

Derh^A

ישער דערהער

כּוֹס יְשׁוּעוֹת אִשָּׁא וּבִשָּׁם ה' אֶקְרָא:

תהלים קמז

"Early Years"

SELECTIONS FROM
THE NEWLY RELEASED
BOOK ABOUT THE
REBBE'S EARLY YEARS

Overflow of Blessings

THE SPECIAL MOMENTS
OF KOS SHEI BRACHA
WITH THE REBBE



NISSAN 5777
ISSUE 55 (132)

Derher**Contents**

NISSAN 5777 ISSUE 55 (132)



Cover Photo:

Kos Shel Bracha, Motzoei Simchas Torah 5749.

Levi Freidin via Jem, 257992

04 **Living in the Trenches**
LESSON FROM THE LIFE OF
THE BAAL SHEM TOV

06 **75 Years**
YUD-ALEPH NISSAN 5737

15 **Undisclosed**
KSAV YAD KODESH

16 **Days of Meaning**
NISSAN

18 **“Early Years”**
FROM JEM'S NEW RELEASE

30 **Energy Independence**
THE WORLD REVISITED

32 **New Farbrengen**
YUD-ALEPH NISSAN 5743

Derher**Editorial**

“כוס ישועות אשא ובשם ה' אקרא”

The word ‘כוס’ indicates concealment (‘כיסוי’). Nevertheless, the *possuk* is telling us that the כוס will bring salvation.

When the [Frierdiker] Rebbe chose a name for an institution bearing the acronym ‘כוס’—he was essentially implying that this *mosad* is his ‘cup’—the Rebbe’s ‘cup’—which ultimately traces its way back to Dovid Hamelech. Our Rabbeim have a special connection to Dovid Hamelech: firstly, because the concept of *nesius*, leadership of the Jewish people in general, is connected to Dovid Hamelech, and also because the Alter Rebbe himself was a descendant of Dovid Hamelech. Hence, each of our Rabbeim possesses a spark of Dovid Hamelech; they are all, in a sense, his successors.

So, this name will bring about כוס ישועות אשא—carrying a cup of salvation, drawing down endless blessings, in *gashmiyus* and *ruchniyus*.

(*Sichas Shabbos parshas Bereishis* 5713).

Approaching Yud-Aleph Nissan, this explanation from the Rebbe on the *possuk* from this year’s new *kapitel* could not have been more timely.

Our *nesi'im* are especially connected with Dovid Hamelech, and as the Rebbe mentions, they in fact descend from Dovid Hamelech.

We mark the day of Yud-Aleph Nissan, the day that the bright light of our *nossi* began shining on earth, the luminary that will continue to shine until the coming of Moshiach. For Hashem promised Dovid Hamelech: “שלא יכבה נור” —his light shall never be extinguished. (See *Sefer Hasichos*—Toras Sholom p. 176).

In spirit of the momentous day celebrated this month, we bring selections of the story of when the Rebbe’s bright light began to shine, based on the newly released book, “Early Years.”

- 34** **Push the Limits**
DARKEI HACHASSIDUS
- 38** **Overflow of Blessing**
KOS SHEL BRACHA
- 58** **A Hat, a Tailor, and a Promise**
A CHASSIDISHER MAISE
- 60** **The Donkey of Moshiach**
MOSHIACH UGEULAH
- 62** **A Mezuzah and a City**
A STORY
- 64** **Birkas Hachama**
MOMENTS
- 70** **Letters to the Editor**



A Chassidisher Derher Magazine is a publication geared toward Bochorim, published and copyrighted by **Vaad Talmidei Hatmimim Haolomi**. All articles in this publication are original content by the staff of A Chassidisher Derher.

Vaad Talmidei Hatmimim

Rabbi Tzvi Altein

Director

Rabbi Yossi Kamman

Editor in Chief

Rabbi Mendel Jacobs

Editors

Rabbi Eliezer Zalmanov

Rabbi Moshe Zaklikovsky

Advisory Committee

Rabbi Mendel Alperowitz

Rabbi David Olidort

Design

Rabbi Mendy Weg

Printed by

The Print House

Photo Credits

Jewish Educational Media

Duchman Family

Vaad Hanochos B'Lahak

Lubavitch Foundation

of Michigan

Special Thanks to

Rabbi Chaim Shaul Brook

Rabbi Zalman Duchman

Rabbi Shloimy Friedman

Rabbi Mendel Gourarie

Rabbi Levi Greisman

Rabbi Sholom Ber Hecht

Rabbi Avremi Kievman

Rabbi Shmuel Lubecki

Rabbi Michael Seligson

Rabbi Elkanah Shmotkin

Reproduction of any portion of this Magazine is not permissible without express permission from the copyright holders, unless for the use of brief quotations in reviews and similar venues.

Submit your questions and comments:

Call: (970) 680 3370 | Email: Feedback@Derher.org

To subscribe, order a copy, or access back issues visit us at www.Derher.org

נא לשמור על קדושת הגליון.

Bringing it all “closer to home,” the way we connect with the Rebbe’s light is by learning his Torah—תורה אור. To that end, we have also included an overview of the farbrengen of Yud-Aleph Nissan 5743, recently released on DVD. “The Torah of the Rabbeim is the light shining forth from the luminary,” the Rebbe explains. “By studying their Torah, we can ultimately reach and connect with the *ma’or*, with the Rebbe himself...”

And it is the Rebbe’s bright light that will continue to shine on the path to the *geulah*, may it be *bekarov mammash*, as Chazal say, “בגיןס נגאלו, ובגיןס עתידין להיגאל”.

The Editors
כ"ה אדר, ה'תשע"ז

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



The Living Archive



LIVING IN THE TRENCHES

Jewish soldiers in the trenches of Shanghai, the Baal Shem Tov's poverty-stricken youth, and how it all comes together in the theme of Pesach.

During the war between Russia and Japan in 5664 (1904), the Rebbe Rashab endeavored, and succeeded, to send matzos, wine and all other Pesach needs to the Jewish soldiers on the front lines in Japan. A telegram was sent in response, thanking the Rebbe for his efforts, signed by "Soldiers in the 'akopi' (trenches) of Shanghai."

Years later, during Pesach 5696 (תרצ"ו), the Frierdiker Rebbe repeated this story, and added in the name of the Alter Rebbe, that although the Baal Shem Tov was born in Tlust, he would sometimes sign his name as "Yisrael from Akup." The Frierdiker Rebbe explained:

The city/village of Tlust originally had walls surrounding it. With time, these walls disintegrated, and the only thing remaining from the walls were the trenches dug for

foundations. The Baal Shem Tov's parents were extremely poor, and could not even afford a proper home, and so they lived in these trenches. It was this "home" of his that the Baal Shem Tov referred to when signing as "from Akup."

The Frierdiker Rebbe concluded, "With the power of these 'akopes' [those living in the trenches] we will be able to push away other 'akopes,' because the power of the Baal Shem Tov is unending; we just need to stand close enough.

The connection between this story and Pesach (when the Frierdiker Rebbe said the story):

The experience of *yetzias Mitzrayim* is seemingly paradoxical. At the time, the Yidden were at a spiritual low point. The Arizal writes that the Yidden had sunken to the 49th level of



לזכות
הת' אברהם יצחק הכהן שיחי'
לרגל הגיעו לעול מצוות
ביום י"ז ניסן ה'תשע"ז
נדפס ע"י הוריו
הרה"ת ר' אהרן הכהן
וזוגתו מרת מנוחה רחל שיחיו
פינק
פלענטישן, פלארידא



tumah, and therefore the *geulah* had to be “in the blink of an eye,” because if things had continued any longer they would reach the point of no return, at the 50th level of impurity.

On the other hand, they experienced unparalleled revelations of the highest levels of *Elokus*, where “נגלה עליהם מלך מלכי המלכים הקב”ה בכבודו ובעצמו.”

The truth is, however, that it was precisely because of the depth to which they had fallen that the Yidden were able to reach so high. As the *possuk* says, when we cry out to Hashem “from the depths,” He will respond to us “in expanse.”

Along similar lines, when speaking to people about the possibility of Moshiach coming in a moment from now, they may have their doubts. Considering how dire the situation is in the world at large, as well as their

personal spiritual condition, how can we possibly make such a great switch, from the most deprived to ultimate freedom?! It seems impossible.

So the lesson from Pesach is, that not only is it possible to make that leap, but even the fall itself drives us to reach even higher revelations of G-dliness than ever before.

The story above serves to illustrate this point. When the Baal Shem Tov was born, world Jewry was at its lowest point, and his birth—his life in general—was to be the “wake-up call” from the state of spiritual unconsciousness the Yidden had fallen into. This is also why he was named Yisroel—the collective name for Yidden—because when a person has fainted, one of the most effective ways of awakening him is by calling his name. The Baal Shem Tov’s birth was also characterized by this low-point—

that when he entered the world, his parents didn’t have a house to be in, and he was therefore born in a ditch.

And it is specifically from this depth—the trenches of *golus*—that we will reach ultimate expansiveness, with the *geulah*. As Moshiach told the Baal Shem Tov, the spreading of the wellsprings of Chassidus will lead to the forthcoming redemption.

Every generation since the times of the Baal Shem Tov, and even from year to year, the *geulah* continues to approach even closer, such that although to all appearances the *golus* is as strong as ever, beneath the surface Chassidus has cleansed the world, preparing it for Moshiach’s arrival. Through the continuous spreading of the Chassidic wellsprings, we will be victorious in all our battles. **T**

(Based on the *sicha* of the second night of Pesach 5720)



לעבן מיט'ן רבין

"נודע ביהודה אלקים, בישראל גדול שמו"

75

75 Years

YUD-ALEPH NISSAN 5737





YOSSIMELAWED via JEM 23265

מוקדש לחיזוק ההתקשרות
לכ"ק אדמו"ר
בקשר עם יום הבהיר י"א ניסן
נדפס ע"י
הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל
וזוגתו מרת חנה שיינא
ומשפחתם ח' מושקא, לוי יצחק,
רבקה מאריאשא, ברכה,
ויקותיאל זוסמאן שיחיו
גנזבורג
שלוחי כ"ק אדמו"ר לטאראנטא, קנדה

40 years ago, Chassidim celebrated the Rebbe's 75th birthday, singing these words from that year's *kapitel*.

"Hashem is known within the camp of Yehuda," reads the *possuk*. For they served Hashem and let His great deeds be known.

As the Chassidim sang these words, shluachim, rabbonim, elected officials and distinguished guests approached the Rebbe, presenting proclamations and gifts in recognition of the Rebbe's vast achievements; strengthening education and spreading Elokus throughout the world.

The following are selections of yomanim and stories of this memorable Yud-Aleph Nissan.

CHANGE IN CLIMATE

Throughout the day of Yud-Aleph Nissan, 40 mitzvah tanks spread out across New York City. Each tank had 20 "*tankistin*." With special subsidies in honor of the occasion, the "*tankistin*" sold many mezuzos and tefillin on the streets.

The Hebrew speaking division of Tzach sent out messages to all of their contacts, informing them of the Rebbe's *yom huledes* and encouraging them to make resolutions in one of the ten *mitvzoim*. Anyone who decided to make a commitment was asked to send in their resolution to the Rebbe. And the letters arrived in the hundreds.

Reb Zalmon Jaffe relates:

"There was a remarkable and dramatic change in the weather on the eleventh day of Nissan. For many weeks New York had been in the grip of freezing wintry conditions. Now, overnight - Zalmon Jaffe had brought his Shavuos weather with him! Lovely, hot, brilliant sunshine... [Reb Zalmon's usual custom was to travel with his family to the Rebbe every year for Shavuos, but this year he came for Yud-Aleph Nissan as well].



A LETTER SIGNED BY ADMORIM OF VARIOUS CIRCLES SENT TO THE REBBE IN HONOR OF YUD-ALEPH NISSAN 5737.

"I had 25 letters for the Rebbe, which I took to the Office. I added these to the three piles of correspondence already lying on the table. I noticed also about 150 cablegrams from all over the world.

"I predicted that it would take the Rebbe about four or five hours to wade through all this correspondence. The Rebbe had also to prepare many Sichos and the Maamar for that evening's

farbrengen. When does the Rebbe prepare, is really a mystery!!! I accepted the inevitable, that I would not receive a reply to my letter whilst I was in Brooklyn.

"To my utter amazement but most welcome surprise, Binyomin Klein handed me a note from the Rebbe - within two hours.

"The Rebbe entered the Beth Hamedrash [for *mincha*], promptly at 3:15pm looking K.H. remarkably fit and well. He is T[hank] G[od] growing younger every day - that is another miracle.

"The Rebbe glanced around and briefly looked at - and through - everyone. In that split second he knew exactly who were present - a rather unique talent.

"The Rebbe very seldom acknowledges any one particular individual. He wishes to avoid favouritism. However, I also have a unique talent - or maybe it is just my expression, but I make the Rebbe smile.

"The Rebbe turned to me and did just that. It was a rather unusual smile which indicated a mixture of pleasure and amusement. This already made my visit worthwhile."

THE U.S. SENATE GIVES HONOR

Reb Zalmon Jaffe writes:

A couple of days previously, a special birthday party was held in honour of the Rebbe at the United States Senate in Washington. Amongst those who were present were fifty-two Senators and a hundred Congressmen together with other notable dignitaries. Former Vice President Humphrey was the Chairman. Hanging on the wall was a large poster which read: "**Celebration 75.**" Underneath this was a plaque with the seal of the USA. Below this was a large photograph of the Rebbe. Many words of praise and blessings were bestowed upon him. The guest of honour, the Rebbe, however was not present personally to hear them. Of course, birthday parties for a King are often celebrated by loyal and devoted subjects even in the absence of His Majesty. It is amazing to see the reverence and the honour given to the Rebbe, even by gentiles. Everyone respects and appreciates greatness.



After *mincha*, a few of the senior Chassidim entered *gan eden hatachton* to give the Rebbe a *bracha*. The Rebbe responded with a *bracha* of his own:

“Hashem should grant you—and all those in whose names you speak—in the manner of a reciprocating blessing, where ‘those who bless will [in turn] be blessed with Hashem’s blessing, in which the bonus exceeds the principle.’

“Let us hear good news—with clear and revealed good evident in our physical world, leading to the coming of Moshiach Tzidkeinu very soon.”

“The Rebbe glanced around and briefly looked at - and through - everyone. In that split second he knew exactly who were present...”

THE BIG FARBRENGEN

Reb Zalmon Jaffe continues:

“[As the Yud-Aleph Nissan farbrengen scheduled for 9:00 p.m. was about to begin] the hall at 770 was packed tightly with people from one extreme end to the other - from corner to corner. Tier upon tier of boys reached to the ceiling. It was a very impressive and imposing sight.

“About six thousand people were present inside the hall. The whole world of Lubavitch was listening to the Farbrengen by telephonic communication, to forty-five cities around the globe. The local radio station also relayed it. This enabled the Rebbeztzin and many thousands of other women - and men and boys, as well, to hear the Farbrengen in the comfort of their homes.

“[Before the Rebbe entered] Rabbi Groner was announcing the order of precedence regarding the offering of birthday gifts.¹ The representatives of the American states would have priority. They should mount the platform on the right, present their gifts, and continue on their way and leave the dais on the left. Very sensible, as the platform ran down almost the whole length of the large Shul (hall).”

At 9:00 p.m., the Rebbe entered the farbrengen. He smiled at the people who had come. The platform was filled with representatives of the city, state, and federal governments. On his way through



THE REBBE ENTERS THE FARBRENGEN

the *shvil*, the Rebbe stopped to greet the mayor of New York City, Mr. Abraham Beame.

When the Rebbe reached his place and sat down, he turned to all sides, smiling and acknowledging the rabbonim, shluchim, *baalei batim* and *anash* present. The shul was packed from wall to wall, with benches laid out all the way to the *aron kodesh*.

The Rebbe began the farbrengen by officially acknowledging all the guests. “When Yidden come with the desire to honor and thank an individual, as one who represents many others, then the first thing, before going on to discuss other matters, is the clear *hakaras hatov*, from the depth of [my] heart, to those who are present, as well as to those who sent their wishes and blessings in writing or through messengers.”

After the first *sicha*, Rabbi Hirschsprung (*av beis din* of Montreal), Rabbi Teitz (a senior rabbi from New Jersey) and Rabbi Yolles (chief rabbi of Philadelphia) approached the Rebbe.

While the crowd joyfully sang the new Yud-Aleph Nissan *niggun* to the words of “*Noda B’yehudah*” from *kapitel* 76, the Rebbe called over Rabbi Groner and spoke to him briefly; Rabbi Groner then went over to give the mayor a *l’chaim*. The Rebbe encouraged the singing, nodding along enthusiastically.

PRESENTS

In the second *sicha*, the Rebbe alluded to the dignitaries attending the farbrengen. The Rebbe thanked the United States and the President for all they have done to help in the salvation of the Yidden who fled from Russia and emigrated here.

“The [Frierdiker] Rebbe, *nessi doreinu*, was one of those saved by the United States. Through saving him, they saved most of the people here now [at the farbrengen], and most of the activities being carried out now.”

The Rebbe lauded the U.S. for its devotion to the rights of individuals, unlike in dictatorships, where the individual is ignored and is considered a mere part of a large apparatus.

Following the second and third *sichos*, dozens of dignitaries, rabbonim, and shluchim and their *baalei batim* went over to the Rebbe, presenting gifts and wishing him well. The Rebbe instructed them to say *lchaim* and blessed them in response.

Mayor Abraham Beame approached the Rebbe, presenting him with a gift:

“Thank you very much,” the Rebbe responded. “And thank you and the entire great city of New York for being the headquarters of our movement.”

“We’re very proud,” answered the Mayor.

The Rebbe then blessed the Mayor: “May G-d Almighty bless you. I heard that your birthday was a few days ago. But you are much younger than I am. Go from strength to strength.”

Representing the Governor of the state of New York, Mr. Hugh Carey, was Mr. Menachem Shayowitz from Albany. He presented the Rebbe with a letter:

“The Governor sent a special letter, recognizing the Rebbe’s accomplishments in America. He wishes the Rebbe long life and good health.”

“Amen, thank you very much,” the Rebbe responded. Acknowledging Mr. Shayowitz as the representative, the Rebbe added: “In Gemara it says that a shliach receives a large thank you.”

New York City Comptroller, Mr. Harrison Goldin, who was active in the struggle for the Yidden in the Soviet Union, approached and handed the Rebbe an envelope. He engaged in



“Thank you very much” the Rebbe responded. “And thank you and the entire great city of New York for being the headquarters of our movement.”

conversation with the Rebbe, recalling a *yechidus* he had with the Rebbe and referencing the Rebbe’s strong stance in the activities on behalf of the Yidden in Russia, namely through the means of quiet diplomacy, as opposed to provoking the Russian government:

“I just wanted to say to the Rebbe, I don’t know whether you remember a very private matter about which we talked at the end of my visit sometime past. I don’t know whether you had the opportunity to follow the ensuing events, but I want the Rebbe to know that what he said to me that night had a big impact on me.”

“Yes,” the Rebbe replied. “I am happy because I’m not hearing anything. No news is good news. No publicity and no news. That is the best news that can be done in this area.”

“I’ve been working very hard to see that there is no news,” said Mr. Goldin.

The Rebbe then wished him: “May G-d Almighty bless you. We are approaching Pesach now. May there be a deliverance from all worries. “*Cheiruseinu*” means liberation from all worries.

"Yes," the Rebbe replied. "I am happy because I'm not hearing anything. No news is good news. No publicity and no news. That is the best news that can be done in this area."

Don't worry about not publicizing, not making news."

Next came Brooklyn Borough President Mr. Howard Golden; Bronx Borough President Mr. Robert Abrams; a representative of Mr. Milton Shapp, the Governor of Pennsylvania; and Israel's Consul General to New York Mr. Tzvi Levin. Each of them presented the Rebbe with a proclamation honoring the Rebbe's seventy five years.

Israeli Ministry of Defense official Mr. Yosef Ciechanover brought blessings from Defense Minister Shimon Peres and from the Israeli Ambassador to Washington, Mr. Simcha Dinitz. In his conversation with the Rebbe, he mentioned that a few weeks earlier, Mr. Peres asked him if he would be at the Rebbe's birthday farbrengen, to which he responded in the affirmative.

Reb Shlomo Maidanchik gave the Rebbe letters of well wishes from Israeli Prime Minister, Mr. Yitzchak Rabin and from the President Ephraim Katzir, as well as from all the ministers and members of Knesset. Reb Shlomo also gave the Rebbe gold keys and medallions from the cities of Tel Aviv, Rishon L'tzayon, Ramat Gan and Bnei Brak.

Reb Yehoshua Pinson presented the Rebbe with a medallion from Yerushalayim, on behalf of the mayor of Yerushalayim, Mr. Teddy Kollek.



