

# Derher

A Chassidisher

א חסידישער דערהער

## Mivtza Kashrus

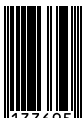
STRENGTHENING THE  
FOUNDATIONS OF KLAL YISROEL

**Lag B'omer 5730**  
LEBEN MITTEN REBBEN

**My Years in 770**  
EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH  
RABBI LEIBEL ALEVSKY

**Tzelem  
Elokim**  
WHY WE  
WEAR  
BEARDS

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## About the Cover:

The kitchen of a Jewish home is the nucleus of the Kosher lifestyle. In this month's magazine, we focus on the Rebbe's campaign of "Mivtza Kashrus", and many aspects and initiative revolving around this mivtza.

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נא לשמור על קדושת הגליון.

# Derher**Editorial**

“This is an unbelievable story I just heard yesterday; it can teach us what a Yid is really all about!”

With this preface, the Rebbe once related:

There was a Yid who grew up in a *frum* home and received a fine Jewish education. Later in life however, due to circumstances that were beyond his control (he was stranded in Russia), he was unable to keep kosher.

His son once asked him, “Father, you always tell us about the wonderful Jewish education you received as a youngster and into adulthood. Why then do you never go into a shul?!”

The father replied: “The reason is, because for more than a decade I was unable to keep kosher and I consumed non-kosher foods. Because of that, I can never walk into a shul...”

When relating this story at a farbrengen, the Rebbe cried quietly for a long while. (29 Elul 5737 sicha 1; audio: [chabad.org/552332](http://chabad.org/552332)).

As the Rebbe notes, this story teaches us just how crucial the mitzvah of *kashrus* was regarded by Yidden throughout the generations. In this regard, *mitvza kashrus* is a most important one of the *mitvzoim*.

In this magazine, you’ll read all about the launch of the *mitvza*, and some of the very special projects initiated in its wake.

May this help us strengthen ourselves in spreading this *mitvza*, along with all the Rebbe’s *mitvzoim*, hastening the *geula ha’amitis v’hashleima*.

**The Editors**

יום הבהיר י"א ניסן ה'תשע"ח



# IYAR: TRANSFORMATION IN LEAPS AND BOUNDS

Of all the months in the year, Iyar is the only one that every single day has a time-relevant mitzvah. During Nissan, we count the *omer* for half the month; in Sivan—just a week. But in Iyar, the mitzvah of *sefiras ha'omer* applies daily for the entire month.

This repetition affects the mitzvah itself by affording it a gravitas and permanence. The days themselves are also changed by their association with a mitzvah. Of all mitzvos that we have, the *sefira* has special significance, as it prepares us for *matan Torah*. On that day, not only were we given the *Aseres Hadibros*, but everything in the Torah until today—*Torah Shebiksav*, *Torah Sheb'al Peh*, *chiddushim* written throughout the generations, and even the new revelations in the

Torah that will be given to us by Moshiach—were all given at Har Sinai.

The *avoda* of Nissan, as it is characterized by Pesach, is *iskafya*—running away from any potential negatives. In the state the Yidden were then found, trying to fight against evil would have been too difficult; the first step was for them to run away. As time passed and Iyar came along, the Yidden were stronger and they began a new *avoda*—*is'hapcha*. At that point, they had to start dealing with the world and transforming it.

Curiously though, the *bracha* and power for Iyar and its *avoda* comes from Shabbos Mevorchim Iyar, which is still in the month of Nissan. If Iyar is so much higher and more advanced than Nissan, how

can its energy come from Nissan?

Although Nissan (*iskafya*) is a more basic level, and only the first step, it does have a unique advantage over Iyar (*is'hapcha*). Transforming the world is slow and methodical work; leaving Mitzrayim, however, was a massive and sudden leap forward. To achieve this, Hashem revealed Himself to the Yidden. His “breaking the rules” enabled Yidden to “break their rules” and escape the clutches of Mitzrayim. This is what Nissan can contribute to Iyar—infusing it with the power to do its job of transforming the world by leaps and bounds instead of the usual slow steps. With that mindset, Iyar—and the daily *sefiras ha'omer*—can be a fitting preparation for *matan Torah*, which broke the





לזכות  
החייל בצבאות ה'  
אהרון ברוך שיחי'  
לרגל יום הולדתו כ"ז ניסן  
שיגדל להיות חי"ל ולגרום נח"ר  
לכ"ק אדמו"ר ולנח"ר הוריו הי"ו  
מתוך בריאות נכונה בגו"ר

PHOTO: JEW/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 104489

rules by canceling the decree of division between Heaven and Earth.

Some may mistakenly assume that as Nissan comes to a close, it is time to stop taking leaps and instead return to a regular, methodical pace. Shabbos Mevorchim Iyar bridges the two months, and reminds us that this pace must continue. Similarly, our custom is not to announce “חסל סידור פסח—the order of Pesach is over.” The work of *mitvza Pesach*—dealing with Yidden still in their own “Mitzrayim” and helping them leave it—is not over; it must continue.

Some question the value—and possibility—of affecting simple Yidden, especially as it may come at a price for their own personal progress. Looking back at the Pesach story, certainly they were in a worse situation. The oppression, assimilation, and hopelessness were harder then. Furthermore, before *matan Torah* there was no open channel between Heaven and Earth. They also didn’t have (nearly as much) *zechus avos* to rely on. Despite all that, the Yidden left Mitzrayim, which means that there is certainly hope for us now.

As to the complaint of the personal “cost,” the opposite is actually true. By helping others and inspiring them to take a leap, Hashem will cause one’s personal *avoda* to grow by leaps and bounds. On a practical note: if you want to sleep peacefully and have sweet dreams—that’s your choice. Great and swift growth is not available to everyone. For that you need to leave your own comfort zone and go out to inspire others. That’s how you can merit this ability.

This also explains the stories of the Baal Shem Tov’s seemingly strange custom. On many occasions, he would initiate conversations with the simple Yidden, asking them about their welfare. Each time, he would lead them to say “ברוך השם” or in Yiddish “געלויבט דער אייבערשטער,” and the like.

When eating and drinking, there is a mitzvah to thank Hashem for the food. There’s no mitzvah to start conversations just in order to say *baruch Hashem*. And yet, the Baal Shem Tov did this. Not just once—it was a regular occurrence. With his special *neshama* of *yechida*, the essence of the *neshamos* of all Yidden, it seems

odd that the Baal Shem Tov devoted so much time to this practice.

The simple Yid epitomizes the idea of exponential effect. When a *mekubal* says a *bracha*, he has many special *kavanos*. In each word, he ponders different levels. When a simple Yid says a *bracha*, he has one simple thought: “Thank You, Hashem.” Instead of focusing on particular levels, he devotes his thanks to Hashem Himself—His essence. When celebrating Hashem’s kindness too, the simple Yid thanks Hashem Himself—*Atzmus*. This is what attracted the Baal Shem Tov to the simple Yidden. It’s also why he didn’t consider it a waste of his time and taking away from his own *avodah*. By inspiring them, he was able to achieve so much more himself.

As he famously said, everything we see and hear must teach us a lesson. This story was made public for a reason—it teaches us to follow in his way and inspire others, inspiring ourselves in the process. **1**

(Adapted from *sichas Shabbos Parshas Shemini* 5745)



לעבן מיט'ן רבין



לזכות  
הרה"ת ר' לוי שיחי'  
נפרסטק  
והכלה המהוללה מרת חי' מושקא תחי'  
ראסקין  
לרגל חתונתם בשעטומ"צ  
ל"ג בעומר ה'תשע"ח  
נדפס ע"י הוריהם  
הרה"ת ר' ברוך  
וזוגתו מרת בריינדי שיחיו נפרסטק  
הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל  
וזוגתו מרת שרה שיחיו ראסקין

# K'Halacha!

*The battle for the integrity  
of the Jewish people*

LAG B'OMER 5730



As a young country recently recognized by the United Nations, the new Israeli government now had the daunting job of laying the law of the land. One of the main areas that needed addressing was immigration. Since Israel was to be a safe haven and open for every Jew to reside in, the prime minister at the time, David Ben-Gurion, had the task of drafting a law defining "Who is a Jew?"

Fifty scholars were contacted to advise the government on the appropriate requirements that should be considered when declaring someone Jewish or not. With an overwhelming majority,

they established that a Jew is "someone born to a Jewish mother or otherwise has received a conversion according to the requirements of *halacha*."<sup>1</sup>

In the following years, this definition began to be challenged by various groups and factions who refused to recognize the ruling of *halacha* as the deciding factor.

In 5730, the Israeli Knesset decided to amend the law and establish that a Jew is "someone who is born to a Jewish mother, or has gone through a conversion and is not part of any other religion."

This new statement, amended into the law, did not include the word “*k’halacha*,” no longer making conversion according to *halacha* a requirement, as had been previously accepted.

While this amendment seemed to be successful on the political spectrum, it was a terrible thing for Yiddishkeit. The Israeli government would now be recognizing so-called “conversions” from other groups based on a broader definition, and against the laws of the Torah that conversions take place *al pi halacha*.

The Rebbe spoke at length, with great anguish about the recent development, for the first time at the farbrengen of Purim 5730, a few days after the amendment was passed. Over the months and years that followed, the topic of “*Mihu Yehudi*” would be spoken about by the Rebbe with great emotion at almost every farbrengen. The Rebbe called it “a terrible decree, the likes of which we haven’t seen before.” It would not only be a catalyst for homegrown assimilation, but also leave the next generation confused and bitter at those Jewish groups who had cruelly misled them into believing that they were legitimately joining the Jewish people.

Lag B’omer 5730 was just three months after the amendment was written into law and the Rebbe spoke publicly and strongly at the parade about its inherent dangers. Later, at the farbrengen, the Rebbe continued this theme. The Rebbe’s words were full of pain and worry, and were publicized throughout Eretz Yisroel and Jewish communities across the globe.

*The following account of that Lag B’omer is culled from the diaries of a few bochurim at the time and the hanachos of the sichos as they are published in Toras Menachem vol. 60.*

## EXCITEMENT

In preparation for Lag B’omer, the Rebbe sent a special answer to the organizers of the parade together with one hundred dollars as a contribution towards the parade.

ת"ח ההמשך מאז! שנהנתי מאוד ממה שהתחילו כ"ז מיט א פארנעם וכו', ויה"ר שחפץ הוי' בידם יצליח למעלה מעלה המשווער ומתוך שמחה וטוב לבב ופירות טובות על כל השנה

*Amidst the last minute hustle and bustle, the exciting news is announced: the Rebbe will be joining the parade.*

כולה וכדאי הוא ר"ש לסמוך עליו ובמיוחד ביום שמחתו ולכל השייך לזה. אזכיר עה"צ. מאה דולר מצוב"ז.

The Rebbe thanks them for their work until that point and especially that they were working with great motivation and enthusiasm. The Rebbe then continues with a *bracha* that their work should shine with success, and that the success should affect the rest of the year as well. The Rebbe concludes with a famous dictum about Rashbi, the cause for the Lag B’omer celebrations, “One can rely on Rabbi Shimon,” especially on his day of celebration and anything connected with it. I will mention you at the resting place [of the Friediker Rebbe]. One hundred dollars are included.”

## SUNDAY, EARLY MORNING, LAG B’OMER 5730:

The Lag B’omer spirit is palpable in the air and the organizers of the parade are eager for a special day of Jewish pride and unity.

The police are almost finished barricading the streets and the last few chairs have been set up. *Bochurim* and staff are running around, most of them have been up all night working on the final preparations for the parade.

At this point, the Rebbe still hasn't confirmed if he will be coming out to join the parade.

### **10 AM**

Amidst the last minute hustle and bustle, the exciting news is announced: the Rebbe will be joining the parade.





While the regular preparations are going on, final touches are being worked on for a new and exciting addition to this year's parade—the floats. [This would be the first year that flatbed trucks would be used to haul stunning creations and creative displays of varying scenes of Yiddishkeit.] 11AM

To the delight of the thousands of Jewish children who had gathered in front of 770, the Rebbe walked out of his room and took his place at the wooden platform that had been erected for this event.

As usual the parade began with the Rebbe addressing the boys and girls. The *sicha* lasted fifteen minutes and touched upon the *parsha* of the week—Bechukosai. The Rebbe explained that Hashem's *brachos* are dependent on the first part of the *possuk*—that we have to keep Hashem's mitzvos and learn Torah.

Following this *sicha* the Rebbe began a second *sicha* that lasted for thirty minutes! This was a huge

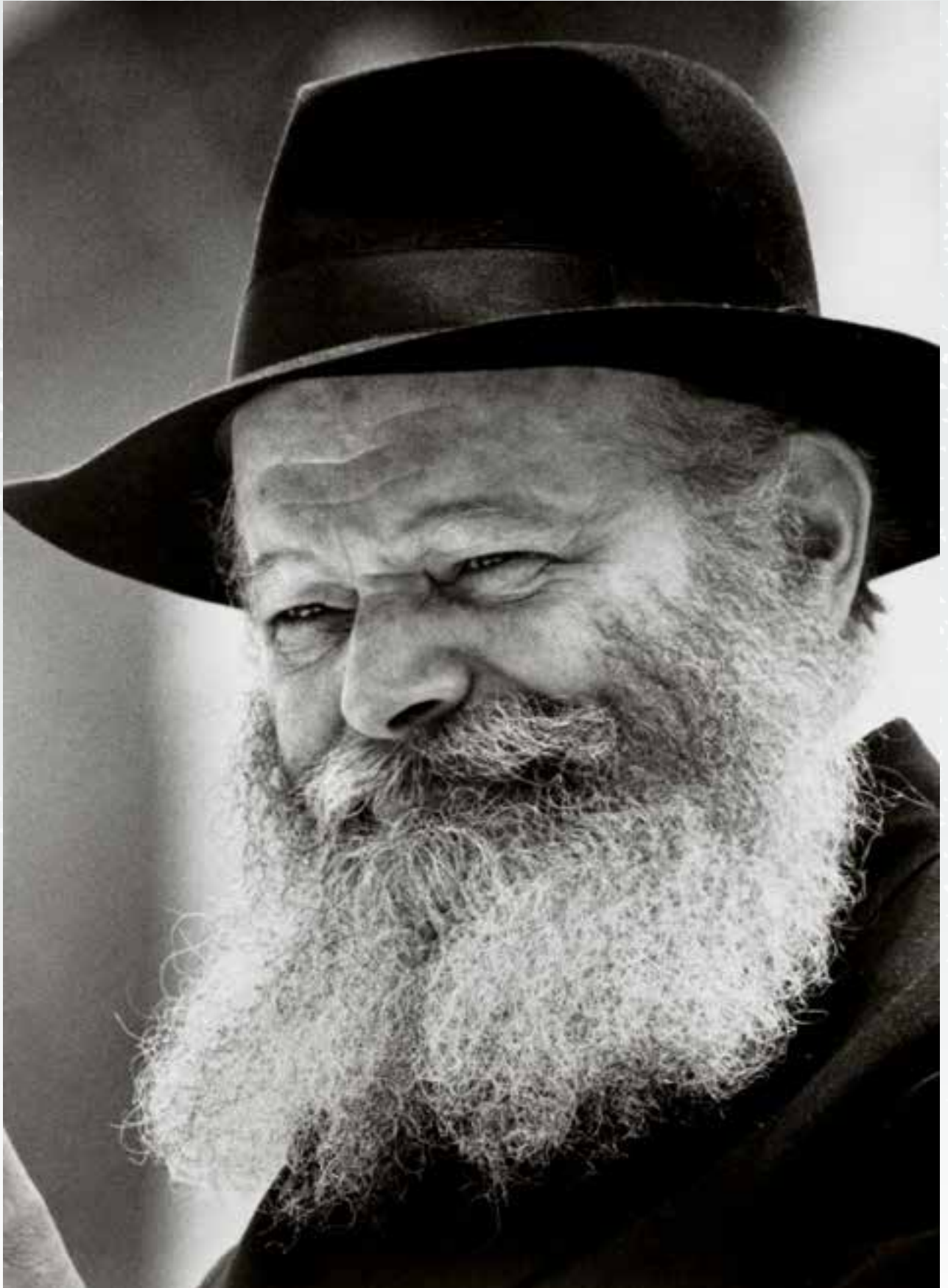
*The Rebbe chose to use this platform to speak about a topic that would be ongoing and the cause for much pain—Mihu Yehudi.*

surprise and completely different than usual. The Rebbe chose to use this platform to speak about a topic that would be ongoing and the cause for much pain—*Mihu Yehudi*.

“We can see clearly,” said the Rebbe, “that three years ago on Lag B’omer we started talking about *mitvza tefillin* when there was a discussion about peace in Eretz Yisroel. Since then thousands of Yidden were saved because of tefillin... and throughout most of the time things in Eretz Yisroel have been pretty calm.... Now, however, there are problems and people have lost their lives.<sup>2</sup> This can be directly tied to when the government began saying that non-Jews are really Jewish.”









ON THE WAY TO THE OHEL, THE REBBE VISITS THE FAIR AFTER THE PARADE.

There are those who wanted to claim that the tragic events were merely a coincidence and weren't connected to the spiritual circumstances surrounding them. The Rebbe strongly negated this way of thinking and quoted the Rambam, who says that whenever a tragedy or suffering befalls the Yidden, we must search our actions and see how we can improve them. It is forbidden to say that it just happened by chance, and calling it an unconnected happening is not the way of Yidden.

Turning to the ministers in the Israeli government, the Rebbe expressed his strong opinion that it was up to them to take a stance and stand up for what is right, true, and best for all.

Following the *sicha*, the thousands of children who had gathered marched by the Rebbe. They were led by the floats, which were making their Lag B'omer debut. In a remarkable display of creativity, they brought Yiddishkeit and the Rebbe's message to life in a whole new way.

Also marching were soldiers and representatives of the United States Armed Forces. This was an incredible show of respect and honor for the Rebbe.

Many of the boys and girls waved to the Rebbe and the Rebbe happily returned this gesture.

It was indeed a magnificent scene. The Rebbe stood with his silk *kapota* and *gartel* on a tall platform that towered over the front of 770 and greeted these young children as they proudly displayed their Yiddishkeit.

Towards the end of the parade, the Rebbe encouraged the singing and dancing with great enthusiasm during which a circle of dancers formed on the street right under the Rebbe's *bimah*. The Rebbe motioned to a number of bystanders to join the circle indicating with his hand round and round.

2:00 PM

The Rebbe got into his car and left to the Ohel, as is his practice on Lag B'omer. On the way out of Crown Heights, the Rebbe's car passed the park where the fair was taking place.

#### EARLY EVENING

The Rebbe returned from the Ohel and went to daven *mincha*.

As *mincha* concluded, the Chassidim were overjoyed to hear that the Rebbe would be holding a farbrengen. This came as a complete surprise. There had not been a farbrengen on Lag B'omer for the

previous eight years, and the Rebbe had said two *sichos* just a few hours earlier, at the parade.

At the beginning of the farbrengen, the Rebbe announced, "We have here with us those individuals who organized today's parade and all the details that go along with it. Let them come and take this and share it with all those that had a part in it." The Rebbe then handed a bottle of *mashke* to Rabbis Shmuel Butman and Chaim Farro.

