

A Chassidisher **Derher**

א חסידישער דערהער

shabbas in Lubavitch

PAINTING A VIVID PICTURE
OF LUBAVITCH OF OLD

Reb Leibel Raskin

A CHOSSID OF
FIRE AND PASSION

Not only for Lubavitchers

MOSHIACH U'GEULAH

He'aros and Pilpulim

EVERY JEW'S OBLIGATION



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EVERY JEW'S OBLIGATION



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לזכות שלוחי כ"ק אדמו"ר בכל אתר ואתר
שיצליחו במילוי שליחותם הק' מתוך הרחבה גדולה בגו"ר

נדפס ע"י הרה"ת ר' שלום וזוגתו מרת שרה
וילדיהם ישראל, ריסא, חי' מושקא, אמונה מלכה, ויעקב יהודה שיחיו
אייזיקוביץ

בקשר עם כינוס השלוחים העולמי ה'תשע"ט

Derher **Editorial**

In the earlier years, when shluchim went out to faraway cities, it was a very difficult undertaking. After all, it was new and uncharted territory.

With time however, things changed. The [Friediker] Rebbe sent shluchim to transform many of these cities, and they went out determined to succeed in their shlichus despite the many challenges that arose; be they the protests of the locals, the lack of sufficient funds, or anything else. They completely immersed themselves in their work with all their energy.

Following the “breakthrough” of these pioneers, it has become a lot easier.

But that sense of “*mesirus nefesh*” seems to be gone. The concept of shlichus has become old and distant; missing the *chayus* and excitement that it once had.

...We need to fulfill the words of “בכל יום יהיו בעיניך כחדשים”—Each and every day [the Torah and mitzvos] should be treated as new”; or even “חדשים—actually new,” not simply “like” new.

In our case:

Every person should imagine as if the Rebbe is now calling him into his room—just like it was in 5701 or 5702—and telling him: “I am giving you this city and all the children who live there. Turn them into Chassidim!”

With that, all the challenges will disappear and everyone will see success in their shlichus.

And the shliach himself will also see success in his personal life; he will become a real Chossid and *yarei shamayim*, and lead a true Chassidishe home...

*(Sicha to a group of teachers and administrators
of out-of-town yeshivos, Isru Chag Shavuot 5715)*

Approaching the month of Cheshvan, when thousands of shluchim from around the world will gather together in the presence of the *meshaleiach*, we hereby present this month's Derher magazine.

In this spirit, amongst all the regular articles, we bring the story of the legendary shliach, Reb Leibel Raskin of Morocco. An exemplary Chossid who truly embodied the Rebbe's words of “never allowing the shlichus to get old,” always infused with the *chayus* that the Rebbe expected of a shliach in his work.

At this time of year we are once again invigorated to recommit ourselves to the ultimate shlichus, as the Rebbe explained at the Kinus Hashluchim 5752: To prepare ourselves and the entire world for the *geula ha'amitis v'hashleima*.

May it be *teikef umiyad Mammosh*.

The Editors

בשם השם, מחרת יוהכ"פ, ה'תשע"ט



In keeping with the style of this column, we present two selections from the Rebbe's farbrengens during the month of Mar-Cheshvan 5752. This article is based on the hanachos printed in Sichos Kodesh 5752 and is bilti mugah. For more in-depth context and explanation, see the sichos as they were mugah and published in Sefer Hasichos 5752.

THE QUEST AND ITS FULFILLMENT

Parshas Vayera,
18 Cheshvan 5752

This year, Shabbos Parshas Vayera occurs on 18 (“Chai”) Cheshvan. This reminds us of the *chayus*—the G-dly life constantly breathed into the world by Hashem. This refers specifically to the *chayus* enlivening the body, more than the *chayus* enlivening the *neshama*, for the month of Cheshvan symbolizes the *avoda* of the *guf*; the everyday mundane tasks that we fulfil in this physical world, infusing holiness in the mundane.

It is also very close, within three days, to the date of Chof Cheshvan, the birthday of the Rebbe Rashab.

The story is well-known that when the Rebbe Rashab was a small child, he lamented the fact that Hashem only revealed Himself to Avraham Avinu, and not to him.

As a direct descendant of Avraham Avinu, the Rebbe Rashab was claiming the right to inherit his great-great-grandfather's rights and merits, including Hashem's revelation.

Indeed, perhaps it can be said that with this demand, the Rebbe Rashab actually managed to achieve this revelation of Hashem!

The [Frieddiker] Rebbe repeated this story, reserving it a place as part of *Torah shebaal peh*. Thus, it serves as a lesson for each and every one of us. True, the Rebbe Rashab was only a small child at the time but nevertheless Chazal tell us by way of example that “בוצין בוצין מקטפי ידיע”—a cucumber can be recognized from its blossoming stage...” [I.e. even when a great *nossi* is

very young, we can already get a sense for whom they will later become].

Interestingly, the original statement of “בוצין בוצין” was said about a story that occurred regarding the mitzvah of *bentching*, ואכלת ושבעת וברכת.

To connect this with the coming of the imminent *geula*:

The only way a Yid can truly be satiated, is if Moshiach comes and we are finally seated at the table of the *livyasan*, *shor habar*, and *yayin hameshumar*. Otherwise, how can we call ourselves satisfied? We are constantly “hungry” for that grand *seuda* of Moshiach!

May we speedily merit to a *geula* in the style of “בוצין בוצין מקטפיה ידיע”—meaning: already at the “infancy,” the “blossoming stage” of Moshiach's era, we will have a complete redemption with all of the Yidden gathered together.

לזכות
הת' צבי מרדכי שיח' בן חנה
שיצליח בלימודו, לימוד הנגלה
ולימוד החסידות בשקידה והתמדה
מתוך התקשרות לאילנא דחיי
כ"ק אדמו"ר



COMPLETING THE ENTIRE TORAH

Shabbos Parshas
Chayei Sarah
25 Cheshvan 5752

In this weeks *parsha*, the *shidduch* between Yitzchak and Rivka is discussed. Surprisingly though, this is not discussed, as would be expected, in *Torah Or* on *parshas Chayei Sarah*. Instead, the Alter Rebbe explains the *shidduch* at the end of *Likkutei Torah*, in the *maamarim* of *parshas V'zos Habrachta*.

It is well-known that *Torah Or* and *Likkutei Torah* are, in a sense, like the “*Torah Shebiksav*” of Chassidus. It follows then, that the order of subjects in it is intentional and precise. There is obviously a lesson in our *avodas Hashem* from this anomaly, as discussed elsewhere.¹



Practically speaking: Just like we learn Rambam on a daily schedule, because it includes all of *Torah Shebaal Peh*, for the same reason, we should learn the weekly *maamarim* in *Torah Or* and *Likkutei Torah*—the *Torah Shebiksav* of Chassidus. After finishing

it the first time, learn it again, this time on a deeper level. As we say in the *siyum* of a *masechta* in Gemara, “Just as You assisted me to finish this *masechta*, so too, please help me to begin and complete other *seforim*, to learn and to teach...”

Through learning the Chassidic *Torah Shebiksav* in the order of the five *Chumashim*, one will merit that which is discussed in the next section of *Likkutei Torah* on *Shir Hashirim*—“ישקני מנשיקות”—the complete revelation of *pnimiyus haTorah*.² This will culminate with the last subject in *Likkutei Torah*, “כי כאשר השמים החדשים—והארץ החדשה... כן יעמוד זרעכם ושמכם For as the new heaven and the new earth which I will make shall endure... so shall your offspring and name endure.”³ ①

1. See *Sefer Hasichos* 5752 vol. 1, p. 106.
2. Rashi on *Shir Hashirim* 1:2
3. *Yeshaya* 66:22



לעבן מיט'ן רבי'ן

לזכות
שושנה ריזא בת זעלדא



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A Month with the Rebbe

CHESHVAN 5725



These accounts are culled from the diaries of Rabbis Menachem (Menni) Wolf and Yisroel Sosover, two *bochurim* studying in 770 at the time. Keep in mind that Cheshvan 5725 was immediately following the passing of the Rebbe's mother, Rebbetzin Chana, on Vov Tishrei, and the Rebbe therefore davened at the *amud* during this period.

MONDAY, 29 TISHREI

During today's *chazzaras hashatz*, the Rebbe cried repeatedly to the point that he could barely say the words. It occurred to me that during the course of the *Yomim Tovim* one could not detect any sadness on the Rebbe, as *halacha* mandates that one must be joyous on *Yom Tov*, but now that *Yom Tov* has ended and everyday life has set in, the

sadness of the *aveilus* has somewhat returned. The Rebbe slowly finished *shmoneh esreh* in a lower tone.

TUESDAY, FIRST DAY OF ROSH CHODESH CHESHVAN

We were just notified that *yechidus* will not continue as it has until now. Whereas until now *yechidus* took place three nights a week—Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays—from now on there will be no *yechidus* on Tuesday nights; only on Sunday and Thursday nights.

The *bochurim* asked the guests who came from Eretz Yisroel to farbreng prior to their departure. They acquiesced, and on Tuesday night, Reb Avraham Pariz, Reb Asher Sasonkin and other Chassidim sat and farbrenged with the *bochurim*.