"ניט פארבונדן מיט אן איש פרטי"

ס'איז דאך פארשטאנדיק אז דאס איז ניט קיין ענין וואס איז פארבונדן מיט אן איש פרטי און מיט א יחיד, נאר דאס איז פארבונדן דערמיט וואס ער האט זוכה געווען און קען מסייע זיין די וואס גייען בדרך התורה והמצוה, אז זיי זאלן מוסיף זיין אין דעם נאכמער, און זיי מערוד זיין אז ווי גוט ס'זאלן נאר זיין זייערע ענינים ופעולות במחשבה, עאכו"כ בדיבור, און נאכמער במעשה - זאלן זיי מוסיף זיין אין דערויף, און מערוד זיין זיי כפי יכלתו.

און אויך איבערגעבן דאס וואס מ'האט זוכה געווען געפינען אין ספרים, ובלשון פון דעם אלטן רבי'ן אין דעם שער פון תניא - "מפי ספרים ומפי סופרים", דאס וואס מ'האט געהערט פון כ"ק מו"ח אדמו"ר, ועד"ז בדוגמתו - פון דעם טאטן און חסידים הראשונים וכו'.

וואס דערפון איז פארשטאנדיק אז דער עיקר בזה איז, אז דורך אים וויל מען אויסדריקן א ברכה און א וואונטש פון הצלחה צו די אלע פעולות, און צו די אלע וואס זיינען זיך עוסק אין די פעולות.

וואס די נקודה הפנימית פון די אלע פעולות און דער צד השווה שבהם איז דאך דער ענין פון הפצת היהדות האמיתית בכל מקום שידו מגעת, און אן קיין הבדל - פון ראשיכם שבטיכם ביז חוטב עציר ושואב מימיו.

(משיחת י"א ניסן תשל"ז)

Letters of blessing from heads of state and city officials were brought by many shluchim and their *baalei batim*.

Rabbi Nachman Sudak gave the Rebbe two volumes of the Tanya translated to English published by Soncino Press. These were printed just a few days earlier in England. Accompanying him were Mr. Bernard Perrin and Reb Zalmon Jaffe. Rabbi Sudak presented the Tanyas while Mr. Perrin showed the inscription.

Rabbi Sholom Ber Hecht and members of the Queens Sephardic community gave the Rebbe *sefarim* and ancient handwritten notes from European *geonim*, which they had purchased as a present to the Rebbe. Among these, was a 500-year-old large handwritten *siddur*, used by the *chazzanim* in a shul in Tehran over the generations. When Rabbi Hecht told the Rebbe that there were handwritten notes in the box, the Rebbe inquired whether any of the notes were *kisvei Chassidus*.

In the period preceding Yud-Aleph Nissan, the Tzach Levi Yitzchok library had collected together the transcripts from all the Rebbe's *maamarim* and *sichos* to date and bound them together in many



YOSSI MELAMED via JEM 23284



volumes. These volumes would serve as a basis for the large set of Sichos Kodesh, published a number of years later. Rabbi Avraham Parshan, a supporter of the library, presented the Rebbe with three volumes from this collection, along with the *sefer* Biurei Rashi.

Rabbi Leibel Raskin, shliach in Morocco, gave the Rebbe a Tehillim Ohel Yosef Yitzchak printed in Morocco. At the Rebbe's request, he came back a few minutes later with a Tanya that was translated into Arabic and printed there too.

As the Rebbe had specifically encouraged in previous years, many yeshivos prepared *kovtzim* of *pilpulim* and *chiddushei Torah* as gifts to the Rebbe. *Bochurim* from these yeshivos passed by the Rebbe, presenting the *kovtzim* and saying *l'chaim*. The yeshivos included: Melbourne, Brunoy, Cincinnati, Oholei Torah, Miami, Morristown and Seattle.

Rabbi Mentlik, the *rosh yeshiva* of 770, gave the Rebbe the *kovetz* from the *bochurim* in 770 and Chovevei Torah.

The newly printed Tzach journal "Uforatzta" was presented by Rabbi Meir Rivkin and Reb Shmuel Melamed.

Many other rabbonim and *baalei batim* present at the farbrengen also approached the Rebbe, extending their good wishes and saying *l'chaim*. This went on for almost a full hour-and-a-half after the second and third *sichos*, while the crowd sang joyously. In between visitors, the Rebbe nodded his head and clapped his hands to encourage the singing.

Reb Zalmon relates: "[The pile of presentations and letters had grown so large] that there was a three-foot high pile of gifts on the table, in front of the Rebbe - who was barely visible. [Rabbi] Label [Groner] obtained some paper sacks and packed up all the gifts. It needed four sacks to clear the pile, and Label and [Rabbi] Yudel [Krinsky] carted them away [up to the Rebbe's room]."

“THEY ALREADY SEE THE ORIGINAL”

Two Russian artists, Vladimir and Grigory Dashevsky, brought a portrait they had painted of the Rebbe with a *sefer Torah* in a large frame:

“Dear Rebbe, in the name of the Russian Jewry who came here and are happy to be here with you, I am an artist and I have the honor to present this to you... We want to give you this as our heartfelt gift. We believe you will have many healthy years for all the Jews.”

The artists raised the picture in the air to show it to the entire crowd.

Motioning that they should put the picture down, the Rebbe told the artists with a large smile “They already see the original! Thank you and be well. The main thing is, strive that it be obvious about you that you follow in the footsteps of this picture: Torah.”

“We will,” answered Vladimir. “We are well-bred but there’s a lot we don’t understand.”

“When you were born, you could not paint such a picture either...So you have already trained for something once before...” the Rebbe replied.

Mr. Yitzchak Berez, a photographer, uncovered a large print of a photo he had taken of the Rebbe. Following the Russian artists’ cue, he too picked up the photo and showed it to everyone. The Rebbe smiled and told him to say *l’chaim*.

The many dignitaries and visitors had finished their presentations, but the *farbrengen* would still continue for a number of hours. The Rebbe spoke a long *sicha* in *nigleh*, connected to the story in *Maseches Pesachim* when Erev Pesach fell out on

Motioning that they should put the picture down, the Rebbe told the artists with a large smile “They already see the original!”

Shabbos (the same *kvius* of this year, 5737), and Ben Beseira forgot the *halacha* of whether the *korban Pesach* is offered on Shabbos.

The next *sicha* was about the *mitvzoim*, especially *mitvza tzedakah*, ensuring that every Yid has everything they need in order to be able to celebrate Pesach.

SINCERE AND HEARTFELT EMOTIONS

Yona Kesse was a refugee who frequented the Rebbe’s home in Yekaterinislav as a child. Rebbetzin Chana fed and took care of him, and he would spend time at their home for a period of five years. He later immigrated to Eretz Yisroel, and became a member of the Knesset, a position which he held for sixteen years.²

Responding to a letter he sent the Rebbe, blessing him in honor of his seventy fifth birthday, the Rebbe replied:

“After a long silence, I was pleased to receive your letter. First of all, I want to express my sincere thanks for your blessings on the occasion of my birthday.

“If a thank you is in order for every blessing, how much more so for yours, which was permeated with sincere and heartfelt emotions, along with memories of childhood and the atmosphere of that time. These evoke in the reader—especially since the memories are *literally* of my own home—memories, emotions, and experiences. I certainly needn’t explain this to you, as it is evident from your letter that these memories stand living before your eyes, as well.”

(*Igros Kodesh* vol 32, p. 204)



THE RUSSIAN ARTISTS VLADIMIR AND GRIGORY DASHEVSKY PRESENT THEIR PAINTING OF THE REBBE.

REMEMBERING THE HOLOCAUST

The Rebbe then went on to state his opinion on a *haggadah* that was making its rounds, with an added prayer, to remember and discuss the martyrdom of those who perished in the Holocaust.

The Rebbe objected to this idea for a number of reasons:

1. The text of the *haggadah* has been set over generations. Once it has been set and instituted, changing it contravenes the laws of Torah.
2. Pesach (and really the whole month of Nissan) is a time of joy, and therefore subjects leading to the opposite of happiness do not belong there.
3. Furthermore, the Rebbe explained, one is surely not doing justice to the Yidden who perished in the Holocaust with a short added prayer in between “*Chad Gadya*” and other songs at the *seder*.

For similar reasons, the Rebbe objected to other suggestions, that an empty chair or extra matzah should be added at the *seder* table, remembering the three million Yidden behind the Iron Curtain.

At 1:00 a.m. the Rebbe recited a 30 minute *maamar*. The Rebbe then said two more *sichos*, also mentioning the recent initiative of *mashpi'im*, especially for children, emphasizing that children themselves can also become *mashpi'im*.

As the farbrengen drew to an end, the Rebbe asked that the *niggunim* of “*Prazos Teshev*,” “*Nye Zhuritz*,” “*Ki Besimcha*” and “*Al Achas*” be sung.

Reb Zalmon Jaffe finishes off his description of the Farbrengen:

“We ended the Farbrengen with a crescendo of singing. The Rebbe standing up once or twice and egging us all on - faster and faster - very exciting.

“The Rebbe reminded us to make the Brocha Acharona - after the wine, and at 2:00 a.m. the Rebbe stood up and took his leave. A very happy and cheerful five hours birthday party.

“Immediately after the Rebbe had left the hall, I made a dash for the exits. I wanted to be at the Rebbe’s door when he left his study, so I could say “farewell.”

“Jumping over tables, benches and people, I fought my way upstairs. I was just in time. The study door was opened and the Rebbe stepped outside. We all commenced clapping our hands and sang ‘Ki Besimcho.’ The Rebbe joined in - saw me - and stopped. The singing also stopped - so that everyone would be able to overhear any private conversation.” **T**

1. This was the last year that people would be allowed to bring their presentations and letters to the Rebbe during the farbrengen. From 5738 on, the many gifts would be sent in through *mazkirus* and only a handful of people would be given the opportunity to approach the Rebbe at the farbrengens.

2. See Early Years, JEM, vol. 1, p. 113



FOLLOWING THE FARBRENGEN,
THE REBBE LEAVES 770 FOR HOME.



כתב יד קודש

לזכות החייל בצבאות ה'
יוסף הלוי שיחי'
לרגל הולדתו
ביום כ"ט טבת, ה'תשע"ז
נדפס ע"י הוריו
הרה"ת ר' דוד הלוי
וזוגתו מרת ליפשא מלכה
ומשפחתם שמואל הלוי, לוי הלוי,
הינדא מאטל שיחיו
ויסמן

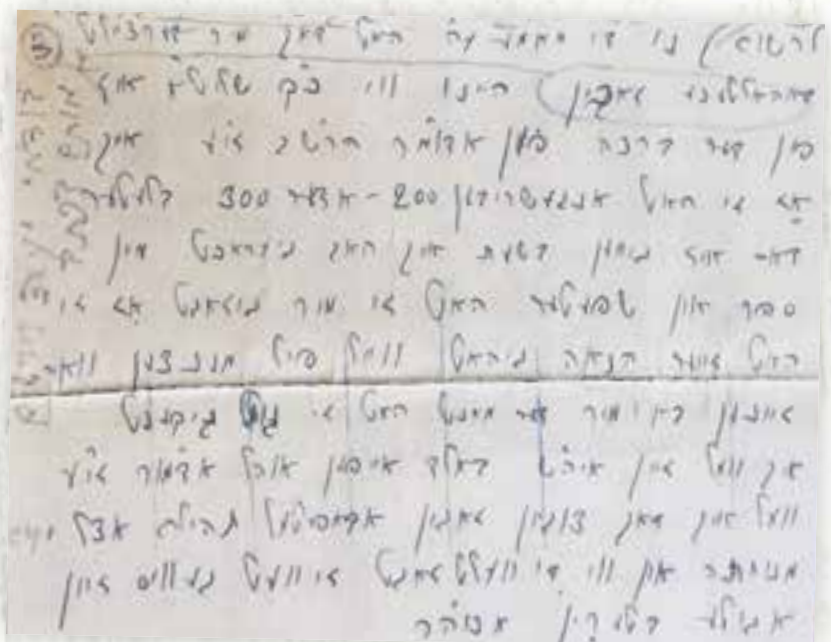
“Undisclosed”

The Rebbe responds to a letter from Reb Zalman Duchman, an elderly Chossid who, with the Rebbe's steadfast encouragement, meticulously recorded his recollections of what he heard and saw in previous generations.

Here he writes to the Rebbe about the many stories and facts he heard from the Rebbe's mother, Rebbetzin Chana, referring to them as “באהאלטענע זאכן”—undisclosed things.

As an example, he cites the fact that the Rebbe was born as a result of a *bracha* from the Rebbe Rashab.

The Rebbe circles the words “באהאלטענע זאכן” and comments:



בודאי יעלה וירשום אותם בכתב

You will certainly transcribe
and commit them to writing.

DAYS OF MEANING

EXPLORING SPECIAL DATES
ON OUR CALENDAR

א

ב

ג

ד

ה

ו

ז

ח

ט

י

יא

יב

יג

יד

טו

טז

יז

יח

יט

כ

כא

כב

כג

כד

כה

כו

כז

כח

כט

2 NISSAN

*Histalkus of the Rebbe Rashab
and Beginning of the
Friediker Rebbe's Nesius*

The Rebbe Rashab was *nistalek* in Rostov on Motzoei Shabbos parshas Vayikra, 2 Nissan, 5680 (תר"פ). The Rebbe Rashab's resting place is in Rostov. The Friediker Rebbe—the Rebbe Rashab's only son—accepted the *nesius* immediately after his father's *histalkus*.

{IN THE REBBE'S PRESENCE}

The Rebbe did not *farbreng* on the day itself, but on a few occasions, at *farbrengens* in proximity to the day, the Rebbe spoke about the day—about the *histalkus* of the Rebbe Rashab and the Friediker Rebbe's acceptance of the *nesius*. On 2 Nissan 5748, the Rebbe said a special *sicha* in his home marking 68 years—*gematriya* חיים (life)—of the Friediker Rebbe's *nesius*.

מוקדש לחיזוק ההתקשרות
לכ"ק אדמו"ר
בקשר עם יום הבהיר י"א ניסן
ולזכות
מושקא שתחי'
לרגל הגיעה לגיל שנים עשרה שנה,
היא עונת בת מצוה
י"ב ניסן התשע"ז
נדפס ע"י הורי' הרה"ר מנחם מענדל
וזוגתו מרת אסתר מרים ומשפחתם שיחיו
ליפשיץ

11 NISSAN

Birthday of the Rebbe

The Rebbe was born in Nikolayev on Friday, Yud-Aleph Nissan 5662 (תרס"ב). The Rebbe was named after the Tzemach Tzedek. The Rebbe Rashab sent six telegrams to the Rebbe's father, HoRav Levi Yitzchok, containing *brachos* and good wishes, as well as inquiries and instructions regarding the Rebbe's birth and education.

[Read more in "Early Years" in this magazine.]

Chazal tell us: "When *tzaddikim* enter the world, good enters the world and calamity leaves the world."

At the second *seider*, in 5699 (תרצ"ט), the Friediker Rebbe said, "In 5662, there were evil decrees against the Jewish People, and before Pesach, they were miraculously annulled."

{IN THE REBBE'S PRESENCE}

Chassidim first found out the date of the Rebbe's *yom huledes* from the Rebbe's mother, Rebbetzin Chana, while the Rebbe was in France in 5707. Rebbetzin Chana suggested to the Chassidim there that they should ask the Rebbe to *farbreng* in honor of the *yom huledes*, and the Rebbe agreed.

Yud-Aleph Nissan is a uniquely special day for the Rebbe, for Chassidim of *dor hashvi'i*, for all Yidden, and for all people living in this generation. Chassidim would present gifts to the Rebbe; specifically by increasing in spiritual matters and studying Torah, as the Rebbe requested (Purim *farbrengen* 5732). People from across the globe would send in their *brachos* and good wishes to the Rebbe in honor of the birthday; many Chassidim would also travel to the Rebbe for the occasion. The Rebbe expressed his appreciation for these gestures on numerous occasions. Each year, one of the elder Chassidim would give the Rebbe a *bracha* in the name of all of the Chassidim.

On the occasion of the Rebbe's 60th birthday in 5722, the Rebbe *farbrenged* for the first time (during the *nesius*) on 11 Nissan. Starting from 5731, the Rebbe *farbrenged* every year on this day, until 5745. From 5741 and on, these *farbrengens* were televised live.

In 5746, 11 Nissan was on Sunday, and the Rebbe distributed dollar bills to men, women, and children. This was the beginning of the "Sunday Dollars."

13 NISSAN

Histalkus of the Tzemach Tzedek

The Tzemach Tzedek was *nistalek* on Wednesday night, 13 Nissan 5626 (תרכ"ו). The Tzemach Tzedek's resting place is in Lubavitch.

{IN THE REBBE'S PRESENCE}

The year 5726 marked 100 years since the *histalkus*, and the Rebbe made a big *shturem* about this in the months leading up to the *yahrtzeit*. That year was the first time that the Rebbe farbrenged on 13 Nissan during the *nesius*. In the ensuing years, the Rebbe farbrenged on this date many times; and from 5738, it was nearly every year.

18 NISSAN

*Birthday of
HoRav Levi Yitzchok*

The Rebbe's father, HoRav Levi Yitzchak, was born on 18 Nissan 5638 (תרל"ח) in Podobranka, near Homel, to his parents HoRav Boruch Shneur and Rebbetzin Zelda Rochel. HoRav Levi Yitzchok was named after his paternal grandfather, HoRav Levi Yitzchok, the Tzemach Tzedek's grandson.

His genius was apparent at a young age, as his *mechutan*, the Frierdiker Rebbe, wrote: "From the earliest youth of HoRav Levi Yitzchok Schneerson, his exceptional talents were apparent."

18 NISSAN

*The Rebbe's
Bris Milla*

On HoRav Levi Yitzchok's 24th birthday, 18 Nissan 5662 (תרס"ב), the *bris* of his son, the Rebbe, took place. The *seuda* was held that same day, at the home of HoRav Meir Shlomo Yanovsky, rov of Nikolayev, the Rebbe's maternal grandfather. The many local Yidden who assembled listened with pleasure to HoRav Levi Yitzchok's *divrei Torah*, as he spoke at length, connecting the two events of the day

20 NISSAN

The Rebbe and Rebbetzin Receive US Visas

In 5701, France was partially occupied by the Nazis YM"SH, while the unoccupied part was governed by a puppet government also under Nazi control. The Frierdiker Rebbe expended enormous effort to free the Rebbe and Rebbetzin from there, and after much effort, they received visas to the United States. The visas enabled the Rebbe and Rebbetzin to escape the occupied European Continent, and they arrived to the U.S. several months later, on 28 Sivan.

HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS



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

18 NISSAN

Expelling Pharaoh's Emissaries

When the Yidden left Mitzrayim, they had requested, and received, permission to leave for three days. Pharaoh sent emissaries along with the Yidden to ensure that they return after the allotted time. When the fourth day arrived, and the Yidden began preparing to travel onward, these emissaries told them, "Three days have passed, and you must return." The Yidden replied, "We didn't leave by Pharaoh's permission." The emissaries said, "Whether you like it or not, you will be compelled by Pharaoh to follow his will." The Yidden rose up against them, striking, injuring, and killing many of them, while the survivors fled and told Pharaoh what happened. Moshe then told the Yidden, "Travel a bit back the way we came, so that Pharaoh shouldn't say that we are [scared and] fleeing from him." (Mechilta, Beshalach 14, 2)

At a Chol Hamoed Pesach children's rally, the Rebbe elaborated on the lesson a Jewish child takes out from this story:

Three days of freedom have gone by since the beginning of *Z'man Cheiruseinu*. One has been freed from the *yetzer hara*, but the *yetzer* may still be trying to influence the person in all sorts of ways. What did the Yidden do when faced with such a challenge? They expelled the agents of Pharaoh, who fled in shame, and the Yidden showed their determination and fearlessness by travelling back a little bit.

"When it comes to fighting the *yetzer*, we demonstrate that we aren't affected or afraid of him at all, because he has no chance to succeed."

(*Hisvaaduyos* 5745 vol 3, p.1782)

תרס"ב - תרס"ט

EARLY YEARS

1902-1929

EARLY YEARS

The formative years of the Rebbe,
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, as told by
documents and archival data

תרס"ב - תרס"ט • 1902-1929

BORUCH OBERLANDER | ELKANAH SHMOTKIN

מוקדש
לחיזוק ההתקשרות לכ"ק אדמו"ר
נדפס ע"י
הרה"ת ר' זאב
וזוגתו מרת ליבא ומשפחתם שיחיו
גולדברג
להצלחה רבה בכל אשר יפנו
בגשמיות וברוחניות



EARLY YEARS

The Gemara relates that Rabbah was once sitting with two youngsters, Abaye and Rava. Impressed with the depth of their understanding, he said, "Butzin butzin mekatfey yediah—the quality of pumpkins is known by testing the sap from which they are formed." I.e. future scholars are recognizable at a young age.