After a short *sicha* addressing the fact that the farbrengen was taking place between *mincha* and *maariv*, the Rebbe recited a *maamar* with the *dibur hamaschil* "Lehavin Inyan Hilula D'Rashbi."

During the *sicha* that followed, the Rebbe explained that the *maamar* was based on a short *maamar* that he saw in the "*bichel*" he had recently received. For a couple of reasons, the Rebbe said it seems certain that it is a *maamar* from the Tzemach Tzedek. The Rebbe then said, "We should mention the fine individual who sent it to me—Yehuda ben Reizel," referring to Rabbi Yehudah Shmotkin of Tel Aviv.

The Rebbe then spoke at length about *Mihu Yehudi*: "This is coming as a continuation to what we began discussing earlier today; however, that was not the right setting to speak in a sharp manner..."

"As a general rule, no one can start up with a Yid unless there is already a small rupture in the Yid's connection to Hashem. Any deficiency in this connection, no matter the size, allows our enemies the opportunity to start up with us. As long as we stay fully connected to Hashem no one can bother us."

Among the many points that the Rebbe discussed that night was the misconception and total deceit of the law's amendment. People, including rabbonim, claimed that we should be thrilled that they kept being born to a Jewish mother as a requirement for being Jewish, as opposed to just the father being Jewish; they even went ahead and called it a victory for traditional Judaism. The Rebbe said that while the first line of the amendment is obviously true and in accordance with Shulchan Aruch, the second part, which omits the fact that the conversion must be according to *halacha*, is completely against Torah. This can be compared to the prohibition of serving *avoda zara* in a way of *shituf*—partnership—just like the Jews who accepted the *eigel hazahav* **alongside** their acceptance of Hashem.



Those who okayed the bill by taking part in the vote must now show regret and announce openly that they made a mistake.

The Rebbe related that he had received a letter from a rav who had signed on the bill. In his defense, the rav said that he had been lied to about the content of the amendment, but what could he do now? "Get up and say, 'I have erred,' but don't write it to me! Announce it there in Yerushalayim!"

The Rebbe was adamant that time was of the essence and no one should wait for the court to issue a verdict; everyone must act quickly.

In connection with what the Rebbe had referenced to earlier at the parade regarding the loss of life that Bnei Yisroel had experienced, the Rebbe said that this was a matter of life and death and any delay was literally playing with innocent lives.

Quoting a story of the Chofetz Chaim, the Rebbe demanded that no one should be silent about this matter and doing so was absolutely forbidden.

The Chofetz Chayim had once sent messengers to work on annulling a decree against the Yidden. When they returned, they reported that they had been unsuccessful and related all the reasons for their failure.

The Chofetz Chayim listened and then asked, "Did anyone faint? If someone would have fainted from the result then we would know that they did everything they could."

"This all comes in continuation to what we spoke three years ago regarding *mivtza tefillin*. I hoped that this mitzvah would lead to other mitzvos... burning down the walls of *galus* and we would merit the coming of Moshiach, bringing all the Yidden to Eretz Yisroel. However... we have not merited this."

*This came as a complete surprise. There had not been a farbrengen on Lag B'omer for the previous eight years...*

In conclusion, the Rebbe stated that since he is speaking openly about all this, he will also express "a wild hope" that although it doesn't seem to have any place politically, eventually all Yidden will do *teshuva*. And the good thought and resolution for peace and unity, and the decision of the ministers that they will resign from the government thereby bringing about the nullification of the decree, will be considered by Hashem as proper *teshuva* and will bring about the true and complete redemption through Moshiach Tzidkeinu speedily.

The farbrengen concluded at 10:40 p.m., after which they davened *maariv*.

#### THE DAYS FOLLOWING

It is interesting to note that after Shabbos Mevorchim Sivan, the Rebbe let it be known that he would not be receiving anyone for *yechidus* until after Shavuos.

Rumor had it that the Rebbetzin said that the reason for this was because the Rebbe was extremely preoccupied with dealing with *Mihu Yehudi*.

Others recall the reason to be that the Rebbe's health was affected by the situation of *Mihu Yehudi*. ❶

1. Two letters from the Rebbe in response to Prime Minister Ben Gurion's inquiry on this subject are published in Igros Kodesh vol. 18 p. 209.

2. This was during the War of Attrition.



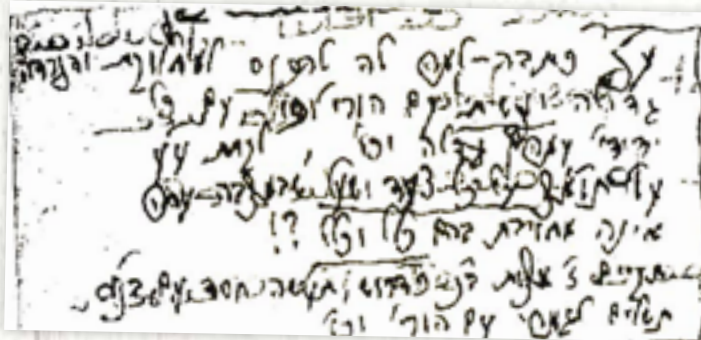


## כתב יד קודש

לע"נ  
הת' נתן נטע  
בן הרה"ת ר' זלמן יודא ע"ה  
דייטש  
גלב"ע ח"י אייר ל"ג בעומר ה'תש"ע  
נדפס ע"י משפחתו שיחיו

# Not Your Calling

In the following *ksav yad kodesh*, the Rebbe responds to a non-Jewish woman who wished to convert to *Yiddishkeit* despite her parents' opposition:



Based on what you wrote:

Why would you engage in a major, mentally-straining split and conflict with your parents and with all your childhood friends etc., to take upon yourself the yoke of Torah and mitzvos [which would impact] every single step of your life—something that you are completely not obligated to do in your current status?!

[Instead,] keep the *sheva mitzvos b'nei Noach* efficiently, be kind to other people, etc., and make complete amends with your parents etc.

ע"פ כתבה - למה לה להכנס למחלוקת  
והפרדה גדולה ונפשית עם הורי' וכו', עם  
כל ידידי' עמהם גדלה וכו', לקחת ע"ע  
עול תומ"צ על כל צעד ושעל שבמצבה  
עתה אינה מחוייבת בהם כלל וכלל?!

תקיים ז' מצוות ב"נ כדרוש, תעשה חסד  
עם בנ"א וכו', תשלים לגמרי עם הורי'  
וכו'.



# The Rebbe Maharash

The Rebbe Maharash is born to the Tzemach Tzedek and Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka on 2 Iyar, the *sefirah of Tiferes Shebitziferes*, 100 years after the Baal Shem Tov revealed himself.<sup>2</sup>

תקצ"ד

The Rebbe Maharash begins to listen to *mamormim* on Chassidus.<sup>3</sup>

תרי"א

At the tender age of seven, the Rebbe Maharash is already fluent in Torah, much of Nevi'im and Kesuvim, and studies Gemara with Rashi and some Tosafof.<sup>4</sup>

תרי"ב

The Rebbe Maharash marries Sterna, daughter of his brother, Reb Chaim Shneur Zalman. (In Hayom Yom and other sources the year is recorded as תרי"ח.) The *kallah* falls ill during the *sheva brachos*. After an illness of approximately three months, she passes away.<sup>5</sup>

תרי"ז

The Rebbe Maharash travels to Vitebsk to attend a conference of activists. Also joining the conference are representatives from Shklov, Vilna, and Petersburg.<sup>6</sup>

תרי"ח

The Rebbe Maharash marries Rebbetzin Rivka, daughter of the Chossid Reb Aharon ben Moshe Alexandrov of Shklov and Rebbetzin Chaya Sarah, daughter of the Mittler Rebbe.<sup>7</sup>

תרי"ט

Per the Tzemach Tzedek's instructions, the Rebbe Maharash begins to be active in communal activities. The Tzemach Tzedek sends the Rebbe Maharash and Reb Aharon of Belinitch as his representatives to a conference in Petersburg, discussing the printing of *seforim* in Yiddish for Jewish children.<sup>8</sup>

תרי"י

Upon returning from Germany, the Rebbe Maharash convenes an assembly of people involved in public affairs who were Chabad Chassidim, [Chassidim of] Vohlynia, the faction of the *maskilim*, and businessmen.<sup>10</sup>

תרי"כ

The Rebbe Rashab is born on 20 Cheshvan in Lubavitch.<sup>11</sup>

תרי"א

The Rebbe Maharash travels to Petersburg and manages to subvert the decrees that had been introduced in the Senate to impose restrictions on the Jews of Lita and Zamut.<sup>12</sup>

תרי"ה

תרי"ה

The Rebbe Maharash travels to Kiev, Petersburg, and abroad to Italy and Germany. To satisfy government scrutiny, the stated reason for these trips was for improvement of health. In truth, these trips were for communal affairs. Similar trips took place in תרי"ט, תרי"ב, and תרי"ג.



The Rebbe Maharash travels to France and elsewhere to meet with people involved in public service abroad.<sup>15</sup>

While the Rebbe Maharash is visiting a health resort in late Elul, a fire destroys much of the town of Lubavitch, including all of the buildings in the Rebbe Maharash's courtyard.<sup>16</sup>

During the return trip, the Rebbe Maharash stops for several days in Odessa.

The Rebbe Maharash makes numerous journeys both domestically and abroad, attending to matters of public affairs.<sup>19</sup>

Risking his life, the Rebbe Maharash intercedes in government circles to suppress the pogroms against the Jews.<sup>21</sup> The mission is a success. For some time, peace is completely restored.<sup>22</sup>

A few days after the Rebbe Maharash returns from that trip, the Frieddiker Rebbe is born, on 12 Tammuz.<sup>23</sup>

The Rebbe Maharash passes away on 13 Tishrei. The Rebbe Maharash's sacred resting place is in the Ohel of his father, the Tzemach Tzedek, in Lubavitch.<sup>25</sup>

תרכ"ח

תרכ"ט-  
תרכ"מ

תרכ"מ

תרמ"ג

תרל"ו

תרל"ט

תרל"ט

תרמ"ב

Following the instructions of the Tzemach Tzedek, the Rebbe Maharash begins reciting *maamrim* publicly. At that time the Tzemach Tzedek issued a note to the public stating: 'Listen to him [the Rebbe Maharash] as you have listened to me.'<sup>113</sup>

The Tzemach Tzedek is *nistalek* on 13 Nissan in Lubavitch, and the Rebbe Maharash accepts the *nesius*, continuing to reside in Lubavitch.<sup>14</sup>

The Rebbe Maharash spends the entire month of Tishrei in Kishinev.<sup>17</sup>

The Rebbe Maharash establishes a permanent committee in Petersburg to investigate matters of public concern, and to remain on the alert to defend the rights of Yidden.<sup>18</sup>

As incitement to pogroms begins, the Rebbe Maharash travels to Petersburg numerous times, and is assured in various government circles that they would put a stop to the incitement.<sup>20</sup>

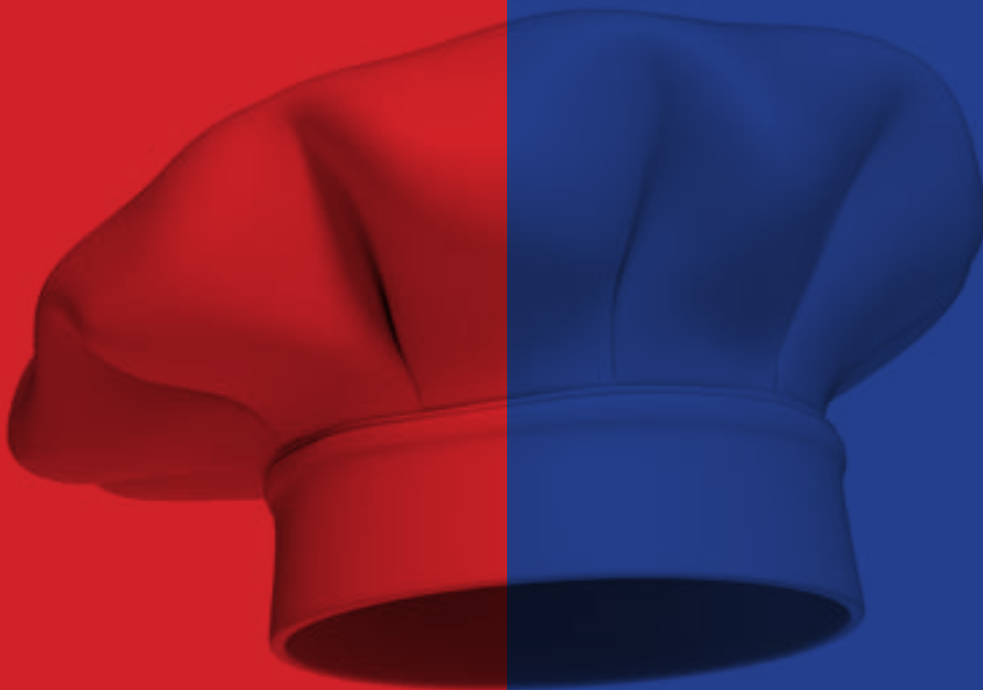
Reb Y. M., of the "Young Progressives," begins working for the Rebbe Maharash to stop pogroms.<sup>24</sup>

The Rebbe Maharash falls ill towards the end of the year.

*More information in English can be found in Sefer Ha Toldos Admur Maharash published by Sichos In English.*

1. According to another version, he was born in the year 5593 (*sichta* of 19 Kislev 5693, sec. 24). Perhaps that refers to the time when he was conceived. Sefer Hatoldos (from the Rebbe), p. 6.
2. *Sefer Hatoldos* (from the Rebbe), p. 6.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Shalshelas Hayachas - Hayom Yom*.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.*, p. 14.
15. *Sefer Hatoldos* (from the Rebbe), p. 14.
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
19. *Ibid.*
20. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 20.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
24. Reb Y.M, *Hatomim* vol. 1, p. 324; *Links in the Chassidic Legacy*, p. 73.
25. *Sefer Hatoldos* (from the Rebbe), p. 21.

לזכות החתן הרה"ת ר' לוי יצחק הלוי  
והכלה המהוללה מרת רבקה שיחיו  
בייטעלמאן  
לרגל נישואיהם ב' ניסן ה'תשע"ח  
נדפס ע"י הוריהם  
הרה"ת ר' יחיאל מיכל הלוי  
וזוגתו מרת חנה שיחיו בייטעלמאן  
הרה"ת ר' חיים יהודה לייב הלוי  
וזוגתו מרת עטל סימא שיחיו קליין



# mivtza KASHRUS

Strengthening the Foundations of Klal Yisrael

Much of the information in this article was gleaned from interviews with Mrs. Yehudis Groner, Mrs. Laya Klein, and Mrs. Shterna Zirkind from the Mivtza Kashrus Committee and Mrs. Esther Blau from the Spice and Spirit Cookbook Committee. וזכות הרבים תלוי בהן.

“When contemplating the current spiritual state of *klal Yisroel*, there is a question raised in *seforim*, and even more so by many individuals: Why is it that the most recent generation has experienced such an unprecedented decline in mitzvah observance in so many communities?”

This painful and sensitive question was addressed at the surprise *farbrengen* of Tes-Zayin Tammuz, the eve of Shiva Asar B'Tammuz, 5735.

The Rebbe opened the final *sicha* on the theme of the daily *Chitas*—*revi'i* of Parshas Pinchas. Responding to the demand of the daughters of Tzelafchad to inherit their father's portion in Eretz Yisroel, Hashem endorsed their request. We learn from this that the Jewish women cherished the land more than anyone else. This clearly illustrates the integral role of Jewish women in nurturing and preserving Yiddishkeit throughout history and for eternity.

“Although I usually don't publicly discuss such matters that are uniquely relevant to women, today I will do so, in light of the daily *Chitas* and the fact that we are under the influence of Yud-Beis and Yud-Gimmel Tammuz.”

The Rebbe then addressed the painfully low spiritual state of many Jewish communities and explained that this “spiritual descent” resulted from a decline in the observance of *taharas hamishpacha* and *kashrus*. Therefore, the key to restoring the spiritual health of *klal Yisroel* is in the hands of the Jewish women.

It is explained in *seforim* (and scholars of nature agree to this assertion as well) that the natural characteristics and tendencies of a person are influenced by the food he or she eats. Just as they affect the health of the body, they also affect the intellect and ways of understanding. Eating coarse and unrefined foods can limit the capacity to properly understand refined topics. Eating

refined foods facilitates clearer thought and comprehension of deeper concepts.

Ingesting non-kosher food causes one to think in a non-Torah manner. The fact that such absurd ideas—such as to consider it possible for one to convert to Judaism not in accordance with *halacha*, or that the existence of the Jewish nation is not dependent on Torah study and mitzvah observance—have been accepted by so many, is the direct result of a decline in *kashrus* observance.

Naturally, the woman of the home has the unique opportunity to influence the entire family to observe the mitzvah of *kashrus*, even if they are currently not doing so. By maintaining a kosher kitchen and preparing physically nourishing meals for the household, she also provides essential spiritual nourishment that will influence all other areas of life.<sup>1</sup>

The Rebbe announced that the time had come to actively encourage more

women to *kasher* their kitchens, to observe *kashrus* and thereby influence their entire families to do so as well, as this will have a major impact on all of *klal Yisroel*.

“A fund has been established by a group of generous donors to help defray costs of anyone, throughout the entire world, who will switch to a kosher kitchen—*kasher* the stove and other utensils, purchase two new sets of dishes and whatever else is necessary. Half of all these expenses will be reimbursed by this special Kashrus Fund upon receipt of a letter from the local rabbi certifying that the kitchen has been *kashered* and the amount of the expenses incurred. This will, of course, be kept in utmost confidentiality.

“I call upon all communities, organizations, and societies to follow the example of these generous donors; to set up more funds to encourage as many Yidden as possible to begin observing this important mitzvah.”

**The fact that such absurd ideas have been accepted by so many, is the direct result of a decline in *kashrus* observance.**



A KOSHER DISPLAY IN A SUPERMARKET.



In a letter addressed to all of *anash* in Eretz Yisroel, dated 25 Tammuz, Rabbi Efraim Wolf communicated the Rebbe's message (received through the *mazkirus*) that they should influence all *frum* communities to get involved in strengthening *kashrus* and *taharas hamispacha*, "as these are not uniquely Lubavitch projects."<sup>2</sup>

### The Three Mitzvos Unique to Women

It is interesting to note that the Rebbe launched the three *mivtzoim* in connection with the three mitzvos unique to women, *neshek*, *kashrus* and *taharas hamishpacha*, in the year 5735—ten years from the *histalkus* of Rebbetzin Chana.

On many occasions the Rebbe would mention that an acronym of the word חנה includes these three mitzvos: חלה—*kashrus*, נדה—*taharas hamishpacha*, and הדלקת נרות—Shabbos candles.

On Vov Tishrei 5745, in connection with the twentieth *yahrtzeit* of Rebbetzin Chana, the Rebbe requested that twenty new *mikvaos* be constructed, and that twenty new funds to assist people in *kashering* their kitchens and twenty new funds to encourage *neshek* be established.<sup>3</sup>

### The New Mivtza Takes Off

Whereas previous *mivtzoim*, such as *tefillin*, *mezuzah*, and *neshek*, were fairly simple to organize and implement, influencing a Jew to start keeping kosher demands an entirely new level of engagement.