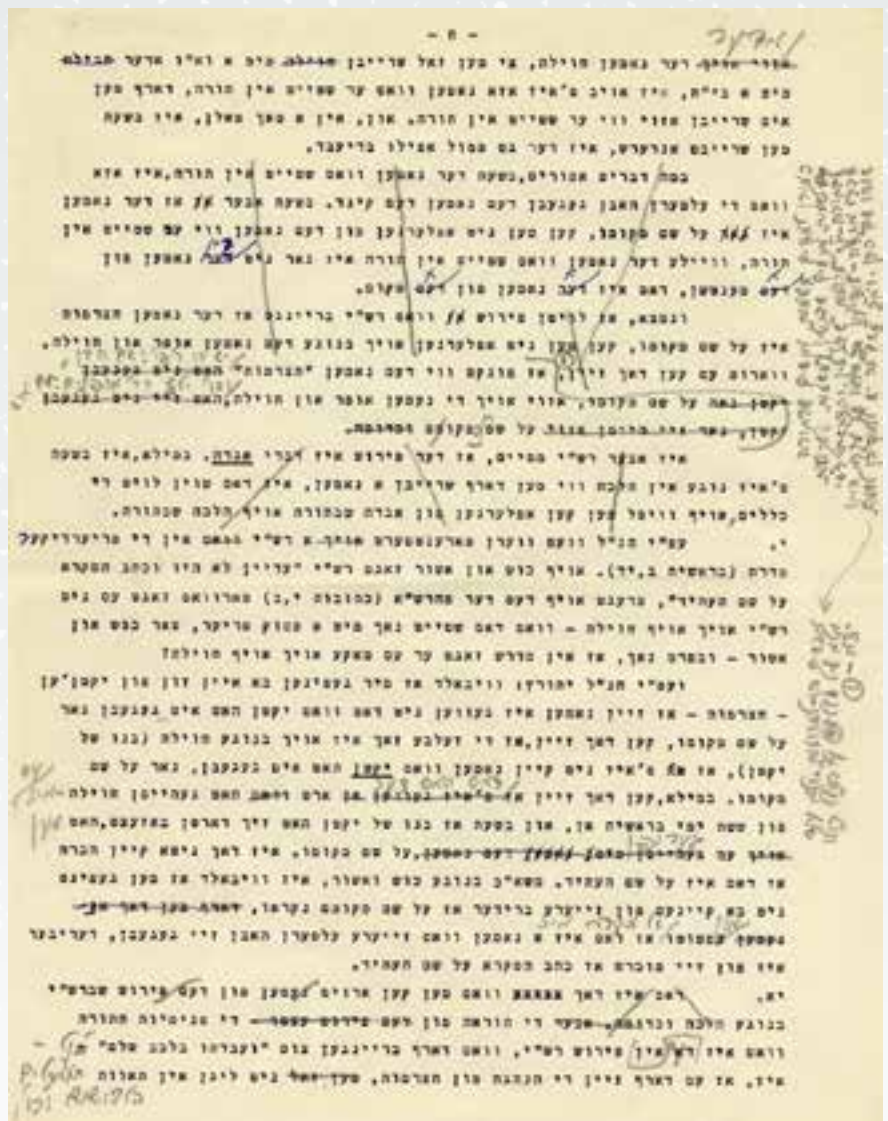
Reb Asher farbrenged about how careful we must be to guard our *machshava, dibbur, and ma'aseh*—our thought, speech, and action—to ensure that everything we think, say and do, should be in line with Hashem's will. Reb Avraham then expounded upon this idea, adding that we must focus on making our thought, speech, and action shine through thinking about the Rebbe, speaking about the Rebbe and following the Rebbe's instructions.

Among other things, Reb Avraham recalled that as a *talmid* in Tomchei Tmimim, he would spend time speaking with both older and younger *bochurim* who came from other cities to learn in Lubavitch. He would sit and listen to the different impressions each of the *bochurim* received from

being by the Rebbe Rashab and hearing him speak. But he received the most from those who didn't say anything at all.

SHABBOS PARSHAS NOACH, 4 CHESHVAN

Word has been going around that the Rebbe will farbreng every Shabbos this year in memory of Rebbetzin Chana. Indeed, the Rebbe came down to farbreng today at 1:30 p.m. Upon the Rebbe's request, a *chumash* was prepared on the Rebbe's table in advance and the Rebbe said a *sicha* on the first Rashi in the *parsha*.¹ The Rebbe also said a *sicha* on Tanya *perek mem aleph*. In this *sicha*, the Rebbe expounded upon the importance of *avodas hatefilah*.



THE REBBE'S HAGAOS ON THE FARBRENGEN OF SHABBOS PARSHAS NOACH 5725.

After *mincha*, as the Rebbe made his way to his room, he removed a *tallis* bag that was on top of a *Tehillim*. The Rebbe encouraged the singing with his hand.

SUNDAY, 5 CHESHVAN

Today's *Shacharis* and *Mincha* went as usual. As tonight marks the *shloshim* of the Rebbe's mother Rebbetzin Chana, the Rebbe gave out a *maamar* of the Rebbe Maharash, "*Me'eimasai Korin es Shema*," and asked that the Chassidim learn the *maamar* publicly and farbreng afterwards. Reb Zalman Blesofsky learned the *maamar* aloud, and the *mashke* that the Rebbe gave on Simchas Torah was then distributed.

SUNDAY, 12 CHESHVAN

A *bochur* went into the Rebbe for *yechidus* today and gave the Rebbe *parshios* of *tefillin* written by Reb Reuven Sofer (the *sofer* of the Alter Rebbe) that an elderly *sofer* had sold him. The *bochur* asked the Rebbe if he should allow other members of *anash* to take pictures of the *parshios* so that they can learn the Alter Rebbe's *ksav* from these *parshios*. The Rebbe advised him that it wouldn't be appropriate to take pictures of the *parshios* since they contain Hashem's name. Instead, the Rebbe said that the *bochur* can come and see them whenever he wants to.

The Skulener Rebbe recently emigrated from Romania to America, settling in Crown Heights. The Rebbe appointed people to ensure that there always be a *minyan* in the shul the Skulener Rebbe rented. Today he came to the Rebbe for *yechidus*, which lasted an hour and a half. *Yechidus* this evening ended at 1:30 a.m.

TUESDAY, 14 CHESHVAN

Bochurim discovered a *ksav yad kodesh* of the Rebbe written years ago, in which the Rebbe was asked about the *siddur* that was being prepared for print, regarding whether it was necessary to write "*Baruch Hashem*" at the beginning of the *siddur*.

The Rebbe replied with the words that Korach used to argue against Moshe Rabbeinu: "*Tallis shekula techeiles*—Does a *tallis* that is completely dyed blue require *techeiles* on the *tzitzis*?"

The *mazkirus* office just received their telephone bill amounting to a large sum. They brought the bill to the Rebbe who commented with a play on words





PURIM 5725, JEM 104323



SENATOR KEATING IN YECHIDUS WITH THE REBBE, 23 CHESHVAN 5725.

from the Gemara (Kiddushin 49b): “עשרה קבים של דיבור ירדו לעולם ותשעה לקחו מרכז—Ten *kabim* of speech descended to the world, nine of which were taken by Merkos [*mazkirus*]...”

The Rebbetzin drove the Rebbe home after *maariv*. The Rebbe sat in the back seat and closed the window.

The Rebbetzin usually comes to 770 twice a week to visit her mother. After her visit, she takes the elevator down to the basement, and then goes out to the car and waits until the Rebbe is ready to go home.

WEDNESDAY, 15 CHESHVAN

We were just notified that the Rebbe accepted the request of the Chassidim and will be *magiah* all the Shabbos farbrengens during this year.

Just a few days ago, Merkos purchased the apartment building adjacent to 770 in order to expand the shul as well as the Merkos offices. The building was bought with the monetary aid of Reb

Aharon Klein, a resident of Crown Heights and a friend of *Beis Rebbe*.

The Rebbe entered the shul for *Maariv* at 6:50 p.m., and davening ended at 7:10. At 7:30 the Rebbe left his room to go home. On his way out of 770, he noticed Reb Yehoshua Yuzevitch from Eretz Yisroel standing by the door of the *zal*. The Rebbe smiled to him and said, “*Fur gezunt, un gib iber a grus fun mir*—Safe travels, and pass on my regards.”

THURSDAY, 16 CHESHVAN

Yechidus began at 8:00 p.m. Tonight the *hanhala* of the yeshiva went in to the Rebbe. Reb Zalman Gourarie also went in for a *yechidus*, which lasted forty five minutes. The Rebbe went home at 2:00 a.m.

SUNDAY, 19 CHESHVAN

At 11:45 a.m. the *levaya* for Mr. Helman, a wealthy man who gave money for Tomchei Tmimim, took place. The entire yeshiva came out for the *levaya*, and the Rebbe came out as well.

The Rebbe accompanied the *aron* until it reached Kingston Avenue and waited there until all of the cars left, after which the Rebbe turned around and walked back to 770. A *kvort* with water was set up in advance outside the entrance to 770 and the Rebbe washed his hands four times on each hand alternately. The Rebbe then came into the *zal*, sat on the bench and said something quietly², then got up and sat down again several times, after which he went to his room.

THURSDAY, 23 CHESHVAN

At 8:45 p.m., Senator Keating, who is currently running for reelection,³ came to meet the Rebbe. Already from 6:00 p.m. there was a large tumult outside. When he finally arrived, accompanied by his entourage, many Chassidim also pushed their way into the Rebbe's room and the place was packed. The Rebbe stood up to greet them and pictures were taken.

During the meeting, the Rebbe requested their involvement mainly in the realm of education; for example, the Rebbe requested that they fund private education as well. The senator said that they are already funding the higher education of older students, to which the Rebbe commented that the senator obviously funds those who have the ability to vote for him in the coming elections...

The Rebbe spoke about children who go off the conventional path and cause damage in the streets. The Rebbe also mentioned that the youth are suffering from drug abuse and offered a lengthy plan for how to prevent this. They seemed to be surprised and awed at how much interest the Rebbe had with the goings-on of American youth.

Among those in the entourage was New York's other senator, a Jew by the name of Jacob Javits, a fifth generation descendent of Reb Yaakov Emden, known as the *Yave"tz* (from where the senator's family name stems). The Rebbe apologized to him for not speaking about his grandfather...

During the *yechidus* there was a lot of pushing, as everyone wanted to hear what was going on, to the extent that the light was accidentally turned off as a result of the pushing (but was immediately switched back on). The guests spent approximately a half hour in the Rebbe's room.

When the Rebbe exited 770 to go home there were large amounts of election papers scattered all around on the street, and the Rebbe asked Rabbi

Krinsky what the papers were. The Rebbe waited in the car until Rabbi Hodakov entered, after which the Rebbe left for home.

SUNDAY, 26 CHESHVAN

During *Maariv*, the Rebbe was on the verge of tears as he said "*Hashkiveinu Avinu...*" Tonight there was *yechidus*. Reb Koppel Bacher went into *yechidus* with his wife and told the Rebbe that he will be going to North Africa with a stop in Eretz Yisroel. The Rebbe gave him 10 dollars and his wife five dollars, and told them to sell the dollars in Eretz Yisroel and to give the proceeds to tzedakah. The Rebbe asked him to visit Yerushalayim, Lod, and Kfar Chabad and to say over the *sichos* there. In addition, the Rebbe instructed him to visit an English speaking village located next to Kfar Chabad.

Ten Sephardic Jews from Afghanistan came to the Rebbe accompanied by Rabbi Shmuel Pesach Bogomilsky. They were in the Rebbe's room for about 45 minutes. The Rebbe said that they should build a shul as well as a mikvah. The Rebbe offered to give them \$4,000 towards the building of a mikvah, but one of the people there said that he would give that amount instead of the Rebbe. The Rebbe insisted that he wished to take part in the initiative so the Rebbe gave them 18 times \$18. The Rebbe told this person that he should be happy, for now he only has to duplicate the same donation of 18 times 18, and not the original \$4,000. One of the people there told the Rebbe that he has a brother who is not feeling well, and if the Rebbe would give his brother a *bracha*, he would give \$1,000. The Rebbe gave him a *bracha* for his brother, and he gave a check of \$1,000. The Rebbe collected from them the money necessary to build both the shul as well as the mikvah.

