitch in *hafatzas hama’ayanos*, then why wasn’t he doing it until now. If he has not been doing *hafatzas hama’ayanos* and does not admire our work, then he won’t allow you to do it either. “Lubavitch is *sam saposhnick*,” the Rebbe ended off.<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, the Rebbe said, S. Louis is not a good idea at the moment. Texas on the other hand is a good idea. “There are eleven rabbis there; you will be the twelfth one,” the Rebbe said. The Rebbe told me to go to Rabbi Hodakov and work out the details.

This occurred in the winter of 5732. A short time later, at the farbrengen of Yud-Aleph Nissan celebrating the Rebbe’s seventieth year, the Rebbe asked that seventy one new institutions be opened in honor of his birthday. Subsequently, the Rebbe agreed that my shlichus in Texas be counted among the seventy one *mosdos*.

## TEXAS

The Rebbe had spoken to me about Texas, but he did not specify which city I should move to. So I did a tour through the state. I went to Dallas, S. Antonio, Houston, and then Austin. And when I arrived back, I wrote a report to the Rebbe. I wrote that Dallas seemed to be on the highest level, from a Yiddishkeit perspective, S. Antonio just built a new *mikveh*, Austin has a campus with many Jewish students, and Houston is lacking in *shomrei Torah u’mitzvah*. The Rebbe told me to move to Houston.

We were one of the first ten shluchim in the United States, but what was unique about our city was that, unlike the cities in which the shluchim had been moving to before then, in Houston there were almost no *frumme* Yidden at all.

# THE REBBE CONTINUED, 'YOU WRITE THAT IT IS BESIMCHA UVETUV LEVAV – WITH HAPPINESS AND GLADNESS, IS IT TRULY SO?'

## BESIMCHA UVETUV LEVAV

Before moving to Houston we went into *yechidus*, and in my *tzetzl*, I pledged to do the Rebbe's *shlichus* with my entire *kochos hanefesh*, with my whole heart and soul. My wife signed the letter as well.

When the Rebbe read it, he smiled, and he turned to my wife and said, "I see that you signed too; do you know what you are signing for?"

The Rebbe continued, "You write that it is *besimcha uvetuv levav*—with happiness and gladness; is it truly so?"

My wife answered, "Yes, of course."

Hearing that, the Rebbe smiled broadly, and put the letter into his drawer.

I was very friendly with the head of the Conservative school in the city, and when he heard that my wife was a teacher, he gave her a job interview and offered her a job. (The Rebbe told me that my wife should teach only if it would not disturb her work in educating our own children.) But

the job came with one condition; he said that she could teach about Torah coming from heaven, or things like that; which he personally didn't mind, but if parents would begin to complain, he will not be able to stand up for her.

We asked the Rebbe what to do. The Rebbe circled the line saying that the principal wouldn't stand up for those teachings, and wrote:

"אם כן מה השאלה?—If that is the case, then what is the question?"

(In other words, she should not accept the offer.)

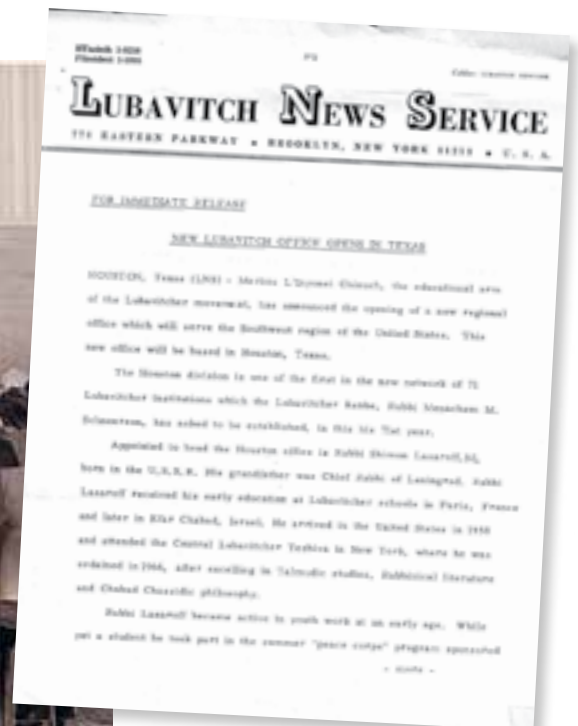
## CHINUCH

When we moved to Houston, the Rebbe had given us two conditions; that we should be able to provide our children with a proper education (חינוך), and that the city should have a kosher *mikveh*.

Now, our children were studying in the modern orthodox, Torah Umesorah school. Since the school's *limudei kodesh* was on a very low level, we worked out with the school that my wife and I would teach our children *limudei kodesh*, and then we would bring them to school for *limudei chol*. (One of my fellow shlichim received a directive from the Rebbe that children must have friends and social



FIRST MAJOR EVENT OF CHABAD IN TEXAS IN HONOR OF YUD-TES KISLEV.



LUBAVITCH NEWS SERVICE REPORT ON THE FOUNDING OF CHABAD IN TEXAS. THE REPORT WAS MUGAH BY THE REBBE.