Shortly after the Rebbe announced the new *mivtza*, Mrs. Yehudis Groner



THE REBBE ADDRESSES NSHEI UBNOS CHABAD, 16 IYAR 5735.

V SCHILDKRAUT VIA JEM 108691

## Influence all *frum* communities to get involved in strengthening *kashrus* and *taharas hamispacha*, "as these are not uniquely Lubavitch projects."

and Mrs. Chashie Lev together with several other Crown Heights women, published pamphlets about *kashrus* and organized teams of *anash* and *bochurim* to *kasher* kitchens. (During the early stages of *mivtza kashrus*, women and girls were *kashering* kitchens as well.)

Shluchim and *anash* around the world sprang into action, and very soon thousands of homes around the world were becoming kosher. Besides the fund that the Rebbe had announced at the farbrengen, the Rebbe also sent token financial participation to the people running the campaigns. The women leading the campaign in Crown Heights received

a check from the Rebbe. Rabbi Akiva Schmerling, a Chabad activist in Switzerland, received 50 francs from the Rebbe towards his involvement in *mivtza kashrus* in Switzerland.

In the early 5740s, the Mivtza Kashrus Committee was established as an official branch of N'shei Chabad, under the directorship of Mrs. Laya Klein and Mrs. Shterna Zirkind. Advertisements were placed in various Jewish newspapers, and they fielded hundreds of requests from Jews in the tri-state area to *kasher* their homes. Every advertisement was reviewed by the Rebbe before publication.

Volunteers would meet with the families in their homes to educate



A BROCHURE PROMOTING KOSHER EATING.

them on the basics of *kashrus* and to determine the best way to *kasher* their kitchens. Teams of *anash* and *bochurim* were then dispatched to do the actual *kashering*. Everyone was offered the 50% rebate for the changeover expenses, as per the Rebbe's instruction upon launching the *mivtza*. As shluchim moved out to more places in the tri-state area, much of the *kashering* work and connections with the many families were referred to the local shluchim.

One of the earliest projects, still in operation today, is "Kosher Week." Stands are set up in supermarkets, stacked with *kashrus* information and literature. Volunteers are on hand to illustrate to Jewish shoppers how easy it is to shop for kosher food.



MIVTZA KASHRUS/CHABAD.ORG

For many, *kashering* the kitchen became the stepping stone to greater growth in all areas of Yiddishkeit. Many families became *frum* and full fledged *anash* directly through *mivtza kashrus*!

## Revolutionizing Kosher Cuisine

In addition to educating and inspiring Yidden to observe *kashrus* and facilitating the often tedious transition, the Rebbe's campaign revolutionized the landscape of kosher cuisine throughout the world. Until the early 5730s, *kashrus* was associated with old fashioned foods from the *shtetl*, or the standard tasteless kosher staples readily available on a large scale in America at the time.

The Rebbe changed this by empowering a group of N'shei Chabad to produce a world class cookbook—the first of its kind.

In early 5732, members of the Junior N'shei discussed the idea of publishing a community cookbook, similar to many synagogue sisterhoods and women's societies. Since there were many *baalei teshuvah* families joining the Crown Heights community, they decided to include

information about *hilchos kashrus*, so that it could serve as a helpful resource for women that had not been raised in *frum* homes.

A committee was organized to collect recipes and to write small articles on various areas of *kashrus*, Shabbos, and Yom Tov. The work was fairly amateur, as it was intended only for the community, but the *halacha* articles were meticulously reviewed by Rabbi Marlow.

"During the month of Kislev 5734, the draft was completed and we were ready to begin typesetting, so we submitted our work to the Rebbe," recalls Mrs. Esther Blau. "The Rebbe's response elevated the entire project to an unprecedented level."

נת' ות"ח. להחזיר. וה' יצליח.  
ולהעיר כיון שצריך להתחרות עם ס' כ"ב  
סתמיים (לאו דווקא - כשר) ולנצחם (שהרי  
זה נוגע לכשרות כ"כ בתים דבנ"י) צ"ל גם  
בעניינים חיצוניים מהודר ונאה, אפילו באם  
ע"ז יתוסף בהוצאות. ובטח יתבוננו בס' כאלה  
הנמצאים בשוק הנפוצים.

I received it, and much thanks.  
Return [the originals]. May Hashem  
grant them success.

Since this cookbook needs to  
compete with other cookbooks (that

# The Rebbe expected this cookbook to become a tremendous tool in transforming the kosher culinary scene on a global level. This was no longer a neighborhood project...

are not necessarily Kosher) and win—as this will have an effect on kosher observance in many Jewish households—it needs to be beautiful externally as well, even if it will increase the cost. Surely, you will consult cookbooks that are already sold in stores.

[See side bar for the rest of this lengthy response.]

“We realized that the Rebbe expected this cookbook to become a tremendous tool in transforming the kosher culinary scene on a global level. This was no longer a neighborhood project, it needed to be the very best—no matter the price!”

As the editorial team kicked into high gear to meet these high expectations, the Rebbe continued to guide them on numerous details. In

one particular instance, a potential cover design was submitted to the Rebbe. It was a depiction of a Shabbos table scene with two Shabbos candles and a plate of fish. The Rebbe responded:

נר קטן בין השניים כרגיל  
אינו ניכר כלל טוב - המאכלים והאם זה  
מאכל בכלל

*Include a small candle between the two large ones, as usual.*

*One cannot tell if the food is good tasting—or if it is food at all.*

The message was clear—every element of this cookbook, especially the cover art, must be of the highest caliber. Reb Michoel Muchnik was commissioned to illustrate the cover as well as many other pages, in accordance with the Rebbe's instruction that the artist be a resident of Crown Heights, “כי כאן ציוה ה' את, הברכה.”

During Cheshvan 5736, several months after the Rebbe launched *mitvza kashrus*, the editors received the following response from the Rebbe: אזכיר על הציון להצלחה רבה ל"קוקבוק" במילוי תפקידו העיקרי - הגברת הכשרות בכל מקום.

*I will mention this at the tziyun for much success with the "cookbook," [that it should] accomplish its main purpose—strengthening kashrus in every place.*

The cookbook was to become an integral element of the Rebbe's campaign to bring *kashrus* to every Jewish community and household.

In the summer of 5737, three and a half years after the Rebbe instructed the committee to produce a game-changing kosher cookbook, *The Spice and Spirit of Kosher-Jewish Cooking* was published. At the Yud-Beis Tammuz farbrengen, Rabbi Marlow presented the new cookbook to the Rebbe. The Rebbe was visibly pleased and said, “Much *hatzlacha* in *mitvza kashrus* and in all the *mitvzoim*.”

During the concluding *sicha* of the farbrengen, while mentioning *mitvza*

## Instructions from the Rebbe's First Response

The Rebbe reviewed the first eight pages of the original first draft of the cookbook in Kislev 5734. In addition to encouraging an entirely different approach to the publication, the Rebbe commented on several parts of the draft.

About the page listing the editorial and rabbinic boards:

ע"ב \ גם שמות הסטעף צ"ל ע"ס הא"ב - כהשאר.

Page 2: *All lists of names should be in alphabetical order.*

The following comments are regarding the introduction about *kashrus*.

ע"ו \ קטע ד' - שהיהודי הוא לא רק מגשמיית אלא גם מרוחנית!!

Page 6 Paragraph 4 - *A Jew is not only physical but also spiritual!!*

A paragraph begins with the following statement: *It is not difficult to keep kosher*. The Rebbe added:

קטע ז' - בהתחלתו: אפילו האם הי' קשה לקיים כשרות פשיטא שאצ"ל שום עיכוב שהרי זה ציווי השם וכו' עאכ"כ

Paragraph 7: *Even if it were difficult to observe kashrus, it should, of course, not deter [a Jew from observing it], since it is G-d's command, etc. How much more so [that it is not difficult...]*

In the section dealing with the waiting time between meat and dairy it said: After eating dairy food... the most common custom is to wait one-half hour before eating meat or meat products. The Rebbe added:

ע"ח \ בתחלתו 1/2 שעה להוסיף - ויש נוהגין שעה

Page 8: In the beginning, one half hour; Add that others have the custom of waiting one complete hour.

מכאן ולהבא - לא קראתי, כמובן.

ועוד ועיקר - חלק הדינים צ"ל מוגה עכ"פ ע"י שניים.

*Obviously, I did not read further than this page. The main thing is—the dinim must be reviewed by at least two people.*





THE ORIGINAL COVER OF "THE SPICE AND SPIRIT" COOKBOOK. INSET: THE FIRST DRAFT OF THE COVER OF "THE SPICE AND SPIRIT" COOKBOOK SUBMITTED TO THE REBBE. THE ORIGINAL COVER, CHANGED PER THE REBBE'S INSTRUCTIONS.

*kashrus*, the Rebbe made special mention of the brand new cookbook. "Especially in light of the fact that on the *yom hageulah* a beautiful book was published and released—which in addition to recipes includes important information regarding *kashrus*..."<sup>4</sup>

### Keeping the Momentum

*The Spice and Spirit* became an instant sensation. Thousands of copies were purchased in a short time and it received rave reviews from food columnists and critics in prominent newspapers. Most of the reviews emphasized the value of the cookbook

as a kosher primer, available to professionals and amateurs alike.

The feedback received from shlichim indicated that the cookbook had opened many doors for them and made *kashrus* fashionable in homes and social circles previously unreachable. *Bochurim* going on Merkos Shlichus were instructed by Rabbi Hodakov to take samples with them and they received more orders for the cookbook than for any other Kehos publication.

The women of the cookbook committee also received guidance from Rabbi Hodakov about their radio

### A Call from Russia

Mrs. Esther Blau relates:

Early one morning, my husband was out of town and my home phone was ringing incessantly. I kept on answering the phone, but I could not communicate with the caller since he was speaking in Russian. I urgently called my Russian speaking secretary and it turned out that the call was from behind the Iron Curtain! A Jew was in trouble and the caller desperately wanted to relay the news to the Rebbe and request a *bracha* on his behalf. The only Jewish book the caller had from the United States was *The Spice and Spirit* cookbook, and he called the number hoping to find a way to reach the Rebbe.

I ran to 770 to communicate this important message to the Rebbe's *mazkirus* immediately.

interviews. "Regardless of what they ask you, have in mind what you need to say and make sure to say it." Mrs. Cyrel Deitch was instrumental in cultivating friendships with celebrity chefs, cookbook authors, publishers and book collectors, some of whom participated in a special evening in Crown Heights in honor of the cookbook and came to the Rebbe for dollars.

**"I urgently called my Russian speaking secretary and it turned out that the call was from behind the Iron Curtain!"**



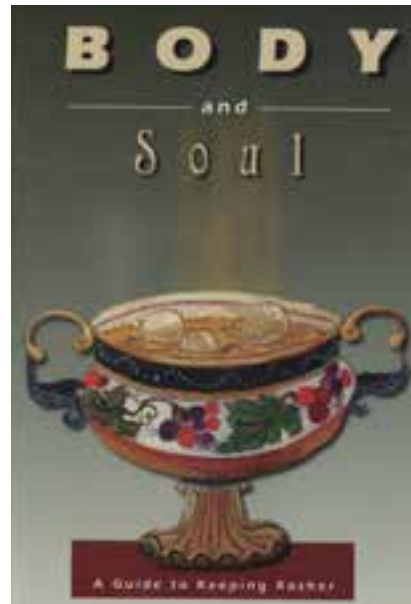
The quality of the cookbook was on such a level that the Rebbe wanted it entered into international competitions:

להתעניין ע"ד ירידי הספרים שבאה"ק  
אשכנז וכו' להציג שם הספר ושיכניסוהו  
להתחרות הנערכת שם וכו'

*Look into book fairs in Eretz  
Yisroel and Germany, etc. To present  
the book there and to enter it into the  
competitions, etc.*

In 5741, the cookbook committee published a kosher for Pesach cookbook. Between the years 5737 and 5750, the regular cookbook and the Pesach cookbook sold 95,000 copies combined!

Over time, the need for a comprehensive *kashrus* handbook, separate from the cookbook, became apparent. In 5749, in a special partnership with the Mivtza Kashrus



MIVTZA KASHRUS/CHABA.DORG

"BODY AND SOUL" PAMPHLET.

Committee, the various halachic instructions scattered throughout the cookbook were reorganized in an orderly fashion and published in a book titled *Body and Soul*.

Every successive printing of *The Spice and Spirit* sold out quickly and the cookbook committee members, Mrs. Esther Blau, Mrs. Cyrel Deitch, and Mrs. Cherna Light, together with the original committee, realized it was time to update their bestseller. Recipes were revised, new recipes were added, and the halachic instructions were rewritten and reviewed as well. In addition to other design changes, a distinct purple cover was chosen, from which it has since taken its most famous moniker, "The Purple Cookbook."

The Rebbe continued to encourage the committee and give *brachos* for the success of the new edition. Mrs. Blau recounts that "the Rebbe was very anxious about the new cookbook's release. I remember when Rabbi Nissen Mindel, one of the Rebbe's secretaries, came out of the Rebbe's room, saying that the Rebbe asked about the cookbook's status. There were many other times as well; it

## Reviews

The great publicity that “The Purple Cookbook” received from elite reviews contributed greatly to *kashrus* awareness. This is also evident from the Rebbe’s response to the committee regarding a certain press release.

(1) כמדומה (קרוב לודאי) שבעצמו ראיתי עוד כו"כ מאמר מכ"ע ע"ד הס' (2) חסרים מכ"כ בעלי שם והשפעה - כמובן כוונתי לנשים ואנשים שבודאי היו כותבים באם היו פונים אליהם. והרי זה נוגע להפצת הכשרות בפועל וק"ל

I believe (almost positive) that I myself read many more news articles about the book.

*It is missing many more famous and influential [names]—Obviously my intention is about women and men who would certainly write a review if they were asked to do so. This is crucial to publicizing practical observance of kashrus. This is easily understood.*

was clear that the Rebbe wanted it published as soon as possible.

“The Rebbe also ensured that the original cookbook remained in print until the new cookbook was published. Clearly, the Rebbe felt it was an integral element of modern-day *kashrus* and should not be unavailable

for purchase for even a short amount of time.”

In honor of Chof-Beis Shvat 5750 “The Purple Cookbook” was published, and it remains the world’s most trusted kosher cookbook for over forty years since its debut on the kosher culinary scene.

## Preparation for the Geulah

The laws of *kashering* utensils (which is the essence of keeping a kosher kitchen) were taught to *Bnei Yisroel* after the battle with Midyan just prior to entering Eretz Yisroel. Chassidus explains that the 42 journeys the Yidden traveled on in the desert are reflected in our long journey through *galus*. Just as *kashrus* was the final preparation for inheriting Eretz Yisroel, strengthening *kashrus* observance throughout *klal Yisroel* will serve as the final push for the *geulah shleima*!<sup>15</sup> **1**

1. The Rebbe also explained the impact of the decline in the observance of *taharas hamishpacha* and how this mitzvah is naturally dependent on the women of the home. *Mivtza Taharas Hamishpacha* was launched during this farbrengen as well. See Likkutei Sichos vol. 13, p. 259.

2. Yemei Temimim vol 6, p. 419.

3. Toras Menachem 5745 vol. 1, p. 108.

4. Sichos Kodesh 5737 vol. 2, p. 227.

5. Likkutei Sichos vol. 13, p. 295







JEM194239

# CHASSIDUS IN-DEPTH

**HARAV YISOCHOR  
DOV ROKEACH  
THE BELZER REBBE**

4 Adar II 5741

**The Rebbe:** Since you're coming from Eretz Yisroel, surely you have good news.

**Belzer Rebbe:** The Rebbe is accomplishing incredible things there.

**The Rebbe:** Why start by discussing my accomplishments in Eretz Yisroel? You're coming from there—talk about what you do.



I saw the newspaper that is published by Belz, so if you don't want to tell me what you're accomplishing, I'll have to tell you what's going on there.

**Belzer Rebbe:** It is a special honor for me that the Rebbe knows about the newspaper.

**The Rebbe:** Not only do I know, I read it too, and I look for good things there. You see that I'm asking for good news.

## CHASSIDUS IN BELZER YESHIVOS

**The Rebbe:** The students in your yeshivos don't talk about learning Chassidus? Is it that they don't expect it, or is it that they have such *kabbalas ol* that they don't mind waiting patiently for Chassidus to be taught?

When I say "Chassidus," I mean beginning from the Torah of the Baal Shem Tov—Kesser Shem Tov, and then Likutei Amarim from the Maggid.

**Belzer Rebbe:** Everyone learns the portions that are important for *avoda*, self-improvement, and love and fear of Hashem. However, the aspects of Chassidus that are focused on *haskala* are studied only by individuals.

**The Rebbe:** How does it come across in the eyes of a yeshiva *bochur* when he's told to *koch* in understanding

the Torah that he learns, but when it comes to studying Chassidus, he's told that it's not important to understand?

When he's learning the laws of *brachos*, he's told not to suffice with learning which *bracha* to say; rather, he must delve into the reasons behind the various opinions. Yet, when he's told to learn the *halachos* of loving Hashem, he's told to learn how to love Hashem, but the various paths and approaches and the differences between them are not relevant to understanding. Don't we teach him in yeshiva to apply his intellect to Torah?

**Belzer Rebbe:** In *Elokus* people need to come to the realization that not everything can be understood; rather, we must believe in Hashem.

**The Rebbe:** All those that I am familiar with who *koch* in the *haskala* aspects of Torah, including myself, understand that there is yet more that we do not understand; much more than we do understand.

## EDUCATION FOR WOMEN

**Belzer Rebbe:** Since the last time I visited,<sup>1</sup> we founded girls' schools. May Hashem help that they be successful.

**The Rebbe:** That's a big achievement, and in today's day and age, it is a necessity.



**Belzer Rebbe:** Does the Rebbe hold that girls should be taught Mishnayos or Gemara?

**The Rebbe:** Mishnayos are *halachos*, so undoubtedly they should learn Mishnayos. Regarding Gemara: when I was asked, I answered that they should learn the Gemaras that are connected with the *halachos* they need to know in their lives—the Gemaras connected with Shabbos, *brachos*, etc.

לזכות  
הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל הכהן וזוגתו  
מרת נחמה דינה ומשפחתם שיחיו  
כהן  
שלוחי כ"ק אדמו"ר  
סאקראמענטא, קאליפארניא

**Belzer Rebbe:** Which [Gemaras] fall under the category of “One who teaches his daughter Torah, teaches her *tiflus*”?

**The Rebbe:** If you look in Shulchan Aruch, it says that the entire *Torah She’Bal Peh* falls under that category. Shulchan Aruch differentiates and says that *Torah She’bksav* is allowed, while teaching *Torah She’Bal Peh* would be “teaching her *tiflus*.” My point is that there is no need for concern regarding subjects that she already knows; we have the option to set her on the proper path through learning.

I was speaking with girls here and I was shocked. We were discussing the creation of the world, and a girl told me unhesitatingly that the world is two billion, or five billion, or seven billion years old!

I asked her, “Did you learn Chumash in school?” She said yes.

“Did you learn Bereishis?” “Yes.”

“What does it say in Bereishis?”