THURSDAY, FIRST DAY OF ROSH CHODESH KISLEV

Today Mr. Kovalsky went into the Rebbe for *yechidus*. Afterwards he shared that he asked the Rebbe to reveal himself and used the words, "*galei kevod malchusecha*." He didn't remember what the Rebbe told him since the Rebbe avoided answering; he only remembered that the Rebbe said "*B'meheira*—speedily." Two years ago—on Yud Shevat—this same Mr. Kovalsky shouted in public

that the Rebbe is Moshiach, and the Rebbe said that he is not responsible for what Kovalsky says.

On his way out from 770 after *yechidus* the Rebbe peeked into the *zal* where Reb Sholom Morosow was farbrenging with the *bochurim*.

FRIDAY, SECOND DAY OF ROSH CHODESH KISLEV

The Rebbe joined the *minyan* for *krias haTorah*, received an *aliya*, and remained until the end of *Shacharis* to recite all the *kaddeishim*. During the spare time, the Rebbe said Tehillim from the one that was placed on his *shtender* in advance. The Rebbe then looked at the front page of the Tehillim to see who it belonged to, flipped through the pages and then closed the Tehillim. The Rebbe then said *Mishnayos* as well as *korbanos*.

The Rebbe returned from his house to 770 for *Mincha* at 4:15 p.m. A *minyan* hadn't yet assembled in the *zal* since the Rebbe would usually come around *licht bentchen* time to daven *Mincha*, whereas today the Rebbe came 15 minutes before *licht bentchen*. There were only four *bochurim* in the *zal* at the time and there wasn't even a cover on the Rebbe's *shtender* as they hadn't expected the Rebbe to come this early. The *bochurim* immediately threw the cover over the *shtender* and it landed in a skewed position, which is how it remained throughout *Mincha*.

As there wasn't a *minyan* in the *zal*, the Rebbe asked that anyone else who was present in the building should come in to complete the *minyan*. Reb Shlomo

Cunin approached the *amud* and began *Ashrei*, but the Rebbe told him, "*Vart a minut*—wait a minute," as the Rebbe is accustomed to say *Mishnayos* and *Kaddish D'raban* before *Mincha* on Rosh Chodesh.⁴ After the Rebbe concluded saying *Kaddish*, the *minyan* began davening *Mincha*. **T**

1. This marks the beginning of the Rashi *sichos*, custom the Rebbe continued at every Shabbos farbrengen for the next 20-plus years. See *Revolution in Rashi*, *Derher Supplement*, *Vov Tishrei* 5775; *Derher Shevat* 5775.

2. This is the *minhag* of reciting *Yoshev B'seser* after a *levaya*.

3. A few weeks earlier, the other candidate, Mr. Robert Kennedy, also visited the Rebbe.

4. This is because the Rebbe did not lead the davening on Rosh Chodesh and hadn't recited the *Kaddish* before *Hodu* in *Shacharis*, so the Rebbe would make up for that *Kaddish* with an extra [*Mishnayos* and] *Kaddish* prior to *Mincha*.



THE REBBE DAVENS AT THE AMUD IN THE UPSTAIRS ZAL OF 770 IN THE MONTHS FOLLOWING VOV TISHREI 5725.



כתב יד קודש

לזכות
הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל הלוי
וזוגתו מרת שולמית ומשפחתם שיחיו
גערבער
להתברך בכל מילי דמיטב
בגשמיות וברוחניות גם יחד

When You Really Need It

The following is a draft of the the Rebbe's response in *ksav yad kodesh* from 25 Adar II 5727 to a woman who asked whether her husband should keep his set *shiurim* in Torah during a period of financial difficulties (Courtesy of Vaad Hanachos B'Lahak):



[Instruction to the *mazkir*] to add [at the end of the letter]:

להוסיף

Obviously, you are correct in your position that your husband's *shiurim*, and his involvement in spreading Chassidus and Yiddishkeit, should be the priority and routine in his life and in his schedule.

To wit—when a person's *parnassa* is not as it was in the past, the *yetzer hara* tries confusing the person and convincing him to minimize the time he spends on Torah and *mitzvos*. [In such a case,] one must explain to the *yetzer hara* that he is rightfully called a “fool”; for when a person needs **additional** *brachos* from Hashem, he must **increase** the vessels to receive these *brachos* and everything which brings it about, and not the contrary, *chas veshalom*. This is easy to understand.

מובן שצודקת בדעתה שאצל בעלה שיי צריכים להיות השיעורים שלו וכן עסקנותו בהפצת המעיינות והיהדות עיקר וקבע בנפש וגם בזמן. ואדרבא - כשמצב הפרנסה אינו כמו שהיה בעבר והיצר הרע מנסה לבלבל את האדם ולהסיתו שימעט מזמנו בתורה ומצוות - צריך להסביר להיצר הרע שאכן בצדק נקרא “כסיל” - שהרי כשזקוקים לתוספת ברכה מה צריך להוסיף בהכלים לברכה זו ולגורמיה ולא להיפך, ח"ו, וק"ל.



העיקר הפצת המעיינות חוצה



Rabbi Eliyahu Hecht

📍 Lomita, California

”נשיא דורנו האט
אויפגעטאן און
אנגעזאגט צו כל
אנשי ונשי הדור
אז מצוות הדור
איז אין דעם ענין
השליחות...”

“The Rebbe *nessi doreinu* established and mandated each and every man and woman in this generation that the ‘mitzvah of our generation’ is *shlichus*...”
(ש”פ וישלח תשמ”ז)

I was *zoche* to be sent by the Rebbe on shlichus to Lomita, California in Elul 5733. Rabbi Shlomo Cunin—who was sent by the Rebbe eight years prior to head the *mosdos* in California—came to visit me. I had been on Merkos Shlichus to the west coast and he felt that I would be the right candidate to start a Chabad House in the South Bay. At the time, he was opening many new *mosdos* as part of the 71 institutions in honor of the Rebbe’s 70th birthday, and a number of my *chaverim* were brought out as shlichim to California.

“There is a new shul there,” Rabbi Cunin said, “and you will become the *rav*.” I wrote to the Rebbe, asking if I should go forward with this position, or maybe I should look into something else. The Rebbe answered “להתעניין”—I should look further into it.

Shortly before we left on shlichus, we were told that we should wait in *Gan Eden Hatachton*. As the Rebbe returned to his room after *Mincha*, he went inside for a moment and came back out with a Tanya and a *siddur*. He gave the Tanya to me and the *siddur* to my wife and then he gave a silver dollar to my son, Menachem Mendel. The Rebbe blessed us:

“זאלסט מאכן פריילאך ביי אנדערע וועט זיין פריילאך ביי דיר—Bring happiness to others, and you will be happy.”

We arrived in Lomita in time for Rosh Hashana 5734. A large crowd turned up for services, but then on Yom Kippur, as I was leading the davening, I realized that most of the crowd had disappeared. The Yom Kippur War had just broken out and many of the congregants who were involved in the aerospace industry, serving as engineers and the like, had to leave on urgent call.

The position as *rav* turned out to bring me a much smaller salary than planned, but with the Rebbe’s *brachos* we had tremendous *hatzlacha* expanding our reach and we garnered many new *baalei batim*. We found that the Jews in the area were not particularly warm towards spirituality but we did our best and, slowly but surely, our fledgling Chabad House grew.

When I wrote to the Rebbe that I wanted to purchase a Chabad House, the Rebbe responded:

“לא כדאי פיזור הנפש על כזו הוצאה גדולה... והעיקר הפצת—The psychological unease that such a great expense would bring with itself is not worthwhile. The main thing should be spreading the wellsprings of Chassidus to the outside.”

Two years later, we finally received the Rebbe’s *bracha* to go ahead and buy. The Rebbe also sent 10 twenty-dollar bills as his participation in the purchase.

לע"נ
הרה"ת ר' אייזיק גרשון
בן ר' אברהם זאב ע"ה
מינץ
גלב"ע ב' חשוון ה'תשנ"ג
תנ"צ'ב'ה'
נדפס ע"י משפחתו שיחיו



As we continued expanding our reach during that first year, we were bringing close to 100 children each week to study in the Talmud Torah (Hebrew school). It was no longer possible for me to teach all the children alone, so I asked the Rebbe about bringing out another shliach to join in the work. The Rebbe responded:

”כעצת עסקני אנ”ש שיחיו שם ע”מ
שמקבלים אחריות

ובאם כוונתו לאחריות כספית הרי הוא חדש
שם ובשנת תשל”ד ותשל”ה לא יוכל לקבל עליו
אחריות זו—

If the local Chabad activists agree and are willing to take responsibility for this [then its a good idea].

If you intend to assume the financial burden, [that is inadvisable since] you are new to the area, and in the years 5734 and 5735 you will be unable to shoulder such a [financial] responsibility.”

A few years later, in 5744, I started to get into heavy debt. When things became very difficult, I wrote to the Rebbe that I am במבוכה גדולה, a big mess. In the same letter, I inquired about expanding the school building as we needed a larger space for our activities. The Rebbe circled the words במבוכה גדולה and wrote:

”!הרי כבר ה’ עד”ז עכ”פ. ויצא סו”ס
לחרות

וכ”ז יחליט כשיוקל מעט עול החובות
ובהתאם להמצב אז

הצלחה רבה ואזכיר עה”צ בשורות טובות

?! You have been in similar situations in the past and eventually you came out fine.

[Regarding the building,] you should make a decision about this

when the burden of the debt decreases a bit, relative to the situation you will be in then.

Much success. I will mention this at the *tziyon*. Good news.”

One issue that we were having in California then was that the *kashrus* industry was not built up enough. At some point I got involved with Histadrus Hakashrus of California, and together with a senior *rav* at the time, Rabbi Pinchas Gruman, we started working on *cholo*l *Yisroel*, glatt kosher, etc. Some of my fellow shluchim tried discouraging me. “Our job is to focus on connecting Yidden to Yiddishkeit, not dealing with *gashmius*,” they said. So I asked Rabbi Zalman Shimon Dworkin, the *rav* of Crown Heights, and he told me that I should continue. When I wrote this to the Rebbe, the Rebbe was pleased with my decision. Although this is not the general work of a shliach, the Rebbe wrote “כמבצע ליחידים—it’s a campaign that some **individuals** should work on.”

Later, I was asked to become the president of the Rabbinical Council of California. When I asked the Rebbe about this, the Rebbe responded:

”באם יה’ לו דעה בה על ידי זה לקבל
הצעה. אעה”צ”

“If this [joining the council] will allow you an authoritative opinion in its decisions, then take the position. I will mention this at the *tziyon*.”

As our financial situation became more pressing, my father, Rabbi Avrohom Hecht, wrote to the Rebbe about it, telling the Rebbe that I need to come to New York to raise money to expand the building, because if I

do so, that will bring in more money. The Rebbe responded that if we bring more people to our activities, that will bring more money. Regarding the trip, the Rebbe said I don’t have to come to New York for money; there is enough money in California. With the Rebbe’s *brachos* we managed to build a mikvah and a daycare center over the next couple of years.