THE CHABAD LUBAVITCH OF TEXAS REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS, HOUSING A WIDE-RANGE OF ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES.

opportunities, therefore I didn't keep them home all day.)

At some point, the school hired a new principal. This new principal didn't like our arrangement, so he told us that either my children remain in the school the entire day, or they don't come at all.

For some time we agreed, but the arrangement didn't work out for my children. They were on a much higher level than their classmates, and as a result they were bored during class and they weren't happy. After a few other incidents of compromising on the level of Torah and mitzvos in the school, I felt this could not go on.

I wrote a letter to the Rebbe describing the problems that the new principal was making, and the Rebbe answered pointedly:

“ישאל רב מורה הוראה בפועל אם חינוך—You should ask a practicing rov, whether proper *chinuch* is in the category of mitzvos one must fulfill at all costs...”

I called the rov of Crown Heights, Rabbi Zalman Shimon Dvorkin, and he said, “Look at what the Rebbe told you; the answer speaks for itself.”

Armed with this ruling, I held a meeting with the president of the

school. I told him what the Rebbe had said about חינוך הכשר. I gave him an ultimatum. They have ten days to decide, I told him; either they allow me to keep my children at home for *limudei kodesh*, or I will open my own school.

He began to laugh out loud. He never believed that I would open my own school.

Ten days later, I called the president and I reminded him about my ultimatum, but he just brushed me off.

I had gotten my answer.

The next day, a Thursday, I placed an ad in the Jewish Herald (a local Jewish newspaper), announcing that Lubavitch opened a new day school in Houston. My wife, who was teaching in the Torah Umesorah school, picked up our children, collected their books, and opened our own school in our house.

Right away, people started to call me to try to make peace and work things out, but I told them categorically that Chabad doesn't shut down schools. The Chabad school is open, so that is the way it will remain.

Meanwhile, with the Rebbe's *brachos*, the school went from five children to seven children; today there

THE REBBE ANSWERED,  
“YOU SHOULD ASK  
A PRACTICING RAV,  
WHETHER PROPER  
CHINUCH IS IN THE  
CATEGORY OF  
MITZVOS ONE MUST  
FULFILL AT ALL COSTS...”

are over one hundred and sixty *kein yirbu*, and *baruch Hashem* it has a very good name.

## BIG HATS AND BIG HEADS

During my early years in Texas, I used to visit the university in Austin on a weekly basis, and be *mekarev* the students there. One year, I managed to convince ten students (among them was Rabbi Moshe Traxler, who is today a shliach here in Houston) to go learn in Morristown over the summer, and during their stay, I brought them along to the Yud-Beis Tammuz farbrengen.

Many of the students were interesting characters, and some even had long hair so the yarmulkahs weren't exactly sticking to their heads.



I had an idea; I got them all to buy big cowboy hats to wear to the farbrengen. When the Rebbe walked in, he was greeted by quite an amusing sight, all ten were standing together with their massive hats. When the Rebbe saw them, he smiled broadly, and during the farbrengen, he instructed them all to say *l'chaim*.

About a half a year later, just before Chanukah, I received a call from Rabbi Shlomo Cunin, my colleague from California; "How many menorahs do you need?"

I was quite confused as to his question, so he explained:

He was in New York, and when the Rebbe saw him standing in the lobby of 770, the Rebbe asked him how *mitvza* Chanukah was going. (That year, 5734, was when the Rebbe announced *mitvza* Chanukah). After he told the Rebbe about his plans, the Rebbe asked him, "And what are you doing about your neighbor in Texas; *dorten hubben di chevre groyse hitlech, un unter di groyse hitlech hubben zei groyse kep, hubben zei groyse hasagos*—Over there they have the people with big hats, and under the big hats they have big heads, so they must have broad perceptions...<sup>2</sup>



## GIMMEL TAMMUZ WITH SHAZAR

A short time after we arrived in Houston, the president of the Federation told me that Zalman Shazar, the former president of Israel, would be stopping over the next day in the Houston airport for a few hours on his way to Mexico. The community leaders would be meeting him in an airport lounge, and he invited me to join.

As a shliach, I didn't do anything on my own; I immediately called Rabbi Hodakov and asked him if I should join the reception.

As I was talking to him, I heard that Rabbi Hodakov paused for a moment; soon enough I picked up from his tone of voice that the Rebbe had joined the call.

I asked Rabbi Hodakov my question again, and he began to question me: "Do you know what tomorrow is?"

I said that I do; it was going to be Gimmel Tammuz. "Do you know the significance of the day?"

I said yes. I remembered that at a farbrengen on Shabbos Korach, Gimmel Tammuz 5718, the Rebbe had explained that for Chassidim, Gimmel Tammuz is in essence a bigger *simcha* than Yud-Beis Tammuz. The Frierdiker Rebbe himself was sent into exile and was unable to effect Chassidim directly as he would be able to if he was home. He was therefore still not free and the ultimate *yom tov* was on Yud-Beis Tammuz, when he could be with Chassidim once more. However for Chassidim who are *mekushar* to the Rebbe, the fact that the Frierdiker Rebbe **himself** was freed from such a dangerous decree (despite the fact that they were unable to see the Frierdiker Rebbe at the time, as he was sent to Kostrama), this itself is a cause of a bigger joy than the joy of Yud-Beis Tammuz.<sup>3</sup>

"Go there," Rabbi Hodakov said to me, "and tell him what you just told me. And don't forget to take some *mashke* and say *l'chaim* with him."