Similarly, we learn about Moshe Rabbeinu, that when he was born, "the house was filled with light." From his first day in the world, his Divine calling was already evident.

In the case of our Rebbe, his holiness—and his greatness—was apparent from the first day our world was blessed with his holy *neshamah*. This holiness was brought to the fore even more, as the Rebbe spent most of his childhood years, not in a *shtetl* atmosphere but in the big city life of Yekatrinoslav, where the Rebbe's father, Horav Levi Yitzchak Schneersohn, served as the rav. The Rebbe's childhood home was a bastion of Yiddishkeit in an ocean of movements and 'isms' that flooded Russia in the early twentieth century, threatening to drown all vestiges of Yiddishkeit and holiness.

In what people may think is only a recent phenomenon, the Rebbe actually grew up in a 'Chabad House.' As the oldest son of the rav, the Rebbe took an active part in different activities, and was a living example to everyone who crossed their threshold of how a Jewish child should conduct his life.

The story of the Rebbe's early years has been chronicled in the newly released book 'Early Years,' prepared by Jewish Educational Media and published by Kehos, in over five hundred and fifty pages. Over the past fifteen years, they have invested exhaustive efforts in researching the Rebbe's early years, and chronicling them in an organized format for everyone to read.

Over the next few short pages, we culled specific parts of the book, in an attempt to bring you a glimpse of the Rebbe's years prior to his bar mitzvah, growing up in Nikolayev and Yekatrinoslav. For the sake of flow and clarity, certain parts have been edited and rewritten, however, the stories in their entirety are all excerpted from the new release, and we are indebted to them for their invaluable work and for their graciousness in allowing us to use it in this article.

While preparing this article, Rabbi Elkanah Shmotkin and Rabbi Levi Greisman of JEM graciously shared with us some tidbits and background information about the research that went into the book, and these have been incorporated into some of the sidebars.

While in this article we describe the Rebbe's childhood and early teenage years, the book covers much more than that; it spans all of the Rebbe's childhood, through the Rebbe and Rebbetzin's *chasunah* in Warsaw, 5689. With many previously unknown details and facts, the book is a must read.

Some of these stories are well known, some less so, but all are certainly worthy to hear again.

Negel Vasser

From the very moment of the Rebbe's birth, the conduct surrounding him was on a level befitting a holy *neshamah*.

Rebbetzin Chana related to Reb Berel Junik that "from the day of his birth, my husband instructed me that whenever my newborn son awoke, I should wash *negel vasser* with him before nursing, which he didn't instruct me to do for the other children. Apparently this was a directive from the Rebbe Rashab."

The involvement of the Rebbe Rashab, in truth, began even earlier. Reb Zalman Duchman related that the Rebbe was born following a *bracha* they received from the Rebbe Rashab (see Ksav Yad Kodesh column).

A short time later, the Rebbe fell ill with typhus, and the Rebbe Rashab sent telegrams with his blessings for good health. (Rebbetzin Chana related that they received six telegrams from the Rebbe Rashab when the Rebbe was born. It is not clear if these telegrams were included in those six, or not.)

Very quickly, the Rebbe's unique talent became apparent. Rebbetzin Chana recounts in her diary that on the Pesach just after his second birthday, the Rebbe asked *mah nishtana* at the *sefer* table. Rebbetzin Chana writes that the manner of speech was that of a young child, but it was evident that he "understood them like a grown up."

The Rebbe's family was living in Nikolayev, supported by the Rebbe's maternal grandparents, Rebbetzin Rochel and Horav Meir Shlomo Yanovsky, the *rav* of the city, while Horav Levi Yitzchak continued learning.

The political atmosphere of Russia in those days was one of protest and revolution against the Czar. When the Rebbe was nearing three years of age, his grandfather overheard him declaring, "*Daloi samaderzhavye*" ("end the dictatorship!")—a mantra he had apparently overheard from the various groups that were protesting the Czar heavy handed dictatorship.

"I remember how my father of blessed memory feared that he might be overheard and instructed him to stop," Rebbetzin Chana writes.

The Rebbe's upshernish took place a short time later, and Rebbetzin Chana relates that the Rebbe already had a beautiful appearance; when they would walk down the street, people would take notice, and stop to look at him.

As the revolution against the Czar gained momentum, it developed into a series of pogroms against the Jews in cities throughout Russia. At one point, the pogroms reached Nikolayev, and a number of Jews found refuge in the back of a pharmacy owned by a kind non-Jew.

Sensing the apprehension on the faces of the adults, the young children began wailing a great deal, and the noise they made could have revealed their location and endangered the entire group. The Rebbe was only three years old at the time. Yet he walked around the room quieting all the children. "It was too dangerous to talk, lest the voices be heard outside," Rebbetzin Chana writes. "He gestured with his little hands to keep quiet, calming each child in a different manner. The pharmacist kept returning to watch how my son comported himself, and how, with such maturity, he affected those little souls."

REBBETZIN CHANA WRITES
THAT THE MANNER OF SPEECH
WAS THAT OF A YOUNG CHILD,
BUT IT WAS EVIDENT THAT HE
"UNDERSTOOD THEM LIKE A
GROWN UP."



THE REBBE'S BIRTH RECORD IN NIKOLAYEV.



THE REBBE BEFORE HIS THIRD BIRTHDAY, TAKEN AT THE STUDIO OF M. KRAMER IN NIKOLAYEV.

Cheder

Rebbetzin Chana writes:

“He began to study in *cheder*, which continued until we commissioned *melamdim* to teach him at home. What a pleasure it was! At every turn, there was some reason to take pride in him. Not that he desired this—on the contrary, he always tried to avoid it. But his personality just evoked respect.”

On a different occasion, Rebbetzin Chana wrote:

“From childhood on, he always spent his time in study. I don’t remember him ever wasting time.”

From the Beginning

In a poignant letter to the president of Israel, Yitzchak Ben-Tzvi, the Rebbe writes:

“From the time I was a child attending *cheder* and even before, the vision of the future redemption began to take form in my imagination; the redemption of the Jewish people from their final exile. Redemption of such magnitude and grandeur, that through it the purpose of the sufferings, harsh degrees, and anguish of exile will be understood”.

In 5669, Horav Levi Yitzchak was appointed to be the rav of Yekatrinoslav¹, and the family moved there. Some time later, Horav Levi Yitzchak asked a Chossid, Reb Shneur Zalman Vilenkin, to learn with his children.

Discovering Rostov

Before being installed as rav of Yekatrinoslav, Horav Levi Yitzchak was encouraged by the Rebbe Rashab to find a rabbinical post, and the Rebbe Rashab was active in encouraging communities to hire him.

In 5666, Horav Levi Yitzchak seems to have been offered a position in a city, but with the condition of receiving *semicha* from Reb Chaim Brisker. The Rebbe Rashab encouraged Horav Levi Yitzchak to travel to Brisk, and interestingly, the Rebbe told over a story about his test with Reb Chaim Brisker, which indicates that the test took place on Sukkos of that year.

In the book, JEM reveals that the suggested position was in the city of Rostov, where the Rebbe Rashab and the Frierdiker Rebbe themselves moved to, just ten years later.

This location was previously unknown. Aside for Rebbetzin Chana’s diaries and the letter from the Rebbe Rashab, there was just one more tip on the subject. A letter from the Rebbe Rashab to a Mr. Yaakov Halbreich, encouraging him to assist Horav Levi Yitzchak in his efforts to become rav. A search for that name in the Rebbe’s library revealed other letters of the Rebbe Rashab addressed to him and another individual, and they are described as pillars in the Jewish community of Rostov.

One more source helped confirm this conclusion:

A book called *Oholei Shem* chronicles the lives and histories of rabbonim throughout Russia, and it lists a certain rabbi as having become rav of Rostov in the year 5667, just after the efforts of the Rebbe Rashab and Horav Levi Yitzchak.

The book *Oholei Shem* assisted in many different ways; another example is:

In a letter, the Rebbe writes that he had relatives in the city of Dobrinka, and the rav himself was a relative of his. The book revealed that in fact, the Rebbe’s great-grandfather, Reb Yitzchak Pushnitz, served as the rav, and in 5664, when the Rebbe was only two years old, he passed away, and was succeeded by his son—the Rebbe’s great uncle—Reb Menachem Mendel Pushnitz.



Over the next four and a half years, the Rebbe, his brothers, and a select few other children would learn with Reb Zalman. There were two classes in the tiny *cheder*. The older class consisted of... the Rebbe, and the younger class held everyone else, and Reb Zalman would divide his time between the two "classes."

Reb Nochum Goldshmidt, one of the students in the younger group, related that while all of Horav Levi Yitzchak's children were brilliant and extremely studious, the oldest one stood out in his personality. The Rebbe's youngest brother Leibel, for example, was brilliant as well, but he was a mischievous boy; he loved to engage others in conversation, jokes, and intellectual challenges. The Rebbe on the other hand, was serious by nature, and his earnestness was always noticeable on his face.

Reb Zalman's son Sholom related that Rebbetzin Chana would walk the Rebbe to *cheder* each day; he was so engrossed in his own thoughts that she was afraid to let him walk alone, fearing that something would happen to him, *chas veshalom*.

THE REBBE ON THE OTHER
HAND, WAS SERIOUS BY
NATURE, AND HIS EARNESTNESS
WAS ALWAYS NOTICEABLE ON
HIS FACE.



After some four and a half years, Reb Zalman told Horav Levi Yitzchak that he could no longer teach the Rebbe; he had eclipsed all of the other children, and the Rebbe began learning at home, with his father.

While Reb Zalman was not the Rebbe's only *melamed*, he seems to have been the primary one (aside for the Rebbe's father himself, as we will soon see).

In 5738, Rabbi Nissan Mindel's grandchild was named Shneur Zalman after his great-grandfather Reb Zalman Vilenkin (Rabbi Nissan Mindel was Reb Zalman's *mechutan*), and when the Rebbe heard who he was named after, the Rebbe told him,

"He taught me and my brothers Chumash, Rashi and Gemara. *Er hot mir geshtelt oif di fis*, he put me on my feet; *er iz gevehn a gehoibener yid*, he was an illustrious Jew."

Dovber Gurary grew up as a neighbor to the Rebbe. He described his experience as follows:

"The fact is ingrained deeply in my memory, and this amazed everyone who knew the Rebbe: he would never be seen sitting idle. Don't forget, we're talking about a child! He was a good friend of my older brother Shmuel Gershon, so we always spoke about him in my home, about this child that studies non-stop, as though he were a great rabbi. He never wasted a minute...

"But even beyond his astonishing abilities, we were amazed by his earnestness. His face always reflected a certain seriousness, something that you don't even see

with the grown-ups. Even we, the children, realized that he was special. I remember that my brother, who was the closest to him, would always tell us that he couldn't discuss anything with him superficially; everything they would discuss would probe the subject in depth.

"In our home, we would discuss how he studies into the night with his father. My brother would tell us that they studied together almost until morning, but it didn't interfere with his Cheder the next day. He'd study as though he had a good night sleep."

"I was zoiche..."

Years later, on the night of the Rebbe's wedding in Warsaw, Reb Zalman participated in the celebration that took place in the home of Horav Levi Yitzchak in Yekatrinoslav. Very excited, he could not contain his pride over his celebrated *talmid*, and danced on the table declaring "I was zoiche..."

When Reb Zalman made it to the United States in 5713, the Rebbe was already Rebbe, and Reb Zalman came for a *yechidus*. When he entered, the Rebbe would not sit until his elderly childhood teacher would be seated. The latter, in turn, didn't want to sit in the presence of the Rebbe, so they both remained standing for the duration of the hour long *yechidus*.

The next time Reb Zalman came for *yechidus*, the Rebbe again offered him to be seated, but he again declined, until the Rebbe said, "Forty years ago we sat together around one volume of Gemara. Let us sit together now, as well." And then they sat down.

When Reb Zalman would enter the Rebbe's farbrengens, the Rebbe would rise in his honor and would not sit back down until his teacher would find his own seat.

Upon Reb Zalman's passing in 5723, the Rebbe escorted his *melamed's* casket to the cemetery and insisted on paying all of the expenses of the burial and the headstone, suggesting that Reb Zalman's children pay one dollar as a symbolic share in the mitzvah of burying their father. His *matzeivah* reads: He studied and taught Torah in public and with students, and merited that the Rebbe *shlit"a* studied under his tutelage.

Summer Visits

Although they had moved to Yekatrinoslav, the Rebbe would visit his grandparents in Nikolayev for the last weeks of each summer. In a note written about a *sicha* on her *yahrtzeit*, the Rebbe wrote about his grandmother Rebbetzin Rochel, that "for several years, I spent the final weeks of the summer in Nikolayev. I stayed with her, *vetiplah bi*, she cared for me."

There were other occasions that the Rebbe returned to Nikolayev, such as for some *yomim tovim*. Batsheva Althaus, Reb Elya Chayim Althaus's daughter, reminisced about seeing the Rebbe as a child on Simchas Torah in Nikolayev:

"I remember that people would speak about the fact that her oldest was different from other children. For example, Simchas Torah, I remember that he would dance energetically, like the older Chassidim; in fact, even more than them. The Schneersons continued to visit Nikolayev even as they grew older, at least until I left Nikolayev when I was eleven years old, in 5681."²

On a different occasion, the Rebbe accompanied Rebbetzin Chana to a resort town in Crimea—Balaklavah—where a now-famous event occurred. Rebbetzin Chana writes:

"A cavern there was joined to the Black Sea by a narrow channel of water that flowed between two rock walls, creating a powerful current. Even experienced swimmers were cautious.

"One day, while spending time near the shore, I heard that a boy was drowning and I went to see what was happening. This is what I observed and heard from others:



APPOINTMENT OF THE REBBE AS RABBI OF THE OLD POBRITZNA SHUL IN YEKATRINOSLAV.

EARLY YEARS/JEM

“There were kayaks there, made for one person using a single oar. A boy in a kayak had neared the powerful vortex, and, caught in the strong current, began to sink.

“As I noted, it was quite dangerous. When my son saw this, he swam out to the kayak, climbed inside, and grabbed the oar from the exhausted boy, who was barely conscious by then. Taking control of the kayak, he steered it out of the current and brought it to shore.

“His passenger was saved. My son, however, after such a difficult and extraordinary feat, was strained both physically and emotionally. To escape the peril, he needed to employ an entire strategy to determine in which direction to steer. All this exertion exhausted him to the point that, as he neared the shore, he began to drown. When I saw him, he was terrifyingly exhausted and pale. His clothing were drenched.”

Rescue Efforts

On 5 Av 5674, World War I broke out and thousands of Jewish refugees streamed into Yekatrinoslav, after the Czar forced them to “evacuate” from their homes near the border for fear that they may cooperate with the German enemy.

Rebbetzin Chana, along with Horav Levi Yitzchak, became very involved in the rescue efforts. In a *sicha* on 6 Tishrei 5745, the Rebbe described his mother’s dedication

FOR EXAMPLE, SIMCHAS TORAH, I REMEMBER THAT HE WOULD DANCE ENERGETICALLY, LIKE THE OLDER CHASSIDIM; IN FACT, EVEN MORE THAN THEM.

to the rescue efforts, saying that although his own main ‘occupation’ was learning in *cheder*, nevertheless, “it is etched in my memory for all the days of my life.”

However, it seems that the efforts were not relegated to Horav Levi Yitzchak and Rebbetzin Chana alone. In an article written by Rabbi Aharon Friedenthal, he describes his experience as a refugee child in the city of Yekatrinoslav during the war, and describes the efforts of the Rebbe’s family:

“The rabbi and rebbetzin, during those horrible days, knew nothing of their own lives. Everything was dedicated to the rescue effort.

“Even the three young boys, Mendel’e (who is now the Lubavitcher Rebbe in Brooklyn) Berel’e and Leibel’e, also felt the goings on. They gave up their places at the Shabbat table for the exiled children. The writer of these lines is one of those children to whom the Lubavitcher Rebbe and his brothers gave away their own meals, imploring us to feel at home. Such warm, precious, children!”



THE VARIOUS RESIDENCES OF THE REBBE’S FAMILY IN YEKATRINOSLAV,
L-R: 31 BOLNICHNAYA STREET, 1908-1913; 2 MOSTOVAYA STREET, 1914-1921; 20 ZHELZHNYAYA STREET, 1921-1934.

Refugee Melamed

Amongst the refugees was a Litvisher rav, Rabbi Issar Nissan Dribin, who previously served as a rav and *rosh yeshiva* in Kovno, Lithuania. Recognizing his Torah knowledge, Horav Levi Yitzchak asked him to move into their home and be his children's private tutor. For over one year, he lived in the Rebbe's home. In a *yechidus* in 5733, the Rebbe said, "When I was a child, I had two brothers. Our father hired a teacher who lived with us in our home, day and night, so that we could study Torah with him at every available opportunity."

There is a well-known story that the Rebbe related about his "*Litvisher melamed*," which seems to refer to Rabbi Dribin.

"I found my teacher studying Gemara on Tisha B'Av. I asked him, 'Doesn't Shulchan Aruch state that one may not learn Torah on Tisha B'Av?'"

"He replied, 'By my estimate, I will receive lashes in the next world anyway. Let it at least be for studying Torah on Tisha B'Av!'"

A longer version of what might be the same story which also occurred on Tisha B'Av was told over by the Rebbe on Yud Tes Kislev 5731, in a long *sicha* about educating children:

"I had a *melamed* who was from Lithuania. He was totally uninterested in secular studies. From time to time especially on the fast of Tisha B'Av, when there is no regular *cheder* and Torah study is prohibited, when no one was in the room, he used to sit and study Torah. When his students entered, he was embarrassed, so he would discuss some matter of secular knowledge.

"One of us told him that there are those who hold differently from Torah's view, that Hashem said 'let us make man in our form, according to our likeness,' and that 'Hashem blew into his nostrils the soul of life,' creating Adam and Chava and their descendants until the end of all time. They believe in the theory known as 'evolution:' first a cell came into being, from which a fish developed, followed by animals, which developed into a monkey, and eventually men came into being. They believe in this theory, bring proof for it, etc.

"After the entire theory was explained to him, the *melamed* said to me: 'Mendel, why must you debate this? Tell them it doesn't bother you—if they prefer that lineage, let them trace their roots to the monkey. And one who accepts that Hashem said 'Let us make man in our form according to our likeness,' can stay with that pedigree! Why must you argue with them?'"



EARLY YEARS/JEM



Discovering the Litvisher Melamed

On many occasions, the Rebbe related the story of his *Litvisher melamed* on Tisha B'Av, as mentioned in the article, but no one ever had an inkling as to who this *melamed* was. Reb Zalman Vilenkin was clearly no Litvak, and the only other teacher that we knew the Rebbe had was his own father, Horav Levi Yitzchak himself.

There was a claim put forth by an individual that his grandfather served as the Lubavitcher Rebbe's teacher, but he did not provide any more evidence or facts that would back up his claim, nor was it clear if he was a teacher in Torah, or perhaps a tutor for secular knowledge.

The tip about Reb Nissan Dribin came a few years ago, with the commemoration of Gimmel Tammuz for the twentieth year, in 5774. The media was full of coverage about the Rebbe and one religious magazine in Eretz Yisrael, *Sha'ah Tovah*, printed a story by the magazine's editor (a Litvisher Yid), in which he described his grandfather as the *melamed* of the Lubavitcher Rebbe. Upon reaching out to him and an additional family member, they confirmed that their grandfather, Nissan Dribin, had been a refugee fleeing from the war, when Horav Levi Yitzchak had offered him the task of teaching the Rebbe and his two brothers.

One identifying factor that they related, was that their grandfather had heard that the youngest brother had moved to Eretz Yisrael, and he had wanted very much to meet him, for he had immensely enjoyed his company as a child. This fact seemed to corroborate what we already knew—that the Rebbe's youngest brother, Reb Yisrael Aryeh Leib, was an outgoing and lively child, who loved to talk and challenge others with riddles and the like.

With this name in hand, the JEM team went to the Rebbe's library to see if they can find any hint of a correspondence with the Rebbe. Searching for his name, a discovery was made, while there are no letters from Reb Nissan himself, there is a letter written by his son Pesach, in which he introduces himself as the son of the Rebbe's teacher.

Thus, his identity was proven beyond a doubt.



EARLIEST EXTANT LETTER OF THE REBBE'S FATHER HORAV LEVI YITZCHAK AS RAV OF YEKATRINOSLAV, DATED 19 SHEVAT 5669.