“In Bereishis it says that the world was created in seven days. Then, Adam Harishon lived for a number of years, and eventually we reached our times.”

I asked her, “How does the world’s age being 5730 or 5720 (whenever it was) years old work out? Didn’t you say that the world is seven billion years old?”

She told me that when she went to school, she was taught as a fact that according to extrapolations and proofs, the world is at least seven billion years old.

I asked her, “You could have asked your teacher or your *madricha* in school how that fits with what it says in Torah?

She answered: “I asked.”

“What did your teacher or *madricha* answer?”

“That one who teaches his daughter Torah teaches her *tiflus*.” [And so the teacher couldn’t teach her Torah.]

So what did she end up with? That they will not answer her question because it would be teaching her *tiflus*! But she has one thing straight—the world is seven billion years old!

Later on, when Hashem blesses her with children, and she gets into a conversation with them about the world, what will she say? She won’t say, “It’s *tiflus*.” She will say that the world is seven billion years old!

Later on, when the child learns Bereishis, he will say that it is *agada*, and that there are other things that are factual.

**Belzer Rebbe:** This is indeed a danger.

**The Rebbe:** We’re looking for solutions, but the very first solution is to explain to the student logically that the seven billion years is falsehood. If she’s told that it’s indecency to teach her Torah, then a *frum*, sensitive girl isn’t audacious enough to persist in asking. She leaves, and what does she leave with? With the impression that the world is seven billion years old.



4 ADAR II 5741, YOSSEI MELAMED VIA JEM 140428

This affects other things too. If she concludes that the six days of creation in Bereishis are *agada*, it will bring her to have the same attitude to “on the seventh day Hashem rested”—Shabbos.

Later, when we discuss Shabbos with her, it creates turmoil in her mind:

The significance of Shabbos is that it’s the seventh day, because the world was created in seven days. But if the world is seven billion years old, where does resting on the seventh day come in?

*The conversation continued in this vein for some time, then the Rebbe said:*

I always like to bring an example from something personal: The very fact that Belz publishes a newspaper is something that didn’t happen in previous generations.

**Belzer Rebbe:** In Belz, a newspaper was indeed first published in Lemberg in 5638-5639 [תרל”ח-תרל”ט].

**The Rebbe:** But Belz existed before 5638.

**Belzer Rebbe:** It was זה לעומת זה [i.e. because other newspapers began being published and having influence at that time].

**The Rebbe:** That is my point. When they weren’t learning the “*tiflus*” in secular schools, when they didn’t know about the newspapers, and the students weren’t told these things in the first place, the girls had no reason to doubt. [Nowadays, however, these issues need to be openly addressed by teaching them Torah.] ⑦

1. The Belzer Rebbe first had *yechidus* with the Rebbe on 9 Adar I 5733. In that *yechidus* the Rebbe spoke to him about the importance of girls schools in today’s day and age.

2. Vanity.

לזכות  
אליהו צבי יהודה בן רייזל  
לרפואה שלימה וקרובה

# Tzelem *Elokim*

*Why we wear beards*



**“I** was speaking with  
someone who  
gave similar  
arguments

on the matter, trying to  
display his brilliance and  
erudition in finding a  
*beter*, and I asked  
him the following  
question (with  
the preface that he  
answer reflexively,  
without thinking):  
Why is it that when  
anyone, Jew or non-  
Jew, depicts the faces  
of Moshe Rabbeinu  
or Aharon Hakohen,  
they include a large beard?”

*(The Rebbe in a letter)*





## Halachic

The *possuk* says “לא תשחית את פאת זקנך—you shall not destroy the edge of your beard.” The reason for this, the Rambam explains,<sup>1</sup> is that removal of the beard was the custom of pagan priests.

Historically, Yidden always kept their beards intact. In more recent times, as people began following secular trends and cutting their beards, halachic authorities began giving *heterim* so that they would at least do it in a kosher framework—and in the following generations, what was initially a *heter* became the default in certain places. The Rebbe explains in a letter: “Those were places and times when—in the opinion of the *matirim*—this was the only way to save many Yidden from going to the other extreme, so they toiled to find a *heter*. Even in the case of great and clear prohibitions of the Torah we find such a concept, and even in *Torah Shebichsav*: the whole idea of *eishes yefas toar* is a clear *heter* in the Torah, and *Chazal* also explain the reasoning behind it. However, thankfully today that is not the case. Anyone who truly wants to [grow a beard] has the ability [to do so].”<sup>2</sup>

The Rebbe continued to make the point that, whichever opinion one

follows as far as the pure *halacha*, nobody denies the history.

“I was speaking with someone who gave similar arguments on the matter, trying to display his brilliance and erudition in finding a *heter*, and I asked him the following question (with the preface that he answer reflexively, without thinking): Why is it that when anyone, Jew or non-Jew, depicts the faces of Moshe Rabbeinu or Aharon Hakohen, they include a large beard? If regarding Aharon Hakohen there is a *possuk* in Tehillim that describes him with “a beard running over the mouth of his garments,”<sup>3</sup> why is it that they illustrate Moshe Rabbeinu that way? [...] Being an honest person, he answered that when he imagines Moshe Rabbeinu—and not only Moshe, but any person in the past generations who followed Torah and mitzvos—it is obvious that he had a beard “running over the mouth of his garments,” without touching it in any which way.”<sup>4</sup>

The fact that this was the *minhag* throughout the generations is itself a powerful halachic reasoning, as the Tzemach Tzedek points out, but as far as the actual prohibition, there is a difference of opinions. The crux of the issue comes down to this: the Torah prohibition covers cutting the

beard with a razor (*destroying* the beard). Is there, however, a rabbinic prohibition against trimming the beard or cutting very close to the face using scissors (and certain shavers)? Some *poskim*, most prominently the Beis Yosef, are of the opinion that it is halachically permissible. Many others are of the opinion that it is rabbinically prohibited, and the Tzemach Tzedek holds that it is prohibited *min haTorah* (because it is *chatzi shiur*, and especially since there is also another prohibition, that a man may not fix himself cosmetically as a woman would). In fact, the Tzemach Tzedek writes that had the Beis Yosef seen a certain *psak* of the Rashba, who writes clearly about the prohibition, he would have changed his *psak*.<sup>5</sup> According to the Rambam, who explains that a shaved beard looks like pagan priests,<sup>6</sup> cutting one’s beard is *avizrai hu d’avoda zara*, an *aveira* for which one must be *moser nefesh*.<sup>7</sup>

In letters, the Rebbe acknowledges that there are *poskim* who rule that it is permissible to cut a beard in certain ways, and that there are many G-d fearing people who do so. Nevertheless, this doesn’t make the prohibition any less stringent for Chassidim or anyone who has a connection with the Tzemach Tzedek.



In a fascinating letter,<sup>8</sup> the Rebbe explains how seemingly the very same action can have a profoundly different effect depending on the person, illustrating it with a parable: There are certain liquids that are dangerous poisons. If a person drinks one of them, the most radical measures must be taken to save him, especially if he drinks poison many times. There are other substances that will harm a person in certain parts of his body, but in other parts they will be benign, albeit useless. For example, the peels of potatoes or lemons will not cause particular harm if one ingests them, although they are useless and must be gotten rid of by the body as quickly as possible. But if they make their way into the lungs, they can cause tremendous harm.

The same is true of the *neshama*. Certain *aveiros* are poison for all *neshamos*, and although they do not harm a non-Jew, they do harm Yidden, on a spiritual and even physical level. Then there are other things that harm certain types of Yidden and not others; for example, if an Ashkenazi marries two wives he violates the *cherem* of Rabbeinu Gershon, but a Sefardi is allowed to do so.

This applies to beards as well: if any Yid shaves his beard with a razor, *Rachamana litzlan*, he transgresses five separate *lavin* every time he does so. But regarding shaving with certain powders or electric shavers—then it depends: for Misnagdim or *olamische* Yidden—those who are not connected to or are not aware of this *psak* of the *talmidei haBaal Shem Tov*—it is

analogous to the potato peels of the above example—although it is not a good thing for the person, and one must rid oneself of the issue as soon as possible, it is not dangerous. However, for Chassidim, or anyone connected with the *talmidim* of the Baal Shem Tov, it is forbidden and causes harm to his *neshama* and body (albeit not like using a razor), similar to the potato peels getting into the lungs—and one must make sure to resolve the issue immediately and heal the damage.

### *Spiritual Effect*

In the early years of Lubavitch in America, in the 5700s and 5710s, choosing to grow a beard was a very difficult test, to a degree that is nearly impossible to imagine today.

No one—*no one*—in America was bearded; it was so rare that there were actual newspaper articles describing individuals who were found with beards. Those who kept them were looked down upon as vagrants; employers were skittish to hire them, and families were reluctant to make *shidduchim* with them. In the video of the Friediker Rebbe arriving in America, one sees quite a few Chassidim who are clean-shaven. In his autobiography, Rabbi Avraham Hecht writes about his older brother's decision to grow his beard in honor of his wedding in 5698, shortly before the Friediker Rebbe arrived: "A sight that had been so common in most of the European communities was considered peculiar in the new, modernized world of America. Passersby would sadly shake

### *In Tanach*

While it is undisputed history that Yidden always kept their beards, there is also a clear proof from Tanach.

Dovid Hamelech attempted to make a treaty with the new king of Amon, Chanun ben Nachash. Instead of accepting the gesture of peace, Chanun seized Dovid's courtiers and clipped off one side of their beards and half of their garments. Hearing about this, the *possuk* tells us, Dovid "dispatched men to meet [the courtiers], for the men were greatly embarrassed. And the king gave orders: 'Stop in Yericho until your beards grow back; then you can return.'" (Shmuel II 10:5)

The Radak points out that if people cut their beards in those days, why couldn't they just cut off the other half and come home? Clearly, "it was not their custom to cut their beards, even with scissors... It's shameful to have a shaved beard, although this is the custom in these lands, lands of idol-worshippers." It was so shameful, the Tzemach Tzedek points out, that a war was begun because of it!

In Yirmiyahu (41:5) it mentions "shaved beards" as a sign of mourning—but that was because in those generations they knew how to cut around the five parts of the beard that are halachically prohibited.

For a more thorough halachic analysis, see: Sefer *Hadras Ponim Zokon*—Rabbi Moshe Wiener, Brooklyn 5738; 5766.

**According to the Rambam, who explains that a shaved beard looks like pagan priests, cutting one's beard is *avizraibu d'avoda zara*, an *aveira* for which one must be *moser nefesh*.**





THE FRIEDIKER REBBE'S VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES IN 5689. MANY OF JEWS FELT COMPELLED TO REMOVE THEIR BEARDS WITH THEIR ARRIVAL IN AMERICA.

## Passersby would sadly shake their heads, murmuring with marked sympathy that the 'Hechts' son had obviously gone out of his mind'.

their heads, murmuring with marked sympathy that the 'Hechts' son had obviously gone out of his mind.”<sup>9</sup>

In the letters and *sichos* encouraging people to overcome the ridicule, the Rebbe's focus isn't so much on the halachic aspect as it is on the tremendous spiritual effect it has on a person. In Zohar and *sifrei Kabbalah*, the beard is referred to as the *tikkunei dikna*, and it has “extremely lofty holiness.”<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, by the very act of wearing an untouched beard, one has the ability to draw down levels of *kedusha* and divine mercy that are utterly beyond this world.

### Levels of Mercy

The Mishna says that when a person was given *malkus* (lashes) for transgressing an *aveira*, someone would stand nearby and read stern *pesukim* from Devarim as the *malkus*

was being administered. These *pesukim* were followed by the *possuk* from Tehillim, “והוא רחום יכפר עון ולא ישחית”—He is merciful and forgives our sins; He does not destroy, etc.” This is because the punishments of the Torah are not given to harm or take revenge; they are for cleansing from sin and returning the person to his former standing. The *possuk* והוא רחום has thirteen words, corresponding to the thirteen attributes of Hashem's mercy, which is what punishment truly is—an act of mercy.

The Tzemach Tzedek explains<sup>11</sup> that the words of the *possuk* “ולא ישחית—He does not destroy,” are significant, because these same words are used in the *isur* of shaving the beard: “You shall not *destroy* the edge of your beard.” By fulfilling the mitzvah of not *destroying* the beard, a Yid draws upon himself Hashem's mercies—“He does not *destroy*.”

### Who?

Rabbi Leibel Shapiro relates: “There was a certain *yungerman* who didn't have a beard, and his excuse was that his wife didn't want him to. He was from a real Lubavitcher family and yet he didn't have a beard. Once, at a farbrengen, the Rebbe called him by his name, told him to say *l'chaim*, and said, ‘זאלסט פארלאזן א זאלסט פארלאזן א—בארד—you should let your beard grow.’ Then the Rebbe added, ‘אין אזא אופן אז ניט נאר די ווייב זאל זיין צופרידן, נאר דו זאלסט זיין צופרידן—You should grow it in such a way that not only will your wife be happy, but you will be happy.’ In other words, the Rebbe was saying, you're blaming it on your wife but it's really you...”

When we say that the unlimited mercies of Hashem are drawn down into this world, this usually means that the unlimited, infinite mercies are brought down into the finite and limited reality of the world, where it *inherits* the limitations of the world. Although Hashem's mercy is fundamentally unlimited, when it comes into the world, it becomes limited, so-to-speak—mercy within the context of the world. In other words, Hashem helps even sinners, but this is accomplished through *cleansing* them of their sins. A person receives the thirteen attributes of mercy of וְהוּא רַחוּם יִכַּפֵּר עוֹן—but only after he is whipped, whether in a literal sense, with *malkus*, or with other types of suffering.

This is also the level of mercy that is accessed when a person doesn't destroy his beard. By not using a razor, the person draws down the

level of mercy that ensures that he is not destroyed—but it is mercy in the terms of the limited world. In Kabbalistic terms, this is referred to as the thirteen *tikkunei dikna* as they shine into *zêir anpin*.

However, there is also a higher level—the thirteen attributes of mercy themselves, as they emanate directly from *atik*, the infinity of Hashem. These are Hashem's infinite “great mercies,” which help a person regardless of whether he deserves it or not; it is mercy on Hashem's infinite terms—not in the terms of the world. The Tzemach Tzedek writes that someone who doesn't touch his beard at all—who not only refrains from destroying his beard with a razor, but doesn't cut it at all in any way—draws down this infinite level of mercy, which “sweetens all judgements,” and transforms *gevura* and severity into “pleasantness and sweetness.”

In the letters that the Rebbe wrote encouraging people to grow or keep their beards, the Rebbe referred to this passage of the Tzemach Tzedek very often, pointing out that based on this, it is in the best interests of a person to grow his beard. In a letter to Reb Nissan Nemenov about a young man who was touching his beard, the Rebbe writes: “...You must get his friends to influence him, especially since his older brother does behave appropriately. You should also explain to him that the thirteen *tikkunei dikna* correspond to the thirteen *midos harachamim*, and anyone who is not able to rightfully demand his needs from Hashem and must rely on Hashem's kindness and mercy should leave his thirteen *tikkunei dikna* complete, *mida kineged mida*. Obviously, a young man who needs to figure out a *parnasa* and a good *shidduch* and so on, and, in general, needs the **mercies** of Hashem, must

be careful with the thirteen *tikkunei dikna*.”<sup>12</sup>

## •Parnasa

Being that it is a channel for Hashem's great mercies, the Rebbe would sometimes advise people to begin growing a beard in order for them to begin having *parnasa*. After assuring someone that ample *parnasa* would eventually come his way, the Rebbe writes that, “If you would have listened to me about the thirteen *tikkunei dikna*...and your spouse about a *sheitel*...you would have already seen a tangible change in your *parnasa*, evident even to the physical eyes, but what else can I do in these two areas other than speaking about it?”<sup>13</sup>

When people wrote to the Rebbe that they were hesitant to have a beard out of *fear* for their livelihood, the Rebbe pointed out that basic *emunah* in Hashem as the sole provider of sustenance forces the conclusion that fulfilling what Hashem wants can only assist in *parnasa*.<sup>14</sup> When someone reported to the Rebbe that he had lost a job opportunity primarily due to his beard, the Rebbe replied that it was impossible that he truly lost out due to his beard: “Hashem is the master of the world in the literal sense of the word, and this also includes

America. In his holy Torah, which is an eternal Torah and living Torah, Hashem revealed that the beard is the thirteen *tikkunei dikna*...and it is impossible that a *bracha* should cause a lack of *parnasa*. It is only that we don't have this type of knowledge, why this job was not good for him or his family, but the truth is that this makes no difference—since Hashem, Who watches over you personally, arranged that you should not work there, it was certainly not good for you **at all**.”<sup>15</sup>

Rabbi Asher Zeilingold of Minnesota related:<sup>16</sup> “I was learning with a particular individual who did not consider himself a Lubavitcher Chossid, but who followed many *minhagei* Lubavitch. He was the regional manager for a department store chain, a very prestigious position. Recently, he had let his beard grow, in accordance with *halacha*, but his employer told him that he had to cut it off. He was obviously very disturbed by that directive, and he asked for my advice. I said, “In a few days I will be going to New York, where I am going to visit the Rebbe, and I will ask the Rebbe what you should do. However, I must caution you that I doubt the Rebbe will tell you to cut off your beard. In fact, I believe that he will surely say that you must







MAYOR OF S. PAUL, MN, GEORGE LATIMER, VISITS A LUBAVITCH INSTITUTION.

keep it.” He agreed to do whatever the Rebbe advised.

“I explained his situation in a letter. The answer was surprisingly quick. The Rebbe said that this man should tell his employer that the mayor of S. Paul has a beard. The mayor, George Latimer, was not Jewish; indeed, he was a Catholic of Lebanese descent.

“How did the Rebbe know this? A few months earlier, we’d had a celebration in our shul, and the mayor of S. Paul was invited to participate. He came, and we took several group pictures, which were published in the *American Jewish World*... That’s how the Rebbe knew about the mayor’s beard. He had carefully reviewed the newspapers, bulletins, and newspaper clippings—even the photo captions!—that I had sent him.

“The manager brought this point up to his employer, and he was allowed to keep his beard!”

## ***Shidduchim***

When it came to *shidduchim*, the Rebbe was equally clear. Starting a marriage is a period in a person’s life when they especially need Hashem’s *brachos*, which are drawn down

through an increased commitment to Torah and mitzvos—not the opposite; it is impossible that growing a beard and having access to the infinite mercies of Hashem will hurt someone’s chances in *shidduchim*.

To a girl who was hesitant about marrying someone with a beard, the Rebbe writes:<sup>17</sup>

“I trust that it is unnecessary for me to emphasize to you at great length that marriage is, in accordance with the text of the blessing, ‘an everlasting edifice’ (*binyan adei ad*), and that everything connected with it is not only of immediate and vital concern to the bride and bridegroom, but has a bearing also on their children. Therefore, it is self-understood that the maximum attention should be given to those factors which are essential to ensure a happy life partnership and an everlasting Jewish home. In such a case it is of no importance whatsoever to pay attention to the opinion of a neighbor or an acquaintance. An obvious example would be in the case where a deal is under consideration, involving a million dollars, when it would be foolish to pay attention to nickels and dimes, and thereby

overlook essential conditions which affect the whole deal.