The next day I went to the airport with my *l'chaim*, and when I arrived, I saw that the place was packed; all the who's who of Houston were there...

However, as soon as he noticed me, President Shazar ushered me over and began a conversation with me. "Surely you are a Lubavitcher," he said. How is the Rebbe, what is going on, he wanted to know everything.

While all the community leaders of Houston were looking on, I told him the Rebbe's message about the day and said *l'chaim* with him, and at the end, he asked me for a favor.

He said that on his way back from Mexico, he would be stopping off in New York. Would he be able to see the Rebbe?

I immediately ran to a pay phone to call *mazkirus* to arrange a *yechidus* for him.

A few days later, I got a call from Rabbi Hodakov, telling me that a *yechidus* had been arranged for Yud-Beis Tammuz, and he asked me if I would be coming to town. I said of course I would. Indeed I came to New York for Yud-Beis Tammuz, and in the first part of the *yechidus*, when all of the dignitaries were present, I was told to join as well and the Rebbe actually introduced me to him.

The Rebbe said: "This is the *yungerman* who told us that you were coming; his name is Shimon Lazaroff. His grandfather and namesake was the rov of Leningrad."

Then the Rebbe continued:

"He lives in Houston, which is the place from where they fly to the moon; *iz duch Houston Shaar hashomayim*, it's the gateway to heaven..."



FORMER PRESIDENT SHAZAR VISITS THE REBBE, YUD-BEIS TAMMUZ 5733.  
RABBI LAZAROFF IS SEEN IN FRONT OF THE REBBE'S DESK.



RABBI LAZAROFF GREETES  
MR. SHAZAR IN HOUSTON.





RABBI LAZAROFF, STUART NELKIN & JAY NELKIN PRESENT THE REBBE WITH THE KEY TO THE RECENTLY PURCHASED AUSTIN CHABAD HOUSE, 12 TAMMUZ 5735.

## BUILDING A BUILDING

When I began plans to build a building a few years after we moved to Houston, I wrote to the Rebbe about a property I was looking into, and I received an answer that I had not expected. The Rebbe asked me why I was jumping so far, where would I get the money from, etc.

I was very distraught when I received the answer, and I decided that I would scrap the entire plan. But then the *mazkir*, Reb Binyomin Klein calmed me down, and told me that the Rebbe wasn't telling me not to build. It simply had to be done with caution. He told me to go home, make proper lists, collect pledges, and to be responsible about it, and then the Rebbe will allow it to be built.

I followed his advice, and it proved to be the right thing. I then received a letter from the Rebbe, with many blessings, and he even enclosed ten fifty-dollar bills (five hundred dollars)—no small sum in those days—as his personal contribution. We built our building, and then we outgrew it, and we did renovations,

and *baruch Hashem* we were very successful.

This initial answer was part of a general instruction that I received from the Rebbe—that I should run my shlichus like a business; I shouldn't do anything that would put me into debt. In fact, I once asked the Rebbe about hiring another shliach, and the Rebbe said that I shouldn't, because I wasn't sure that I could afford it. (This was at the same time that Rabbi Shlomo Cunin was being told to do everything "*lechatchila ariber*.")

Right after we finished a phase of the building, I came with a prominent *baal habos* to the Rebbe, and during the farbrengen (on Yud-Tes Kislev 5740), we came up to the Rebbe and the *baal habos* said that he donated a specific amount of money towards the building. The Rebbe told him he didn't give enough, and he must add to his previous pledge. Then, after he said *l'chaim*, the Rebbe gave him a *bracha*, that we should see each other once more in ten years.

Another similar episode took place years earlier, in 5734, regarding a different building which I had bought, in Austin:

During a farbrengen, the Rebbe told a *baal habos* who had just sponsored the building that soon we will outgrow those buildings, and we will need to expand...

Chabad in Texas began in 5732 with nothing, and with the Rebbe's *brachos*, today it has expanded to seventeen cities, twenty seven institutions, forty shluchim and hundreds of *ba'alei teshuvah*, many of them shluchim themselves, teachers and rabbis across the globe. With Hashem's help and the Rebbe's continuous *brachos*, it will surely grow much more in the future, and give the Rebbe much *nachas*. **1**

1. "Sam saposhnick" means "I myself am a shoemaker." The story goes that a Yid found his stolen tefillin in the possession of a gentile. When the Yid identified the Tefillin, the non-Jew called out "I myself am a shoemaker," claiming to have found animal skin and created the "shoes" himself. The Rebbe used this term to bring out that Chabad is independent and maintains a unique style and approach. Our activities cannot be confined to merely following in the ways of others.

2. See Derher Kislev 5776 "Illumination" for the rest of the Rebbe's conversation with Rabbi Cunin, and a full overview of Chanukah 5734.