Over the years I sent frequent *duchos* to the Rebbe, always meriting to receive answers or acknowledgment of my reports. Once while in a *yechidus*, I detailed many difficulties I was contending with on shlichus, including my financial situation which was quite desperate. The Rebbe encouraged and blessed me, and as soon as I returned to California, an individual I knew made a very generous donation, enabling us to continue.

A few years after Gimmel Tammuz, I was once again in dire financial straits. In desperation, I went to the Ohel and wrote to the Rebbe, “How can I go on?”

That was a difficult visit. It was pouring rain and I got completely soaked. I returned to Crown Heights in low spirits and was on the way to get something to eat when I suddenly got a call on my cell phone. “Is this *Rabbit* Hecht?” the caller from somewhere in Texas asked. “Yes, this is *Rabbi* Hecht,” I replied. “A family friend of ours just passed away and left a gift of \$25,000 for you.” I wasn’t even aware of who this person was, but the Rebbe had answered me. There’s no such thing as a מבוכה גדולה. The Rebbe is always *bentching* us! T

He'aros and Pilpulim

Every Jew's Obligation



מוקדש לחיזוק ההתקשרות
לכ"ק אדמו"ר נשיא דורנו
נדפס ע"י
הרה"ת ר' מרדכי וזוגתו מרת חי' מושקא
ומשפחתם שיחיו
גראטבויים
סטאני ברוק, ניו יארק



RASKIN FAMILY ARCHIVES

Perhaps ONE OF THE MOST CRITICAL ENDEAVORS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ONESELF AS A CHOSSID IS TO FOSTER IN ONESELF CHASSIDISHE HANACHOS, A CHASSIDISHE OUTLOOK ON LIFE.

As we grow into adults, we develop a fundamental perspective on life from a variety of influences—parents, friends, teachers, books, experiences—and this determines our approach to everything we do, whether consciously or subconsciously.

Naturally, not all of one's viewpoints can trace their origins to Yiddishkeit, and altering them to become more in line with those of Torah is one of the most difficult, but still worthwhile, accomplishments that one can do. מוח שליט על הלב, the mind governs the heart, and when our head is in the right place, our emotions and actions follow.

Throughout the *nesius*, the Rebbe educated us, shifting our perspective on matters large and small. This shows itself most prominently in extremes; in the (relative) ease with which a Lubavitcher asks someone to put on *tefillin*, in the constant focus on Moshiach, and so on. There are so many areas where we can only wonder how life would be outside the Rebbe's influence.

But then there are areas where the Rebbe's viewpoint is so revolutionary, so different, that although we go through the motions and follow the instructions to the tee, it would almost seem that the Rebbe's fundamental outlook has yet to seep through.

What's the point?

One of the most enduring characters in Chassidic literature is that of the fantastically egotistical Torah scholar from the early time-period of Chassidus: *geonim* who imagined themselves greater than Moshe Rabbeinu (and found themselves questioning Hashem's judgement as a result)¹; hermits who could not comprehend why Eliyahu Hanavi would not appear to them²; and Talmudists who sincerely thought of Rashi as an inferior caliber scholar to themselves.³ Their self-worth was measured by their achievements and innovations in Torah-study, and as much as they studied, a true appreciation for *Elokus* and *avodas Hashem* was nonexistent.

For generations, many Chassidim scorned the notion of focussing on one's own innovations in Torah, viewing it as synonymous with leaving *Elokus* out of the picture, a relic of these self-absorbed scholars.

This attitude is alive and true today, in one form or the other. Many view *chiddushim* as the purview of the elite, of those who “know how to learn,” of *roshei yeshivos* and *rabbonim* (and overconfident youngsters). Why waste time and energy on developing mediocre ideas that might not even be true when there are so many *real* things to learn? Isn't that an exercise of empty vanity?

The Motivational Factor

The Rebbe's attitude was different. His primary argument was simple: people study more when they know that they have to come up with something.

“In earlier generations, the *roshei yeshivos* world infuse their students with energy and gusto in the study of Torah,” the Rebbe said. “Today, unfortunately, the *roshei yeshivos* do not infuse their students with sufficient enthusiasm in Torah, which

is why other ways must be found to do so.

“When a student knows that every once in a while he will need to deliver a *chiddush* in Torah in front of his colleagues, this gives him more energy in his studies so that he won’t be caught in front of his friends not knowing the material... These *chiddushim* should then be written, and *printed* in a special *kovetz*, in order to publicize it everywhere. Thus, these *chiddushim* will not remain in the yeshiva, rather *yagdil Torah v’yaadir*.”⁴

“When the students are infused with the notion that they should discuss Torah among themselves and come up with new ideas, that itself gives them more enthusiasm in their studies: the very fact that they are empowered, and told that ‘the time has come’ for them [to innovate in Torah] gives them more enthusiasm. This is true even though their ideas may not always be fully true... Even if you will say that this is Torah-study for an ulterior motive, *shelo lishma*; *zol zein shelo lishma*, the main thing is that they will live with Torah, and eventually they will arrive at the *lishma*.”⁵

As the Rebbe pointed out, this isn’t a theory: it has been proven true whenever it’s been tried.

Innovation as an Obligation

Beyond the practical considerations, there was also a deeper, philosophical issue at play.

A *bochur* in a non-Chabad yeshiva was once very despondent. He wasn’t intellectually gifted like his friends, and he was beginning to come to the shattering realization that his life-long dream of becoming a *gadol* would never come to fruition, no matter how hard he tried. Broken-hearted, he wrote to the Rebbe.

The Rebbe replied with one line that would change his life: אני נבראתי לשמש את קוני, *I was created to serve*

FOR GENERATIONS, MANY CHASSIDIM SCORNE THE NOTION OF FOCUSING ON ONE’S OWN INNOVATIONS IN TORAH.



my creator.⁶ It’s not about finishing a certain amount of books or reaching a certain level of knowledge; it’s not about what you accomplish—it’s about your obligation to serve Hashem by studying Torah. Just as one must serve Hashem with the hand by performing *mitzvos*, one must serve Hashem with the mind by studying Torah.

The point of innovating in Torah is not to come up with the most brilliant idea, or to give oneself empty accomplishments. It is simply an extension of the obligation to study.⁷ As the Alter Rebbe writes in Tanya, “Every Jewish person has the ability to innovate in both *halacha* and *aggada*, in both *nigleh* and *nistar*—and he is obligated to do so.”⁸ This obligation applies every single day, as the Zohar states: “לאפשר לה בכל יום ויום, [one must] increase in the Torah every single day.”⁹

If a person has the ability to innovate in Torah, the Rebbe says, and instead he chooses to study subjects in Torah that have already been revealed,

it is considered *bittul Torah*! “Even if he has already innovated in Torah today—three times!—he must increase and innovate even more, for every moment that there is an obligation to study Torah, there is an obligation to innovate in Torah.”¹⁰

When one views *chiddushei Torah* in this context, as a selfless extension of our service of Hashem rather than a self-centered ladder of accomplishment, it becomes clear why the Rebbe urged every single person to do so, no matter the quality of their scholarship or brilliance of mind: Every single person has a part in Torah, and every person can be the *talmid vosik* whose innovations were included at Har Sinai.

Innovating in Chassidus

It seems that the first iteration of publishing *he’aros* in the Lubavitch world was in *Hatomim*, a periodical published by the Frierdiker Rebbe in Poland, where people were given the opportunity to ask and

“ON PAPER, THE EDITORS [OF HATOMIM] ARE OTHERS, BUT THE WORK IS ALL HIS [I.E. THE REBBE]...”

answer questions in both *nigleh* and Chassidus. For the first time, some of the most profound issues in Chassidus were being discussed on paper in plain language. [The official editor of *Hatomim* was Reb Shmuel Zalmanov, and for many decades, the Rebbe’s level of involvement was anyone’s guess, although many suspected that he was very involved. Recently, an entire cache of letters from the Frierdiker Rebbe to the Rebbetzin was discovered, and in one he writes, “On paper, the editors [of *Hatomim*] are others, but the work is all his [i.e. the Rebbe].”¹¹]

It would take many years before it would become popular on a broader level. Beyond the general uncomfortability that some had with *chiddushim*, they were particularly perplexed with the notion of people writing *pilpulim* and asking questions in the G-dly discipline of Chassidus.

But in fact, as the Rebbe explained, the only way to truly understand something is if one allows himself to ask questions. In a foundational *sicha* on the occasion of the Rebbe Rashab’s birthday, the Rebbe said:

“A person may think, ‘How can I ask questions on the Rebbe? The Rebbe wrote the *maamar* in his own handwriting (as I can see for myself)—how can I raise (what seem to be) contradictions between this *maamar* and a *maamar* from an earlier Rebbe or a later Rebbe, or between this *maamar* and a passage in *Torah Shebiksav* or *Torah Sheba’al Peh*?!”

“...[But the truth of the matter is that] the study of Torah must be *intellectual*... As long as you’re afraid of contemplating it too deeply, lest you find something that you

don’t understand [you cannot truly comprehend it]... Only through learning the *maamar* to the extent that you have questions, *that* is how you will arrive at the true understanding of the matter.”¹²

How To:

Over the years the Rebbe gave practical guidance on how to write *he’aros* and how to create a *kovetz*.

- **Ensure that the *he’aros* follow the *klalei halimud*:** The Rebbe often spoke about the fact that, unfortunately, *yeshivos* do not study the “rules of study” (*Klolei Hashas* printed at the end of *Mesechta Brachos*), where one finds practical guidance on how to approach study, and thus the *he’aros* sometimes don’t make sense. One rule the Rebbe mentioned a number of times was that when one wishes to ask a question, the question must be strong; but when attempting to resolve a question, it doesn’t have to be as airtight. On a number of occasions, the Rebbe pointed out that the

questions in the *he’aros* weren’t solid enough to pass the test.