EARLY YEARS/JEM

“MENDEL, WHY MUST YOU DEBATE THIS? TELL THEM IT DOESN'T BOTHER YOU—IF THEY PREFER THAT LINEAGE, LET THEM TRACE THEIR ROOTS TO THE MONKEY...”

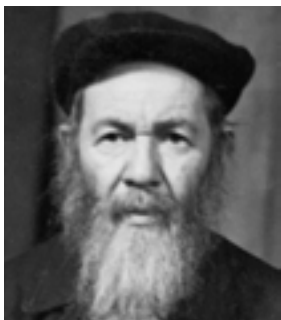
After about one year, Rabbi Dribin concluded that he can no longer teach the Rebbe, who was then around the age of bar mitzvah. From then on, the Rebbe studied on his own, under the tutelage of his father, Horav Levi Yitzchak.

In a *sicha* in 5739, the Rebbe professed that his father was his primary teacher, citing the Gemara's account of conversation between Rabi Yaakov and Rabi Yochanan. Rabi Yaakov told Rabi Yochanan, that when Yehoshua, Moshe's foremost pupil, taught, he did not preface each statement by saying, “So said Moshe.” In fact, Yehoshua sat and spoke without stating his source, yet everyone knew it was Moshe's Torah.

“So too, Reb Elazar your student; he holds forth without mentioning your name, but everyone knows that the teachings are yours!”

The Rebbe continued:

“Reb Elazar was a student of Reb Yochanan, but not his son. Nevertheless he didn't specify that all his knowledge was imparted by his master, as this was obvious. How



EARLY YEARS/JEM

REB SCHNEUR ZALMAN VILENKIN,
THE REBBE'S MELAMED.



EARLY YEARS/JEM

RABBI ISSER NISSAN DRIBIN.

much more so in my case—a student who is also a son. Everyone knows the source of my knowledge.”

The Bar Mitzvah

Horav Levi Yitzchak's father, Horav Boruch Shneur, would often visit Lubavitch and eat at the Rebbe Rashab's table, and then record their discussions in his diary, known as *Reshimos Harabash*. When the Rebbe approached bar mitzvah, he writes, he had a conversation with the Rebbe Rashab:

“After Shabbos I was in the Rebbe's room while he ate *melaveh malka*. I spoke with him about my grandson, Menachem Mendel, Levik's son, who will become bar mitzvah on the eleventh of Nissan, G-d willing...”

“The Rebbe told me,

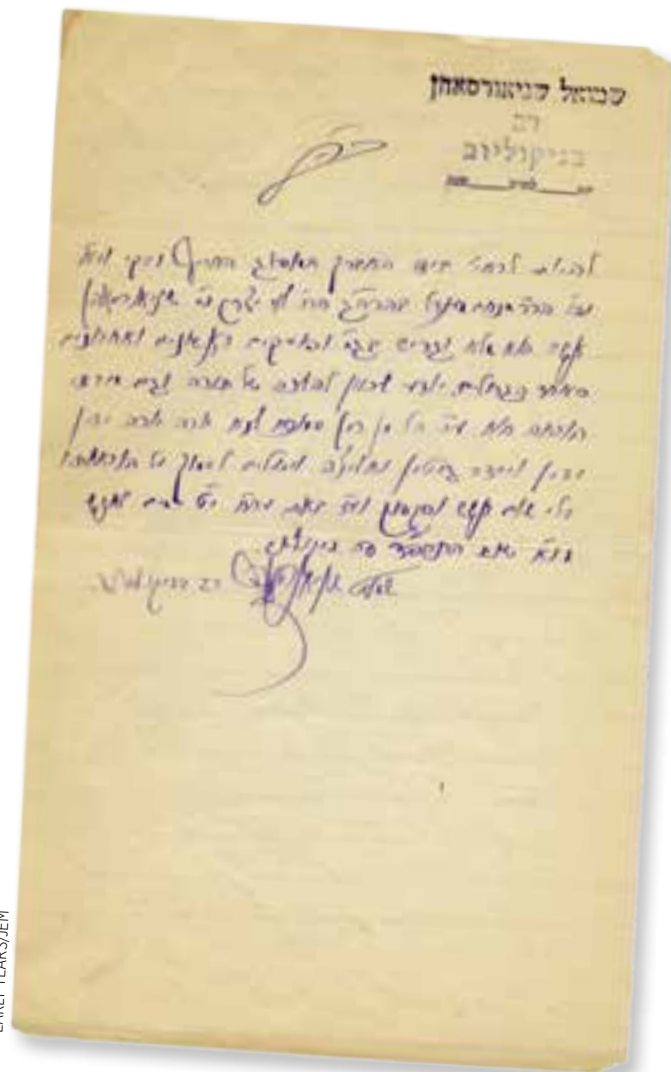
“Go in health. May Hashem grant that it be a kosher Pesach. May we meet again in good health. Send regards to your father-in-law [Rabbi Zalman Chaikin] and to [your son] Levik. May Hashem grant that he [Mendel] be a good Jew, and Levik should have *nachas* from him and the other boys.”⁴

The Rebbe's *hanochas tefillin* took place on Yud-Aleph Adar 5675, just one month prior to his bar mitzvah, as the custom was at the time.

The bar mitzvah itself fell out on Friday, and the celebration was held on the following day, on Shabbos. Rebbetzin Chana describes the celebration at length:

It was our family's first personal celebration in the city. My husband, of blessed memory, was held in high regard following the initial birth pangs of his rabbinic position, due to the opposition of the non-Chassidim and Zionists. They had seen him as a personification of Lubavitch, so they hadn't previously come to terms with his appointment.

By now, however, we had already been living in the city for seven years, and our supporters were proud of my husband's accomplishments, while those who had



EARLY YEARS/JEM

THE REBBE'S SMICHA FROM HIS UNCLE, REB SHMUEL SCHNEERSON.

previously opposed him had expressed remorse many times over. Now both sides had an opportunity to express their feelings towards him.

The celebration took place on Shabbos and the *farbrengen* continued until after *havdalah*.

For our good friends it was a true celebration; a delightful, friendly, connection—a delectable feeling, as I remind myself now. Many guests attended.

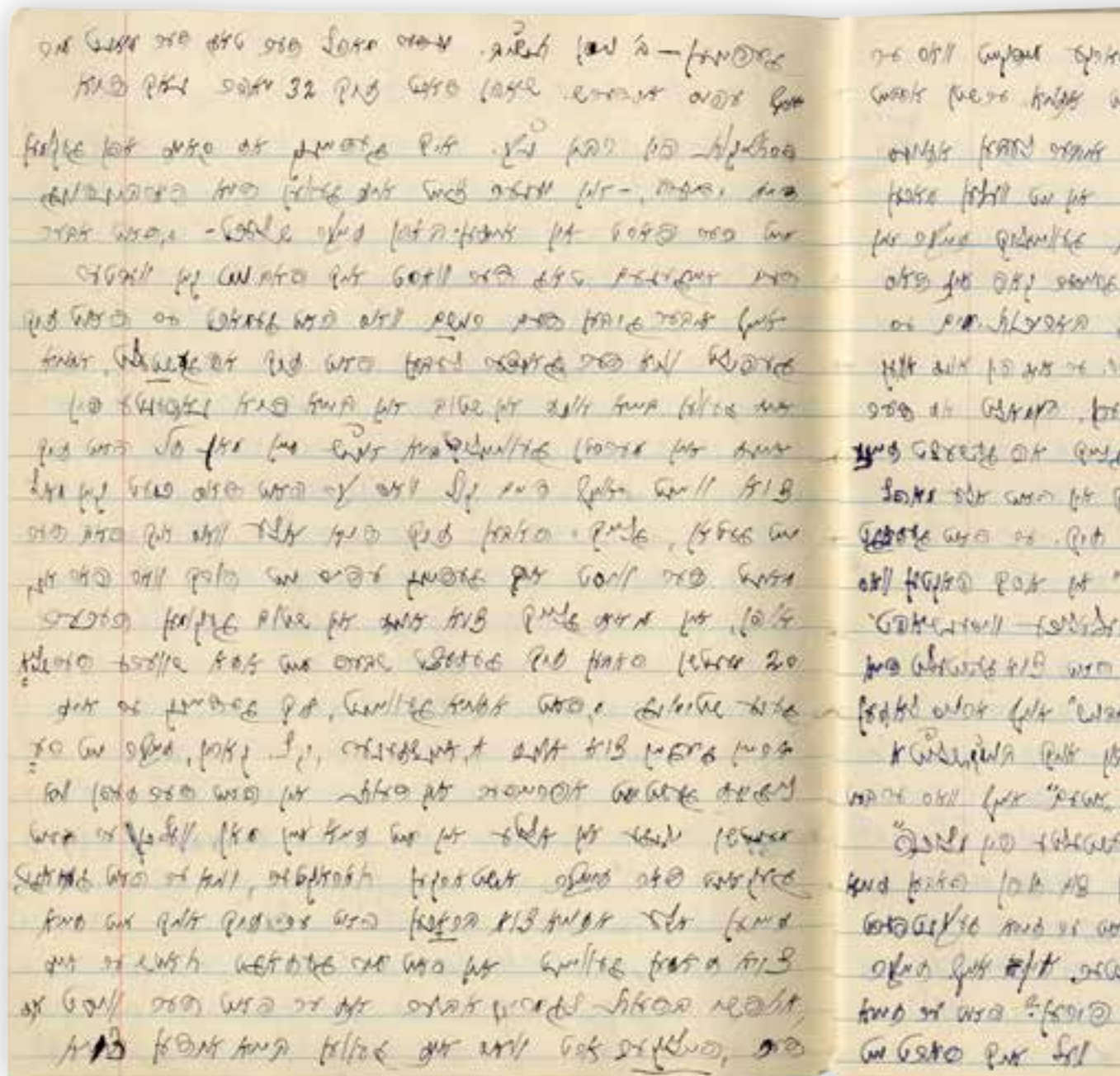
At the time we had a large home, and all its rooms were packed. Because it was so crowded, there was a constant exchange of guests, with some leaving while new ones entered, filling their places.

Many women came for me, as well, and there were also many young people. And amongst all these ages and genders, people from all types of backgrounds were included. I don't remember exactly what time it began, probably at around midday, after the conclusion of

davening in Shul. When they returned home, the men sat in the large room, while the woman were in the large dining room. Of course, it was prepared beautifully, with abundant food for men and women.

I believe my son remembers the talks he delivered at his bar mitzvah. He gave two speeches, I believe one in Talmudic scholarship, the other in Chassidic teachings. A large number of guests were present. We had many good

friends at the time, and it was a triumph for Chassidim that one of their own—my husband—had become rabbi of the city. Consequently, many uninvited guests attended as well. I wasn't present in the room when he delivered his talks. Everyone was indescribably overwhelmed by them. I recall how the engineer Sergei Paley came over to me—he possessed a sharp mind and was very learned in Torah.



REBBETZIN CHANA'S RESHIMOS.

He exclaimed, "This is the first time in my life that I heard such scholarship from a boy of his age!"

Around 3 or 4 p.m., men began to emerge with tear-soaked faces, old and young, not religious and Torah observant. I tried to look inside the main hall to discover the cause of their tears, but it was so packed that I couldn't see above all the heads.

When I inquired of those who have been inside, they told me that his father—my husband—had requested that our son, may he live long, promise him something. I wasn't inside, so I don't know the actual course of events. Our son's reply, apparently, was not immediate. Everyone was amazed by the great character of such a young boy, who is so guarded and cautious about giving his response.

Exactly what happened there I don't know, but around 6 or 7 p.m.—I remember it wasn't very light outside anymore—the faces I had previously seen weeping became very joyous. From inside, we heard the sound of such dancing and singing! The celebration became so intense that it affected those outside, as well. One sensed that this enthusiasm held some deep significance, and that both the request and the one who gave his reply would remain memorable for a long time. He was a slim boy with a refined face reflecting an inner spirit. One rarely encounters such a person.

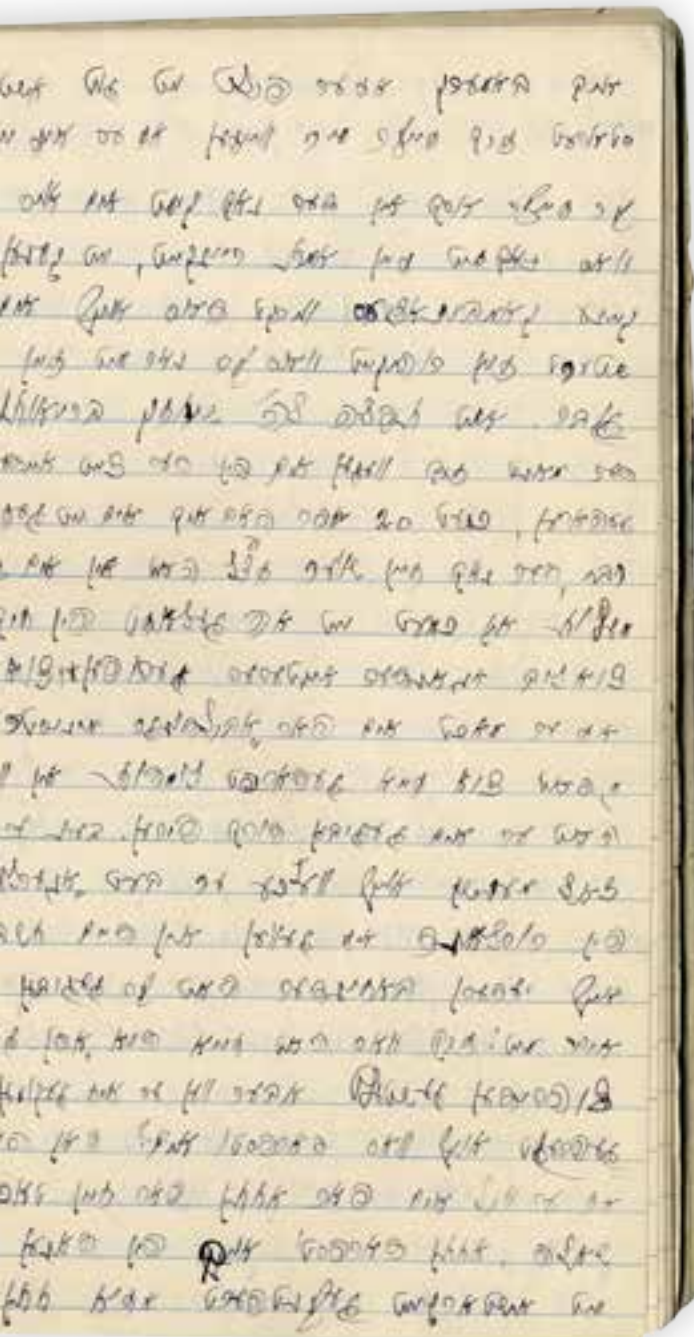
ONE SENSED THAT THIS ENTHUSIASM HELD SOME DEEP SIGNIFICANCE, AND THAT BOTH THE REQUEST AND THE ONE WHO GAVE HIS REPLY WOULD REMAIN MEMORABLE FOR A LONG TIME.

His entire existence was Torah.

Over the following years, the Rebbe was usually seen standing in his room, studying alone. Those who knew the Rebbe and his brothers, describe their intelligence and broad scope of knowledge in glowing terms.

The Rebbe's early years can perhaps be best summed up by the account of Yonah Kesse, a child whom the Rebbe brought home after he found him in shul starving, and who later became a member of the Israeli Knesset. He described how the Rebbe was always found standing and learning diligently; never sitting. "I remember that he was also well-versed in physics and mathematics," he said. But after an entire description of how the Rebbe was visited by university professors and students, etc., he concluded, "His entire existence, I recall, was Torah."

1. For a description of Horav Levi Yitzchak's leadership in Yekatrinoslav, see A Chassidisher Derher - Av 5776
2. Kfar Chabad issue 634
3. Yevamos 96b
4. Reshimos Harabash pg. 141-142



VAAD HANOCHOS B'LAFAK



Fulfilling America's Mandate Through

ENERGY INDEPENDENCE



Throughout the second half of the 20th century there were two rivaling superpowers in the world: the USA and the USSR. Whereas the Communists endeavored to promote an ideology of atheism and to stifle human rights and freedom, the Americans stood at the forefront of preventing their expansion.

The Rebbe declared on numerous occasions that the United States of America is a “Kingdom of Kindness” with a divine mission to promote a global awareness in *emunas Hashem*, as stated on every piece of U.S. currency: “In G-d We Trust.”

In an era of technological advancement, discovery and innovation, one of the most valuable commodities is oil to supply energy. Without it, society as we know it cannot operate. For over half a century, the United States has imported oil from foreign countries to meet the demand of energy that resulted from the post WWII economic boom.

This dependence on other nations for such a vital resource has, on numerous occasions, compromised

America's ability to assert its power to ensure that justice, morality, goodness and kindness prevail throughout the world.



On Yom Kippur 5734 (1973) Egypt and Syria declared war on Eretz Yisrael with a devastating surprise attack. During the first week of the war the situation was so desperate that many were certain that it would end in assured catastrophe. On the second day of Sukkos, U.S. President Richard Nixon authorized Operation Nickel Grass, a strategic airlift to deliver weapons and supplies to Eretz Yisrael.

In retaliation for the overwhelming U.S. support to Eretz Yisrael during the war, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)—an international group of twelve oil rich countries (which included seven Arab countries)—agreed to an oil embargo on the United States. The price of oil greatly increased, causing a major oil shortage in the U.S., which eventually triggered a major stock market crash.

To end the embargo, America pressured the Israelis to make

devastating concessions to their mortal enemies, compromising the security of millions of Yidden to this day. This is one example of how America's great diplomatic weakness was exposed due to its dependence on foreign powers for energy.



In a *sicha* during the historic *farbrengen* of Yud-Aleph Nissan 5741, the Rebbe emphasized the urgency of this matter and advocated for an immediate remedy.¹ The following is a summary of the various points of the *sicha*.²

AMERICA'S MANDATE

Recently, the Soviet Union's policy of expansionism is causing a deterioration in relations between many countries and disrupting the world order. At the same time, Hashem bestowed the United States with the mission and the power to counter this evil. This will not only benefit other countries, it will also result in increased justice for the people of the USSR itself. The freedom to practice their religion, and especially so that the Yidden have the

ability to serve Hashem in spiritual and physical tranquility. Isolationism is an inappropriate policy for this powerful and consequential nation.

USING OUR RESOURCES

To succeed, America must be free of economic pressure from immoral dictatorships. As long as we rely on them for oil, our strength and influence is compromised. Recent events have illustrated that acquiescing to the demands of these rogue dictators and regimes has caused great harm to Eretz Yisrael and in turn harmed the physical and material well-being of the United States as well.

Freedom from this pressure will be accomplished only if this country utilizes the full potential of its resources. It is inconceivable that in this modern era, when oil is such a critical resource, the nation charged with the mission of bringing true peace, justice and morality to the world should depend on and be manipulated by lowly nations.

In truth, beneath American soil there is an abundance of natural resources of energy. If we would only develop our abilities to mine our own oil and coal, we would have long been freed from this irrational reliance on other countries, whose capabilities for exporting oil throughout the world were, ironically, developed by Americans! There is such an abundance of these resources that we can even export energy to others! Failure to do so is blatant ungratefulness to Hashem for the gifts he has bestowed upon us.

This is not simply in order to wield U.S. strength, or increase U.S. power. Hashem placed these resources in this nation's soil, so that, ultimately, it will be able to spread Torah's justice throughout the world, primarily the

observance of the *sheva mitzvos b'nei Noach*.

SOLAR ENERGY

Defeating the arguments of those resisting the development of these domestic resources (for personal gain, etc.³), or effectively ignoring these elements, will take a very long time. Even when this roadblock is finally cleared, it will take a significant amount of time to develop these resources to the point of full energy independence.

There is, however, a clear solution to America's energy crisis: Solar Energy.⁴ To harness the light and heat of the sun as a source of generating energy. Solar technology requires far less time to develop than other energy sources and the southern region of this country is saturated in sun-light. The solar energy that can potentially be generated in those regions can provide ample energy for the rest of the country and even a surplus for export!

The development of this vital resource has already started, albeit on a very small scale⁵ and it should be greatly intensified. Doing so, based on belief in Hashem and in observance of the command to fully utilize the resources He provides, will make us fully energy independent in a very short while.

SHARING THE MESSAGE


What can be accomplished by discussing this topic during a farbrengen, in a shul and *beis hamedrash*, in the presence of Yidden that have no direct impact on governmental policies?

As U.S. citizens we have an obligation to be concerned for the welfare of this country. More importantly, this issue concerns the Yidden behind the Iron Curtain, that

they should be able to learn Torah and observe mitzvos under better conditions than they were able to until now.

The Rambam rules that even a single statement based on Torah, has the power to tip the scales for salvation, and past experiences have shown that issues discussed here have reached Washington.