3. Toras Menachem vol 23, p. 103-106.



# Moshiach & Sefiras Ha'omer

## A Practical Discussion

לזכות  
מרים מינדל שתחיל בת רייזל  
שיקויים בה  
ברכת כ"ק אדמו"ר אליה  
"ביחד עם בעלה שי' לגדל  
כיו"ח שי' לתחומע"ט מתוך  
שמחה והרחבה...."



We are all aware that the coming of Moshiach and the future *geulah* are not abstract concepts, but rather part of our everyday consciousness, as it is said, "I await his coming every day, that he should come."

There is a lesson from Sefiras Ha'omer: When the Yidden left Mitzrayim, they counted the days leading up to the giving of the Torah at Har Sinai, yearning for the day to come. This needs to be our approach as well—waiting and yearning every day for Moshiach to come.

In addition, the mitzvah of *sefiras ha'omer* has another obvious connection to this idea of constantly yearning for the coming of Moshiach:

According to most opinions, the mitzvah of counting Sefiras Ha'omer only applies when the *Beis Hamikdash* is standing. In the time of *golus*, the *sefiras ha'omer* that we count is not a *d'oraysa*, but rather instituted *mid'rabbanan* as a *zecher l'Mikdash*—commemorating the *sefrah* in the times of the *Beis Hamikdash*.

This is why we say a special *tefillah* right after Sefiras Ha'omer asking for the *Beis Hamikdash* to be rebuilt. We are acknowledging that we have not fulfilled the mitzvah in the most complete way, and requesting that very soon we merit to have the *Beis Hamikdash* and perform the mitzvah *d'oraysa*.

### COMPLETENESS IN SEFIRAH

Regarding *sefiras ha'omer* the Torah says "Seven complete weeks you shall count..."—there is a special command that the weeks be whole and complete.

It is brought in the Midrash,<sup>1</sup> "Reb Chiya says, When are the weeks complete? When the Yidden are fulfilling Hashem's will."

The Rebbe explains this Midrash to mean, that when the Yidden will fulfill Hashem's will and merit the coming of Moshiach, then the mitzvah will be complete. I.e. we will fulfill the mitzvah of *sefirah* in its complete manner, as a *d'oraysa*.

This brings us to a very interesting question:

If Moshiach were to come during the days of *sefirah*, would we have the mitzvah *d'oraysa* of counting from that point on? Or would we need to wait until the next year to count from the beginning of *sefiras ha'omer*?

### THE PROBLEM

Why might you think that the mitzvah does not begin immediately, and we would need to wait until the next year?

Firstly, there is the issue of the *korban ha'omer*. The Torah says “You shall count from the second day of Pesach, the day that you bring the [*korban*] omer...”. It follows that if Moshiach does not arrive before the second day of Pesach, the *omer* is not brought that year. How then can the mitzvah (*d'oraysa*) of *sefiras ha'omer* apply?!

However, this can be answered if we take into account another important aspect of *sefiras ha'omer*. The Torah says “until the day after the seventh week [Shavuos], you shall count fifty days and bring the bread of waving [*shte'i halechem*]”. This means that the mitzvah of *sefiras ha'omer* is also in place as a preparation for Shavuos.

If we look at *sefirah* as a preparation for Shavuos then if Moshiach comes during *sefiras ha'omer* we would obviously be able to begin the mitzvah immediately.

In addition, there is another answer to account for the lack of the *korban omer* in a year when Moshiach arrives during the days of *sefirah*. The Torah doesn't say that you count from the **offering** of the *korban omer*, rather that you count “**from the day of the bringing** of the *korban omer*.” This means that if there is a *Beis Hamikdash* and on the 16th of Nissan the *omer* is not brought for whatever reason, there is still a mitzvah of *sefiras ha'omer*.

Now, during the time of *golus*, because there is no *Beis Hamikdash*, the day of the 16th of Nissan is no longer considered **the day of the bringing** of the *korban omer*, so there is no mitzvah *d'oraysa*.

However, once Moshiach comes then the 16th of Nissan is once again **potentially** the day of the *korban omer*. Therefore, there is no need for the *omer* to actually have been brought for the mitzvah of *sefiras ha'omer* to resume the status of *d'oraysa*.

## MISSING DAYS

There is another issue that needs to be addressed with regard to Moshiach's coming during the days of *sefirah*.

We are all well aware that the mitzvah of *sefiras ha'omer* needs to be performed from beginning to end without missing any days. If one did not begin counting on the second day of Pesach, he cannot count with a *bracha* later on. Even if one began counting, but missed a single day in middle, he is lacking the completeness and can no longer make a *bracha*.

Accordingly, if Moshiach was not here at the beginning of *sefirah*, how can we begin to count with the status of *d'oraysa* halfway in? We are then missing all the days up until that point!

(Even if we did in fact count each day until that point, the counting had only the status of a *d'rabbanan*; from the perspective of the Torah, there was no counting.)

The answer is that if we look a little deeper we will realize that the counting that we did during *golus* was indeed considered counting from the perspective of Torah. Accordingly we can begin to count with the status of a *d'oraysa* as soon as Moshiach arrives.

Here's how:

When the Torah attaches significance to a time, place, or object, it takes on a special value. This is true even if the Torah did not command us to do a mitzvah with the said time, place or object.