- **Be Original!** When the Rebbe fielded questions on Rashi (see below), he would urge people to think of original questions, instead of simply copying the type of questions the Rebbe had developed: why Rashi cites the name of the author or why Rashi provides two explanations, etc.
- **Don’t get lost in technicalities.** The Rebbe’s clearly preferred a question that was a “*klotz kashe*,” the common-sense question that people (and often *meforshim*) don’t even think of asking. He would urge people to focus on these types of questions instead of technical *pilpulim*, and not to get lost in the technicalities of the subject.
- There were two phrases the Rebbe would often use (with variations): מ'שפאלט א האר און—people are splitting a “hair” and forgetting the “head,” i.e. the subject itself; מ'קלייבט ווערטער—און פארגעסט אויפ'ן תוכן הענין—people are focussing on the words (and technicalities) and forgetting the content behind them.¹⁶

There are additional reasons one must specifically focus on innovation in Torah:

- **Your part in Torah:** Every *neshama* has a part in Torah that it must reveal to the world, as we say in davening every day וותן חלקנו וותן חלקנו, give us *our* part in Torah. Now, in the last generation of *galus*, there is no time to wait for another *gilgul* to do so.¹³
- **Deeper Revelations:** Innovation reveals a level in Torah that is rooted in the *atzmus* of Hashem.¹⁴
- **Bringing of Moshiach:** Through innovating in Torah we bring about the true innovations of Moshiach’s era, when, “A new Torah” will come from Hashem.¹⁵

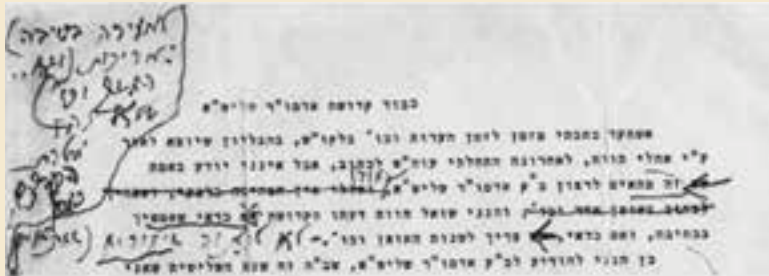
- **Try finding an answer:** In addition to asking questions, one should spend time trying to find answers, and the editors should shoulder the responsibility in this matter as well.
- **Don't be afraid to write your name:** There were a number of times when the Rebbe urged people not to hide behind an anonymous title or pen name.¹⁷
- **The responsibility of the editors:** The editors have the responsibility for the content of the *kovetz*, and if there is an obvious answer to the question that is being asked, or if it was addressed by previous *meforshim*, the editors should make note of it in the *kovetz*. They have the responsibility to ensure that everything makes sense.¹⁸
- **What belongs:** The Rebbe said that the *kovtzim* are not a place for publishing *shiurim* (see sidebar).

The Rebbe's Involvement

In the history of Lubavitch, there were occasions when *maamarei Chassidus* were said at the behest of a great Chossid. The Alter Rebbe, for example, delivered certain *maamarim* for Reb Aizik Homiler; the Mittlerer Rebbe wrote entire *seforim* for select disciples; and the Tzemach Tzedek said *maamarim* for Reb Hillel Paritcher. Obviously, the level of the Chossid to whom the *maamar* was directed had a certain effect on the style of the *maamar*.

But this phenomenon was limited to the greatest of the Chassidim, a handful over centuries. In the early years of the Rebbe's *nesius*, too, there was no official channel through which Chassidim could ask questions on the Rebbe's *farbrengens*, with the

When the *kovtzim* began coming out, people started using them to publish their *shiurim* (in addition to *ha'aros*). One of the early writers in the *kovtzim* asked the Rebbe whether he should continue.



“אשתקד כתבתי מזמן לזמן הערות וכו' בלקו"ש, בהגליון שי"ל ע"י אהלי תורה, לאחרונה התחלתי עוה"פ לכתוב, אבל אינני יודע באמת אם זה מתאים לרצון כ"ק אדמו"ר שליט"א ואולי אין הכתיבה כדבעי ושצריך לכתוב באופן אחר וכו', והנני שואל חו"ד הקדושה אם כדאי שאמשיך בכתיבה, ואם כדאי, אם צריך לשנות האופן וכו'.

Last year, I occasionally wrote *ha'aros* on Likkutei Sichos, in the *kovetz* that comes out from Oholei Torah. I recently I began writing again, but I don't know if it is truly what the Rebbe wishes. Perhaps I am not writing as I should, and I should write differently. I am asking the Rebbe's opinion about whether I should continue writing; and if I should continue, should I change the way I'm doing it.”

The Rebbe circled the word “whether” [I should continue writing] and added the word, “כמובן, obviously.”

Then the Rebbe added:

“לא לכתוב שיעורים (שמתאים לאמירה בישיבה): אריכות (וגם... המשיך וכו') שלא זהו מטרת הקובצים כמובן.

Do not write *shiurim* (which are appropriate for delivery in a yeshiva): Long (and also a series), because that is not the purpose of the *kovtzim*.



As a result of their reinvigorated involvement in the Rebbe's Torah, *bochurim* were coming up with all types of questions and answers on the *sichos*, and they began printing their discussions on a page titled "*He'aros Hatmimim*." It was a simple page that was intended only for internal circulation among the *bochurim*.

After a few months, a group of *bochurim* took the initiative to gather all the *he'aros* that had been printed until that point and publish them in an official booklet, bearing the same name, "*He'aros Hatmimim*."

They sent it in to the Rebbe, and to their pleasant surprise, the Rebbe reacted very warmly to the idea, even giving them several specific pointers on the project:

The title of the *kovetz* should be *He'aros Hatmimim V'anash*, in order to include non-*bochurim*; the format should be like that of the Likkutei Sichos; and more. In fact, the Rebbe wrote that he would be covering 10 percent of the expenses from the "70 Fund," which was dedicated to the 71 new institutions established in honor of Yud-Alef Nissan. The *bochurim* were amazed that the Rebbe was considering this *bochurim*-led project as one of his 71 institutions!

In fact, the *rosh yeshiva* of 770, Rabbi Mordechai Mentlik, said at the time that, in his opinion, the reason the Rebbe resumed editing the Likkutei Sichos around that period—which he had ceased doing a few months earlier—was due to the *kovetz he'aros*.²⁰

Another *kovetz* was published the following year, and this time the Rebbe covered 20 percent of the project's cost. Following their success and the warm reception from the Rebbe, other *yeshivos* began following their lead.

But many people were hesitant to get involved. How can a Chossid have the *chutzpah* to ask questions on his Rebbe? The yeshiva in Morristown,

THE BOCHURIM WERE AMAZED THAT THE REBBE WAS CONSIDERING THIS BOCHURIM-LED PROJECT AS ONE OF HIS 71 INSTITUTIONS!

One of the Mosdos

The name of the *kovetz* was originally *He'aros Hatmimim*. The Rebbe circled the word *Hatmimim*, and wrote:

"לכאורה שולל השתתפות דכו"כ - אולי להוסיף "זאנ"ש" (או כיו"ב) וכן בהפתח דבר וכו'.

This would seem to exclude the involvement of many. Perhaps add "*v'anash*," or similar. The same goes for the introduction."



They wrote that it would cost at least six-hundred dollars. The Rebbe replied:

"10% השתתפות מקרן הע' (כשאר ע"א מוסדות).

10% will be given from the '70 Fund' (as with the other seventy-one institutions)."

It wasn't written anywhere in the *kovetz* who the publishers were, and on the bottom of their letter the Rebbe wrote:

"י"ל ע"י "חברי מערכת".

Published by the Editorial Board."

The Rebbe also added:

"כדאי שהפורמט - כמו הלקו"ש.

The format should be like Likkutei Sichos."

for example, started its own *kovetz* in 5733. But rumors began circulating that the Rebbe wasn't happy about it, so they stopped. They soon received a phone call from the Rebbe's secretary Rabbi Binyomin Klein, asking what had happened, and they resumed production.

Confusion still surrounded the issue, so when the *mashpia* of Morristown, Reb Meilach Zweibel, went into *yechidus*, he brought up these rumors to the Rebbe.

The Rebbe said that, to the contrary, he was happy about the *he'aros*. The Rebbe went on to tell Reb Meilach that a certain *rav* had asked him a question on a *sicha*, and the Rebbe had sent him a copy of the *he'aros* where the very same question

had been asked and answered; "דא האסטו דיין שאלה און דא האסטו דיין ענטפער—*here is your question and here is your answer*."

A *mazkir* would always bring the *kovtzim* to the Rebbe before Shabbos, and people who went into *yechidus* reported seeing them on the Rebbe's desk.

The Rebbe displayed his fondness for the *kovtzim* in other ways as well. They were tucked into his *siddur* during davening on Shabbos; on Friday night he would read them during the singing of *Lecha Dodi*; and on Shabbos day he would read them between *aliyos*. In order to see which *kovetz* the Rebbe was reading, the staff of the various *kovtzim* began printing them with different colored covers. If

the Rebbe was spending noticeably more time on a certain *he'ara*, it could be presumed that it might be a topic at the farbrengen.

Rabbi Sholom Spalter of the yeshiva in Morristown was one of the mainstays of the Morristown *kovetz* throughout the years. He relates: "One time in the beginning of 5743, the Rebbe sent the *kovetz* back to us, and he had edited two of the *he'aros* by hand! As you can imagine, this was a very big surprise for us; to the best of our knowledge, this was the first time the Rebbe ever made handwritten comments of one of the *kovtzim*."

"A few weeks later, the Rebbe again sent back the *kovetz* to the editors with a handwritten answer. This happened about 15 times over the next few years. Sometimes, the Rebbe wrote a number of lines with questions, answers or comments."

"Once, when the writer of the *he'ara* wrote about a question of the Shalah on a certain *possuk* and referenced the wrong *possuk*, the Rebbe reprimanded the editors; on the cover the Rebbe circled the word מערכת and wrote next to it "עורכת" או רק מעתיקה?—underlining the word מעתיקה twice. Meaning to say: Is this a job of editors who actually prepare the *he'aros* for publication or merely copy word for word from the writer?"

"We felt unbelievable joy when we received the answers. It gave us the drive and push to continue publishing more and more *he'aros*."

The first time

As time progressed, several more *yeshivos* began publishing *kovtzim*, and more frequently. By 5740, the *yeshivos* of both Morristown and Oholei Torah were publishing *kovtzim* on a weekly or bi-weekly basis.

It was around then that the *kovtzim* gained another level of prominence: They transformed from being merely scholarly journals to a major forum with which the Rebbe answered questions his Chassidim had in Torah study.

It started on Shabbos Chayei Sara 5740. In the previous farbrengen, the Rebbe had discussed the weekly *likkut*,²¹ which was about the famous story of the Rebbe Rashab in his youth asking his grandfather the Tzemach Tzedek why Hashem hadn't revealed Himself to him as He had to Avraham Avinu, as it related to Rashi's explanation. The Rebbe asked a question on the explanation in the *likkut*, and concluded that the answer would come at the following farbrengen.

A group of *bochurim* from the yeshiva in Oholei Torah wrote a *he'ara* asking why the Rebbe had asked



להערה בלקו"ש (ות"ח ע"ז) - מכמה טעמים טוב שיעשה כנהוג לאחרונה בכיו"ב, לכתוב לאחד הקובצי תורה שענינם בכיו"ב, ותברר הדבר ע"י ולרבים. וק"ל.

Regarding your comment on the Likkutei Sichos (and thank you for it)—for several reasons, it would be good if you followed the recent practice of submitting it to one of the *kovtzei Torah*, and the matter will be resolved with the help of the public, and for their benefit.