When hostile nations can no longer use oil to manipulate U.S. policy, America's influence will increase, without having to use force. The mere knowledge of our energy independence will nullify foreign pressure. Hashem has blessed this Nation of Kindness with plentiful sources of energy to accomplish a divine mission—to promote true goodness throughout the world.

It is interesting to note, that during the year of 5741, construction of the very first large scale solar power plant, Solar One, was completed in the Mojave Desert, California, USA. 

1. While the U.S. and USSR are not specifically named throughout the *sicha*, the Rebbe was clearly addressing the recent turmoil caused by Soviet aggression and the ability of the U.S. to intervene.

2. See the full *sicha* in *Sichos Kodesh*, 5741 vol. 3 page 120 – 126.

3. The campaign to prevent the development of domestic energy resources is significantly funded by the oil monies of these foreign countries!

4. A week before this farbrengen, on 4 Nissan, Yidden around the world observed *birkas hachama* (see "Moments" column in this magazine). According to *nusach Chabad*, Kapitel 19 in *Tehillim* is recited, and it includes the words "ואין נסתר מחמתו" – Nothing is hidden from its heat." This provides a clear lesson for the current discussion.

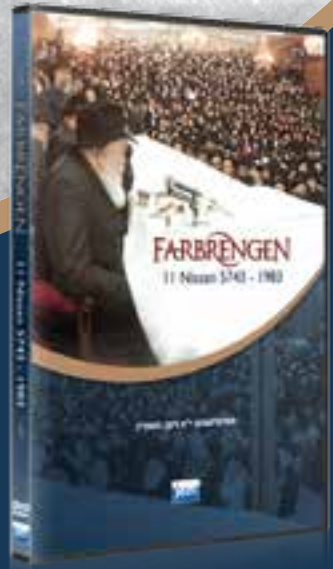
5. See the end of this article.

Dedicated by
The Shlounge
New Haven, Connecticut

YOSSI MELAMED via JEM 11/7/53

פארברענגען

FARBRENGEN



YUD-ALEPH NISSAN 5743

It's a day of celebration for each and every Yid in the generation. The birthday of the nossi—הנשיא הוא הכל.

And they came. In the thousands.

The Rebbe leads the celebration with a special farbrengen. Drawing on the inspiration of the time, the place, the gathering of people, the Rebbe encourages further action in the year to come.

The topics covered at the farbrengen are many; from the declaration of President Reagan, to the story of a wealthy Jew on his yacht, and the importance and impact of the mitvtzoim. The time in between the sichos is filled with hearty niggunim

and l'chaims to the Rebbe, and a joyous yom-tov like atmosphere prevails throughout.

In honor of Yud-Aleph Nissan this year, JEM has released the full video recording of this memorable farbrengen on DVD. Watching the farbrengen, we can relive the way Chassidim celebrated this day with the Rebbe and learn the timeless lessons of the day from the Rebbe himself.

Below are just a few highlights:

WHAT ARE WE ABOUT?

Elaborating on the significance of this gathering, the Rebbe began by summarizing the objective of why we get together here: to strategize and make *hachlatos* to finally and completely reveal Hashem's presence in this lowly world.

How is this accomplished? By way of Torah and mitzvot, and by teaching and spreading G-dliness to all the inhabitants of the world, along with the observance of *sheva mitzvot b'nei Noach*.

Every Yid can and must involve himself with this task. As the next story shall demonstrate.

THE JEW AND HIS YACHT

There was a Jew ("He is here now," the Rebbe said. "May he enjoy many long years together with his family.") who Hashem blessed with great wealth and many possessions, including a yacht. When it came time to daven as he was out at sea, he approached the captain of his yacht and asked which direction was east. He wanted to daven properly, facing Yerushalayim. After this incident repeated itself a few times, a conversation ensued and the Yid told his non-Jewish captain about his prayers to Hashem.

The Yid's words made a strong impression on the captain, who in turn resolved that he, too, must think more about G-d.

"Let this serve as a lesson for each and every one of us," the Rebbe concluded the story. "Every single Jew, even the least sophisticated, can and must influence his surrounding neighbors to observe the *sheva mitzvot b'nei Noach*. This story proves that doing so is simpler than ever. Even merely going about our personal Yiddishkeit proudly will automatically have an effect on others."

A "CHANCE" ENCOUNTER

With this, the Rebbe brought in the next subject: the power of *mitzvot*.

There are those who ask: what is the value of a one-time mitzvah?

And besides, when standing in the streets you always need to ask the passersby if they're Jewish or not. If they aren't Jewish, you've made a fool of yourself!

After giving a lengthy explanation on the infinite value of even one single mitzvah, the Rebbe said:

Even if the passerby turns out to be a non-Jew, you never know what you can accomplish by merely asking him your question, "Are you Jewish?" It can affect a transformation in his heart and lead to the observance of *sheva mitzvot b'nei Noach*, especially since the question is asked sincerely and from the heart.

ALL ABOUT CHINUCH

Expectedly, a sizable part of the farbrengen is dedicated to discussing the importance of education.

"This time of year is opportune for *chinuch*," the Rebbe explained. "The yom tov of Pesach is all about *chinuch*; teaching our children."

Which brings on the next subject: the need to institute a "moment of silence" in public schools.

If Pesach is an opportune time ("יום וזמאן") to focus on education, then these past few years have been an opportune time to focus on instituting a moment of silence in public schools. The sitting president of the United States has made his view clear that education must be rooted in belief in G-d. If the President has done so, it remains for us to take advantage and act on this endorsement from the highest office in the land and work towards achieving the moment of silence in public schools.

THANK YOU ALL

The Rebbe thanked everyone who sent their birthday wishes in honor of Yud-Aleph Nissan, especially the President, who also sent his wishes. "Not on my personal account," the Rebbe clarified, "but on account of all those who follow in the ways of Chabad, whom I am privileged to represent."

The Rebbe concluded by wishing the President continued success in his important job, most notably in deterring the opposition against ensuring peace and stability in the Holy Land.

ALL THOSE LISTENING

Just before leaving, after reciting the *bracha acharona*, the Rebbe announced that he will distribute dollars to all the participants through the "*tankistin*," asking that each person should only take one dollar, for quantity is of no significance in this matter.

"Those who are listening in through the 'hook-up' or the like, should also give one dollar to tzedakah, either tonight or tomorrow—or at least before Pesach." **T**

Watching the farbrengen on video today, we can be certain that the Rebbe had us in mind as well; those listening on the "hook-up or the like"—as we connect with the Rebbe by studying his Torah, and all the more so by learning his Torah from the Rebbe himself.

There could be no better way to properly celebrate Yud-Aleph Nissan than joining with the Rebbe in this newly released farbrengen.

May we merit to celebrate this Yud-Aleph Nissan with a "new" farbrengen together with the Rebbe, and learn "new" Torah with the coming of Moshiach, "תורה חדשה מאתי תצא".



לעילוי נשמת
יעקב בן אייזיק ע"ה
נלב"ע ח' טבת התשע"ז
תנ"צ'ב'ה'

נדפס ע"י בנו
הרה"ת ר' אלכסנדר
וזוגתו מרת חנה ומשפחתם שיחיו
קאלער



Push the Limits

Going Out of Mitzrayim

מצרים הוא לשון מיצר וגבול. גלות מצרים ברוחניות הוא מה שנפש הבהמית מגבלת ומסתרת על הנפש האלקית, עד שנפשה"א מתמצצמת כל כך שנועשה בקטנות והעלם. ויציאת מצרים הוא הסרת המיצר והגבול. והיינו דהשכל שבמוח מאיר בלב במדות טובות בפועל ממש.

The word "Mitzrayim" expresses constriction, limitation. The *galus* of Mitzrayim in the spiritual sense is how the *nefesh habahamis* restricts and conceals the *nefesh ha'Elohis* so severely that the *nefesh ha'Elohis* is compressed to the degree that it is diminished and obscured. "Yetzias Mitzrayim" is the removal of the constriction and bounds; i.e. the intellect in the brain illuminates the heart, bringing about *middos tovos* (fine character traits) translated into actual practice.

(היום יום ד' שבט)

"זכר ליציאת מצרים"—a phrase that is repeated and referred to quite often in our davening and learning. We are commanded to remember *yetzias Mitzrayim* each and every day (twice a day, in fact), and so many of the mitzvos we do are associated with it.

The author of Sefer HaChinuch, explaining the mitzvah of *sippur yetzias Mitzrayim*, asserts that this mitzvah is "a great foundation and pillar of our faith."¹

But the going out of Mitzrayim was seemingly a one-time occurrence. Why is there so much emphasis on an exodus that happened so long ago?

In truth however, leaving Mitzrayim is an ongoing process.

The Mishnah teaches: "בכל דור ודור חייב אדם לראות"—In every generation a person must see himself as if he personally left Mitzrayim. In Tanya, the Alter Rebbe adds the words "בכל יום ויום"—i.e. the obligation is not only in every generation, but each and every day!

As we know, there is more to going out of Mitzrayim than just leaving the actual confines of

the land of Egypt, and Chassidus explains that the word מצרים can also mean מִצְרִים וגבולים—boundaries and limitations.²

That's why it's so important to **remember yetzias Mitzrayim**:

“The power of memory, imagination, and imagery is such that it can bring the soul of the thinker to a state of being identical to the one he is thinking about. The more control afforded to one's spiritual powers over his body, the closer his soul will be to the original occurrence he is trying to reach...

“For this reason, we are commanded to remember *yetzias Mitzrayim* daily; because every day we need to free our soul from the confines of the body...”³

THIS IS YIDDISHKEIT

In order to properly fulfill all of Torah and mitzvos, one must do away with all personal limitations and constraints, going out of his personal Mitzrayim. You can't just do the mitzvos that you understand, or learn Torah in the amount that you feel befits you. You need to do things because that's what Hashem wants and no other reason! Otherwise, your performance of mitzvos is for ulterior motives and not in order to fulfill Hashem's Will.

This is one of the principal teachings of *Toras haChassidus*: to put oneself on the side. The Frieddiker Rebbe related a story about the Tzemach Tzedek, who was approached by a Chossid lamenting of the fact that he has no desire to study Torah (“cheshek”). The Tzemach Tzedek replied: “Fool! What should I do that I **do** have the desire to study?!”

In other words: when someone enjoys studying Torah, even if he is studying *lesheim Shamayim*, he still derives intellectual pleasure, and the mitzvah is not free of ulterior motives. Whereas someone who lacks the desire and pleasure will have an easier time fulfilling the mitzvah properly.

(Yud-Tes Kislev 5714)

Everyday Doings

So what exactly is the *avodah* of leaving our personal Mitzrayim?

The Frieddiker Rebbe explains:

A person sets up his life by planning and scheduling everything according to his needs, setting up clearly defined limitations on his time.

First and foremost, a person must go out of Mitzrayim. That is, regardless of his plans and schedules, he must add a set time to study Torah every day, and properly devote himself to davening (“ס'זאל זיין געדאווענט; נישט אפגעדאווענט”).

Then, after *yetzias Mitzrayim* there is *krias yam suf*. Once a person starts on the path of *avodah* of *yetzias Mitzrayim*, he will immediately encounter various disturbances along the way, all of them being powerful and intimidating. For that, you will need Hashem's help, much like *krias yam suf* was performed by Hashem Himself. But in order to receive the Heavenly assistance, one first needs to “jump into the sea”—the approach of *mesiras nefesh*. Then, Hashem will turn the “sea” into “dry land,” removing all the obstacles along the way.⁴

The Rebbe takes matters a step further:

We say in *krias shema* that we love Hashem, not only בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך—with all our heart and with all our soul, but also בכל מאדך—with all our might. Meaning, more than our regular capacity, reaching further than what we may have perceived as normal *avodas Hashem*.

“Serve Hashem beyond all worldly calculations,” the Rebbe says. “Disregard all the talk of your neighbors and the trends they wish to pressure upon you. Disregard the talk of your own *guf* and *nefesh habahamis*; what it thinks is *geshmak* and what is not. Disregard even the calculations presented by the *nefesh ha'Elohis*. All of these calculations do not matter. The only important thing is to serve Hashem and do what He wants without any limitations whatsoever.”

The Rebbe specifies what this *avodah* means practically: “Every person must have his own personal *geulah*; going beyond his limitations and constraints. One must give tzedakah without limitations. One must daven properly; even if he thinks that his busy schedule and business life doesn't allow him to daven with a *minyan* and have adequate *kavana*, he should pay no heed to these thoughts. The same is true with setting times for Torah study, especially on Shabbos. One must study Torah in a manner that transcends all limitations.”⁵

It's All Relative

Even after one leaves his personal Mitzrayim, breaking his nature and moving up to another level in *avodas Hashem*, there will always still be room for growth.

Although you have left that “Mitzrayim,” you are essentially still in a “Mitzrayim” in comparison to a higher level. And so the going out of Mitzrayim is actually a constant, never-ending *avodah*.

The Rebbe gives an example:



LIVING LESSONS, HAGGADAH

We know that davening is like climbing a ladder, one step at a time.

First, we make a preparation for davening. This is the first step, freeing one's heart and mind of worldly affairs and preparing to daven to Hashem.

"Just putting on a *gartel* and getting ready to daven is already a form of *yetzias Mitzrayim*," the Rebbe explains. "Freeing yourself from worldly matters and personal limitations.

"But this is obviously not enough. For although you left one level of *Mitzrayim*, in comparison to the next level, you are still in a personal Egypt with all its limitations. You then need to begin with '*Hodu*,' moving one level up and leaving the current *Mitzrayim*, and then move on to the next, and so on, until you reach the 'climax' at *Shmoneh Esrei*.

"But no matter how high a level you reached today with your davening, tomorrow morning you will start this process of leaving *Mitzrayim* yet again; only this time it will begin on a higher plane. There is always room for growth, with every exodus from *Mitzrayim* being followed by another."⁶

TIME TO LEAVE

At the Purim farbrengen of 5711, just a month after the Rebbe accepted the *nesius*, the Rebbe spoke throughout the *sichos* about the *yom tov* of Purim as being a time that every person must go beyond himself.

Towards the end of the farbrengen the Rebbe related a story of how the Rebbe Rashab recited Chassidus for the Friediker Rebbe on the last Simchas Torah of his lifetime (in the year תר"פ). When he concluded, he told the Friediker Rebbe, "You must go out of your current self and become a new person" ("ארויסגיין פון זיך און ווערן אן אנדערער").

The Rebbe concluded with a lesson:

We all must go out of our current selves and become new people; each one according to his level.

Some people think that if they walk out in the street while their beard is not rolled up or their tie is not exactly fashionable, they can hardly be considered human. They must go out of their current selves!

Each person must leave his current state, every person according to his own level. Even in matters

of holiness, Torah and mitzvos, we need to push ourselves out of our current state and become new people!

Key to the Final Geulah

Completing this *avodah* of *yetzias Mitzrayim* will ultimately bring the *geulah*.

The Rebbe explains:

In *Mitzrayim*, the Yidden suffered from עבודה כבדה—backbreaking labor. The Gemara interprets this as "women's tasks were assigned to men and men's tasks to women." This was especially difficult, for even if the tasks themselves were not so hard, the workers were not accustomed to doing such work.

In our time as well, in order for us to leave this *galus*, we don't necessarily need to do the biggest and most difficult tasks. We need to break ourselves by doing those things that we are not accustomed to—changing our usual habits (in Chassidus terms: שינוי הרגילות).

It's about pushing ourselves to go the extra mile. As the Alter Rebbe quotes in Tanya, when one hired a donkey driver for ten *parsa*, he paid one *zuz*; but to go eleven *parsa* the rate was two *zuz*. Because the extra *parsa* made the trip longer than the usual distance, it cost the rider double, even if it wasn't double the distance.

In our generation, we only need to complete the small tasks in order to bring Moshiach. Everything else was already accomplished by our predecessors. We need to break ourselves and do things small but significant, small but difficult for our nature.

With that we will merit the *geulah* from today's *Mitzrayim*.⁷ **T**

1. Chinuch mitzvas aseh 21
2. Torah Ohr B'shalach 64a, et.al.
3. Igros Kodesh vol. 7 p. 205
4. Sichas Shemini Atzeres 5693; quoted from the Rebbe's Igros Kodesh vol. 4 p. 15
5. Maamar B'chol Dor V'Dor 5734.
6. Likutei Sichos vol. 2 Mattos-Maasei p. 349
7. Sichas Shabbos parshas Vaera 5711

כוס
ישועות
אשא

Overflow of Blessing

Kos Shel Bracha

לזכות
הרה"ג הרה"ת ר' שלום דוב בער
וזוגתו מרת ח' מושקא
בנותיהם ברכה ליפשא ועליזה שיחיו
שוחאט



ng

In the preparation of this article we were greatly assisted by Rabbis Meir Harlig, Yosef Levertov, Yossi Lew, Hirshel Raskin, Yisroel Noach Vogel, and Shlomo Zarchi. זכות הרבים תלוי בהם.



Kos shel bracha is one of those times with the Rebbe that simply defy description. After a full Yom Tov that the Rebbe spent with the Chassidim, this was the finale—when every person had the opportunity to pass by the Rebbe and receive *kos shel bracha* from his hand, while hundreds of Chassidim in bleachers from all sides were watching and singing.

The Rebbe himself was especially *behisgalus* during this time, looking at every person one by one as he encouraged the singing and even danced; there were times when the Rebbe also sang with the crowd. Many people from surrounding communities and states, who weren't able to be in 770 during Yom Tov, came in for *kos shel bracha* in order to see the Rebbe in this special, *yom-tov'dike* mode.

For Chassidim after Gimmel Tammuz, although we cannot experience what Simchas Torah and Yom Tov was like in 770, the videos and photographs of *kos shel bracha* afford us a unique view of the Rebbe—in scenes which were at times even more *freilich* than Simchas Torah itself.

In the following pages, we attempt to give an overview of what *kos shel bracha* was like—how it worked, when it happened, and a bit of what it felt like—though words fail to capture even a fraction of this heavenly experience.



THE REBBE MAKES HAVDALAH ON MOTZOEI YOM TOV FOLLOWING THE FARBRENGEN, PRECEDING KOS SHEI BRACHA.

When it happened

Every time the Rebbe washed for *hamotzi* in public and *bentched* over a cup of wine, he would distribute from that wine—the *kos shel bracha*, the cup of blessing—to those who were present (as is brought down in the Alter Rebbe's *Shulchan Aruch*¹).

However, at regular farbrengens the Rebbe did not wash for *hamotzi*. The exception to this (aside for certain rare occasions) was the farbrengen held at the end of a Yom Tov, when the Rebbe would wash and continue the *seuda* and farbrengen for hours into the night of Motzoei Yom Tov. This happened several times a year: the second day of Rosh Hashanah, Simchas Torah, Moshiach's *seuda* on Acharon Shel Pesach, and the second day of Shavuot. (Until 5731, there was also a farbrengen and *kos shel bracha* on the second day of Sukkos.)

[If it was a three day Yom Tov (with Shabbos following Yom Tov), the Rebbe would farbreng Friday evening with *hamotzi*, but hold the *kos shel bracha* until the following day. Then he would usually hold two farbrengens on Shabbos: a short one at 1:30 p.m.—the regular Shabbos farbrengen—and another right before *shkia* as a continuation to the Yom Tov farbrengen, after which he would distribute the *kos shel bracha*. However, if Rosh Hashanah was a three day Yom Tov there was only one farbrengen, and *kos shel bracha* would be distributed on Shabbos itself.²]

How it Worked

This is how it usually worked:

The Rebbe entered the farbengen about a half hour before *shkia*. Rabbi Berel Junik, the dedicated *meshamesh bakodesh*, would be ready with a *kvort* full of water, a *shissel*, and a towel. After washing, the Rebbe would put the towel on the armrest of his chair, where it would remain for the rest of the farbrengen.

Throughout these farbrengens, the Rebbe would say *l'chaim* on wine from his silver *becher*, which was filled by the official *sar hamashkim* Rabbi Mordechai Mentlik, the *rosh yeshiva* of the central Tomchei Temimim in 770. After Rabbi Mentlik passed away in 5748, his place was taken by Rabbi Junik.

As per Shulchan Aruch³, at the very end of the farbrengen, right before *bentching*, the Rebbe would always drink something. In the early years it was half and half, a type of lemonade/seltzer drink, later it was seltzer, and by the *late mems* it was water; the Rebbe would drink it out of a large glass cup on the farbrengen table prepared for this purpose. The Rebbe said *Shir Hamaalos* and washed *mayim acharonim* from what was left in the cup. Rabbi Mentlik refilled the *kos* and the Rebbe began to lead *bentching*.