For example: the Torah gives importance to matzah. This means that matzah is “something” in the eyes of Torah; even before the Torah commands us to eat matzah on Pesach, the Torah has declared that matzah is important and has a place in Hashem's plan for creation.

The same applies with regard to the days of *sefiras ha'omer*. If the

Torah never gives an importance to these days, the concept of counting the days would have no holiness to it whatsoever. However Torah said that these days are “special,” thereby giving them a unique status—an object of value in Hashem's eyes. Just as we explained with regard to matzah, this status remains without regard to whether or not there is a mitzvah *d'oraysa* at the present time.

Therefore, when we count the *omer* during *golus*, we still effectively mark the days of *sefirah*. Accordingly, if Moshiach arrives in middle of *sefirah*, we can commence counting with the full status of a *d'oraysa*, without any “missing” days.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, if Moshiach comes during *sefirah* we will begin to count as a mitzvah *d'oraysa*.

It is interesting to note that the Minchas Elazar says<sup>2</sup> that in a certain sense the counting once Moshiach comes will have a retroactive effect on the previous days before Moshiach's coming. The mitzvah *d'oraysa* of *sefiras ha'omer* will apply to the earlier days giving them the status of *d'oraysa* as well. We must therefore have in mind when counting *sefirah* (even though we are in *golus*) that we could potentially be fulfilling a mitzvah *d'oraysa*, for Moshiach could come any day.

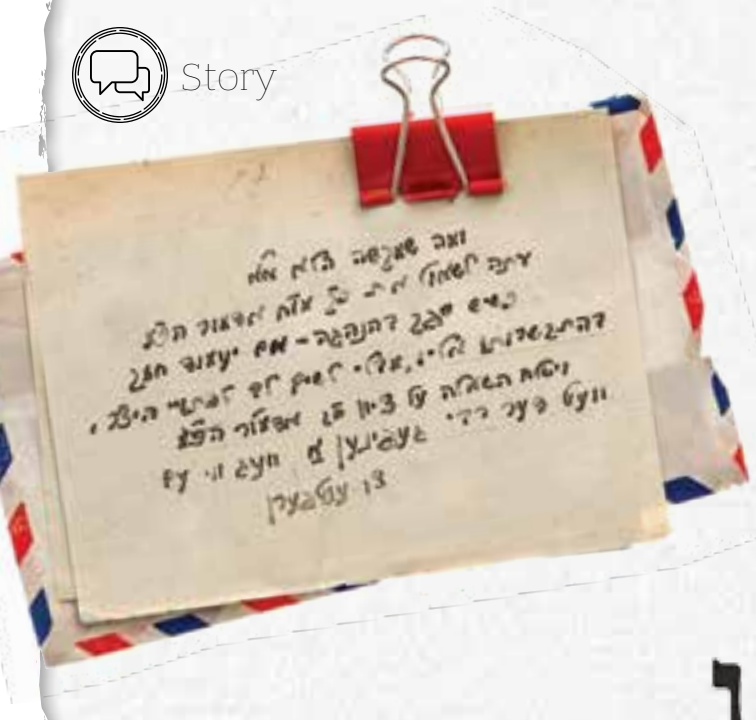
As we say in the *tefillah* after *sefiras ha'omer*, “May Hashem restore to us the *avoda* in the *Beis Hamikdash* speedily in our days,” and already this year we will fulfill the mitzvah of *sefiras ha'omer* in the most complete manner.<sup>3</sup> **1**

1. Vayikra Rabah 28,3

2. Teshuva in Sefer Nimukei Orach Chaim

3. Adapted from the Sichah of Acharon Shel Pesach 5751 in Sefer Hinei Yomim Boim





# דער רבי וועט געפינען א וועג...

לע"נ  
יעקב ליבער בן גמליאל ליב ע"ה  
נלב"ע ט"ו אייר ה'תשס"ד  
ת"צ'ב'ה'

נדפס ע"י בנו  
הרה"ת ר' ישראל ליב  
וזוגתו מרת פרומא רחל  
ומשפחתם שיחיו  
רעזניק

## In the Nick of Time

AS TOLD BY RABBI ELIE FILLER (PRESCOTT, ARIZONA)

Our shlichus began in the beautiful, mountainous town of Prescott, Arizona two years ago. After a year, we were gifted with access to a substantial amount of cash to purchase a suitable building for a Chabad House. The layout of the city is quite scattered and we felt that the strategic location for a Chabad House is in the downtown area.

Buildings for sale are hard to come by and we spent several months scouting the area for the perfect fit. We finally settled on a structure that is both commercial and

residential. The posted price was above our means, so we made an offer that was considerably lower yet reasonable. The owner stubbornly refused our price and compromised for a price that was still more than we could afford.

I consulted with several older shluchim and I received conflicting advice. Some felt that acquiring the building was important enough to accumulate some debt and others felt that the stubbornness of the owner was a concern.

I sent a *tzetel* to the Ohel detailing the entire episode and included the conflicting messages I was receiving. I



concluded that until I gained more clarity on the matter we would stop pursuing this specific deal and perhaps a better option will present itself.

The search for a new home for Chabad continued and, in the meantime, the building we had looked into went into contract with another company. I figured this was our answer.