Don't be Afraid to Ask!

One should study Torah! And if you don't understand something [in the farbrengen], you should *b'feirush* ask! You can sign your name on it, and there's no reason to sign it as "one of *anash*" or "one of the *temimim*." You aren't slighting anyone [i.e. the Rebbe] by doing so—to the contrary, "from my students [I learned] more than from everyone else!"

the question, when it could easily have been answered in a certain way (as they explained). The following Shabbos the Rebbe addressed their *he'ara*: "A week passed, and I was happy to see that there were several people who were even coming with a complaint: How could you ask such a question on Rashi when there's an answer for it?!" The Rebbe smiled, and continued, "I said from the beginning that it's a question that could be answered, it's just that we

would answer it next week, because of the lack of time. So what's the surprise that it can be answered; the point of the question was to answer it!"

The Rebbe went on to say why their explanations didn't fit with the simple meaning of Rashi, and elaborated on the issue at length.

"This was the first time that the Rebbe publicly commented on the *kovetz*, and it was very exciting for us all," says Rabbi Avraham Gerlitzky, longtime editor-in-chief of the *He'aros*

U'biurim of Oholei Torah. "But it was still in the context of a question that the Rebbe himself had posed at the farbrengen.

"A little while later, there was an ongoing discussion in the *kovtzim* between Rabbi Pinye Korf and myself regarding the *likkut* that had come out for Chanukah that year. We went back and forth for several weeks,²² and on Shabbos Parshas Bo, the Rebbe mentioned our discussion (and went on to explain how neither one of us was correct). This was especially surprising because it was a simple discussion between two individuals—it was a subject that had not been mentioned at the recent farbrengens—and yet the Rebbe himself weighed in and commented on it! After Shabbos, the Rebbe edited that *sicha* to be published in the following volume of *he'aros*."

In the following months, the Rebbe's involvement in the *kovetz* became more and more frequent, and picked up pace in 5741. In the ensuing years, the Rebbe discussed hundreds of *he'aros*, on a vast range of topics. Rabbi Gerlitzky says, "A sixteen-year-old student of mine once wrote a question on Likkutei Dibburim. On the following Shabbos, the Rebbe spent a good half hour (!) discussing his question."

Chassidim felt that the Rebbe was almost like a *rosh yeshiva* interacting with his students, as he answered questions on the ongoing farbrengens or weekly *likkutim*, asked questions and left them for the Chassidim to answer, and even commented on various discussions and debates that were going on in the pages of the *kovtzim*.

New Heights

The Rebbe's involvement in the *kovtzim* continued steadily, but there is one episode that stands out even then, which may have been a precursor for

Major Topics

There were certain topics that merited extensive involvement from the Rebbe, many of which were formally published in Likkutei Sichos. The following is a small sampling:

- **The Kvatter:** One week, in the *kovetz* that was published for Parshas Beshalach-Yud Shevat 5741, Rabbi Moshe Wiener wrote about the *minhag* that a pregnant woman should not serve as a *kvatter*. The Rebbe spoke about it at the 15 Shevat farbrengen, and the following week there were more questions in the *kovtzim*. The Rebbe explained it the following Shabbos (Yisro), and there was a continued discussion in the *kovtzim*. A few months later, the Rebbe was *magiah* his *sichos* on the topic for a *likkut*,²³ and, again, questions were asked in the *kovtzim*, which the Rebbe answered at the farbrengen. This entire episode was especially unique since the entire issue had been raised *b'isarusa d'letata*, by a regular Chossid writing about a topic!
- **A letter in a Sefer Torah:** On Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sara 5742, the Rebbe spoke about the importance of buying a letter in the *sefer Torah*, and that one thereby fulfills the mitzvah of writing a *sefer Torah* (according to some *poskim*). Over the following weeks, the Rebbe spoke about it again and it was discussed at length in the various *kovtzim*. On the second night of Chanukah, the Rebbe held a farbrengen, the bulk of which was dedicated to answering questions on the topic. The back-and-forth discussion continued over the following weeks in the *kovtzim* and farbrengens, and it was later published in several *likkutim* in Likkutei Sichos.
- **Sheva Mitzvos:** On Acharon Shel Pesach 5743, the Rebbe spoke about the obligation to teach non-Jews about the seven Noahide laws, something that the Rebbe would continue to expound on in much greater detail over the years to come. “After Shabbos,” Rabbi Gerlitzky relates, “I received a phone call from the Rebbe’s *mazkir*: The Rebbe was asking that we should research the issue and find sources for the *sicha*. Following this directive, it became a major discussion in the ensuing *kovtzim*, and before Shavuos I received another phone call from Rabbi Groner: the Rebbe asked that all the *seforim* that had been mentioned should be brought to him. We put together a stack of *seforim*—from my house and from the yeshiva—and we brought them to the Rebbe. Sure enough, the *sicha* on Shavuos²⁴ for the *kinnus Torah* was about *sheva mitzvos*, and the Rebbe mentioned all of these *seforim*.”
- **Relative Truth:** The *likkut* published for Shavuos 5743²⁵ discussed the eternity of every part of Torah, and that every single item in Torah was given to Moshe at Har Sinai. The Rebbe says there that even though there are opinions that certain areas of Torah were taken from outside sources (like the medical knowledge in Gemara), once the Rambam *paskened* that everything came from Moshe, it is impossible to learn otherwise. This sparked an interesting, though somewhat unrelated, question in the *kovetz* from Morristown: If one studies a viewpoint in Torah that was later proven to be unquestionably wrong to believe—like the notion that Hashem has an actual body, or that the *tzimtzum* is meant literally, or our case, that not everything in Torah is eternal—does studying such viewpoints constitute Torah learning? The writer proposed his own answer to the question, but at a following farbrengen, the Rebbe delved into the issue, revealing new depths into some of the most profound areas of Torah, all in response to a *he’ara* in a *kovetz*.²⁶
- **The Korban of Geirus:** The *likkut* that was published for Shabbos Parshas Mishpotim 5745²⁷ spoke about the *korban* that is brought as part of a *geirus*, and why the *geirus* is still complete without it. It was discussed in the following *kovtzim*, and later that year, when the newly-established Rambam cycle reached these *halachos*, the Rebbe instructed that the *likkut* should be reprinted *together with the he’aros*.

“I ASSUMED THAT SOME PEOPLE WOULD TRY TO FIND AN EXPLANATION FOR THIS... BUT, IN ALL OF THE KOVTZIM, I DID NOT FIND ONE PERSON WHO TRIED ANSWERING THE QUESTIONS!”

how things would develop in the years that followed.

On Shabbos Parshas Vayeshev 5744, the farbrengen went on longer than usual, and the Rebbe said that he would answer the questions on Rashi the following week.

No answers were published in the *kovtzim* that week. (Two people tried sending answers to the He'aros Ubiurim of Oholei Torah, but the editors decided against printing them, since the Rebbe had promised to answer the following week.) At the farbrengen, the Rebbe spoke sharply about the fact that none of the *kovtzim* had proposed an answer.

“Being that there was a break between one farbrengen and another, I assumed that some people would try to find an explanation for this, which they would publicize for the benefit of the public in the weekly *kovtzim*. But, in all of the *kovtzim*, I did not find one person who tried answering the questions!”

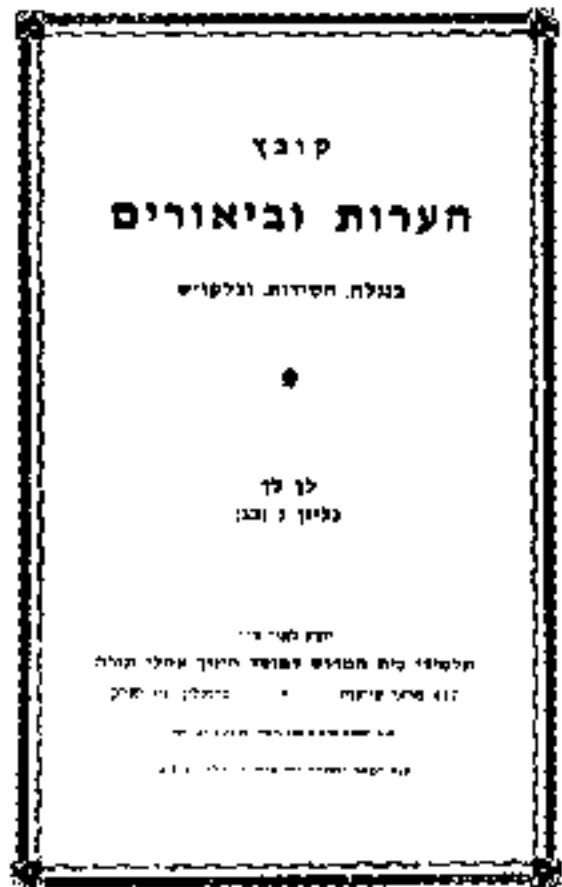
After speaking bitterly about the fact that no-one seemed to be involved in the farbrengens, the Rebbe concluded by saying, “Next Shabbos, there won’t be a farbrengen, and neither will there be in two Shabbosim and three Shabbosim from now. In four Shabbosim from now, *hut der Aibershter geholfen* that it will be Shabbos Mevorchim, so there will be a farbrengen. Do you want to take that away too?!”

And that’s what happened. The next farbrengen was four weeks later, Shabbos Parshas Va’eira. During that time period the Rebbe farbrenged almost every week, so a break of a month without a farbrengen was a shocking occurrence.

At the long-awaited farbrengen, the Rebbe again asked questions on the Rashi and left them unanswered.

Rabbi Chaim Shaul Steinmetz, shliach in Sarasota, Florida, was a member of the *ma’areches* of Oholei Torah’s He’aros Ubiurim in the early 5740s. He relates: “At the time, the Rebbe almost never edited the farbrengens, but he agreed to edit the questions of that week. We printed many copies of the edited *sicha* and spread them in the shuls of Crown Heights. (This practice continued later as well.)”

“People started writing *bli gvul*,” Rabbi Gerlitzky says. “Hundreds of people submitted answers that week; men, women and children. Many of the answers were very similar to each other, so we organized the answers



COVER OF A KOVETZ HE'AROS PUBLISHED BY OHOLEI TORAH.

into different categories, and chose the ones that were written best, adding a note at the bottom with a list of people who had proposed similar answers.”

“The following Shabbos,” Rabbi Steinmetz says, “the Rebbe mentioned some of the answers that were offered, but rejected them on the basis that they were not in line with ‘*pshuto shel mikra*,’ the literal meaning of the *possuk*. The Rebbe answered the questions of the previous weeks, and asked a series of questions on another Rashi in Parshas Bo, on the *possuk* that says that the dogs didn’t bark at the Yidden during *yetzi’as Mitzrayim*, and again, he left it unanswered. After Shabbos the questions were edited by the Rebbe and distributed.