“When the Rebbe said ‘*Birshus maranan verabanan virabosai*,’ there was always a pause after the word ‘*Birshus*,’” says Rabbi Yossi Lew. “Every single time; this never changed. Now, in the early years, there were often times that the Rebbe said ‘*Birshus Adoneinu*’ (and then ‘*maranan verabosai*’). In fact, even as late as the 5740s, I remember hearing the Rebbe say ‘*Birshus Adoneinu*.’ And it seems that even when it wasn’t said out loud, it’s possible the Rebbe was thinking it—or saying it very quickly—which was perhaps the reason for the pause.”

After *bentching* came *maariv*. Being that it was after *shkiah*, the wine from *bentching* couldn’t be drunk until later and would therefore be used for *havdallah*. The Rebbe would walk over to the right-hand side of the farbrengen *bima*, where the *shtender* and a temporary “wall” would quickly be set up, (from 5746, the Rebbe would daven *maariv* closer to his farbrengen place).

After *maariv*, the Rebbe would return to the farbrengen table for *havdallah*. He would raise the *becher*—still filled from the wine from *bentching*—and Rabbi Mentlik would refill it over the brim (as he would do every time the Rebbe lifted the *becher*).

The Rebbe would then begin *havdallah* in the iconic tune seared into the minds of all who heard it: “*Hi-nei Kel yeshuasi...*”

“The *niggun* for *havdallah* changed over the years,” says Rabbi Yisroel Noach Vogel. “In the earlier years, the Rebbe said it in a lower note; in later years a higher note which was very *geshmak*. On Motzoei Rosh Hashana 5740, which was an exceptionally *freilech* Yom Tov (see below), the Rebbe’s tune during *havdallah* was very *geshmak*.”



MOTZOEI PESACH 5739, YOSSEI MELAMED via JEM, 12/687



After *havdallah*, the distribution of *kos shel bracha* would begin. The first person to receive was the Rebbe's brother-in-law, Rashag, and then came the people who had sat nearby during the *farbrengen*.

At All Times

Rashag once missed *kos shel bracha*, and the Rebbe's reaction was very telling as to its significance. In 5730, Rashag's mother passed away during Chol Hamoed Sukkos, so the *aveilus* began on Motzoei Simchas Torah. He left 770 right away to remove his shoes and begin sitting *shiva*. However, during *kos shel bracha*, the Rebbe was looking for him.

Later, when the Rebbe visited him for *nichum aveilim*, Rashag explained that he had left early in order to remove his shoes immediately after *maariv*. The Rebbe replied that he could have davened *maariv* after *kos shel bracha*, and given the wine to someone else to drink. In fact, the Rebbe added, leaving early constituted a problem since it was a public display of *aveilus* (which is prohibited on Yom Tov). In the end the Rebbe said that he would give him from some wine that had remained in his room.

Rashag said that he had sent a *bochur* to get *kos shel bracha* on his behalf.

"Which *bochur*?" the Rebbe asked. Rashag motioned to a *bochur* standing there. Addressing the *bochur*, the Rebbe asked, "In what way did you ask?"

"For Rabbi Gurary," the *bochur* said.

Turning back to Rashag, the Rebbe motioned with his hand, "There are many Rabbi Gurarys..."

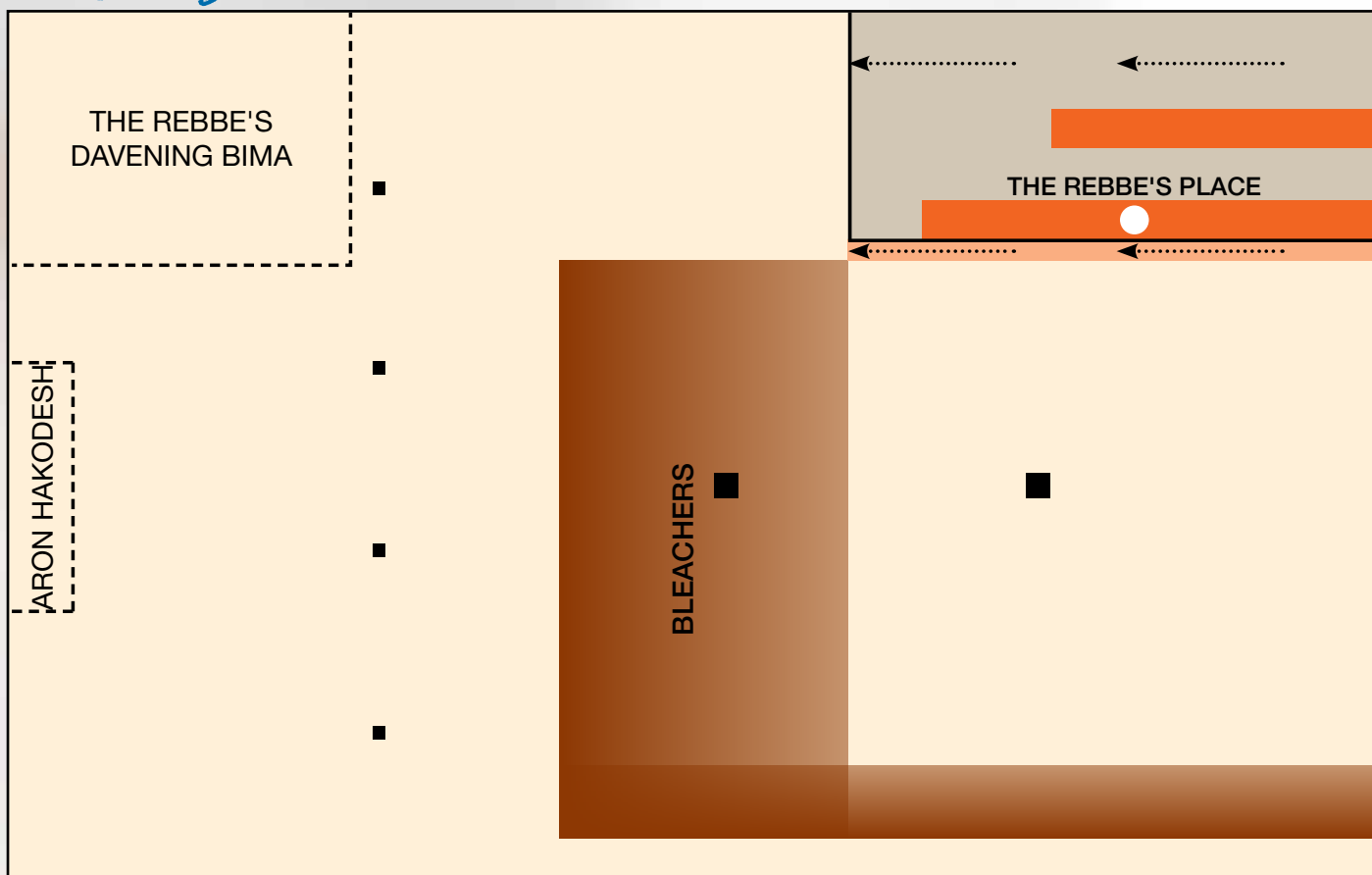
In those first few minutes, as the Rebbe was beginning to distribute *kos shel bracha*, and sometimes during *maariv*, the entire room would undergo a drastic overhaul. All of the benches on one side of the room were removed to make room for people to stand and get around.

Reb Zalmon Jaffe describes the scene: "There was a terrific commotion during *maariv*. Some of the appointed stewards were busying themselves rearranging and pulling away benches and tables in order to make additional space for the anticipated *kos shel bracha* lines to commence immediately following *maariv*. Their efforts made it a hazard to stand still to say the *amidah*. It was a miracle that no one was injured by the overhead progression of tables and benches!"⁴

Schematic of Kos Shel Bracha

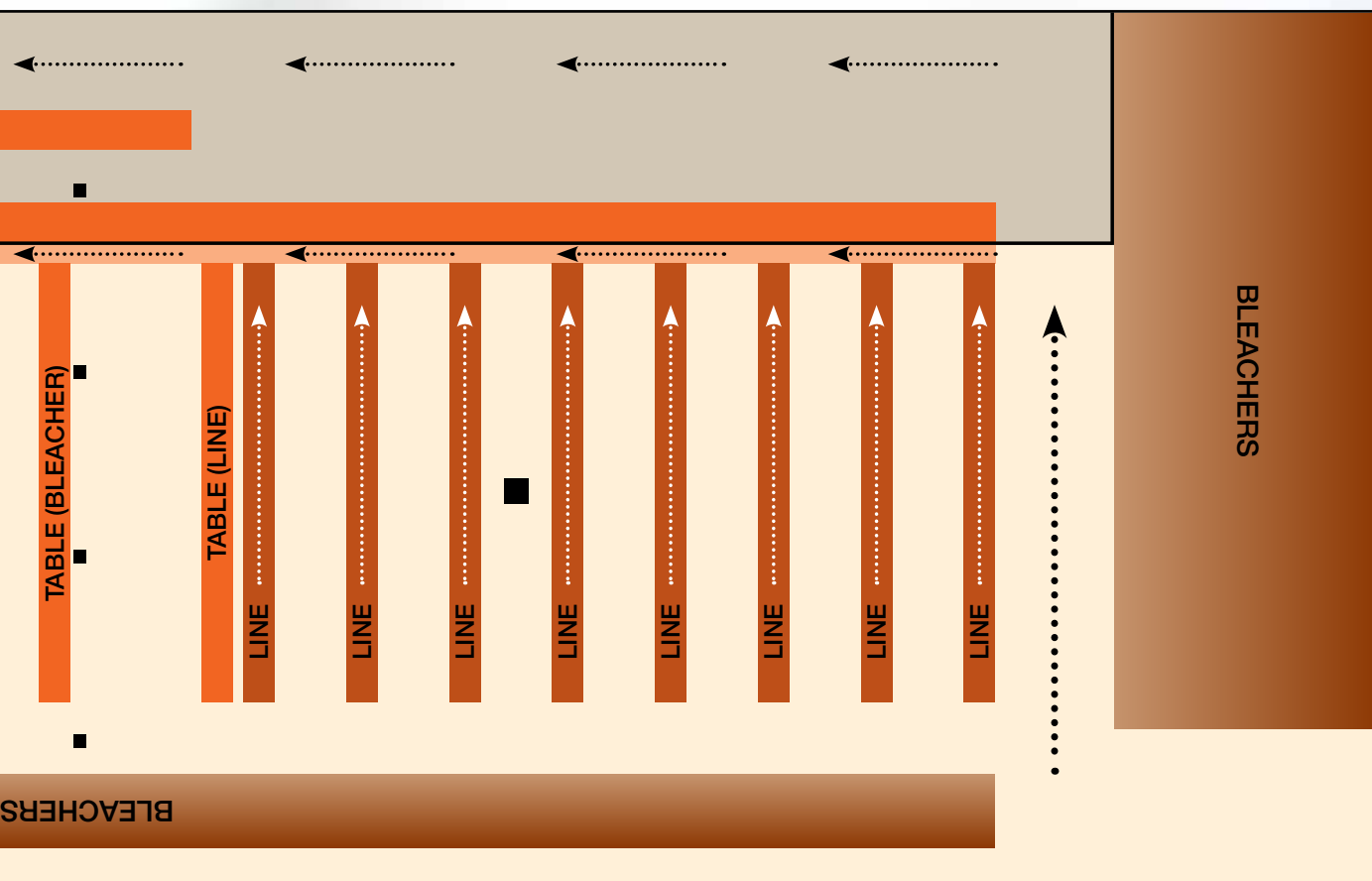
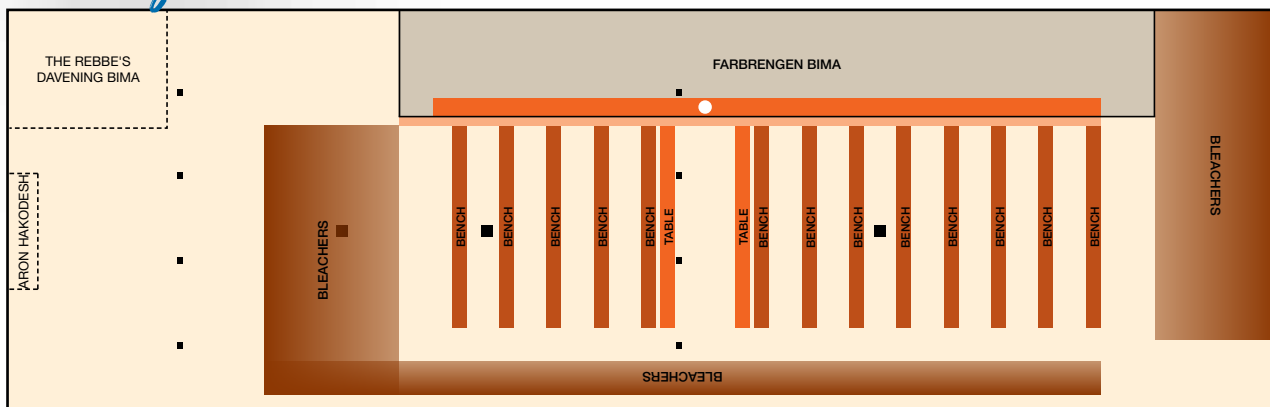
- After *benctching*, the Rebbe davened *maariv* at his *shtender* which had just been brought over.
- The Rebbe recited *havdallah*.
- As the Rebbe began giving out *kos shel bracha*, the benches on the left of 770 were moved out of the way to make room for the crowd.
- Meanwhile, people got up on the bleachers to watch the Rebbe.
- The Rebbe distributed *kos shel bracha* near the east end of the bima (left). The east table (to the left) became a bleacher, and the west table (to the right) was a line. (After 5746, the Rebbe distributed at the *farbrengen* place, near the middle; the left table was taken out and the right table became a bleacher.)
- In order to receive *kos shel bracha*, you would join one of two lines:
- **The back line:** you would go to the rear of 770, where a line went up the stairs and onto the back of the *farbrengen bima*.
- **The front line:** you would join one of several lines on the benches. Under the direction of several volunteers from the *vaad hamesader*, these would feed into one single line on the table alongside the front of the *farbrengen bima*.
- Standing between the tables, the Rebbe would switch between the lines at his discretion.
- After receiving *kos shel bracha*, you would leave the *bima* using the stairs.

Kos Shel Bracha



It should be noted that this is only a rough approximation, as the exact setup of 770 often changed over the years.

Farbrengen



Unbounded Joy

As the Rebbe was distributing *kos shel bracha*, the *bochurim* and *yungeleit* standing on all sides—as well as all the people standing in line—would sing lively *niggunim*, intermittently encouraged by the Rebbe. The Rebbe would pour to about five to eight people at a time, after which the *becher* was refilled by Rabbi Mentlik (later, Rabbi Junik). Although the Rebbe was giving out to so many thousands of people, he would always look up and make eye contact with each person as they passed.

When refilling the *becher*, Rabbi Mentlik was careful to do it in a way that the wine being added was nullified to the wine already in the *becher*. Each time he poured wine in, he added less than was originally in the *becher*, and then he would pour in some more. This made the refilling take some time. This time period, as the Rebbe was waiting, was often when he would give the greatest encouragement to the singing.

“Generally, as the Rebbe was giving out *kos shel bracha* with his right hand, he would encourage the singing with his left hand”, Rabbi Hirshel Raskin says. “There were times that he would encourage with both hands—as he was holding the *becher*. Can you imagine what happened with the wine...? In general it was a miracle that any wine ever stayed in the *becher*...

“And then there were those special times when the Rebbe put down the *becher* and encouraged the singing with both hands, dancing in his place with amazing energy. It is impossible to describe the *giluyim* in those moments.”

“Sometimes,” Rabbi Yossi Lew says, “the *bochurim* would go through various *sedarim* of *niggunim*. All the *niggunim* on the Rebbe’s *kapitlach*; all the *niggunim* that the Rebbe taught, etc. Who can forget those times when we were singing ‘*Stav Yapitu*,’ and the Rebbe encouraged the singing at the words ‘*v’ato tishma-a-a-a-a-a....min hashamayim*.’ It was a very special moment.”



THE REBBE MOTIONS FOR CHASSIDIM TO WHISTLE.

MOTZOEI SIMCHAS TORAH 5749, LEVI FREIDIN *via* JEM, 258140





The Chazzan and his Children

Then there was Chazzen Tzvi Hersh (Grischa) Tsatskis. He was an emigre from Tatarstan, where he grew up under the Communist regime, and he and his family was educated by the underground Lubavitch network. Following over a decade of trying to emigrate without success, a Lubavitcher shliach asked the Rebbe for a *bracha* for them, and less than a year later, they received the green light. As soon as they arrived in America, Tzvi Hersh and his family came to the Rebbe to express their gratitude. After the *farbrengen*, the Rebbe began giving out *kos shel bracha*.

He related: “I was sitting in the back, debating with myself whether I should join them. I wanted to, but not being a Chabad Chossid, I wasn’t sure if I should, until I saw the line coming to an end. And then, on impulse, I got up and stood at the back of the line. Before long, I found myself in front of the Rebbe holding my cup. The Rebbe gave me a big smile, poured wine into my cup, and I said *l’chaim*. I started to walk away, but the Rebbe called me back. He motioned for me to come forward.

“So I came back, and he gave me an even bigger smile and poured more wine into my cup. I said *l’chaim* and then he spoke to me in Russian: “Don’t have any more doubts.” I was so shaken that I almost fainted. Then he said, “Sing!” And I started to sing the Pesach song, ‘Who knows one!’ Except I sang it in the Russian: ‘*Ech Ti Zimlak...*’”⁵

From then on, Chazzen Tsatskis was a permanent fixture at *kos shel bracha* leading the singing, often with his trademark song “*Ech Ti Zimlak*.” When he was present, the Rebbe’s encouragement was stronger than ever.

He would often come with his children. Once, when he came only with his son but not his daughter, the Rebbe immediately asked for her: “Where is she? Where is Tanya?” His son immediately ran to call his wife, and Tanya—a little girl at the time—was immediately brought over. When the Rebbe saw her, he waved to her, and from then on, Mr. Tsatskis would always bring her with him.

Once, during *kos shel bracha* of Motzoei Simchas Torah 5747, Mr. Tsatskis was singing “*Ech Ti Zimlak*” as usual, and the Rebbe was encouraging the song with one hand as he was distributing the *kos shel bracha* with the other. His daughter Tanya was singing along into the microphone, and after a few minutes, the Rebbe instructed Rabbi Groner to tell her, gently, that she was too old to be singing in front of men.

When Rabbi Groner returned, the Rebbe looked back at her, and it seemed that he was concerned that she was upset. So in the middle of the song, during the countdown—

Shesh knizek mishni....[six sidrei Mishna]

Piat knieznik tur.... [five books of the Torah]

Tchitiri nashich matushki...[four are the mothers]—

the Rebbe put down his *becher*, turned to face the girl, and started clapping with amazing enthusiasm in her direction. The scene was indescribable. The Chassidim—who hardly knew the refrain of the song, let alone the countdown—joined along, singing *aiya-aiya, aiya-aiya, aiya-aiya*, faster and faster, long after the countdown was over.

Interactions

Throughout the evening, the Rebbe was often very *freilach*, smiling to people as they passed and telling them a few words. The following are some selections from Motzoei Rosh Hashana 5743:

❖ Rabbi Groner's ten-year-old son asked the photographer Mr. Levi Freidin for his camera. The Rebbe turned and asked, "Since when is the child involved in such things?" Addressing the child, the Rebbe said: "Your *inyan* is to learn Chassidus; your *zeides* didn't know of such things."

❖ When "Charlie Buttons" passed, he held out three cups, explaining that one is for him, the second for his *yetzer hara* which had been transformed to good, and the third for the *yetzer tov* itself. The Rebbe smiled and filled them all with wine.

❖ The chairman of a *kibbutz* came by. The Rebbe took the glass cup which he usually used for soda (or water), emptied it, and filled it with wine. Giving it to the man, the Rebbe said in an Israeli accent, "*Hatzlacha rabba*."

❖ Someone passed with his child who was wearing a hat with the emblem of Tzivos hashem. The Rebbe pointed at the emblem and told the father to look at it.

❖ Someone asked for wine on behalf of Prime Minister Menachem Begin, adding that he had done a fine job (in the war of '*Shalom Hagali*'). The Rebbe replied that he must stand strong.

❖ At the end of the night, when the Rebbe's chair was brought for *bracha acharona*, there was some pushing. Mr. Levi Freidin started shouting "Don't push the chair! Where are you pushing!" The Rebbe commented, "They want it to be *achishena*..."

Over the years, there were open miracles that occurred during *kos shel bracha*. In one of his journals, Mr. Zalman Jaffe relates one such story: "Rabbi Yehuda Paldy, an Israeli journalist and activist on behalf of the "Who is a Jew?" campaign, had broken his leg twenty years ago and, after three operations, it was decided that nothing further could be done for him. He could only walk leaning heavily on a big stick. He had been coming to see the Rebbe for three years now. On this past motzoei Shavuos, whilst he was receiving his wine during *kos shel brocha*, bent double over his stick, the Rebbe asked him why he still walks with a stick. He should now leave it behind. Rabbi Paldy smiled and the Rebbe said it was not a joke. "You don't need a stick."