“With specific reference to the matter about which you write in your letter and which seems to worry you, let me say this: When a young man has the strength of will and the strength of character to wear a beard, and has done so for several years, even at a time when wearing a beard was not such a popular thing as it is now, not only in Orthodox circles but even in circles which have nothing to do with religion, it surely shows great courage and conviction, as well as a loyalty to obligations—all of which are essential qualities to ensure a happy family life.

“It is surely also unnecessary for me to add that where religious boys do not wear a beard, it is not because they have the strength of character and conviction, rather because of the lack of them.”

When it did seem that it might hold up a *shidduch*, the Rebbe pointed out that if someone wasn’t ready to finalize a *shidduch* for the sole reason that the boy had a beard, this was an indicator that Torah and mitzvos weren’t important enough to them, and it might just be a good idea to call it off.<sup>18</sup>

## ***Siddur Kiddushin***

In the early years of the *nesius*, when the Rebbe still officiated at weddings as *mesader kiddushin*, one of the conditions that the Rebbe made was that the *chosson* and the father of the *kallah* grow their beards. As a *bochur*, Reb Sholom Ber Raskin once came into *yechidus* for his birthday and asked the Rebbe about a certain *shidduch*. After giving his approval, the Rebbe said: “I want to ask something of you. It would be fitting [*a glaiche zach*] for you to let your beard grow. Your father had a beard, your grandfather had a beard, your great-grandparents had beards. [You





should do this] not because I want it, but because Hashem wants it.” Reb Sholom Ber then asked that the Rebbe agree to be *mesader kiddushin*, and the Rebbe replied, “If you do what I asked of you, I will do what you asked of me.”

About two weeks later, on a Friday, he received a phone call from Rabbi Hodakov. The Rebbe wanted to know whether he had agreed to the condition, and if yes, he should put a note on the Rebbe’s *shtender* before *Kabbalas Shabbos*. He replied that he had indeed accepted this upon himself.

A couple months later, when the Rebbe saw him in 770 with his newly grown beard, he said to him, “It would be fitting for you to travel to my father-in-law, at the *tziyun*, with the *tzelem Elokim*.”<sup>19</sup>

### ·Parental·Pressure

Perhaps the Rebbe’s strongest words were reserved for (religious) parents

who pressure their children to remove their beards. “It is uncomfortable for me to write about this, but being that this is for the benefit of a Yid, I am unable to remain silent. I must express my disappointment: Your son underwent a struggle—with himself and his surroundings—specifically in relation to his external image, and I had hoped that the first people who would be supporting him and helping him on this trial-ridden path would be his parents, especially his mother—his doting mother, as the expression goes. Especially since **everyone agrees** that a person’s external clothing have no intrinsic meaning, and no intrinsic importance, and are merely a social construct. The only ‘value’ is to impress other people; to resolve the question of ‘what will “people” say?’—and these people [who are judging] are not the types of people who have a comprehension in the meaning of life, who respect a man or woman who stands strong in their

opinions and swims **against** the tide. These are people who judge the book solely by its cover, whose only interest is that every single person should be carried along with the **crowd**. Furthermore, [by pressuring your son] you are shaking the self-confidence that a person naturally feels by living his daily life according to his own conscience, without being forced to violate his principles. And specifically in such a case, I was disappointed.”<sup>20</sup>

The Rebbe illustrated it with a parable: If you have a building that has only one or two floors, it can still be a very nice building. If you decide to build a new floor on top of the existing structure—then it becomes an addition to the building. But once you complete the construction, if you would now go ahead and remove the ‘extra’ floor, it would ruin the rest of the building and even the foundation. Because once you added the top floor, the entire building is now connected. And all the more so if you destroy the first floor, it obviously will destroy the rest of the building.

“Every person is a **living organism**,” explains the Rebbe. “When dealing with any issue, one must consider this living person who is not a robot—not always will the general solution work for him...Your son decided to wear a beard because of an inner inspiration, and it is difficult to know whether this is the ‘first floor’ in the above parable or an ‘additional floor...’ As I’ve written in the past, his relatives and friends, and even more so his parents, should be encouraging and strengthening him as much as they possibly can, and I hope that his parents will do so, as this is for the good of their son and them as well.”<sup>21</sup>

A certain *bochur*, who came from a non-Chassidic family, was having trouble from his parents over his beard. They argued, “Why do you have to be different from your friends,

**When the Rebbe saw him in 770 with his newly grown beard, he said to him, “It would be fitting for you to travel to my father-in-law, at the *tziyun*, with the *tzelem Elokim*.”**



A SAMPLE OF LETTERS WHERE THE REBBE WRITES ON THE IMPORTANCE OF A BEARD.

and why do you want to look like the hippies?”

During a *yechidus*, the Rebbe spoke to him about it at length, explaining that a beard is very important in Yiddishkeit because it serves as a sign that someone is Jewish. The Yidden merited to leave Mitzrayim because they didn’t change their names, their language, and their clothing. This showed everyone that this person was Jewish, *duh geit a Yid*. This is something that can be learned from the hippies, the Rebbe added: they don’t change their names, language, or clothing, and that’s what makes them unique.<sup>22</sup>

The Rebbe said that there was another benefit to having a beard. If a bearded Yid goes into the store and begins looking at a newspaper or a non-kosher magazine, he suddenly remembers that he is clearly stamped, that anyone who sees him with his beard knows that he is a G-d fearing person. Therefore, it is not appropriate for him to be looking at such things, and he immediately runs off.

Recording his *yechidus*, the *bochur* wrote: “When I heard the Rebbe’s

last words I nearly fainted. I only recovered outside the Rebbe’s room... The reason I was so shocked was because the example the Rebbe had brought had just recently happened to me.”

## Family Resistance

The Rebbe helped many *baalei teshuvah* and *mekuravim* navigate resistance to their growing a beard, whether it was friends, parents, or spouses, assuring them that such resistance was very normal, and gave personalized guidance on what to do.<sup>23</sup> In one letter, to someone who seems to be a recent *baal teshuva*, the Rebbe suggests growing a beard as a way to jumpstart his transition: “It is difficult to advise from so far, but in general it is human nature that a decisive change that is visible to all eases internal changes and the habituation into a new environment. As the expression goes in Yiddish, “To burn the bridges behind you,” and it is possible that in your situation, growing a beard will do this for you.”<sup>24</sup>

Rabbi Chaim Yehuda Paldi was a prominent activist in Eretz Yisrael in

the fight against *aschalta d’geula* (the destructive notion that the *geulah* has already started, popular among certain Zionist groups) and *Mihu Yehudi*. His connection to Lubavitch began in 5729, when he spent half a year in America and experienced a miracle from the Rebbe regarding his health. By the time he went back home he was sporting a small beard.

To his surprise, his wife couldn’t accept the beard. She said that it wasn’t a religious issue; it was a deep psychological barrier that she was unable to overcome, and she said that she wasn’t able to live under the same roof as him as long as he kept the beard. He managed to get her to agree to a seven-day postponement, during which he would be able to obtain the Rebbe’s opinion on the matter. In his letter, he outlined his conundrum: on the one hand, he felt that because he hadn’t been wearing a beard until then, he should give it up for *shalom bayis*; on the other hand, he wrote, his beard had deep roots in his soul, and giving it up could cause a decline in other areas as well. “Now—my request: in order to avoid

I do not know you personally, but being that I've heard a lot about you from your husband Mr. Yehuda, *sheyichye*, I take the liberty of writing to you the following lines, and I hope you will not be offended.

Following our correspondence by mail, I had the pleasant opportunity of getting to know your husband on his recent, longer visit here. Based on our conversations, during which he recounted the general story of his life, I was happy to see that he found tranquility through his increasing connection to an outlook based on our Torah, the living and true Torah, tranquility that also borders on and brings inner contentment—contentment of the soul.

Surely this process, which has brought tranquility, harmony, and contentment, is only possible with the assistance of the wife, the *eizer*, in the words of the *possuk*. This was confirmed to me when your husband told me about your assistance in general, and especially in the above.

It is superfluous to write at length about the critical importance of inner tranquility and harmony in order for a person to live a life worth living, especially these days, which are full of upheaval in the public as well as private life.

It is therefore my strong hope that you will continue in the future as you did in the past to stand at the side of your husband in this area of progress as well, for every living thing must surely grow and progress. Together you should both ascend in life according to the our living Torah.

However, I figured that I should write to you about this matter specifically, expressing my hope together with my encouragement and support—because sometimes a person encounters difficulties and so on in their journey, especially (as *Chazal* tell us) when encountering people who have yet to arrive at this level [of progress], and who try reassuring themselves in their own eyes and in the eyes of others by scoffing at and putting down those who have progressed more than them and have arrived at a higher worldview—our Torah and our belief. How much have our Sages enjoined us not to feel embarrassed by the scoffers, for they knew the nature of man that this test is not an easy one.

—I refer specifically to one particular matter, growing the beard. It seems that your husband,

*sheyichye*, began growing his beard during his stay here. Our Sages tell us that the beard is “the garment of Hashem” and it cloaks a person with the image of Hashem, as is told in several *Midrashim*. This was not easy for your husband when he was here (mostly because of the scoffers), and yet, without any outside influence, he began doing so. It seems that this enhanced his tranquility and recognition that he is standing on a strong foundation of Torah and mitzvos. This is one of the primary objectives of this letter, to request of you—and to express my hope—that in this matter, too, you will assist and encourage your husband to continue in this path in the future, with joy and tranquility.

I am aware that there are many religious Jews who do not grow their beards, and the differences of opinions are recorded in the *poskim*. But in this case we are not discussing only a halachic point of view, but primarily the results in your husband's personal life—and they are not only satisfactory, but **much** more than that. The beard has joined the other positive developments in his life in the past few years, including in his relationship with you and so on—increasing light and vitality into his life, which certainly enhances your life as well.

Clearly, there is no comparison between this achievement and ascension in life—and the scoffing of a few individuals in your area, which, as mentioned above, is essentially the self-justification of the scoffer. The easy way for him to quiet his own conscience, which bothers him from time to time, is to put down those who are above him, even in his estimation. There is surely no need to explain this at length.

Just to add another point—in this case it is a primary one—to quote the words of our Rebbe the Tzemach Tzedek, that growing a beard is a special *segula* to draw down Hashem's *brachos* in abundance, in quantity and in quality. Thus, anyone who needs additional *brachos* from Hashem in matters of health, finances, and even more so spirituality, must surely very much hold on to this development. Especially since in all such matters we are promised that those who come to purify themselves are assisted from above, with great assistance.

(Igros Kodesh vol. 26 p. 155)





## How Does He Look?

In 5739, after the shluchim to Eretz Yisrael printed Tanyas in Lebanon and Cyprus, the Rebbe gave the directive that a Tanya should be printed in the former capital of Turkey. In an interview with *A Chassidisher Derher*, Rabbi Yosef Gerlitzky relates: “We were told to first visit Reb Shneur Zalman Schmerling, whose son-in-law was the ambassador to Turkey at the time, and offer him to print it. If he wasn’t willing to go, we should go. He immediately replied that he was ready to go as soon as he had printing plates. A few days later, as we were preparing the plates, the question arose regarding the way to print the name of the city. At the time it was called Istanbul, but beforehand it had been called Kushta, so we called Rabbi Hodakov and asked what to do. Suddenly, I heard the Rebbe on the line. The Rebbe told him, and he relayed to us, “שרייבן ווי מ’שרייבט,” אין א גט, write it as it would be written in a *get*.”

It was quiet for a moment, and a few seconds later Rabbi Hodakov asked me (in Yiddish), “How does he look?” I didn’t understand the question, and asked, “What do you mean?”

Rabbi Hodakov said, “Does he have a beard?”

“Yes,” I replied, “he started growing a beard.” It was quiet again—Rabbi Hodakov was talking to the Rebbe—and then Rabbi Hodakov asked me, “How big is his beard?”

I was under such pressure, knowing the Rebbe was on the line, I just said, “Like Reb Binyomin [Klein].” Rabbi Klein had a small beard. Again, it was quiet, and I overheard the Rebbe speaking with Rabbi Hodakov, and then Rabbi Hodakov asked me, “Does he trim his beard?” I said that I didn’t know, next time maybe I’ll try to look...

Rabbi Hodakov finished off the conversation by saying that, obviously, everything said here must remain in utter confidence.

Later on, when I next visited Rabbi Schmerling, I casually asked him what he had spoken to the Rebbe about in *yechidus*. He told me that the Rebbe had spoken to him about growing a beard...And that’s why the Rebbe was asking if he had grown his beard, to see if he had done as he had asked.

utter disaster, I may have to decide to remove the beard, unless the Rebbe directs me differently. My special request is that the Rebbe consider the urgency of the issue and please send the answer by express-mail.”

The Rebbe sent him a telegram: “Regarding your question, the issue may resolve itself. Either way, any such problem should be directed to a local rav who will hear both sides and give his Torah-opinion.”

The Rebbe also sent a letter to his wife, where he asks her to stand by

her husband’s side, and reveals the shallowness of those who scoff. (See sidebar)

A few days later, Rabbi Peldi sent a letter to the Rebbe with the good news that, indeed, the matter had been settled. “I must emphasize,” he wrote, “that the Rebbe’s letter had an effect even before it came. On the very date that the Rebbe’s letter was written, my wife told me these words: “Listen, if the Rebbe would at least write to me a few words, that I should try overcoming my difficulties and that

# It was quiet for a moment, and a few seconds later Rabbi Hodakov asked me (in Yiddish), “How does he look?”

this would bring me blessing, then...” At that point I felt that she was just looking for a way to back down with dignity, and then I was sure that such a letter would come. My wife was very touched by the great honor, and asked me to pass on her profound thanks to the Rebbe.”

1. *Mishneh Torah Hilchos Avoda Zara* 12:7.
2. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 22, p. 192.
3. 133:2
4. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 22, p. 492.
5. *Tzemach Tzedek Yoreh Dei'ah* 93:6.
6. According to the simple reading of the Rambam, this includes trimming as well, see *Tzemach Tzemach Tzedek Siman* 93.
7. *Shemini* 5713
8. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 8, p. 87.
9. *My Spiritual Journey*, p. 42
10. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 22, p. 490.
11. *Tehillim Yahel Or*, p. תרכו-תרכז.
12. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 9, p. 235.
13. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 10, p. 311.
14. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 22, p. 166.
15. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 10, p. 365.
16. Special “Guests” of Honor—*Here’s My Story*.
17. English Letter from 28th Teves 5722.
18. See *Igros Kodesh* vol. 24, p. 16.
19. *Mekadesh Yisrael*, p. 248.
20. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 9, p. 264.
21. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 21, p. 273.
22. On another occasion the Rebbe pointed out that many of the hippies were Jewish, and the very fact that they were distinct would be the merit for *geula*. See Living Torah program 124 *Jewish Counterculture*.
23. See, for example, Living Torah program 687 *Peaceful Solution*.
24. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 15, p. 249.

## Jfigber·Protection

During the Yom Kippur War, Mr. Efraim Mol served in the IDF, stationed at Israel’s southern border with Sinai. Fearing a chemical attack from the Egyptians, his commanding officer warned that all soldiers must shave off their beards in order to tightly fit a gas mask over their faces.

Efraim wasn’t willing to shave off his beard so quickly and he persuaded the commander of his unit to allow him to ask the Rebbe if this was indeed a case of *pikuach nefesh*. “If the Rebbe says it is, then I’ll shave,” Efraim said.

The Rebbe’s response was not long in coming:



1. It is clear that there will be no poison gas attack.
  2. The soldier may take the gas mask, put it on, and demonstrate that the beard does not obstruct it. Those who hold otherwise either lack knowledge, or haven’t studied the matter in depth, because they don’t consider it all that important.
  3. The soldier should present the above points. If, however, these points are not accepted, then as an extra precaution, to satisfy their opinion, he may concede by carrying scissors with him and, if the need arises, he can remove his beard in one minute—the same amount of time it would take to put on the gas mask—if there is an attack of the type which they fear.
- P.S. During World War I, poison gas was widely used, and all the armies, including the British, used masks. Yet the Indian Sikhs, who fought in the ranks of the British, were permitted to not remove their beards, and they distinguished themselves in battle.

This should be transmitted to the soldiers, and it may be publicized immediately.

(*My Encounter interview—Here’s My Story, Shabbos Parshas Bereishis* 5775)



לזכות  
הת' דובער שיחי'  
לרגל הגיעו לעול מצוות  
ח' אייר ה'תשע"ח  
נדפס ע"י הוריו  
הרה"ת ר' משה יעקב  
וזוגתו מרת חנה שיחי'  
ראב"ן

# eight facts 770

# 1

## Kodesh Hakodashim

Apartment, personal office, and headquarters of Merkos are labels that the Rebbe's room in 770 carried at some point or another.

Although it is most famous as the Rebbe's room and *yechidus* room for 47 years, it also served as an interim apartment for the Rebbe and Rebbetzin. They lived there for a short time after their arrival to the USA, before they moved to a regular apartment.

Then it became the office of Merkos. Being that it is small in size, the two or three other individuals working there were in very close proximity to the Rebbe.

In 5707 it became the Rebbe's room as we know it today.



## Women's Section

The original "women's section" was a balcony that was built for the women in the *Beis*

*Hamikdash* every

Sukkos. It was from that vantage point that the women and girls had the opportunity to partake in the *simchas beis hashoeva* festivities.

Overlooking the *shalash* in 770 there was also a balcony that served as a place for the women to daven, watch the Rebbe, and join in the farbrengens.

On some occasions, especially on Yom Tov, Rebbetzin Chana would stand there during *shacharis*.



## Respect

The Rebbe personally cared about the cleanliness of 770. It was not uncommon to see the Rebbe bend down to pick up a scrap of paper or dispose of a piece of garbage.

On one occasion an electrician had done some work in 770 and left without replacing the cover to the box he had been repairing. After a full year of it being ignored, the Rebbe exclaimed at a farbrengen, "I waited a full year to see if anyone would notice, but until now nobody bothered to put a cover on the box!"



## In the Name

When standing upstairs in 770, it may be technically correct to refer to the downstairs *shul* simply as "*untan*," but when the Rebbe heard a *gabbai* use that term, the Rebbe said, "We don't say '*untan*' about a *shul*!"







## Celebration

Is the day you lay the cornerstone of a new building a *yom tov*?

When that building is as special as 770, the answer is yes.

The Chassidim learned of this when the Rebbe wore his silk *kapota*, which was almost solely for Shabbos and Yom Tov, at the *hanochas even hapina* ceremony on 17 Elul 5748. A short while later the Rebbe said that the Rebbeim would wear silk on *yom tov* *dike* occasions as well.



## Door is Open!

Behind a shut door, the throngs push to get in, but when the door is wide open, the crowd disperses and the line is empty.

On the first night of Pesach 5710, the Rebbe used this sentiment to express some disappointment that after 10 Shevat 5710, the Chassidim weren't coming to 770 as often anymore. The Rebbe also stressed that we are still able to get all the *brachos* that we received before the *histalkus*.

The Rebbe concluded, "Is there any better place to receive the revelations of Eliyahu Hanavi than in the room where the Rebbe held his *seder* for over ten years?"

The Rebbe's words hit home, and the next night many Chassidim came to the Rebbe's *seder*. The Rebbe instructed that soup be given to those who hadn't already eaten the *afikoman*. The soup was served from a silver bowl that had belonged to the Alter Rebbe.