“It was unbelievable: Wherever you went, walking down the street, in the store or in 770, everyone was discussing this Rashi. It took over the entire community, everyone was discussing the nature of dogs and how they bark... Everyone was excited and involved.

“The following week, Shabbos Parshas Beshalach, the entire crowd was waiting in suspense for the Rebbe to speak about the Rashi. Once again, the Rebbe said that the answers weren’t in line with *p’shuto shel mikra*, and he provided the resolution. Again, he asked questions on a Rashi in Parshas Beshalach and left them unanswered.”

That week, Rabbi Leibel Kaplan, shliach in Tzfas, was visiting from

Eretz Yisroel together with his young son Mendel. With his father’s help, he wrote up his own answer to the question, and sent the paper to the Rebbe.

On Friday morning they received a fascinating note from the Rebbe. The Rebbe expressed his pleasure from the answer and instructed him to publish it in the *kovetz* (see sidebar). That Shabbos, when the Rebbe discussed the many answers that had been proposed, he mentioned that there were some points that fit according to *p’shat*, and thanked those who had proposed the answers (although they weren’t fully sufficient). The Rebbe also told the young Mendel Kaplan to say *l’chaim*.

This exact system didn’t continue after those three weeks, but from then on, whenever the Rebbe didn’t finish answering the questions on Shabbos, the questions would be edited and published for the broader crowd to answer.

The New Style of Rashi Sichos

In 5746, the era of the *kovtzim* reached its apex. On Shabbos Vayakhel, the Rebbe addressed the question of Reb Velvel Rosenblum on a certain Rashi, and then he announced that, from now on, the Rashi *sichos* would follow a new *seder*.

“This time, we will speak about a Rashi that was already discussed in one of the *kovtzim*, where several questions were mentioned. From now on, this is how it should be: Before



The Rebbe's note to Mendel Kaplan:

"נהניתי במאד מקריאתו, ובפרט מהדיוק בהפרטים וכו' - ויציעו להדפיס בא' הקובצים בצירוף הסברתו שלא יקשה מפרש"י טו,א: כל השירה כפולה.

I really enjoyed reading it, and especially the focus on the details—you should submit it for publishing in one of the *kovtzim*, where you should add your explanation as to how there would be no difficulty from Rashi 15,1: The entire song is doubled."

Shabbos, the crowd will propose one or more Rashis that require explanation.

"There are several advantages to doing it this way:

"It relieves me of the burden of finding a Rashi that hasn't been discussed yet.

"Additionally, this way we will be discussing a Rashi that the listeners

do not understand. Until now, it was possible that I would choose a Rashi that the crowd didn't find difficult, since the minds of people are not alike.

"The main thing: When the crowd proposes the Rashi to be discussed, it will enhance people's attention as they listen for the answers."

The Rebbe smiled and added, "I am not committing to speak about

every single question in Rashi that is brought up, and even when I do speak about a Rashi, I am not committing to resolving all the questions!"

The *kovtzim* then opened a new section, "*P'shuto shel Mikra*," and until the Rebbetzin's *histalkus* in 5748, the Rashi *sichos* were almost always based on questions of the crowd. After someone mistakenly asked a question on a Rashi that the Rebbe had already discussed (to the Rebbe's consternation at the *farbrengen*), the *kovtzim* also began printing a list of Rashis the Rebbe had already discussed in previous years.

Previously, over the years, the Rebbe would often tell Reb Yosef Waldman which Rashi he would be discussing on Shabbos.²⁸ But now that



it was chosen from one of the *kovtzim*, the Rebbe would ask to convey to Reb Yosef which *hae'ara* he was going to discuss. At times, the Rebbe was seen stopping on the way from his room to the shul holding a *kovetz* and showing Reb Yosef the precise page he'd later discuss.

Throughout the years, the Rebbe never ceased to fervently encourage more enthusiastic Torah study, and by extension, writing in the *kovtzei he'aros*. In fact, during the last “dollars” distribution to date, on 26 Adar I 5752, Rabbi Avraham Hecht came with his grandson to the Rebbe. When Rabbi Hecht mentioned that his grandson was studying in Morristown, the Rebbe told him: “You know that in

Morristown they put out *he'aros*; be sure to contribute to them!”

In the last *yechidus* that *bochurim* had with the Rebbe (as of now) in 5752, the Rebbe said:

“One must study all areas of Torah, and the entire Torah... especially through the study cycle of Rambam... and in addition to studying the *halachos* of Torah, one must toil in the *pilpul* and debate of Torah, to the extent that one innovates in Torah—true innovations, which are founded on the *klolim* of Torah, and become a part of Torah. This includes publicizing these innovations and publishing them. The study of Torah should be beyond any limitations, to the extent that the first thought that falls in one's mind in the morning is about Torah, and even when sleeping, one dreams about *pilpulim* in Torah!

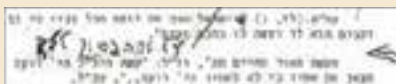
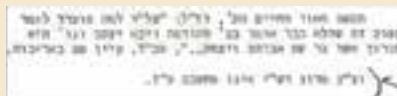
“By increasing Torah-study, *nigleh* and Chassidus, and through spreading Torah, *nigleh* and Chassidus, *yafutzu ma'ayanosecha chutza*—this will speed up the coming of Dovid, King Moshiach, ultimately Moshiach himself, *teikef u'miyad mamash*.”²⁹

For a detailed overview on the Rebbe's involvement in the he'aros and a collection of all the sichos in this regard, see: He'aros Ubiurim, Sefer Hayovel—Oholei Torah 5770; V'ha'er Eineinu B'Sorasecha—Morristown 5765. **T**

1. Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayatz vol. 3, p. 184.

2. See Toras Menachem vol. 19, p. 45.

3. Hatomim vol. 1, p. 70.



The Rebbe marks the Rashi that he would be discussing on Shabbos.

4. Toras Menachem Hisvaaduyos 5744 vol. 2 p. 991.
5. Ra'd 4 Adar Sheini 5741.
6. Reb Yoel Kahn, *B'Darkei Hachassidim*, p. 189.
7. Toras Menachem Hisvaaduyos 5743 p. 1222
8. Iggeres Hakodesh Siman 26 (145,a).
9. Miketz 38,3.
10. See Toras Menachem Hisvaaduyos 5752 vol. 1 p. 116-117; Sichos Kodesh 5740 vol. 1 p. 800-801.
11. Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayatz vol. 15 p. 208.
12. Toras Menachem 5744 vol. 2 p. 576-577.
13. See Toras Menachem Hisvaaduyos 5743 vol. 3 p. 1222.
14. See Toras Menachem Hisvaaduyos 5752 vol. 2 p. 243.
15. See Toras Menachem Hisvaaduyos 5752 vol. 1 p. 117
16. See e.g. Hisvaaduyos 5744 vol. 4 p. 292.
17. See e.g. Sichos Kodesh 5741 vol. 2 p. 426.
18. See Hisvaaduyos 5744 vol. 2 p. 825; Ibid vol. 3 p. 2082; Hisvaaduyos 5747 vol. 2 p. 717.
19. See 70, *A Time to Expand*, Derher, Nissan 5776.
20. See *The Written Torah*, Derher, Tammuz 5777,
21. Likkutei Sichos vol. 15, p. 129.
22. Vol. 31-35 *He'aros U'biurim*.
23. Likkutei Sichos vol. 22, p. 56.
24. Hisvaaduyos 5743 vol. 3, p. 1576.
25. Likkutei Sichos vol. 23, p. 33.
26. *Vih'o'er Eineinu* p. 109.
27. Later published in Likkutei Sichos vol. 26, p. 160.
28. See Derher....???
29. Hisvaaduyos 5752 vol. 1, p. 212-213



לע"נ
הרה"ת ר' אייזיק גרשון
בן ר' אברהם זאב ע"ה
נלב"ע ב' חשון ה'תשנ"ג
תנצ"ב

נדפס ע"י
הרה"ת ר' אברהם זאב
וזוגתו מרת הינדא ומשפחתם שיחיו
מינץ

Just One

The power of one action, one speech, one thought

צריך כל אדם שיראה עצמו כל השנה כולה כאילו חציו זכאי וחציו חייב. וכן כל העולם חציו זכאי וחציו חייב. עשה מצוה אחת, הרי הכריע את עצמו ואת כל העולם כולו לכף זכות וגרם לו ולהם תשועה והצלה...

Throughout the entire year, a person should always view himself as equally balanced between merit and sin and the world as equally balanced between merit and sin... If he performs one mitzvah, he tips his balance and that of the entire world to the side of merit and brings deliverance and salvation to himself and others...

*(Rambam, Hilchos Teshuva
Perek 3, Halacha 4)*

A common recurring theme in the Rebbe's sichos is the power of each and every individual action, performed by each and every individual person. In fact, the Rebbe emphasized that it need not even be an action; even a dibbur echad or machshava achas, one single word or one single thought, has the power to bring salvation to the world.

In this new column we will be exploring various themes from the Rebbe's Torah, beginning this month with this important topic.

IF ONLY ONCE

There are those who ask: "What is the benefit from going out and spreading the *mitvzoim*? You find a Yid and put *tefillin* on him only once; meanwhile you have no idea where he will be tomorrow and if this will have a lasting impact on him at all!"

The Rebbe addressed this topic at a farbrengen, explaining that only an *am ha'aretz* could ask such a question. The Gemara clearly states that a person who never put on *tefillin* in his lifetime will be in a terrible category in the World to Come. Helping another Yid put on *tefillin*, even if only once, would remove him from this category!

But aside from that, the Alter Rebbe explains in Tanya that every single mitzvah is of infinite value. With every mitzvah, the *neschama* becomes unified with Hashem, not only at the moment of the act, but “יחוד זה למעלה הוא נצחי לעולם ועד”—in Heaven, this unification is everlasting.”

More importantly though, there is another impetus to carry out the *mitzvot*:

The world is currently in a turbulent state. We live with constant uncertainty as to what could *chas v'shalom* go wrong in the next moment. To correct all these problems, the Rambam gave us a perfect formula: A person should always view himself, and the entire world, on an even scale. Doing even one single mitzvah can tip the scale and bring salvation to the entire world!

This is how the Rebbe teaches us to view the power of every single mitzvah: the potential outcome of the mitzvah is infinite, and the power of the act itself has limitless impact on the world.¹

WHAT IS THE BRACHA WORTH?

A similar question was posed to the Rebbe by Rabbi Norbert Weinberg, a *rav* in Yonkers, NY in the 5710s.

Rabbi Norbert was the principal of the Hebrew school in Yonkers, working very hard to instill Yiddishkeit in the hearts and minds of the young children, but was slowly becoming discouraged. These kids learn so much in school, he thought to himself, but then they go home and absorb all the values contrary to everything they've learned. “Am I really making a dent here?” he asked himself. “Perhaps I should leave this profession altogether and pursue a career as a lawyer or doctor.”