Several months passed, our search was unsuccessful and the original building was back on the market! Realizing that this was an opportunity, I wrote to the Rebbe of the developments and requested a *bracha* that we should succeed in purchasing the building no matter the price.

I advised our real estate agent to re-submit our original offer and clarified that in the event that they requested a higher price, we would strongly consider it. A month passed with no response.

It was Friday afternoon and I received a letter in the mail notifying us that the lease on our current home will be up in forty days and the owners do not wish to continue renting out the house. We were shocked! Homes for rent

are difficult to find in this area and a month's time was painfully insufficient to find a new place to live.

Immediately I notified the Rebbe of the disturbing news and asked if perhaps this was a sign that I should work aggressively to obtain the building at any price.

Literally, ten minutes later my phone rang and the caller ID showed that it was our real estate agent on the line. My wife gasped, "Oh my goodness!"

The agent excitedly notified us that the owner had agreed to sell the building for our original offer! We went into contract that very day. Since it was a cash deal, the transaction was relatively quick and the day we needed to move out of our old home we received the keys to the building we now call Chabad of Prescott. ①

## YOUR STORY

Share your story with A Chassidisher Derher by emailing [stories@derher.org](mailto:stories@derher.org).







CB HALBERSTAM via JEM, 101892

## THE CHIEF RABBIS' VISIT

11 Iyar, 5749

This month we feature photos of a *yeichidus* of Eretz Yisroel's chief rabbis, Rabbi Avraham HaKohen Schapiro and Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu, the Ashkenazic and Sephardic ("Rishon L'tziyon") rabbonim respectively.

לע"ג אבי מורי  
הו"ח אי"א נז"נ יעקב בן יצחק ע"ה  
ד' אייר תשע"א  
תנ"צ'ה'  
נדפס ע"י בנו הרה"ת ר' יצחק  
וזוגתו מרת פנינה חנה  
ומשפחתם שיחיו  
חנוכה



CB HALBERSTAM via JEM, 10894

As they entered the Rebbe's room, the Rebbe rose and welcomed them warmly, motioning for them to sit. The ensuing conversation proceeded for over an hour and a half, covering a wide variety of concepts in Torah and of their function in the Rabbanut, amongst other topics.

Following the *yechidus*, the Rebbe greeted each member of the accompanying entourage, shaking their hands and sharing a few words. As the rabbonim took their leave, the Rebbe escorted them outside, and the assembled crowd of Chassidim began singing *Ki B'simcha* with the Rebbe's encouragement. Amazingly, the Rebbe stayed outside for a few minutes after the rabbonim left, looking in the direction that their car was traveling. After nine minutes, the Rebbe returned to his room.

The *hanacha* of the *yechidus* was *mugah* by the Rebbe, and is printed in the *hosafos* of Sefer Hasichos 5749, vol. 2.





# 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](mailto:feedback@derher.org).

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



**Dear devoted staff of  
A Chassidisher Derher,**

The subscription we made for the year has been the best purchase we've ever made. Each issue is packed full of such amazing and detailed information.

I was really enjoying the article about Reb Mendel Futerfas and, obviously, there is no shortage of what can be written and told about him.

I was wondering, based on the fact that the Rebbe spoke of telling stories of "ordinary Chassidim" for us to relate to and feel that we can accomplish more too (*halevi* we were as ordinary as Reb Mendel!), if perhaps A Chassidisher Derher could include a section of stories of such Chassidim in each issue, or "sprinkle" them throughout each issue.

Lastly, have you ever interviewed those involved or written a history on Hadar HaTorah? Being our longest standing *baal teshuva* yeshiva, the founding and growth of such an institution—given the Rebbe's focus on Jewry worldwide—would give great insight into how, perhaps, the Rebbe guided *baalei teshuva* once they "entered the fold" and give insight to current *baalei teshuva* as well.

**Avrohom Kaufman**  
Monsey, New York

”

**Dear Editors,**

In the Adar magazine, you presented an article detailing the Rebbe's launch of Tzivos Hashem [*On the Front Lines* Derher issue 54 (131)]. I'd like to share some additional background information, a story which I had the *zechus* of having a part in.

Every summer, when Camp Gan Yisroel ended, we would daven *mincha* with the Rebbe, and then the parents would pick up their children. I was in 770 after the summer of 5737, when suddenly someone tapped me on the shoulder and said, "Rabbi Hodakov would like to see you and your friend." My friend and I went to his office.

Rabbi Hodakov told us how special it was that we keep a connection with these children all year, and being that my friend and I were very involved in the camp, and last year we sent out a Camp Gan Yisroel magazine twice after the summer, he wants us to go now and make a magazine once a month and send it to every one of the kids in camp. The magazine should contain stories and projects, and the kids should mail back to us, informing us of what they accomplished, and they should be able to get points and go up in ranks. In this way, throughout the winter the kids will be able to grow in the mitzvos that they learned from last year's summer. In effect, if you think about it, this is the concept of Tzivos

Hashem, but he didn't use the words Tzivos Hashem.