## "Small"

When 770 was originally purchased, the room upstairs that we call the small *zal* was two separate rooms. Upon the Frierdiker Rebbe's instruction, they removed the dividing wall and made it into one room.

Now, with the expansion of the basement and the main shul, the upstairs is the smaller counterpart.



## Permanent and Temporary

*In the middle of the month of Menachem-Av [5700], the Frierdiker Rebbe went to visit 770 for the first time. He instructed how the shul should be set up for davening, and asked to see the basement as well. Then the Frierdiker Rebbe instructed that the mezuzos be put up, and when questions arose as to which side of the door certain mezuzos should be hung, he made the determination.*

*Afterwards, they davened mincha and maariv, and then the Frierdiker Rebbe sat down and said l'chaim (in the room that would later be the Rebbe's room). Then he said, "Hashem should grant that this be a permanent dwelling b'nefesh—[permanent] in our own souls, [providing peace of mind] for Torah and avoda, and [at the same time] a temporary dwelling, for we will soon be in Eretz Hakodesh together with Moshiach."*

The above paragraphs are from a letter that Reb Shmuel Levitin wrote to fellow Chassidim announcing the purchase and future plans for 770. He also mentions how they would designate a *zal* similar to the way it was in Lubavitch.

The excitement must have been great, as Lubavitch now had permanent headquarters in the United States.



The content for this article is largely based on *The Heartbeat of Lubavitch* Derher, Nissan—Iyar 5775; "770" photo album published by Tzivos Hashem; *Beis Chayeinu* by Heichel Menachem, Yerushalayim.





להביא לימות המשיח

DEDICATED BY  
CHABAD LUBAVITCH  
OF COSTA RICA



# Expressions of Redemption II

Learning the Rebbe's *sichos* and watching farbrengens, we often come across various expressions and quotes from *Chazal* in reference to Moshiach. Some of them are used repeatedly, so that at times we can almost become oblivious to them. It is important to remember that in truth they are laden with layers of meaning.

In continuation to a previously featured article on this subject,<sup>1</sup> we will examine a few more of these quotes and expressions, and attempt to deepen our understanding of them. Hopefully this will add in our overall appreciation of the Rebbe's references, and inspire us to take his words to heart and do all that we can to hasten the coming of Moshiach.



“וַאֲרוּ עִם עֲנַנֵי שָׁמַיָא”<sup>2</sup>

“And behold with the clouds of the heavens...”

This is a quote from the *nevuah* of Daniel. Previously in the *perek*, he describes a vision he had of the end of times, alluding to the rise and fall of all the nations of the world, and how Hashem will judge them all. Then, a person arrives, riding on “the clouds of the heavens.” As *meforshim* explain, the “person” is Moshiach.

11 TISHREI 5749, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 256615



**“The joy of the world upon their heads...”**

This is another quote from Yeshaya, describing the way the Yidden will be brought back to Yerushalayim with the coming of Moshiach.

Rashi explains that the word עולם means a joy that happened already once in the past; referring to the joy of *yetzias Mitzrayim*.

The Rebbe brings two possible translations to the word עולם in this context:

1. A joy brought about from the things that are happening in the world at the time.
2. A joy that is **everlasting**, like the word “לעולם,” which means “forever.”

These two translations are symbolic of a lower level and a higher level of joy. The joy begins by us utilizing and refining the physicality of the world for *kedusha*, and this results in the higher level of joy—one that completely transcends the world.<sup>14</sup> **1**

1. *Derher Tammuz* 5777.
2. *Daniel* 7:13.
3. *Sanhedrin* 98b.
4. 26 Adar 5751.
5. *Sefer Hasichos* 5752 vol. 1, p. 66 fn. 100. The *possuk* in Daniel is talking about Moshiach himself arriving on a cloud. In *Yalkut Shimoni Yeshaya, Remez* 503, it is applied to each and every Jew.
6. *Zohar* vol. 1, 129a.
7. See *sichas Shabbos Parshas Pinchas* 5745, et. al.
8. See *sichas Shabbos Parshas Beshalach*, 13 Shevat 5711.
9. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sara* 5746.
10. *Yeshaya* 49:23.
11. *Zevachim* 19a.
12. *Likutei Sichos* vol. 24, Tavo (2).
13. *Yeshaya* 35:10
14. *Sichas* 19 Elul 5748.

Citing this *possuk*, the Gemara asks:

Rebbi Yehoshua ben Levi raises a contradiction. It is written: “...With the clouds of heaven...” And it is written: “Behold, your king will come to you; he is just and victorious, lowly and riding upon a donkey...” Rebbi Alexandri explains: If [the Jewish people] merit redemption, [then Moshiach will come in a miraculous manner] with the clouds of heaven. If they do not merit, he will come lowly and riding upon a donkey...<sup>3</sup>

Rashi explains: “Clouds of the heaven” indicates speed. “A poor man on his donkey” is a symbol of procrastination.

The Rebbe explains that “*ananei shmaya*” are Hashem’s clouds, and they travel even faster than airplanes!<sup>4</sup>

Another reason they are referred to as “*ananei shmaya*”: Essentially, clouds come from the ground, as the *possuk* says, “ואד יעלה מן הארץ”—a cloud arose from the ground.” With the coming of Moshiach, they are transformed into “clouds of heaven.”<sup>5</sup>

**בשעתא חדא וברגעא חדא<sup>6</sup>**

**“In one hour and in one moment...”**

The Rebbe often uses this phrase to describe Moshiach’s imminent arrival. The original expression in the Zohar is said about *teshuva*: A *tzaddik’s avoda* is carried out step-by-step, gradually climbing from one level to another. A *baal teshuva*, on the other hand, makes his turnaround instantaneously, reaching the highest levels in one moment—ברגעא, ביומא חדא, ביומא חדא—in one hour, in one day, in one moment.

Since the coming of Moshiach is dependent on us doing *teshuva*, and *teshuva* can be done in one instant, Moshiach can come anytime—speedily!<sup>7</sup>

Many times, the Rebbe used the alternate translation of the word “שעתא,” which can also mean “turn.” In other words, with one quick “turnaround” we can do *teshuva* and greet Moshiach.<sup>8</sup>

In a fascinating *sicha*, the Rebbe explains that the phrase שעתא חדא, יומא חדא has the *roshei teivos* of “שליח.” The letter ש - שעתא, the letter י - יומא, the letter ח - חדא, and the letter ל can also stand for רגעא. According to Kabbalah, the *teshuva* of “רגעא חדא” is connected to בינה, which represents Torah study—לימוד התורה, which begins with a <sup>9</sup> ל.

**וְהָיוּ מַלְכִּים אֲמִנִּיךָ וְשָׂרֵי תֵּיבֹתֶיךָ מִיְּמִינֶיךָ...<sup>10</sup>**

**“And kings shall be your nursing fathers and their princesses your wet nurses”**

This is a quote from Yeshaya, describing the great honor Yidden will receive from the nations of the world; even being personally served by kings and princesses.

In this regard, the Rebbe quoted a story from the Gemara:

Rav Ashi said, “Huna bar Nassan told me, ‘I was once standing before King Izgedar; my belt lay high up, whereupon he pulled it down, and said to me, “the Torah calls you a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” [I.e. it is not befitting for you to be improperly dressed.] When I came before Amemar, he said to me: “The *possuk* והיו מלכים אמניך has been fulfilled for you.””<sup>11</sup>

The Rebbe explains that when we as Yidden are not intimidated by the *gulus*, and we act as if it doesn’t really exist, we merit seeing the fulfillment of this prophecy already now.<sup>12</sup>



לע"נ  
ר' שמואל נתן ע"ה בן ר' אברהם אבא  
ע"ה  
פערלמוטער  
גלב"ע ו' אייר ה'תשנ"ב  
תנ"צ'יה'  
גדפס ע"י בנו  
הרה"ת ר' אברהם אבא  
וזוגתו מרת חנה פרומא ומשפחתם  
שיחיו  
פערלמוטער



*Exclusive Interview with*  
**RABBI LEIBEL ALEVSKY**

# MY YEARS *in* 770



Rabbi Leibel Alevsky has served as the Rebbe's shliach to Northeast Ohio for over forty years.

Before moving to Cleveland, he merited to spend many years by the Rebbe, first as a *bochur* learning in 770, and then as the *menahel* of Tzach throughout the 5720s.

In this exclusive interview with *A Chassidisher Derher*, he shares stories, recollections, and lessons from his years as a *bochur* and his involvement in the early years of *hafatzas hamaayanos*.



REB LEIBEL BRINGS MR. SID DAVIDOFF, ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT TO NEW YORK MAYOR JOHN V. LINDSAY, TO THE REBBE, MOTZOEI SIMCHAS TORAH 5728.





A GROUP OF CHASSIDIM IN THE DP CAMP IN WEGSCHEID, GERMANY. REB LEIBEL IS SITTING BOTTOM ROW FIFTH FROM RIGHT, CIRCA 1950.

## BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

I was born in Chernigov, Ukraine, in 5699 (תרצ"ט). When I was two years old, my father was drafted into the Russian army to fight the Nazis, and never returned. I was raised by my mother and my maternal grandfather, Reb Gavriel Kagan, a *tomim* from Lubavitch.

After the war, we joined the famous escape from Russia under false Polish passports, and after some time in a DP camp and in France, the Frieddiker Rebbe instructed my family to move to Eretz Yisrael.

When we arrived, I enrolled in Tomchei Temimim in Lod, and when I was fifteen, I joined the *zal*, under the tutelage of Reb Shlomo Chaim Kesselman.

## YESHIVAH IN ERETZ YISROEL

Many prominent Chassidim lived in Eretz Yisrael at the time, and we often availed ourselves of opportunities to *farbreng* with them. I spent time with Chassidim such as Reb Zalman Moshe Hayitzchaki (as a child), Reb Shmerel Sasonkin, and others.

Every *yoma d'pagra* we would *farbreng* with Reb Chaim Shaul Brook. For us young *bochurim*, he was engaging and down to earth; unlike most older Chassidim, he was very street-smart, and he really understood us and spoke our language. "Reb Sheyel" (as he was affectionately called) truly captured our imagination.

I don't recall studying *maamarim* of the Rebbe in those days. The only *maamar* of the Rebbe I recall studying before I left in 5718 was Mayim Rabim 5717. I don't remember many *sichos* either; I remember once, Reb Shlomo Chaim received a *hanacha* of a *sicha*, so he gathered the whole yeshiva and taught it to us. That was the general atmosphere in Eretz Yisroel in those days; we knew that there was a "*yunge Rebbe*" in America, but we only had one picture of him. Aside for *panim* on Erev Rosh Hashanah, I almost never corresponded with the Rebbe.

This was the state of affairs in Eretz Yisroel until the Rebbe sent the shluchim.

After the terrorist attack in Kfar Chabad in 5716, the local Chassidim were very dejected, and the Rebbe sent twelve *bochurim* shluchim to

*I remember Reb Shmuel Fogelman—who was one of the shluchim—crying out to us, "Ir farbhteit nisht! Der Rebbe iz a melech! You don't understand, the Rebbe is a king!"*

strengthen them. It was they who totally changed our perception of how to have a relationship with the Rebbe.<sup>1</sup>

The shluchim were based in yeshiva with us; from there they would go to visit rabbonim, yeshivos, and communities, and we tagged along wherever they went. These were *bochurim* from 770, so we hung onto their every word, and they showered us with attention.

One night, we *farbrenged* with the shluchim in Kfar Chabad. After many hours and many *l'chaims*, I remember Reb Shmuel Fogelman—who was one of the shluchim—crying out to us, "*Ir farshteit nisht! Der Rebbe iz a melech! You don't understand, the Rebbe is a king!*"

Their visit left such an impression on us that many of us decided that our future was in 770. We were determined to go to the Rebbe.

Some time after their trip, I, wrote to the Rebbe asking for permission to come to New York, and received the following answer: "ישיבת כרכים קשה, אם לדעתי ישמע יעסוק בלימוד ויתעסק בעבודת התפילה וישפיע על חבריו. City life isn't conducive [for a *bochur*]; if you ask my opinion, you should study Torah, engage in *avodas hatefillah*, and influence your surroundings."

In other words, there is nothing to talk about.

I was despondent.



I was approaching draft-age. Within a short while, I wouldn't be able to leave Israel at all without first serving in the army, so I was desperate to leave. After my grandfather wrote a long letter to the Rebbe explaining the situation, the Rebbe sent him the following instructions:

“יסע לשנה לצרפת תחת הר”ן נעמאנאוו, וואו יוחלט המשר דרכו. You should travel to spend a year in France under the tutelage of Reb Nissan Nemenov, and then your future path will be decided.”

I spent a half a year in France until my passport was about to expire. I was in a bind. The Rebbe told me to spend a year in France, but now I couldn't remain there. I wrote the whole story to the Rebbe, and concluded my letter saying, “*v'atah lo eda ma la'asos*, I don't know what to do.” A week later, I received an affidavit from Rashag, enabling me to enter the yeshiva in 770 (something which he only sent per the Rebbe's instructions).

My excitement was out of this world. That night, my friends and I held a grand farbrengen that lasted until morning. I was ecstatic. I couldn't believe my good luck. A year and a half after I first wrote to the Rebbe, I would finally be able to learn in 770.

## NEW YORK

I arrived in New York on my nineteenth birthday, Rosh Chodesh Sivan 5718. Reb Itche Springer picked me up from the ship and brought me to the Kerestirer *mikveh* before *maariv*, where I prepared to see the Rebbe for the first time.

A year earlier, my friend, Reb Meir Friedman, had spent Tishrei in New York and had described his experiences to me. He had related that he once walked into 770 and proceeded down the hallway, when suddenly the Rebbe appeared in front of him, coming from the sink. The hallway was very narrow, and he didn't

know what to do. He told us that he was so frightened, he wished a pit would open under him so he could jump in.

That was the impression of *yiras haromemus* in my mind before I saw the Rebbe for the first time. Before *maariv*, I made my way to the southwest corner of the small *zal*, as far as

possible from the Rebbe's place, and I stood there shaking from fright.

Suddenly, I hear “ssshhhhh.” I raised my eyes and saw the hats split, and another hat walking in between them. I immediately lowered my eyes and didn't pick them up until the Rebbe left.

That Shabbos was Erev Shavuos, and the Rebbe farbrenged. In

*“Vou iz Alewsky? M'darf mechanech zein di naye. Where is Alewsky? We need to educate the new ones.”*



REB LEBEL (TOP LEFT) IN KFAR CHABAD.



THE SHLUCHIM SENT BY THE REBBE TO ERETZ YISROEL, SUMMER 5716, VISITING THE CHEDER CHILDREN IN LUD.



those years, the Shabbos and Yom Tov farbrengens took place in the “shalash” (a tent-like structure built in the courtyard outside), and the big weekday farbrengens were held in halls outside Crown Heights.

I was still afraid, so during the *niggunim* when the Rebbe would look around, I made sure to hide behind the *bochurim*. Suddenly, the *bochurim* pulled me in; the Rebbe was looking for me. They gave me a *kelishke* and said, “Say *l’chaim*.” I said *l’chaim* and the Rebbe responded.

After the farbrengen, the *bochurim* told me that the Rebbe had said, “*Vu iz Alevsky? Zol er zogen l’chaim. M’darf mechanech zain di naye. Where is Alevsky? He should say l’chaim. We need to educate the new ones.*”

Two weeks after I arrived, I went in for *yechidus*. I wrote a long *tzetel*, writing everything about myself, and I asked a few questions as well. The Rebbe answered point by point. After the *yechidus*, I wrote down the *hora’os*, and merited that the Rebbe edited it.

One *hora’a* was regarding *avodas hatefillah*. The Rebbe said:

איידער מען שטעלט זיך דאווענען, טראכט מען איבער דעם ענין אדער דעם אות אדער די נקודה אין דער מאמר וואס מ'האט געלערנט אין דער פרי, און מיט דעם שטעלט מען זיך דאווענען.

ווען מ'זעט אז די התעוררות ווערט שוואכער, קען מען איבערטראכטן די נקודה פון דעם מאמר אבער ניט אין אן ארט וואס

*Right before the Rebbe reached the corner, he turned to me, made sure that I noticed him, lifted the collar of his coat, and opened his hands in a surprised expression.*



REB LEIBEL (RIGHT) IN BRUNOY.

CHABAD OF TEXAS ARCHIVES

מ'טאר ניט מפסיק זיין, ווי אין ברכות קריאת שמע.

“Before davening, contemplate on the concept, or the *ois* or point in the *maamar* that you studied that morning, and with that, you can begin davening. When you notice that your inspiration is fading, contemplate on it once again, but not in a place where it is forbidden to make an interruption, such as in *Birchos Krias Shema*.”

Another question I asked the Rebbe was, when I daven *barichus*, I sometimes feel good about it. How can I ensure that it won't cause *gaavah*?

The Rebbe answered:

“אז ס'גייט אדורך א צייט, און מ'זעט אז מ'לאכטשעט ניט, און מ'פאטש'ט ניט אויפ'ן פלייצע, און מ'גייט נישט קיין מעדאל פאר דעם, גייט עס אוועק פון זיך.

“When time passes, and you see that no one compliments you, no one is patting your back, and no one is

giving you a medal, it will go away on its own.”

That was the only time I asked the Rebbe *avoda'dike* questions. After spending time in 770, I understood that it's not my place at all, and I would stick to asking for a *bracha* (besides for *askanus*, as I'll describe later.)

## LIFE IN 770

In those days, the Rebbe would only farbreng on Shabbos Mevorchim, Yom Tov, and special weekdays.

The farbrengens in the *shalash* were often held in freezing weather. The Rebbe would walk in wearing a coat over his shoulders, say a *sicha*, and right before beginning the *maamar*, the Rebbe would shrug the coat off. After the *maamar*, Reb Shmuel Levitin and Reb Shlomo Aharon Kazarnovsky would gently put it back on the Rebbe's shoulders. If the Rebbe would

see a *bochur* without a coat, the Rebbe would motion to him to get one.

Likewise, the Rebbe would also comment to *bochurim* who didn't wear coats outdoors during the winter.

One Israeli fellow once walked out of 770 without a coat, and turned left onto Eastern Parkway. Suddenly, he noticed that the Rebbe was approaching from the far end of the block. Not wanting the Rebbe to see him, he moved between two of the houses, and before the Rebbe passed, he ran all the way to the back of the driveway to hide.

It didn't help him. As he stood there shivering in the cold, the Rebbe came down the driveway, turned to find him, and said, "*Frier trugt men nit kein mantel, un dernach kumt men bet'n brachos*. First you don't wear a coat, and then you come and ask for *brachos*."

I had a similar experience:

One Shabbos morning when the Rebbe arrived in 770 at eight o'clock, he made his way through the hallway and looked into the *zal* and *cheder sheini* to see who was on time for *seder Chassidus*. Many *bochurim*, myself among them, were missing. The next Shabbos, we all knew that we had to make it to 770 on time. Imagine my consternation when I awoke at five minutes to eight!

Our dormitory was on Eastern Parkway, across from Oholei Torah. I threw on my clothing and my hat and jacket and started dashing down Eastern Parkway. When I approached Brooklyn Avenue, I stopped abruptly; I saw the Rebbe approaching, his hands in his coat pockets, reciting something.