"So, he now walks fine without a stick. The men and boys who saw him previously walking laboriously with a stick still cannot believe it. This is Rabbi Paldy's own story, and he is keeping the stick as 'Exhibit A' for a constant reminder."



MOTZOEI SIMCHAS TORAH 5742, YOSSI MELAMED via JEM, 125812



MOTZOEI SIMCHAS TORAH 5751, LEVI FREIDIN via JEM, 175856



MOTZOEI ROSH HASHANA 5737, LEVI FREIDIN via JEM, 203805



MOTZOEI SIMCHAS TORAH 5737, LEVI FREIDIN via JEM, 205149

From all over

“As the night would wear on,” Rabbi Raskin says, “people would come from all over to receive *kos shel bracha*: Boro Park, Williamsburg, Monsey, Flatbush. Half of the room was filled with *shtreimelach*, *spodeks*, hats, regular yarmulkes. In fact, most of the line came from non-Lubavitchers; it was unbelievable!”

In addition to the wine that the Rebbe distributed to every person passing by, he would also give bottles to *shluchim*, *askanim*, and occasionally other individuals. On Motzoei Simchas Torah and Motzoei Shavuot these were small bottles of *mashke*, and on Motzoei Acharon Shel Pesach, bottles of wine. (Bottles were not given out on Motzoei Rosh Hashanah.)

“*Kos shel bracha* was such a *geshmake* time,” Rabbi Vogel says. “It was a time to just be with the Rebbe. It’s not like a *farbrengen* where you’re concentrating on the *sichos*, or even other times; you were simply together with the Rebbe, watching, singing...”

“The *giluyim* of *kos shel bracha* were something special,” says Rabbi Raskin. “There were the *giluyim* of *sichos*, dollars, *yechidusen*, *farbrengens*, rallies; but the *giluyim* of *kos shel bracha* were different. There were some people who didn’t necessarily push so much at the *farbrengens*, but they were always there for *kos shel bracha*. That’s what we lived with! We lived from one *kos shel bracha* to the next.”

Is there anyone who didn’t get yet?

At the end of the night, as both lines would finally come to an end, the chair was brought for the Rebbe to sit for *bracha acharona*.

After the *bracha acharona*, the Rebbe would occasionally say a few words to the crowd.

On Motzoei Simchas Torah 5748 it was an announcement about *hakhel*: “*Hatzlacha rabba umuflaga* to every single person in *hakhel*...Every single person could, must, and surely *will* be successful in the activities of *hakhel* in their place, neighborhood, and overall surroundings...”

Before leaving, the Rebbe would often start a *niggun*—usually “*Ki Besimcha*”—and then walk upstairs to his room.

“Here we saw one of the most unbelievable things about the Rebbe,” says Rabbi Lew. “The Rebbe had spoken at the *farbrengen* for hours and hours; then he stood for hours and hours, pouring wine for each person. If you ever tried it, you’d see that the amount of exertion that such a thing takes is extraordinary. All the while, he was waving his hands, encouraging the *niggunim* etc. etc.

“Yet—and this happened *every single time*—before he went upstairs, the Rebbe would ask: ‘*S’duh nuch eimitzer vos darf bakumen? Is there anyone who didn’t get yet?*’”

“One could think, the five hours weren’t enough?! And there was *always* someone who didn’t get yet, someone who just couldn’t make it in the previous five hours of the Rebbe giving out.

“Most people would be relieved that such an exhausting task was finally over. But the Rebbe wanted to give more and more. Even after all of his giving, the Rebbe is always looking to give more.”



**THE REBBE SITS DOWN FOLLOWING KOS SHEL
BRACHA TO RECITE THE BRACHA ACHARONA.**
MOTZOEI ROSH HASHANA 5748, YOSSEI MELAMED *via* JEM, 132155



MOTZOEI SHAVUOS 5737, YOSSEI MELAMED via JEM, 114918



Special Moments

Throughout the years, there were unique moments that stand out in the minds of all those who witnessed them. A small selection is included below.

Piannismio! Motzoei Simchas Torah 5729

Reb Shmuel Katan came from Eretz Yisrael to spend Tishrei with the Rebbe for the first time. During *kos shel bracha* on Motzoei Simchas Torah, the *bochurim* somehow found out that he had a violin with him, and on their initiative he ran to the house where he was staying to bring it.

He related: “I stood in line to receive *kos shel bracha*, which I received from the Rebbe’s hand. Overcome with emotion, I said, “Rebbe, I would like permission to play the violin.” As the Rebbe continued to distribute *kos shel bracha*, he looked at me for a second, with a penetrating look, and said: “*Tov me’od! Bibakasha!* Very good! Please do!”

“The Rebbe continued to distribute *kos shel bracha* while I took out my violin. I was told—with the Rebbe’s consent, obviously—to play the *niggun* “*Essen Est Zich*.” Towards the end of the *niggun*, the Rebbe gestured with his shoulders, as if to say, ‘Something isn’t right.’ When I finished the *niggun*, the Rebbe said there were two nuances [*kvetches*] that I had played which weren’t part of the song.

Once I corrected it and reached the last stanza of the *niggun*, which is wordless, the Rebbe asked me to repeat it several times: “*Mach noch amol, noch amul—uber pianissimo*,” the Rebbe said. “Play it over and over again, but pianissimo.” In Italian, this means ‘softly,’ very softly.

“So I played it as the Rebbe requested, every time softer and softer. The Rebbe turned to me and said, “Make the last note a *tekia gedola!*” as he gestured widely with his right arm.

“At the end of *kos shel bracha*, the Rebbe stood up and started walking out, and everyone started singing ‘*Ki Besimcha*.’ The Rebbe also sang. Then he looked at me, as if to say, “Nu, play along.” So I started playing along with everyone. As I’m playing, the Rebbe instructed me for the third time, saying, “Make it a crescendo!” I was familiar with the concept but I hadn’t heard exactly what the Rebbe had said. When the Rebbe saw me looking at him, unsure of what to do, he said, “The opposite of pianissimo.”⁶



A year of *kos shel bracha*: 5738

Due to the events of Shemini Atzeres, the Rebbe did not distribute *kos shel bracha* on Motzoei Simchas Torah. Throughout the year that followed—starting with Zos Chanukah and then during many Motzoei Shabbos farbrengens—the Rebbe would wash and then distributed *kos shel bracha*.

This was unique to that year, rarely happening at regular farbrengens before that, and certainly not afterwards.

At the final farbrengen of the year, on Erev Rosh Hashanah, the Rebbe said that he will now give out *kos shel bracha* once again, this time in order to officially make up for missing it on Motzoei Simchas Torah.⁷

Ubeyom Simchaschem: Motzoei Rosh Hashana 5740

“It already began during Rosh Hashanah,” Rabbi Hirshel Raskin relates. “The Rebbe announced ‘*Gut Shabbos! Gut Yom Tov!*’ three times—very uncharacteristic for a solemn day like Rosh Hashanah—and then ‘*Lishana tova tikasev viseichasem!*’ Then the Rebbe began ‘*Vesamachta!*’ The *olam* was shocked, *arois fun di keilim*. We saw that something special was happening. Then, on Motzoei Rosh Hashanah, throughout *kos shel bracha*, the Rebbe was very *freilich*, setting down the *becher* several times and encouraging many of the *niggunim* with both hands, and even singing out loud together with the crowd.”

“*Kos shel bracha* wasn’t very long, but the Rebbe encouraged almost every single *niggun*,” Rabbi Yisroel Noach Vogel recalls. “During the *niggun* of ‘*Didan Notzach*’—before there were words—the Rebbe made so *freilich* by that *niggun*, the crowd was going wild, *mamesh* screaming the *niggun!*”

Towards the end of *kos shel bracha*, the Rebbe told the *chazzan*, Reb Moshe Teleshevsky, to put the words of the *possuk* ‘*Ubeyom Simchaschem*’ to the *niggun* that was being sung at the moment. (Rosh Hashanah fell out on Shabbos that year, and the *maamar*’s *dibbur hamaschil* was ‘*Ubeyom*

simchaschem eilu haShabassos.’) The Rebbe added that in a *piyut*, the first words are repeated after each stanza, as in the *piyut* ‘*Ulay Yerachem.*’ (When he didn’t understand what the Rebbe was saying, the Rebbe told him, “Aren’t you a composer?!”))

Reb Moshe tried figuring it out and teaching it to the crowd, but it didn’t go over very well. Finally, after fifteen or twenty minutes, the Rebbe said: “A *Simchas Torah*’dike *niggun* *vet mistame gein besser*—A *Simchas Torah niggun* will probably work better.” They began singing “*Zol shoin zain di geula*” without the words.

“The Rebbe set down his *becher* and started passionately encouraging the singing with both hands,” Rabbi Vogel says. “First the Rebbe began clapping very strongly, then he started motioning with both hands, then it was back to clapping. It was truly unbelievable.”

“There was amazing *simcha*,” Rabbi Hirshel Raskin says. “The Rebbe danced; to say it was like *Simchas Torah* is an understatement! It was *Simchas Torah sheb’Simchas Torah*—on Motzoei Rosh Hashanah!”

When the photographer Levi Freidin returned to Eretz Yisrael with the video, the Chassidim were overjoyed to see that the Rebbe had returned to his full strength following Shemini Atzeres 5738.



LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM, 19803

THE REBBE INSTRUCTS CHAZZAN MOSHE TELESHEVSKY TO SING A NIGGUN TO THE WORDS ‘UBYOM SIMCHASCHEM’.



LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM, 199864

Tzivos Hashem Choir: Motzoei Simchas Torah 5742

A large children's choir, dressed in their Tzivos Hashem uniforms, came to *kos shel bracha* and sang behind the Rebbe. Throughout the evening, the Rebbe encouraged the singing every once in a while. "At the very end," Rabbi Yossi Lew says, "the Rebbe began starting *niggunim*: 'Nyet Nyet Nikavo' and 'We Want Moshiach Now.' The Rebbe was almost conducting them, using both hands to encourage the singing."

Ana Avda: Motzoei Rosh Hashanah 5743

Reb Zalman Teibel came by for *kos shel bracha*. Many years earlier, in 5729, Reb Zalman had introduced the *niggun* "Ana Avda" to Chassidim. While sitting at the Rebbe's *seudah* in the Frierdiker Rebbe's apartment on the first day of Shavuot, the Rebbe asked Reb Zalman to sing a *niggun*, and after his unsuccessful attempts at remaining silent, he acquiesced and sang "Ana Avda." During the *seudah* that night, and then again on the following day, the Rebbe asked him to sing it again. At the farbrengen on the second day of Shavuot, the Rebbe asked that the Chassidim adopt this *niggun* and learn it, and it became a *niggun* which the Rebbe showed much *chavivus* to and started on his own many times.

Now, over a decade later, Reb Zalman was an elderly man. He went by *kos shel bracha* together with Rabbi Chaikel Chanin, who asked the Rebbe for a *bracha* that Reb Zalman should be *be'simcha*. In response, the Rebbe began singing the *niggun* "Ana-Ana Avda" together with Reb Zalman. At first Chassidim tried joining in the song as they normally would, but the Rebbe kept on singing, so the crowd slowly quieted down and listened—a very

rare sight in the 5740s. As he sang, the Rebbe motioned passionately in the direction of Reb Zalman, who was singing together with him, and then announced: "It was just Rosh Hashanah. Now we're going to Tzom Gedalya, the Asseres Yemei Teshuva, Yom Kippur, Z'man Simchaseinu, Simchas Torah. May we be *zoche* to sing this [*niggun*] with Moshiach as an '*ana avda*,'⁸ together with you!"⁹

Non-Yom Tov Kos Shel Bracha: Throughout the Years

There were rare occasions (in addition) that the Rebbe washed and gave out *kos shel bracha* during a farbrengen that wasn't on Yom Tov: Yud Tes Kislev 5712; Purim 5712; Purim 5713; Lag Bomer 5735; farbrengen Chol Hamoad Sukkos 5737 for the Released Time children; Shabbos Bereishis 5750, and others. There were also the Rebbe's three visits to camp, in 5716, 5717, and 5720; and, most prominently, the famous surprise farbrengen on Shabbos parshas Nasso 5751.¹⁰ **T**



CB HALBERSTAM via JEM, 74946

KOS SHEL BRACHA FOLLOWING THE SURPRISE FARBRENGEN OF SHABBOS PARSHAS NASO 5751.

1. Shulchan Aruch Orach Chayim Siman 190 seif 5.
2. This too varied throughout the years; in earlier years the Rebbe distributed *kos shel bracha* on Rosh Hashanah itself; in later years the Rebbe held two farbrengens on Shabbos Shuva.
3. Orach Chayim Siman 179 Seif 8
4. My Encounter with the Rebbe, Shavuot 5734, "The mezuzah campaign."
5. Here's My Story "They are Observant".
6. Living Torah Disc 154, program 614 "Musical Interlude"
7. Sichos Kodesh 5738 vol. 3 p. 443; see also Sichas Zos Chanukah 5738, *ibid.* Vol. 1 p. 355
8. "באופן ד'אנא עבדא"
9. See Derher issue 43 (Nissan 5776), Behind the Picture: "Ana Avda" Reb Zalman Teibel's Niggun
10. See Derher issue 32 (Sivan 5775) p. 7

Faces of Kos Shel Brocha

MOTZOEI PESACH 5737, YOSSIE MELAMED via JEM 129755



MORDECHAI BARON via JEM 146086



YOSSIE MELAMED via JEM 130885



Rabbi Mordechai Mentlik, *rosh yeshiva* of 770, the *sar hamashkim*. Over the years, many commented on the amazing fact that the person pouring wine for the Rebbe—seemingly a job befitting a more simple individual—was in fact a brilliant and respected *rosh yeshiva*.

Rabbi Meir Harlig. A constant presence at *kos shel bracha* and other *chalukos*. He would play a role in keeping the line moving forward.

Rabbi Leibel Bistritzky. He would help direct the line on the right side of 770.

MORDECHAI BARON via JEM 147483



MORDECHAI BARON via JEM 145831



YOSSIE MELAMED via JEM 129905



Rabbi Berel Junik (R), *meshamesh bakodesh* and later *sar hamashkim*.

Rabbi Berel Lipskier (L). He would stand on the floor of 770, assisting Rabbi Mentlik and refilling his pitcher of wine, while also helping direct the flow of the line.

Chazzen Tzvi Hersh Tsatskis. He often led the singing.

Reb Meir Abehsera. When the Rebbe would give the signal to whistle—by putting two fingers near his mouth and nodding strongly—it was usually to Reb Meir. From his perch on the front end of the Rebbe's *farbrengen bima*, he would whistle very loudly with all his energy.



A Hat, a Tailor and a Promise.

“Let’s make a deal,” said one Chossid to his fellow. “From here on I won’t say *l’chaim* without you and you won’t say *l’chaim* without me!”

And so it became their practice; Reb Tuvya the *melamed* and Reb Shmuel the businessman would never say *l’chaim* one without the other.

It was Purim and the *l’chaim* was flowing freely in the city of Vietka, and indeed at homes of Jews all over, which meant that the Chassidisher pair Reb Tuvya and Reb Shmuel were in close proximity of each other. As the hard liquid took its effects, Reb Tuvya began toying with his friend’s hat; pulling and turning it, twisting and schlepping.

“What do you have with my hat?” Reb Shmuel exclaimed.

There, in the depth of a Purim *seuda*, Reb Shmuel

received a history about hats.

“At first,” Reb Tuvya began, “Yidden would wear round hats without a brim so that it would be easy for them to raise their eyes to our father in heaven.

“After a while, our cursed enemies decreed that we have to only wear hats with a brim in the front (*“kasket”*) so that we wouldn’t be able to turn our eyes heavenward. As terrible as this was, at least there was some comfort in the fact that throughout the day, as Yidden were busy with their daily activities, the hat got pushed around and the brim wasn’t covering their eyes.

“Following this, however, the *satan* grew even more clever and brought about hats with a brim all the way around (the *“shlyapah”* in Russian). And that’s what we have today. He wants to stop up us from looking up to our source of life,” he concluded.

“WHAT DO YOU HAVE WITH MY HAT?” REB SHMUEL EXCLAIMED

The Russian government’s eyes were always open, searching for a new opportunity to complicate the lives of its Jewish citizens, even if it meant taking simple things and turning them into big problems. For this reason, in their war against religion and Yiddishkeit in particular, Czar Nicholai instituted laws even about which hats were legal ware and which were treated as contraband.

Of course there were Chassidim who weren’t influenced or frightened and that is precisely the reason why Reb Hillel Paritcher found himself in a filthy Russian prison cell.

For refusing to wear the designated hat, he was thrown into jail and his acquaintances and fellow

Chassidim began searching for ways to free him.

“The tailor!”

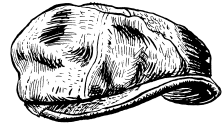
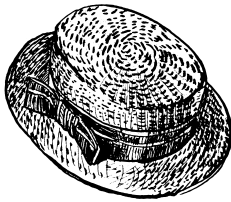
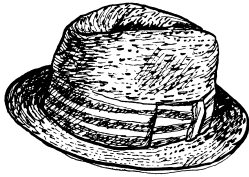
That was the answer.

The tailor of the local governor was very well connected in high places and he agreed, with the aid of a bottle of alcohol, to see that Reb Hillel would be released. The tailor quickly made his way over to the governor’s house and gave his wife the bottle, while convincing her to accompany him to the jail to free the prisoner.

When the tailor stood before Reb Hillel and related to him that he was now a free man, Reb Hillel asked with emotion, “With what can I repay you for this act of kindness?”

The tailor had one but simple request: “I would like to be buried next you,” he said. Reb Hillel assured him

לע"נ
מרת חנה רבקה בת הרב ר' מנחם מענדל
נלב"ע י"ב אדר ה'תשס"ב
ת'נ' צ' ב' ה'
נדפס ע"י משפחת לענט



that he would be granted this honor.

Throughout the year Reb Hillel would travel through the farmlands and visit the Jewish farmers and their families to encourage them and bring some Yiddishkeit to their busy lives.

These farming colonies had been set up by the Mittlerer Rebbe to help many Jewish families with a livelihood. They served to refute the baseless claims of the Russian anti-semites that the Jews didn't do anything for the country and instead, like leeches, sucked out the money from the hard working peasants.

The Mittlerer Rebbe felt responsible for these farmers and therefore sent shluchim to inspire and infuse them with a spiritual *chayus*.

On one of these journeys to the village of Kherson, in the summer of 5624, on the 11th of Av, the *tzaddik* Reb Hillel was *niftar* and laid to rest in the local cemetery.

Years later, in a way that only the Creator of the world can orchestrate, an elderly man who helped in the shul of Kherson and lived by his daughter, passed away. Even though it was in the middle of the night, members of the Chevrah Kadisha were immediately

summoned to arrange a burial, because it was the custom to never leave a body overnight.

The night was cold and the snow covered most of the landscape, so the first place that didn't have much accumulation of snow was quickly turned into a burial plot for this deceased elderly gentleman.

As the winter months faded and the snow turned into puddles and flowed away, the Jewish community realized that someone had been buried next to the *tzaddik* Reb Hillel; but who was he?

An investigation was immediately on its way and they soon discovered the identity of the man who was interred there and the events of that cold winter night.

They looked into this further and questioned the

daughter about her father's roots. They learnt that he had been a tailor in the city of Paritch and when his wife died he moved to Kherson to be with his daughter so not to live alone.

Still not convinced that this tailor deserved to be buried next to such a *tzaddik*, they sent the details of the story to the rav of Paritch so he could make a decision and verify the facts.

With great amazement to the wondrous ways of Hashem, the rav let them know about the promise of Reb Hillel in return for the bravery that the tailor had shown towards him.

It was clear before one and all how the words of a *tzaddik* were fulfilled. **1**

(Based on the memoirs of
Reb Yisroel Jacobson,
Zikaron Livnei Yisroel
chapter 30)

**THE JEWISH COMMUNITY
REALIZED THAT SOMEONE HAD
BEEN BURIED NEXT TO THE
TZADDIK REB HILLEL; BUT WHO
WAS HE?**



The Donkey of Moshiach

READY FOR MOSHIACH

In the beginning of Parshas Vayishlach the Torah tells us of the message that Yaakov sent to his brother Esav in anticipation of their impending reunion.

“ויהי לי שור וחמור צאן ועבד ושפחה ואשלחה להגיד לאדני למצא חן בעיניך...”