I loved the idea, but the *bochur* that was with me looked at Rabbi Hodakov and said, "I can understand one magazine, two magazines, but you want us to make one every month? I can't; I'm a *bochur*, I have to sit and learn, that's my priority." There was no way he was going to do it, and I looked at Rabbi Hodakov and I said, "I need him to do it, what should I do?" Rabbi Hodakov said, "Nu nu, he wants to sit and learn, that's a good thing," and that was that. We never heard of it again until a few years later.

The first time that the Rebbe spoke about Tzivos Hashem was during a rally on Chol Hamoed Sukkos 5741 (as mentioned in the article). I was outside, as only teachers were allowed in. The Rebbe spoke about how kids should be able to have the concept of an army and they should have points and ranks and so on. While standing outside, I thought to myself, "Wow! This is almost word for word the same thing we heard from Rabbi Hodakov." I felt bad that we hadn't acted earlier. The Rebbe didn't say at that time that publications should be mailed and that the children should mail reports back, but I knew what the Rebbe wanted.

Then something special happened.

As you described in the article, the Rebbe danced a *hakafa* on Shemini Atzeres and Simchas Torah together with the children. I had a beautiful place—I was on the top row, with an unobstructed view. As the Rebbe was walking around and letting the children kiss the Torah I started realizing more and more the Rebbe is the general leading these children to a new place. They started singing the Rebbe's father's *niggun* and the Rebbe was waving the Torah around and around. At that moment, it entered my head that I have to do what Rabbi Hodakov told me, and I decided that after Simchas Torah I would write to the Rebbe and take upon myself to do

what the Rebbe wanted. The moment my thoughts went there, the Rebbe looked way up, right at me, and waved the Torah right at me. Tears were literally coming down my cheeks. The Rebbe turned around, and the second time that the Rebbe turned around, the Rebbe was looking straight at me and I said the words, "Rebbe, I'll take care of it," and the moment I said that, the Rebbe waved the Torah up towards me again.

After putting my thoughts together after Yom Tov and the next day, I walked over to my *chaver*, I sat him down, and I said, "I know what the Rebbe wants for Tzivos Hashem." I told him the whole story about Rabbi Hodakov's office. The friend I spoke to this time was Levi Fogelman, today a shliach in Natick, MA. He agreed to join my team. A day or two later, while on our flight back to California, where we were learning in Yeshiva Ohr Elchonon Chabad, we put together a whole plan: we would make a book of eight mitzvos and publish it for Chanukah.

We decided to use a character for the cartoons—Beetle Bailey—who has a sergeant giving him orders. We would draw pictures of various things, including Chanukah. But could we be sure it was the right thing? On the flight, we consulted with the rosh yeshiva, Rabbi Ezra Schochet. He looked at us and he said, "That's exactly what the Rebbe wants—a booklet that will be sent out every month and the kids send back a report."

The next day in *zal* I began the work. With us was Meir Gitlin, today a shliach in Markham, Ontario. He drew the cartoons, Avraham Weg took care of the layout, Shimon Yurkowitz coordinated the many initial school visitations, and our production was underway. Remember, it was already Cheshvan and we needed to have this ready for Chanukah.

Within three weeks we had the book and one layer of the color; it was going to be a two-layer color book. On that

Friday, before Shabbos Mevorchim Kislev, everything was ready to go to print, and we just awaited Rabbi Cunin's arrival back from New York to secure his financial backing.

However, that Motzei Shabbos we learned that the Rebbe was quite unhappy that nothing had been done for Tzivos Hashem. There was a farbrengen in LA that night to celebrate Rosh Chodesh Kislev, which was Sunday, and from there we called Rabbi Cunin and told him that we have something to put on the Rebbe's desk in the next week or two, because printing takes time.

In those days, fax machines weren't yet commonplace, but there was a new machine called the Exxon Qwip. To send something through this line took a long time, about 45 minutes a sheet. Rabbi Krinsky had such a machine in his office in New York, as did Rabbi Cunin in LA. Over the phone, Rabbi Cunin said, "Get in there, and start sending it to me!" We had a booklet of 8 or 10 sheets and it would take many hours to send. We came to the office and it was locked—nobody had the key except Rabbi Cunin, who was still in New York—and the office had a big heavy wooden door. We asked Rabbi Cunin what we should do? He said, "Take an axe and smash down the door!" That's what we did, and all night we were Qwipping the booklet to him. Rabbi Cunin went into Rabbi Krinsky's office at around 9:45 AM and picked up the sheets of paper. He stood near the Rebbe's door, and he told the Rebbe that in California we have this ready to make for Tzivos Hashem and this is the first edition. He also told the Rebbe that the 12 Pesukim would be printed to be given out as a package to all the children in California. The Rebbe took it, and just a few hours later, we received a reply. It was about 4:10 PM so it must have been after *mincha* and *maariv* in New York. We received a phone call from Rabbi Cunin, who told us the Rebbe's answer:

נתקבל ות"ח דבר  
בעתו סמוך לויעקב  
הלך לדרכו אזכיר  
על הציון

"It was received, thank you, it is timely—close to 'And Yaakov went on his way' [i.e. after the festive month of Tishrei], I will mention it at the Ohel."