I immediately backtracked a few steps, and waited for the Rebbe to pass.

Right before the Rebbe reached the corner, he turned to me, made sure that I noticed him, lifted the collar of his coat, and opened his hands in



REB LEIBEL (TOP LEFT) AT THE REBBE'S FARBRENGEN, PURIM 5732.



a surprised expression. I understood exactly what the Rebbe wanted. I ran back to my dorm, grabbed my coat, and raced back to 770, reaching the building just as the Rebbe walked through the door.

I turned out to be extremely lucky. Just one minute later, the Rebbe walked out of his room, came towards the first door of the *zal*, and motioned for us to come in. Only about twelve people were present. We filed into the Rebbe's room, the Rebbe told us

to lock the door, and started saying a *maamar*...<sup>2</sup>

The next week, the *zal* was packed.

## WATCHING THE REBBE

In those days, *bochurim* didn't run after the Rebbe at every opportunity. On the contrary, we were ashamed to be in the Rebbe's presence. Whenever the Rebbe would arrive at 770, we made sure to be nowhere to be seen. Only one person would remain to open the door for the Rebbe, and very



often he too would hide behind the door so the Rebbe wouldn't see him.

The only time we would remain in the area was during *seder*; we would be sitting in *zal* with the door wide open, so when the Rebbe would appear at the door of 770 we would all stand up and wait respectfully for the Rebbe to enter his room. Sometimes the Rebbe would gaze through the door at us on his way. One time, I remember a few children were playing *dreidel* near the elevator, and the Rebbe bent over near them and spun the *dreidel*.

Every night, the Rebbe would walk home from 770 at eleven or twelve at night, and sometimes later, accompanied by Rabbi Hodakov. Because of safety concerns, a custom began that two *bochurim* would escort the Rebbe from some distance behind. We acted as if we didn't exist. If, for whatever reason, we saw the Rebbe turn his head towards us, we would immediately duck behind a tree or car.

One time, we had an amusing experience:

One Friday night, the Rebbe was approaching his house on President Street from across the street when we noticed a big dog barking on the sidewalk. Being that it was sitting right in front of a large puddle, we figured that the Rebbe would probably just cross the street to avoid them both.

That's not what happened. As the Rebbe came closer, the dog quieted down and backed away with its tail between its legs. Then the Rebbe took one step back, jumped over the puddle, and continued on.

When we tried doing the same thing, we landed smack in the middle of it with a loud splash, and then the dog heard the noise and began barking at us loudly. I looked up towards the Rebbe, who was already walking up the steps to his house; he looked back at the noise, smiled at us, and walked inside.

## KANIM

About a half a year after I arrived, in Parshas Ufaratzta 5719, The Rebbe instructed the *hanhalah* to appoint seven *bochurim* for *nigleh* and seven for Chassidus. They were called *kanim*—branches, as in the seven *k'nei hamenorah*. These *kanim* would study their respective subject for an extra hour and a half each night, and the idea was for them to bring *chayus* into the Torah learning of the *yeshiva*.

I was privileged to be one of the *knei hamenorah* in Chassidus. The night that we were all chosen, we went into *yechidus* together and the Rebbe said a *sicha* for us.<sup>3</sup>

A few weeks later, the Rebbe added a *hora'a*: once a week, one of the *knei hamenorah* should deliver an *inyan* to the whole *yeshiva*. Regarding Chassidus, the Rebbe said that we should teach a concept, “בהסבר ממה” שמובא עד”ז ממקומות אחרים בדא”ח



REB LEBEL SPEAKS AT A TZACH KINUS, 20 TISHREI 5738.

LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 22385

## REB SHLOMO HORENSHTEIN

One of the Rebbe's secretaries in those years was named Reb Eliyahu Quint. He was a very learned Jew who served as the Rebbe's bookkeeper, and he enjoyed speaking to the *bochurim* in his free time.

One evening, I was sitting with him in the *mazkirus* office, when a buzz came from the Rebbe's room. Rabbi Quint picked up the phone and said, "Haaallo?" (Not being a Lubavitcher Chassid, he took the liberty to speak to the Rebbe in ways the other *mazkirim* never would. They, for example, would pick up the phone and quietly await the Rebbe's instructions. He would answer with a grand "Hello").

He listened for a moment, and said, "Alevsky is here." I started getting nervous. A moment later, he said, "Good, I'll tell him."

He put down the receiver and said, "The Rebbe wants you to enter his room."

I was petrified; I began berating him, "What did you do to me?" Normally, the only time I entered the Rebbe's room myself was for *yechidus*, and only after days and weeks of mental and spiritual preparation. Here I was expected to walk straight into the Rebbe's room!

I had no choice. He told me what to do: "Knock twice quietly on the door, and the Rebbe will buzz the door open."

I knocked and the Rebbe buzzed me in. I saw the Rebbe was sitting with a visitor; he was Reb Shlomo Horenshtein, a first cousin of the Frierdiker Rebbe<sup>5</sup> who would visit the Rebbe from time to time. The Rebbe was sitting with him in an informal fashion; they were both on the Rebbe's side of the desk.

When the Rebbe noticed me, he motioned to me to step inside, and said, "*Zei darfen bald forren in de Bronx. Hostu a car?* He needs to go to the Bronx; do you have a car?"

I answered, "I can get a hold of one."

Reb Shlomo asked the Rebbe if I know the way to the Bronx, and the Rebbe replied, "*er vet shoin oisgefinen*, he'll figure it out."

To me, the Rebbe said, "*In arum fuftzen minute*—in fifteen minutes."

Exactly fifteen minutes later, the Rebbe walked out supporting Reb Shlomo's right arm. The Rebbe brought him over to the doorway and gave me a look. I slipped my hand under his other arm, and the Rebbe said *yasher koach*.

As we approached the car, I remember thinking to myself, "I have an hour with this guy; I'll be able to ask him about everything he heard from the Rebbe." Unfortunately, that is the last memory I have of that occasion; I remember absolutely nothing that happened after that. Nothing similar ever happened to me; I guess the Rebbe deleted my memory disk.

explanations based on other sources in Chassidus."

That was an entirely new concept to us. Until then, we only reviewed Chassidus in *lashon harav*. Now the Rebbe wanted us to give over *pilpulim* in Chassidus, just as in *nigleh*.

Shortly thereafter, another *hora'a* came. Whenever we speak, the *bochurim* should be able to ask questions. A little while later, the Rebbe instructed that our *drashos* be published as well.

Three quarters of a year later, on Erev Rosh Hashanah, the Rebbe called us in for a *yechidus* again with the *hanhalah*.<sup>4</sup> He began a *sicha*, saying that there are *hamshachos* from heaven that are sometimes obstructed on their way down into the world. Through our efforts, we can be "*mavrich es hagefen*," we can create a bridge that allows them to come down.

As the Rebbe continued speaking, he began to cry, and as he went on, the crying became stronger, until the Rebbe was sobbing like a child and could no longer speak. I had never seen the Rebbe in that state. He was shifting back and forth in his chair weeping intensely, while we were standing in a half circle around the Rebbe's desk, not knowing what to do.

At some point, Rabbi Hodakov motioned for us to leave. He opened the door, and we all filed out. As I left, I looked back at the Rebbe, and I saw the Rebbe lift his face from his hands. His face was very red and full of tears, and the Rebbe said, "*Lshana tova umesukah*." The Rebbe then put his head back down and began crying again.

## DRIVING THE REBBE TO THE OHEL

One time, the Rebbe needed to go to the Ohel and no one in *mazkirus* was available to drive, so Rabbi Groner asked me to drive the Rebbe. Frightened by the prospect, I argued



that I wasn't the man for the job, but he explained that there was no one else to do it and there was no choice.

I asked him what I needed to know, and he told me the *seder*:

The Rebbe would walk out of 770 holding a bag of *panim*, sit down in the front seat and place the *panim* next to him (on the way to the Ohel, the Rebbe always sat in the front). Rabbi Groner would hand me a second bag, and I was to put it in the car right next to the Rebbe's bag.

I also asked Rabbi Groner, "When do I know the Rebbe wants to go back?" He answered, "The Rebbe will tell you."

That's what happened; I opened the door for the Rebbe, we put in the bags, and on the way the Rebbe began

to work quietly. Rabbi Groner had told me that when arriving at the Ohel, the Rebbe would take the first bag and I should take the second bag and bring it into the Ohel. That's what I did.

The Rebbe approached the Ohel, knocked on both doors, put the bag of letters down and began organizing the papers on the ledge.

I didn't know what to do, so I stood in the corner with my bag. When he finished organizing the letters, the Rebbe looked at me quizzically, as if to say, "What are you still doing here?" and put out both hands to take the second bag.

After the Rebbe began organizing those letters as well, I remained standing there, as I needed to know when to return. The Rebbe

finished organizing and looked at me quizzically again, and said "*Arum fir azeiger*, at about four o'clock."

I sat in the car, busying myself with my work, and at a quarter to four I came back into the hallway of the Ohel. It was then that I suddenly realized that Rabbi Groner hadn't told me whether I should inform the Rebbe when it's time to leave, or just wait for the Rebbe to come out. I didn't know what to do.

I walked to the end of the hallway, and dared open the door just a crack. The Rebbe was working quickly. Making notes on some letters, dropping some letters in, and putting others back into the bag. Meanwhile, four o'clock came and went, and my *kishkes* were turning.

I slowly kept opening the door until it was fully open, hoping the Rebbe would notice me. I had a Tehillim in one hand, one eye on the Rebbe, and I was getting more and more nervous.

*The Rebbe was working quickly. Making notes on some letters, dropping some letters in, and putting others back into the bag.*



Should I interrupt the Rebbe, at the Ohel no less?

It was already a quarter to five, then five o'clock, and suddenly the Rebbe looked up at me with the same quizzical look; "*Shoin fir azeiger*, is it already four o'clock?"

I answered, "It's already five."

The Rebbe said "Ah," and began immediately packing away the remaining *panim* and got ready to leave. The Rebbe moved one bag over for me to take, took the other bag himself, and we left back to Crown Heights. On the way back, the Rebbe finished *Maaneh Lashon* and said *korbanos* for *mincha*.

Back at 770, the Rebbe davened *mincha* and then returned to the car to go home. When the Rebbe entered the car, he sat down in the back seat, behind the passenger seat.

Now, that put me in another dilemma. In those days, whenever the Rebbe would go home, he would sit behind the driver's seat, and when he would go to Rebbetzin Chana, he would sit behind the passenger seat. I

thought I would be taking the Rebbe home to break his fast, but here he sat down in the 'Rebbetzin Chana seat.' I turned and asked the Rebbe, "*Tzu der mame'n?* To Rebbetzin Chana?"

The Rebbe answered, "*Nein, tzu der heim*—no, to the house," and slid over to the other seat.

Because of my experience before leaving the Ohel, and realizing that there was no way to ask something, I felt that there should be a way to contact 770 from the Ohel, and I therefore asked a friend to donate a car-phone for the Rebbe's car. It cost nine-hundred dollars. (As soon as it was installed, the Rebbe began sending many *horaos* directly from the Ohel.)

I also arranged a no-parking sign in front of 770; beforehand, *bochurim* would "hold" the spot in front of the walkway until the Rebbe would come, but often the space would be taken and the Rebbe would have to walk around a car or two. When I began working with government officials as part of my job in Tzach, I arranged that sign.

## TZACH

For ten years, until we moved on shlichus to Cleveland, I ran Tze'irei Agudas Chabad, or in short, Tzach. I was its first official employee.

This is how it all began:

Tzach essentially began as a volunteer organization run by Reb Dovid Raskin. A lot of the *hafatzas hamaayanos* in the New York area, such as *tahalucha*, was under the official auspices of this organization.

Tzach would make a *kinus* each year on Chol Hamoed Sukkos. In 5722, the topic discussed was disseminating the Rebbe's *sichos*. In one speech, Reb Bentzion Shemtov declared with his inimitable lisp, "*M'darf nemen a mensch, cholen gelt, un svet zein shichos*." Tzach, he said, needed a permanent employee whose job would be to publicize the Rebbe's *sichos*. With volunteer work, nothing would ever be properly done.

After the Rebbe received the *duch* of the *kinus*, Rabbi Hodakov told Reb Dovid Raskin that he would pay a beginner's salary for an employee to work for three hours a day, and Reb Dovid offered me the job.

I was a 22-year-old yeshiva *bochur*, and also one of the *knei hamenorah* so I initially refused, but Reb Dovid reasoned with me that I should at least write to the Rebbe.

The Rebbe answered, "אם מסוגל הוא, לזה, אפילו בהשערה עכ"פ, יקבלו בשעה טובה ומוצלחת, אם ברשות ההנהלה. If you are qualified for it, at least assumably so, you should take the job in a good and auspicious hour, with the permission of the *hanhalah*."

I went to the *hanhalah*. Reb Yisrael Jacobson began asking questions, but Reb Shmuel Levitin cut him off. "The Rebbe said to ask permission from the *hanhalah*? You can go."

The day I began working, Reb Dovid Raskin took me to meet the Rebbe's mother, Rebbetzin Chana.



PINNY LEW

A NO PARKING SIGN IN FRONT OF 770, ALLOWING THE REBBE'S CAR CONSTANT ACCESS. CIRCA 5725.



REB LEIBEL BECAME A LIASON OF TZACH TO CITY OFFICIALS AND DIGNITARIES.

Thus began a unique relationship with the Rebbetzin which I enjoyed for the next few years. I merited to assist her in numerous ways and spend hours in her presence. (The many stories and experiences in this regard are beyond the scope of this interview and will be covered at a later point, נ"ח).

My job in Tzach was to take responsibility for everything that had previously been organized on a volunteer basis. *Hakhalas kehillos, tahalucha*, Shabbosim in outlying cities, *shiurim*, printing *sichos*—they were all my responsibility.

One thing I organized was the early publication of Likkutei Sichos.<sup>6</sup> Tzach printed the first 4 chalokim and I was heavily involved in all of the work.

The Rebbe was involved in everything that happened in Tzach. He would see every piece of mail that arrived or went out. Whenever I wrote a letter, I would send it in to the Rebbe with a carbon-copy, and the Rebbe

would often write comments on the carbon-copy and return them to me. In his comments, the Rebbe basically taught me how to write letters. Sometimes the Rebbe would circle a paragraph and ask, “*Mah zeh mosif*, what does this add?”

In 5727, I suddenly got a *tzetz* from the Rebbe; “Does Tzach have anything more important to do than to deal with the *shechunah*?” This was during the time when many of the Jewish residents began moving out of Crown Heights and it was becoming dangerous.<sup>7</sup>

That came as a total surprise, because until then we were involved solely in *hafatzas hamaaynos*, but I immediately threw myself into the new mission. I built all sorts of connections with city officials and prominent Jewish organizations, and got them involved in helping the *shechunah*. On a number of occasions, I brought groups of Jewish

officials and dignitaries to the Rebbe’s farbrengens, and the Rebbe said *sichos* directed specifically to them.

Thanks to those connections, Tzach purchased a number of buildings and obtained numerous grants to help other Jewish people buy property.

## YUD-ALEF NISSAN, SHNAS HASHISHIM

Some time before Yud-Aleph Nissan 5722, we had a discussion about the Rebbe’s upcoming sixtieth birthday. We felt it was an important milestone, and although we had never marked the Rebbe’s birthday before, we felt it would be appropriate to do so now. The idea we came up with was that every Chossid should make a contribution in the number of sixty; whether in Torah learning, money, or whatever.

This discussion took place during a Shabbos Mevorchim *melaveh malka* that was held in 770 by Reb Dovid

*Although we missed out on the farbrengen, the Rebbe instructed Rabbi Hodakov to phone the wedding hall to give over the nekudah of the farbrengen*

Raskin. A *duch* of the *melaveh malka* was sent to the Rebbe, and I also sent in a proposed letter that would be sent from Tzach to all of *anash* about the campaign. (We would never dare do something like that without showing it to the Rebbe first.) The Rebbe returned the letter without comment, so we took it as an approval and began sending the letter to the entire world.

Letters began streaming in from all over, with donations and *hachlatos*, and the campaign generated a lot of excitement. It was a very special time; this was the first time in history that Chassidim banded together from across the globe to collectively bring the Rebbe a *nachas ruach*, and it gave us all a very special feeling.

Many people overseas didn't differentiate between the Rebbe and Tzach, so they sent their donations directly to the Rebbe, and the Rebbe sent it to us. After a few times, the Rebbe wrote "*Likeren Hashishim*" on the envelopes intended for us. I was very excited; the Rebbe had formally agreed to our project and even gave it a name!

On that Yud-Aleph Nissan, when the Rebbe returned from the Ohel, I gave Rabbi Hodakov two bags—one full of *duchos* and the other full of money and checks totalling twenty-two thousand dollars, which was a very large sum in those days.

Five minutes later, Rabbi Hodakov walked out and said that the Rebbe would farbreng. That was the first time the Rebbe farbrenged on Yud-Aleph Nissan and it was a very unique farbrengen.

## MARRIAGE

Around Purim 5722, my mother-in-law was in *yechidus* and gave the Rebbe a list of *bochurim* whom Reb Dovid Raskin had suggested for her daughter. The Rebbe chose my name, but added, "*M'zol nit dertzeilen di kinder biz noch Pesach*—don't tell the children about the idea until after Pesach."

After Pesach, the *shidduch* was suggested to me, so I wrote to the Rebbe and received a *bracha* to go forward with it. Every time I met with my wife, I wrote to the Rebbe again and received a *bracha* to continue.

Then, once we made a decision to marry, we each entered *yechidus* separately. (Later, we would go into *yechidus* together as *chosson* and *kallah*, and another time shortly before our wedding.) Because we entered separately, when my wife came out of her *yechidus*, she was a *kallah*, but interestingly, I wasn't yet a *chosson*.

Two weeks before my wedding, we asked the Rebbe in *yechidus* about going on *shlichus*, and the Rebbe answered, "*Du bist duch matzliach in Tzach, vos darfstu avekfaren*—you are, after all, successful in Tzach, why should you move out?"

Something special happened at my wedding:

Our wedding took place in Cleveland on Chai Elul 5722. We suggested that date to the Rebbe because it was an auspicious day, a *yoma d'pagra*, when the Rebbe didn't normally hold a farbrengen (in those years).

We received the Rebbe's *bracha* and *haskamah*, and on Chai Elul many of the *bochurim* in 770 drove

to Cleveland to participate in our wedding.

Little did we know that a major event did take place. At the same time as the wedding, the Rebbe held a surprise farbrengen where he announced the upcoming "Shnas Hakan," 150 years since the *histalkus* of the Alter Rebbe. That was a major theme of the Rebbe's *sichos* and activities throughout the following year, and it all started during that farbrengen on Chai Elul.

Although we missed out on the farbrengen, the Rebbe instructed Rabbi Hodakov to phone the *chosson* at the wedding hall to give over the *nekudah* of the farbrengen, and to have the *chosson* repeat it to all the *misnagdishe* rabbonim and *baalei batim* who were present.

## LIGHT UP THE WORLD!

In our *Yechidus* before our wedding, the Rebbe told us, "*Az ir vet machen lichtig arum eich, vet der Aibershter machen lichtig bai eich*—When you will spread light around you, the *Aibershter* will illuminate your own space as well."