“...I have acquired oxen and donkeys, flocks, manservants, and maidservants, and I have sent to tell [this] to my master, to find favor in your eyes.”

The Midrash¹ opens our eyes to the deeper meaning contained in this message. Yaakov was telling Esav that his *avodah* was complete and he was thus prepared for the coming of Moshiach.

This is alluded to in the words “I have acquired...donkeys.” As the Midrash says, “This refers to Moshiach as it says, ‘עני ורוכב על החמור [Moshiach will arrive as] a poor man riding on a donkey.’”²

The Gemara³ tells us that Moshiach can appear in one of two ways, depending on the level of the spiritual readiness of the generation. If the generation is meritorious Moshiach will come on a cloud, however if the generation is not meritorious then he will come on a donkey.

Why then does Yaakov refer to Moshiach using specifically the word “donkey”? Why refer to Moshiach using the term that refers to a generation that is not meritorious?

This is especially puzzling since Yaakov himself was on a very high spiritual level, having already completed his *avodah*, and was certainly meritorious.

THE SAME DONKEY

In Pirkei D'Rebbi Eliezer⁴ it says that the donkey that Moshiach will arrive on is the same donkey that Moshe Rabbeinu used to bring his family from Midyan to Mitzrayim, and it is the same donkey that Avraham used by *akeidas Yitzchak*.

What is the significance in it being the same donkey?

לזכות
החתן הרה"ת ר' אליהו שיחי'
סאפאטשקינסקי
והכלה מרת שיינא רוחמה שתחי'
אלבסקי
לרגל בואם בקשרי שידוכין
י"ד שבט ה'תשע"ז
נדפס ע"י הוריהם
הרה"ת ר' חיים ברוך וזוגתו מרת
שטערנא שרה שיחיו אלבסקי
הרה"ת ר' יצחק זאב וזוגתו מרת
ברכה שיחיו סאפאטשקינסקי



He was referring to the tremendous spiritual heights that the Neshamah will attain in the future by virtue of refining the physical and material world which is not overtly spiritual and G-dly.

Avraham, Moshe, and Moshiach are all links in a chain, all part of a progression toward the time of Moshiach. Avraham began the process of preparing the world for the giving of the Torah. Moshe was the one who brought the Jews out of Mitzrayim to receive the Torah at Har Sinai. The giving of the Torah was the beginning of the process of refinement of the physical world which will ultimately bring about the coming of Moshiach.

THREE MODES OF TRAVEL

However, there is a difference in how Avraham, Moshe, and Moshiach actually use the donkey.

Avraham did not ride on the donkey, he merely put his supplies on the donkey, while he and Yitzchak both walked alongside.

Moshe also did not ride on the donkey, rather he put his family on its back. A person's family is much closer to him than his possessions; a wife is considered as one's own body, and a child is literally a part of the father.

Moshiach, however, will be riding on the donkey himself.

What do these differences represent?

Riding on a donkey is necessary to reach a destination that one could not reach on his own.

The word for donkey, "*chamor*," has the same root as the word for

physicality, "*chomer*." Spiritually, riding on a donkey represents the capacity of the physical world to carry a person to a level that he could not reach on his own.

Through engaging the physical and working on refining our part in this world, we are raised to a level that we could not have reached on our own.

However there are different degrees to which this capacity is revealed.

In the times of Avraham the physical world was stuck in its physicality. Eloikus could not penetrate the physical and make it holy. Therefore the physical lacked the capability to bring the person to a higher spiritual state. Only Avraham's possessions, which were used to fulfill Hashem's command, were elevated to a higher level.

In the times of Moshe Rabbeinu the process of refining the physical world began. The boundary between heaven and earth was broken, and Eloikus was able to penetrate the material world. Through doing mitzvos with physical objects, the world becomes refined and holy. By engaging and refining the physical world a person is elevated to a higher spiritual level. Nevertheless, until the coming of Moshiach this is limited to one's outer faculties, the lower levels of the soul that are manifest in his body.

It will be revealed how the lowest physical creations have the deepest source in *Eloikus*. Therefore, by way of refining the physical, the *neshamah* reaches heights unattainable until then.

YAAKOV IN THE HOUSE OF LAVAN

Yaakov had spent a long time in Charan in the house of Lavan where he had to deal with the physical, materialistic world. This is where he had to do his *avodah* of working to refine the physical world.

This is why Yaakov chose to refer to Moshiach specifically using the term "donkey." He was referring to the tremendous spiritual heights that the *neshamah* will attain in the future by virtue of refining the physical and material world which is not overtly spiritual and G-dly.

By refining the physicality of the house of Lavan, Yaakov was ready for the highest revelation of Moshiach, where Moshiach himself is riding on the donkey.⁵ ⑦

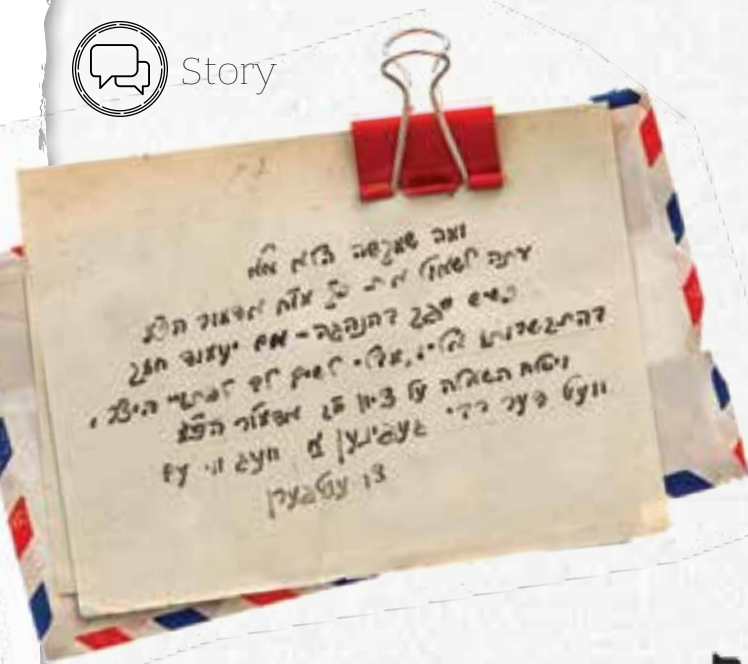
1. Bereishis Rabbah 75,6.

2. Zechariah 9,9.

3. Sanhedrin 98a.

4. Chapter 31; quoted by Rashi, Shemos 4:20.

5. Adapted from Lekutei Sichos vol. 1 Vayishlach p. 70-73.



דער רבי וועט געפינען א וועג...

A Mezuzah and a City

AS TOLD BY RABBI YISROEL ARYEH LEIB RABINOVICH (ASHKELON, ERETZ YISRAEL)

This story took place last summer, around the month of Av.

My wife and I are shluchim in Ashkelon, in the south of Eretz Yisrael. One Shabbos morning, at around seven o'clock in the morning, we woke up to a frightening cry.

"Abba, Ima, I can't walk..."

It was the voice of our two year old daughter Sheina. She had been walking for quite a while by that time, and her call had us jump out of bed and run to her room. To our consternation, we saw her attempting to stand, but with each try, her feet would just buckle and she would collapse on the ground.

Needless to say, we were very frightened. By *hashgacha pratis*, my sister was visiting our home that Shabbos and we

were able to leave the rest of our children with her, and we immediately prepared to take Sheina to the hospital.

As we were gathering a few things to bring along, she simply returned to being a small baby, crawling around on the floor, and from time to time she would forget her new situation, and she would attempt to stand only to fall back down again.

The hospital in Ashkelon is a short walk from home, so *baruch Hashem* we did not need to enter a dilemma about *chilul Shabbos*, and we walked her there in a stroller, arriving very quickly at the emergency room.

In Eretz Yisrael, the main population is Jewish, and therefore, visiting the hospital on Shabbos, if it is not a situation of *pikuach nefesh*, entails extensive *chillul Shabbos* through every step.

So, when the nurse admitted us, I asked her to type instead of write—as that is a lesser *chillul Shabbos*, and I began pestering her to find an Arab nurse to do the paperwork instead of her and so on and so forth.

Now, from my point of view, I wanted to find out if this was an issue of *pikuach nefesh*, and if—as I hoped—it was not, I would leave the hospital and return after Shabbos.

My plans had one impediment. According to the hospital regulations, they were not permitted to release us until the issue was under control. I began questioning the doctor. I asked him, if there would have been a seven hour line ahead of us, would you see us first, or would you let us wait. He answered that in that case (this was not actually the case, because on Shabbos, the emergency rooms in Eretz Yisrael are usually quite empty) he would have allowed us to wait; there was no immediate urgency. When he told me that, I asked him to allow us to wait in the waiting room until Shabbos was over, and when he agreed, I simply took my wife and daughter home.

My daughter went about crawling her way around, and we spent our Shabbos going about our regular schedule. As Shabbos drew to a close, I went to the Chabad House for *mincha* and *maariv*, and by the time I returned home, my wife had already written a letter to the Ohel with all of the details involved, asking for the Rebbe's *bracha*. She also had managed to take down all our mezuzos to be checked, as the Rebbe had instructed on innumerable occasions. On our way to the emergency room I dropped the mezuzos off at the *sofer Stam* of our Chabad House.

When we got back to the emergency room it was overflowing with people; we figured that we would not get in until three or four in the morning.

Since we had already heard that this was not a life-threatening issue, we decided to come back home and return the next morning.

The next morning we headed to the emergency room once more where we were admitted, and a doctor was assigned to us. He conducted a series of tests, and, as he did not see anything at first glance, told us to wait in the hall while he studied the results and return in one hour.

My wife and I were sitting on a bench, and our daughter was sitting on my wife's lap. Suddenly, she turns to us and says, "Abba, Ima, I can walk now; my feet hurt me only a little bit."

We were shocked. My wife helped her onto the floor, while I pulled out my phone to record the moment on video. My daughter put one foot on the ground, then the second one, and after a few wobbly steps with my wife's assistance, she began to walk and run as if nothing had ever happened.

Well, we still had a half hour before we would see the doctor. Meanwhile, we took her to the children's play corner of the hospital, where she ran and jumped around. She totally forgot that she had ever had an issue in the first place.

When we walked into the doctor's office, he took one look at the girl in front of him, and he asked us,

"Is this the same girl that you had here before?"

He was as mystified as we were; he told us that the tests did not show anything amiss, and prescribed some antibiotics "just in case."

We went home, and a couple of minutes later I get a call from the *sofer*. He wanted to let me know that he had gone through all of our mezuzos, and everything was okay besides for one small issue which he had corrected: in one mezuzah, the "*veis*" of "*uvilechticha*" was too short, and the word seemed to be split into two. He had added some length to the letter, and now the mezuzah was as good as new.

His news hit me like a bolt of lightning. I inquired what time he had checked and repaired the mezuzah, and he said,

"I just finished going through all of them; I finished with that mezuzah a few minutes ago..."

I realized that I had been a first hand witness to a miracle. I felt that it would probably be worthwhile to tell the story to the *anash* of Ashkelon; it would remind people of the importance of writing to the Rebbe and checking their mezuzos. So I wrote up the story, and sent it as a Whatsapp to the local *anash*.

At the time that I sent out the story, I forgot the abilities of Whatsapp. Within a few minutes, I began receiving messages from all of my friends and relatives who had heard about the story, and a short time later, I received a phone call from a local journalist, who wanted to confirm the story with me and write it up in the local newspaper.

We agreed. A photographer came to our home, took a picture of our daughter kissing the mezuzah, and the story was published in their next issue.

Within a short time, the entire city was buzzing about the miraculous occurrence. Many people, including the entire staff of the newspaper, came to write letters to the Rebbe and have their mezuzos checked...

I had not intended to publicize the story, but in the end, an entire city was lifted up by a story of the Rebbe's miracle. **T**

YOUR STORY

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



BIRKAS HACHAMA

4 Nissan 5741

Anticipation filled the air for days. A truly historical moment was about to unfold. True, this rare ritual was being observed throughout the world, but standing there at this awesome moment with the Rebbe was a most memorable experience not to be missed.

Every 28 years, as the sun completes its orbit and returns to the very spot where it was first created, we perform the mitzvah of *birkas hachamah*. The days surrounding 4 Nissan, 5741 were overcast and cloudy, but on that Wednesday morning the sun radiated with an intensified shine, setting the scene for this special moment.



לזכות
פריידא שתחי'
לרגל הגיעה לגיל שתים עשרה שנה,
היא עונת בת מצוה
ד' ניסן ה'תשע"ז
נדפס ע"י הוריה הרה"ת ר' אברהם דוד
וזוגתו מרת שיינא ח' שיחיו
ווייספיש





Already at daybreak Chassidim were seen gathering in the courtyard of 770, saving a spot to partake in this mitzvah up close, as close as possible to the Rebbe. In no time, the area was filled with men and women (each in their respective area), and at 8:15 a.m., following *shacharis* in 770, the Rebbe emerged towards the podium. An unmistakable intensity was seen on the Rebbe's face.

JEM 105362



Facing east, towards the sun, the Rebbe instructed the Chassidim to sing the Alter Rebbe's *Niggun of Daled Bavos*. Throughout the *niggun* the Rebbe's eyes were closed, his hand lightly banging on the *shtender*. Afterwards the Rebbe instructed that his father's *hakafos niggun* be sung, this time encouraging the *niggun* and banging on the *shtender* stronger.



As per the Rebbe's instructions, Reb Shea Pinson led the crowd with the *tefillah*. Before saying *Shehecheyanu*, the Rebbe took out of his pocket a new silk handkerchief over which to say the *bracha*. It should be noted that later on the Rebbe disclosed that he was also wearing a new silk *kapote* for the occasion.





To the great delight of the Chassidim, the Rebbe began saying a *sicha*, an unexpected turn to the event.

In between and following the three *sichos*, the Rebbe instructed for various *freiliche niggunim* be sung, some even started by the Rebbe himself. Throughout the singing, the Rebbe joyfully encouraged, clapping vigorously and turning to all sides.



JEM103900



CB HALBERSTAM via JEM, 105403

The Rebbe then requested that the 12 Pesukim be recited by six boys and six girls, yet another unexpected development. Following the Pesukim, amidst joyous singing, the Rebbe returned to his room at 770.

Derher**Letters**

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

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



Yud Shevat 5750 Niggun

Dear Editors,

I read the Shevat magazine with interest, *yasher koach* for another great issue.

In the article about Yud Shevat 5750 ["Celebration 40" Derher 53 (130)], you mention the *niggun* composed in honor of Yud Shevat with the *pessukim* "ויתן בפי שיר חדש תהילה לא-לוהינו", "[ולא] נתן ה' לכם לב לדעת ועינים לראות ואזנים לשמוע [עד היום הזה]. I must point out that the *niggun* we sang had 3 *pessukim*. The last *pessuk* of the *niggun* was the last one of *kapitel mem-alef* - ברוך ה' אלקי ישראל מהעולם ועד - העולם אמן ואמן.

Dovid Pink

Manchester, England

”

‘Mir zegenen zich nit tzvei mol’

Dear Editors,

In regards to what Rabbi Menachem Junik recounted ["In the Presence of Royalty" Derher 53 (130)] about his encounter with the Rebbetzin, that "As I began to say goodbye for a second time, she stopped me. 'Mir zegenen zich nit tzvei mol—one doesn't say good bye twice'" --

There's an interesting story that was actually on the Living Torah's My

Encounter a few months ago (Disc 156, Program 624) that Rabbi Yaakov Spitzetzky, a *bochur* at the time, was returning home to France. As customary before leaving town, he stood in Gan Eden Hatachton and waited for the Rebbe to pass by and wish him a *bracha* of "צאתכם לשלום". Next to him stood other travelers with their luggage, and the Rebbe indeed blessed each one "צאתכם לשלום", "safe travels," etc., but the Rebbe did not say anything to him. Shortly after, Rabbi Groner came out of the Rebbe's room and told him, "The Rebbe said I should tell you that the reason he didn't say anything to you is because this morning, the Rebbe answered your letter asking for a *bracha* for your trip to Paris, and there is a *kabbalah* from Rabbi Yehudah Hachassid that one doesn't say goodbye twice!"

Baruch Shmotkin

Stamford, Connecticut

”

Mincha-ma'ariv after the Ohel

Dear Editors,

There is a lot of interesting, rich content in the Teves issue. However, I must point out a few small inaccuracies which I came across.

In the article about the “Brazilian Delegation” that visited the Rebbe in Teves 5739 [Derher 52 (129)], it speaks about the Rebbe’s conversation with the group, and how they decided to push off their flights to participate in *mincha* with the Rebbe, after his return from the Ohel. You write that “When the Rebbe came in for *mincha-ma’ariv* after his return from the Ohel, the group was there. The Rebbe looked at them with a big smile and a surprised look. After *mincha* the Rebbe spoke again briefly with Rabbi Alpern and Mr. Rosen in *Gan Eden Hatachton*”.

“*Mincha-ma’ariv*” seems to be a mistake as in those years the Rebbe would not daven *mincha* and *ma’ariv* together on his return from the Ohel. Even when the Rebbe would return at a time that was late enough to daven *ma’ariv*, he would daven *mincha*, go back to his room and daven *ma’ariv* at the set time. Only later, in the 5740s, did the Rebbe daven *mincha* and *ma’ariv* consecutively when he returned from the Ohel late.

A member of the *hanhalas hayeshiva* in Morristown told me that in his years as a *bochur* during the 5730s, the Rebbe almost never came back from the Ohel late, and that there were times when a small *minyan* for *ma’ariv* בִּזְמַנָּה would take place in Gan Eden Hatachton so the Rebbe could participate and return home earlier, having not eaten the entire day. However the yeshiva *Minyan* took place at its regular time—6:45 in the winter and 9:30 in the summer.

Another small inaccuracy is in the Days of Meaning column [Derher 52 (129)] where it speaks about the farbrengens that took place in connection with Chof-Daled Teves 5723. You write, “The Rebbe held three farbrengens, one on Shabbos, 23 Teves, one on Motzei Shabbos, eve of Chof-Daled Teves, and a third one on Sunday, Chof-Daled Teves itself. While the first and **third** farbrengens were

publicized in advance, the one on Motzei Shabbos was a surprise farbrengen.”

In fact, both the second and third farbrengens (Motzei Shabbos and Sunday) were surprises. The Sunday night farbrengen was announced only that night at the end of the yeshiva dinner, and it started at 11:45 PM! [See Derher 7 (71) “The story of Shnas Hakan” for more about these farbrengens.]

Yitzchak Green

Morristown, New Jersey



Transcribing the Sichos

Dear Editors,

Last year I shared with you the story of our *yechidus* before we moved out on shlichus to Ann Arbor. In the article about *chazzara* [“Retaining Chassidus, part 2”] Derher 42 (119)], it says that in the *yechidus* I “gave the Rebbe a binder of *sichos* from 5732-5735 that hadn’t previously been published,” and continues to talk about the rest of that *yechidus*.

As I related at the time, I presented the Rebbe with a **number** of binders of *sichos* that I transcribed based on the *chazzara* from 5727-5735.

Another interesting and important part of the history of *chazzara* that was not included in the article, is that although four *bochurim*, Shlomo Zarchi, Ephraim Piekarski, Leibel Schapiro and Shalom Ber Levitin officially took on the responsibility of assisting Reb Yoel in his role of *chazzara* (as mentioned in the article), the one who would actually transcribe most of the *sichos* was Reb Avrohom Gerlitzky, also a *bochur* at the time. Reb Yoel would *chazzer* the Rebbe’s farbrengen on Motzei Shabbos and if he had difficulty, those *bochurim* who were the official *chozrim* would give him a hand, but the *hanacha*—transcription of

the many *sichos* from then—is credit to Reb Avrohom.

Until 5726, it was unheard of for anyone to publish an official *hanacha* of the Rebbe's *sichos* besides for Reb Yoel, but once these *bochurim* became involved Reb Avrohom's *hanachos* from those Motzei Shabbosim were put out on the tables of the *zal* and later sold to the public.

Aharon Goldstein,
Ann Arbor, Michigan



“Celebration 40” Article

Dear Editors,

I just spent the last half hour reading to our children from the Shevat Derher. We

read the article on 40 years [“Celebration 40” Derher 53 (130)] and every part of it was fascinating. I especially appreciate it as I was there for that Yud Shevat and reading this amazing article really brought it alive for me.

We were also thrilled to find my grandfather in a picture.

Thanks so much for all that you are doing to provide us with phenomenal reading material and really describing the amazing times that I was fortunate to experience. In this way our children could really understand and experience those amazing times.

I look forward to reading the rest of this amazing magazine.

Anonymous

BRING *it* HOME!

A CHASSIDISHER DERHER

available in stores, or delivered to your door!



» www.Derher.org/subscribe