The Rebbe also gave a few pointers that we should add into the book: the first was that it should be made clear that this booklet of eight commands is only eight commands out of the 613 commands that the Commander-In-Chief has given us. Also, it has to be clear that it's for boys and girls. The Rebbe also wanted to make sure that being that there are *brachos* being mentioned in it, the booklet shouldn't be defaced or discarded.

We wrote that we were going to do it multicolored, the Rebbe underlined the word multicolored twice and we took it that the Rebbe wanted 4 colors so we added 2 more layers of colors to the project. The Rebbe also said he wished to participate in the costs, and we got from the Rebbe 18 dollars; a 10, 5, 2, and 1 dollar bill. And we were off to the races; we were so excited that we printed 10,000 copies, sending them out to all the Jewish children. Thousands of children were signed up, and by Shevat, we already had edition number two. That, my friends, is how Tzivos Hashem began.

**Rabbi Chaim Mentz**  
*Bel Air, California*



לזכות  
החתינה הרה"ת ר' לוי יצחק שיחי'  
והכלה המהוללה מרת דבורה לאה שתחי' שטיינמין  
לרגל חתונתם ב' ניסן, ה'תשע"ז

נדפס ע"י הוריהם  
הרה"ת ר' שניאור זלמן וזוגתו מרת רחל שיחיו צירקין  
הרה"ת ר' חיים שאול וזוגתו מרת שרה שיחיו שטיינמין

לע"נ  
הבחור הת' מאיר יעקב יוסף ע"ה  
בן יבלחט"א ר' מנחם מענדל שיחי'  
הלל  
נלב"ע ז"ך טבת ה'תשע"ז  
תנ"צ'ב'ה'  
DEDICATED BY  
THE SHINE CORP

לזכות החייל בצבאות ה'  
ישעי' ארי' שיחי'  
לרגל ה'אפשערניש' שלו  
ביום ל"ג בעומר ה'תשע"ז  
נדפס ע"י הוריו  
הרה"ת ר' איסר וזוגתו מרת דבורה לאה שיחיו  
נין

לזכות  
אהרון ברוך ב"ר מנחם מענדל הי"ו  
לרגל יום ההולדת שלו ב"ז ניסן

לזכות החייל בצבאות ה'  
מנחם מענדל שיחי'  
לרגל הולדתו ביום כ"ז שבט ה'תשע"ז  
ולזכות אחותו חנה שתחי'  
נדפס ע"י הוריהם  
הרה"ת ר' שלום דובער וזוגתו מרת מושקא שיחיו  
קסלמן

לזכות  
חנה בת מושקא  
ולזכות חי' רחל דבורה בת לאה  
לרפואה שלימה וקרובה בכל אבריהן וגידיהן  
נדפס ע"י  
הרה"ת ר' מאיר יצחק וזוגתו מרת חוה שיחיו  
שטיינער

לע"נ  
ר' מנחם נחום בן הרב משה יצחק ע"ה  
נלב"ע כ"א תמוז ה'תשמ"א  
פראגער  
נדפס ע"י  
משפחתו שיחיו

לזכות חנה בת מושקא  
לרפואה שלימה וקרובה  
נדפס ע"י משפחתה שיחיו

מוקדש לחיזוק ההתקשרות לנשיא דורנו  
כ"ק אדמו"ר זצוקללה"ה נבג"מ זי"ע

DEDICATED IN HONOR OF  
**RABBI YOSEF AND REBBETZIN MIRIAM GOPIN**  
SHLUCHIM OF THE REBBE TO GREATER HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT  
MAY YOU CONTINUE TO GO FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH  
GIVING THE REBBE MUCH NACHAS!  
BY YOUR GRATEFUL ADMIRERS AT THE CHABAD HOUSE

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 ה'ארכיט' שלו ה'ב"ט אייר  
ולזכות תבלחט"א זוגתו מרת פרומא שתחי'  
DEDICATED BY **DOVID** AND **CHANIE JUNIK** AND FAMILY  
AND IN CELEBRATION OF HIS BIRTHDAY **12 IYAR**

לזכות  
הבחור הת' שניאור זלמן הכהן שיחי'  
זרחי

לרגל הגיעו לעול מצוות ביום ועש"ק כ"ג אייר ה'תשע"ז  
שיגדל להיות חסיד ירא שמים ולמדן כברכת כ"ק אדמו"ר הנשיא  
נדפס ע"י זקניו הרה"ת ר' יעקב ליב וזוגתו מרת חוה שיחיו אלטיין

לעילוי נשמת  
הילדה השלוחה מנוחה רחל ע"ה  
בת יבלחט"א הרה"ת ר' יצחק יהודה שי'  
נלב"ע ביום ט"ז אייר ה'תשנ"ז  
תנ"צ'בה'

נדפס ע"י הורי' הרה"ת ר' יצחק יהודה וזוגתו מרת גאלדע שיחיו בוימגארטען

מוקדש לחיזוק ההתקשרות לכ"ק אדמו"ר נשיא דורנו  
נדפס ע"י ולזכות הרה"ת ר' לייביש משה וזוגתו מרת רינה  
ילדיהם קיילא באשא, בנציון דוד, אליהו איסר, רבקה שיינדל אלטא שיחיו  
גולדהירש

A Chassidisher Derher  
Vaad Talmidei Hatmimim



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