This directive and *bracha*, throughout our years in Tzach, and then on the Rebbe's *shlichus* to Cleveland beginning in 5732, has been a guiding light for us. ❶

1. See *Transforming Tragedy*, Derher issue 20 (97), Sivan 5774.

2. Presumably, this was the *maamar* "*Vayedaber Hashem*," Shabbos Parshas Tzav 5719—ed.

3. Toras Menachem vol. 24, p. 218.

4. Toras Menachem vol. 24, p. 239

5. He was to married Devorah Leah, daughter of Rebbetzin Sheina Bracha Dulitzka, a sister of Rebbetzin Shтерна Sarah. See Igros Kodesh vol. 20, p. 571.

6. See The Written Torah, Derher Tammuz 5777.

7. See *Crown Heights*, Derher issue 50 (127), Cheshvan 5776. The Rebbe began addressing the issue publicly only three years later, in 5729.





# דער רבי וועט געפינען א וועג...

לזכות  
הרה"ת ר' משה פינחס  
וזוגתו מרת עלקא ומשפחתם  
שיחיו  
וואלף

## My Friend Next Door

AS TOLD BY LEVI LAZAROFF (HOUSTON, TX)

My parents, Rabbi Chaim and Chanie Lazaroff, moved on shlichus to Houston, TX, 15 years ago, and over time established a new Chabad House in an area called Uptown, which is a considerable distance from the large established Jewish community.

My siblings and I are very involved in all areas of the shlichus, and I am especially proud to join my father on *mitvzoim* all the time. I am aware of the great impact we

have on so many Yidden and our great *zechus* to be the Rebbe's shluchim.

The fact that we do not live in the same neighborhood as my school friends has been very hard for me. After school, and Shabbosim and *Yomim Tovim* can be lonely, as I can't just walk over to my friends' homes to play with them.

This year, I was at the Ohel for Vov Tishrei and I wrote a letter to the Rebbe requesting a *bracha* to succeed in



my shlichus of teaching Yidden whatever I can about Yiddishkeit. I also asked for a specific *bracha* that I should have friends living nearby.

A few days later, we were playing ball in the yard of the Chabad House (which is our home as well) when a woman opened the second story window of the apartment complex next door, and said, “Hi! I noticed this is a Jewish place. We’re Jewish too. We moved here last week. Can we come over?”

Her son was standing next to her and I excitedly invited him to come over to play football.

The Stein family moved to Houston from New York one year ago. Barely nine months after they settled in, the historic Hurricane Harvey ripped through the city and flooded thousands of homes to the point that their inhabitants were left homeless. The shluchim in the city worked together to provide much needed support for many thousands of people and these efforts are still ongoing.

Since their new home was badly damaged by the hurricane, the Steins lived in a hotel room for five weeks

until a local rabbi was able to arrange an apartment for them in the Millenium High Street, which is right next door to our Chabad House!

Their son Danny is my age; he came over to play for a while and we had a great time.

On Sukkos, the Steins observed me helping some of our guests shake *lulav* and *esrog* and asked if they could come over to do that too. I happily invited them over and proudly assisted Danny in doing the mitzvah for the first time in his life. Throughout Sukkos I shook *lulav* and *esrog* with over 115 people.

Since then, Danny and I have become good friends. The Rebbe gifted me a great friend—right next door. **1**

## YOUR STORY

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





לזכות  
הת' מנחם מענדל שיחי'  
לרגל הגיעו לעול מצוות  
כ"ב אייר ה'תשע"ח

נדפס ע"י הוריהם  
הרה"ת ר' שניאור זלמן  
וזוגתו ומשפחתם שיחי'  
דוכמאן

## SHACHARIS

Until the Rebbetzin's *histalkus* in 5748, the Rebbe usually davened *Shacharis* on weekdays privately in his room. There were a few times a year when the Rebbe joined the minyan, such as the times when he lead the davening at the amud, and a few other days (Chol Hamoed, Erev Rosh Hashanah, Erev Yom Kippur, Purim, and Tishah B'Av). After the Rebbetzin's *histalkus*, the Rebbe began davening every day with the minyan.

Many distinct *hanhagos* were done by the Rebbe during davening. The Rebbe once noted when a Rebbe does something publicly, this is an indication that it is pertinent to all.<sup>1</sup>

The following is in no way a comprehensive description or explanation of the Rebbe's conduct during davening. This is merely a short collection of some of the Rebbe's *hanhagos*, especially as seen in these photographs.





1. Leaving his room while wearing *talis* and *tefillin*, the Rebbe would use a staircase from Gan Eden Hatachton to the main *shul* downstairs. Interestingly, upon returning to his room after davening, the Rebbe would use a different staircase—the one in the back of *shul* with which we are more familiar.<sup>2</sup>

From 5738 and on, the Rebbe would use the elevator on weekdays.



20 AV 5735, JEM

ADAR II 5749, LEVI FREDIN VIA JEM 26374





2. On his way to his place at the front of the *shul*, the Rebbe would give coins to children for tzedakah, and if a *pushka* was in sight the Rebbe would put a few coins in himself.





6 TISHREI 5750, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 186800

3. The Rebbe would touch the *paroches* when entering and exiting the *shul*.
4. The Rebbe would come into the *shul* with the *retzua* of the *tefillin shel yad* still undone on the hand, and would finish wrapping it while saying איזהו מקומן. From 5748, the Rebbe would arrive with the *shel yad* fully wrapped and would begin with וכן שני כתובים. When reaching *Sheyibone*, the Rebbe would often signal to begin singing.



5. The Rebbe used a Siddur Torah-Ohr, printed in 5701, gifted to him by the Friediker Rebbe. Despite the noticeable wear-and-tear of the *siddur*, the Rebbe insisted on only using that *siddur*. As a result, it was sent to binders for repair multiple times over the years. In the back of the *siddur* the Rebbe kept various recently published papers and *kortzim*, held in place by a rubber band.

6. The Rebbe would noticeably say every word while looking inside the *siddur*. The Rebbe once commented, “My father-in-law [the Friediker Rebbe] would always daven from the *siddur*, and this is my *minhag* as well.”<sup>37</sup>



7. There were four time during davening when the Rebbe would touch his tefillin:

1. פותח את ידך ומשביע לכל  
touching the *shel yad* when saying את פותח ידך, and the *shel rosh* when saying ומשביע לכל חי רצון.
2. יוצר אור ובורא חשך:  
touching the *shel yad* when saying יוצר אור, and the *shel rosh* when saying ובורא חשך.<sup>4</sup>
3. קריאת שמע:  
touching the *shel yad* when saying וקשרתם לאות, and the *shel rosh* when saying והיו לטוטפות. And touching the *shel yad* when saying וקשרתם אתם, and the *shel rosh* when saying והיו לטוטפות.
4. At the end of זבא לציון:  
touching the *shel yad* at ונזכה, touching the *shel rosh* at ונחיה, and kissing at ונראה.

The Rebbe would touch his eyes after touching the tefillin *shel rosh*, before kissing his fingers.



26 IYAR 5750, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 244907



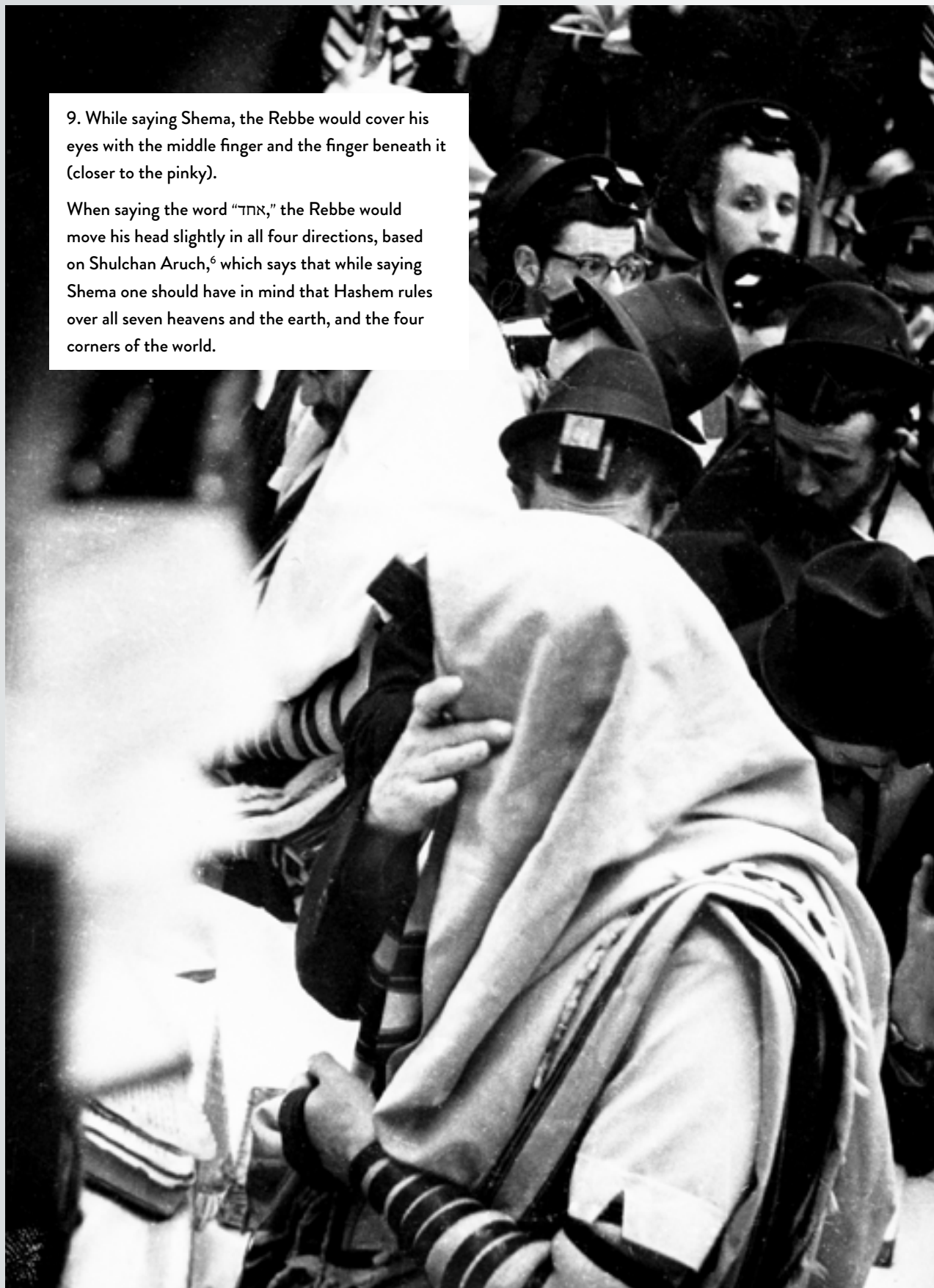
8. The Rebbe began gathering the four corners of his tallis for Shema immediately upon beginning<sup>5</sup> אהבת עולם, and was not meticulous about finishing before reaching the words “מארבע כנפות הארץ.”



IYAR 5750, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 245614

9. While saying Shema, the Rebbe would cover his eyes with the middle finger and the finger beneath it (closer to the pinky).

When saying the word "אחד," the Rebbe would move his head slightly in all four directions, based on Shulchan Aruch,<sup>6</sup> which says that while saying Shema one should have in mind that Hashem rules over all seven heavens and the earth, and the four corners of the world.



10 SHEVAT 5722 JEM 287438





6 TISHREI 5747, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 8152

10. The Rebbe would fix the placement of his tefillin many times throughout davening. Usually after kissing them, and always after taking three steps back after Shmoneh Esrei or after Kaddish.





13 TISHREI 5750, LEVI FREDIN VIA JEM 234805

1. For more on *minhagim*, see *A Way of Life*, Derher Nissan 5773.
2. See *Shulchan Aruch Admur Hazaken, Orach Chaim* 25:7.
3. 13 Tishrei 5743, *Toras Menachem* 5743 vol. 1, p. 145.
4. This *minhag* is mentioned in *Sefer Haminhagim*, where it says to only touch the tefillin (not mentioning to kiss them as well).
5. Contrary to *Sefer Haminhagim*, which says to begin gathering the *tzitzis* upon reaching the words "והביאנו לשלום."
6. *Shulchan Aruch Admur Hazaken, Orach Chaim* 61:6.

# Derher**Letters**

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



## Chosen as A Shliach

Dear Editors,

Thank you for a great article about the Shluchim to Eretz Yisroel 5736-5738 [“Historic Mission” Issue 66 (143), Adar 5778]. As I was unable to speak when you called me about this article, I will share a couple of anecdotes that were not included in the article:

1) I was a member of the first group in 5736. I was a *bochur* so I was sent to Yerushalayim. As mentioned in the article, Reb Binyomin Klein was the one who notified the various *bochurim* and *yungeleit* that had been chosen by the Rebbe to be his Shluchim. When the *bochurim* got wind of this, everyone was constantly following him around to see who was next and if they had been chosen. It got to a point that he was no longer able to notify the guys discreetly that they were on the list and that they should confirm with their parents (and wives) and get back to him. For this reason, he asked my brother in law, Rabbi Leibel Kaplan a”h from Tzfas, who happened to be in New York at the time, to tell me that I had been chosen. I will never forget my excitement on that Erev Shabbos.

2) A certain *bochur* was very distraught that he had not been chosen as a Shliach. It broke his heart and I remember how he was crying bitterly about this. Interestingly,

one of the *bochurim* that had been chosen to go was taken off the list for some reason. At this point that *bochur* was chosen as the 11th Shliach to Yerushalayim. It just teaches us a lesson that when it comes to the Rebbe’s shlichus, we need to really want it, and when we do, the Rebbe gives us the special *zechus* and opportunity.

3) A special farbrengen (of Chassidim) took place a few days before we left to Eretz Yisroel. It was in the zal upstairs and all 22 Shluchim spoke! Reb Dovid Raskin also spoke then and it was a very special gathering. I remember that this is when some of us got to know the other Shluchim that would be joining us on the shlichus.

4) One very big milestone that the Shluchim accomplished in Eretz Yisroel that wasn’t mentioned was the extensive work on the Rebbe’s *nigleh sichos*. The Shluchim (headed by Rabbi Avrohom Baruch Pevzner) were the ones that wrote the פענוחים (filled in citations from sources) on the Rebbe’s *Hadranim* and published the *seforim* הדרנים על הש”ס.

5) Another important point not spoken about in the article is the Kinus Hashluchim that began in 5741 and continues each year until today. Most of the Shluchim from the three groups were married and began to spread out across Eretz Yisroel so Reb Zusha Wilimovsky (Partisan) came up with the idea of

making a Kinus around the Rebbe's father, Harav Levi Yitzchak's *yahrtzeit* on Chof Av. The Rebbe had great *nachas* from this endeavour and encouraged the Shluchim each year with a special letter that he sent for the Kinus. The Rebbe also made mention of the Kinus in the *sichos* around that time each year, and in fact, the Kinus Hashluchim in New York started three years later as a result of a *sicha* in which the Rebbe spoke about the Kinus in Eretz Yisroel (see *Hisvaaduyos* 5743 vol 4, p. 1907).

Today, 40 years later, we live in trepidation as to if we are truly utilizing the unique, tremendous and unparalleled *brochos* and *kochos* the Rebbe blessed us with.

**Rabbi Menachem Mendel Lieberman**  
*Ashkelon, Eretz Yisroel*



## Shluchim Arrive in Eretz Yisroel

Dear Editors,

*Yasher koach* for your beautiful Adar Issue, which I read with much pleasure.

The article "Historic Mission" [Issue 66 (143) Adar 5778] includes some photos (on p. 57) of the Shluchim of 5737 & 5738 posing and dancing in front of an El Al plane. The captions beneath the photos explain that the Shluchim are about to embark. However, these are the photos from their arrival in Eretz Yisroel.

Wishing you much continued *hatzlacha*,

**Rabbi Yossie Alperowitz**  
*Bournemouth, England*



## Rebbe's Hakomas Matzeiva

Dear Editors,

Reading the *Derher* magazine from Shevat, I noticed that you wrote "On the night of

21 Adar, the *shloshim* of the Rebbetzin, the Rebbe said a *sicha* after *Maariv*. The next day the Rebbetzin's *matzeiva* was erected." ["Chof Beis Shevat 5748" Issue 65 (142) Shevat 5778].

This was obviously an error as the Rebbetzin's *matzeiva* was erected on Wednesday, 29 Shevat, one week after Chof Beis Shevat and the day after the Rebbe stood up from *shiva*.

I remember this distinctly as I was a *choson* then and my *chasuna* was set to take place in Australia. *Chasanim* had the special *zechus* to daven *Mincha* with the Rebbe's *siddur* on the day of their *chasuna*. If the *chasuna* was taking place out of town, they would use the *siddur* a few days before. That Wednesday is the day that I merited to receive the Rebbe's *siddur* and the Rebbe also went that day to the Ohel. Although the Rebbe went to the Ohel, he was not present at the *hakomas matzeiva* of the Rebbetzin.

The following day, I went to the Ohel as was customary for *chasanim* and *kallos* before their *chasuna* and I actually took pictures of the *matzeiva*. I remember noticing how the *lashon* on the Rebbetzin's *matzeiva* was the exact same *lashon* that was printed in the *likkut* that came out for that Shabbos. This *lashon* was obviously chosen by the Rebbe.

**Rabbi Sholom Raichik**  
*Gaithersburg, Maryland*



## Relocating Vs. Fleeing

Dear Editors,

In the article about the Rebbetzin's biography [Issue 65 (142) Shevat 5778], the editors wrote about the Nazi occupation and the Rebbe and Rebbetzin's relocation to Vichy: "They boarded one of the last trains leaving Paris and fled south, first to Vichy, and then to Nice".



(ששה לזמן מסוים בפאריז). לפני חג השבועות ה'ת"ש - עוזבים  
(מפני הכיבוש הנאצי) את פאריז ובורחים לוישי (שם הגיעו בערב חג  
השבועות). שוחים שם כמה חדשים, ומשם ממשיכים לניצא, בניצא  
שוחים מקיץ ה'ת"ש עד תחילת קיץ תש"א. ובכ"ח סיון באים "איש  
וביתו" צלחה לעיר ניו יארק.

I would like to share a very interesting edit that I merited to receive from the Rebbe when I was working on the "Shalsheles Hayachas" - biographical outline for Hayom Yom.

We had written as follows:

לפני חג השבועות ה'ת"ש - עוזבים (מפני הכיבוש הנאצי) את פאריז ובורחים לוישי (שם הגיעו בערב חג השבועות).

Before Shavuot 5701, [the Rebbe and Rebbetzin] left Paris because of the Nazi occupation and **fled** to Vichy, arriving on Erev Shavuot.

The Rebbe crossed out the word "בורחים" - and they fled" and changed it to say "ומעתיקים" - and they relocated".

The whole story of the Rebbe and Rebbetzin's escape from Europe and arrival in the United States were mostly details that we only found out about in the later years, and I believe this was the last time I submitted a section of "Shalsheles Hayachas" to the Rebbe for editing in the summer of 5750.

**Rabbi Michoel Seligson**  
Brooklyn, New York

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