He decided to present his dilemma to the Rebbe in *yechidus*.

The Rebbe shined light on the issue, completely changing Rabbi Norbert's perspective. The Rebbe explained:

According to Jewish law, it is almost impossible for *beis din* to put anyone to death. We know that a *beis din* that puts someone to death once in 70 years is called a bloodthirsty court.

Say a person is, in fact, sentenced to death. Can you imagine what kind of person this had to be for the court to hand down that sentence? Such a person had refused to listen to the warning of the two *eidim* and murdered someone in front of other people; an individual with no fear or shame.

Think about this: This murderer was sentenced to death by the court. If he now asks for a glass of water before the verdict is carried out, he has to make a *bracha* on that glass of water just like the greatest *tzaddik* in the world...

“You are asking me,” the Rebbe continued, “what importance there is in teaching these children. These young people are guiltless, they're just starting out in life. Each of them can become the greatest of men, the greatest of Jews. You're asking me if it's worthwhile to teach them?! Even a murderer on the way to execution would have to make a *bracha* the same way a *tzaddik* has to make a *bracha*. How, then can you deny this child the opportunity to recite a *bracha*? Teaching a child to make a *bracha*—what can be greater?”

Rabbi Norbert was absolutely stunned. During all his time in education, such a perspective had never occurred to him.

As Rabbi Norbert was leaving, the Rebbe gave a few final words of advice: “Don't worry about it—don't worry about what they will or won't do. You just try your best with them and their *mitzvos* will have strength of their own.”²

IN OUR REALITY

These concepts may sound spiritual and hard to relate to. Is it really possible for a single action, performed by a lone individual, to create significant change in the entire world?

Recent scientific discoveries prove just that, says the Rebbe.

People used to think that in order to bring about change in a large part of the world, one needed vast amounts of material, hold command of a large military, and have many means.

Not so today. Now we know that with just a small atom, a person can press a button that will bring about mass destruction in an instant!

If this is true with regard to destruction, all the more so are we able to harness this power for good causes. We don't need vast amounts of material and power to bring about positive change; even one small action can change the world for good.

Furthermore: the person who actually presses the button of the atom bomb doesn't necessarily need to understand all the scientific workings of nuclear power. He can be even the simplest person around—even a very small child—all he needs to do is press the right button at the right time.

When the Rambam issues a *psak din* that every single person has the possibility to bring positive change to the entire world with even one small act—we no longer need to rely on our *emuna* to believe that this is true. We can already see this as a real concept in our own physical world!³

A FAVOR FOR HASHEM!

This subject, as discussed in the all of the Rebbe's Torah, is extremely vast and is reiterated in various ways. By learning the Rebbe's *sichos* and *maamarim*, we will come to appreciate the infinite power of every single *maaseh*, *dibbur*, or *machshava*, and their potential to change the world and bring the *geula*.

In conclusion, one final amazing *vort* from the Rebbe on the subject:

Mr. Fred Chernowski visited the Rebbe in *yechidus* for members of the Machne Yisroel Development Fund on 7 Tishrei 5752.

Fred's father was 84 years old and suffered from a terrible brain disease that was slowly robbing him of much of his physical strengths to the extent that he couldn't walk anymore. As a *frum* Yid, he really wanted to go to shul and do other *mitzvos* but he wasn't able to do much. In despondency, he cried a lot.

The Rebbe told Fred to tell his father:

As a *frum* Jew, he surely learned in Pirkei Avos that every Yid has a *shlichus* from Hashem to do a *mitzvah*. When a Yid does a *mitzvah* here in this world, he is doing a favor, *kvayachol*, for Hashem Himself! Emphasize to your father that as a *frum* Yid, every *mitzvah* that he can do in this world is a gift from him to Hashem. How can he forgo such a *shlichus*?

All the good things in the world are no match for even one of the favors he does for Hashem, by putting on *tefillin* or giving *tzedakah*!⁴ **T**

1. *Sichas Yud-Aleph Nissan* 5743; *Hisvaaduyos* 5743 vol. 3, p. 1210.
2. Here's My Story, published by JEM, Shabbos Parshas Tazria 5774.
3. *Sichas Yud Shevat* 5746; *Hisvaaduyos* 5746 vol. 2, p. 454.
4. Living Torah program 229; chabad.org/818259.

FOR FURTHER READING:

- *Sichas Purim* 5747, adapted in *A World In Balance*, *Derher Tammuz* 5776.
- **Waves:** *How every thought, speech, and deed can make a world of difference*; video by JEM, www.chabad.org/132937

INSPIRE THEM!

While in *yechidus* with the Rebbe on 19 Teves 5730, Rabbi Yitzchok Meir Gurary, *mashpia* of Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim in Montreal, asked the Rebbe for advice:

Farbrengens have always been a venue for giving over values of Chassidus, he wrote to the Rebbe. Stories of Chassidim who lived in past generations, and *Chassidische hergeshim* were always the staple of his *farbrengens*. Now, however, he sees that *bochurim* sometimes need to hear about basic concepts in *yiras Shamayim* and *minhagei Chabad*, but he was not sure how to go about doing it. Which *osiyos* should be used, he asked the Rebbe, when encouraging them to to fulfill the bidding of Shulchan Aruch?

The Rebbe told him (among other things) that his message should be based on the Gemara in Kiddushin, “לעולם יראה אדם עצמו—שקול וכל העולם כולו שקול”—a person should always see himself and the entire world as being on an even scale.” In this manner, he should impress upon the *bochurim* that each action that they do, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant, carries with it great opportunity; it could be that small action that will bring the *geula ha'amitis v'hashleima*.

(Interview with A Chassidisher Derher, Iyar 5775)



shabbas in Lubavitch

לזכות החייל בצבאות ה'
מנחם מענדל שיחי'
לרגל הולדתו
י"ב אדר ה'תשע"ח

ולזכות הוריו
הרה"ת ר' שלמה יוסף וזוגתו אסתר חי'
שיחי
זעלערמאיר

ולזכות החייל בצבאות ה'
מנחם מענדל שיחי'
לרגל הולדתו
ח"י אייר ה'תשע"ח

ולזכות הוריו
הרה"ת ר' משה ארי'
וזוגתו רבקה יהודית שיחי
שריף

נדפס ע"י זקניהם
הרה"ת ר' יצחק יהודה
וזוגתו מרת חנה שיחי
קופפר

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Lubavitch.

A town rich in history.

A town filled with holiness.

For more than 102 years, the Rebbeim of Chabad called this town home, and from here Chassidus spread around the world. Chassidim from all over would journey to the town of Lubavitch to spend a few uplifting days, weeks, or months with the Rebbe. In this article, we revisit the incredible experience of Shabbos in Lubavitch after the Rebbe Rashab founded Tomchei Temimim.

Friday Night

The highlight of the week in Lubavitch was the *maamar*. Every Friday night, before *Kabbalas Shabbos*, the Rebbe Rashab would say a *maamar*. The *maamar* was attended by the *temimim*, guests, and some of the local residents.

Every Chossid yearned to be present, but there was a *seder* in Lubavitch. *Mashmaas* (discipline) and *seder* were paramount; and while the younger *talmidim* (and their teachers) would have wished nothing more than to be at the *maamar*, their *seder* rarely afforded them the opportunity, as they would be studying from when Shabbos began. Undeterred by this seemingly insurmountable obstacle, some members of the faculty did all they could to be there. The *mashgiach*, Reb Yechezkel Himmelstein, would sometimes switch duties with another *mashgiach*, so as to afford himself the opportunity to hear the holy words of the Rebbe with his own ears.¹

Niggunim and Hachanos

The Rebbe Rayatz would come to shul earlier, wearing a *shtreimel* and Shabbos clothing. Once everyone found their places, the *bochurim* would sing *niggunim*, including *Yedid Nefesh*. The singing was led by a group of *menagnim*, headed by Nosson Nota Paharer, who had a beautiful voice, was proficient in music, and sang beautifully. Some of the *niggunim* sung had been composed by the holy Rebbeim, while others could be traced to legendary Chassidim.

The singing would go on, sometimes for half an hour and sometimes for an hour or more, until the Rebbe would appear.

As the Rebbe's footsteps were heard approaching the room, the *niggunim* stopped, and everyone turned to face the door.²

The Maamar

A hush fell over the crowd, as a wide path opened, and the Rebbe Rashab entered. It felt as if a *malach* had entered the room. Seeing the Rebbe would leave a deep impression on everyone present. Even a regular person looks different on Shabbos; how much more so the Rebbe. In particular, on Friday night, before saying the *maamar*, the Rebbe's face shone with the G-dly light contained within. The Rebbe Rashab was tall, head and shoulders above the crowd. While during the week the Rebbe Rashab wore a silk hat, on Shabbos he wore a *shtreimel*, as well as a silk coat and a snow-white silk kerchief around his neck.

The Rebbe would walk to the *cheder sheini* and remove the silk coat and scarf. Then he would slowly walk to his place, between the rows of *talmidim* standing like soldiers at attention, and would sit down facing the assembled Chassidim.

The Frierdiker Rebbe would stand across the table facing the Rebbe Rashab. The *temimim* and guests would stand all around, everyone jostling and pushing to catch a glimpse of the Rebbe's holy face or at least to be in the front row. They would soon be dripping with sweat, "*zei'ah shel mitzvah*."

For a moment, the Rebbe Rashab would sit silently, exchanging gazes with the Frierdiker Rebbe.



LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASIDEI CHABAD

The Rebbe Rashab would begin the *maamar* in a soft voice, but would steadily grow louder and louder, more and more powerful. Every Chossid in the room, however distant he was standing, could clearly hear the powerful, deep baritone of the Rebbe's voice. The Rebbe's face was flaming red.

The Chassidim would stand silently, absorbing every word. The Frierdiker Rebbe would stand as well, occasionally nodding his head attentively. From time to time, in middle of the *maamar*, the Rebbe Rashab would pause, and the Rebbe Rashab and the Frierdiker Rebbe would look into each other's eyes. The *maamar* would generally continue for between an hour and a half to two hours.

The awesome experience would leave a deep impression on young and old, even on those who had never heard Chassidus before. It truly felt like one was standing at the foot of Har Sinai, surrounded by 600,000 fellow Yidden all hearing the word of Hashem.

Upon the conclusion of the *maamar*, the Rebbe Rashab, soaked with sweat, would go to the *cheder sheini* to rest for about five minutes, sometimes longer.

The Rebbe would then enter the small *zal*, the *minyan* would daven *Maariv*, and then most of the people would go home to their Shabbos *seuda*.³

Chazara

A select few *temimim* and guests wouldn't head straight home just yet. Instead, they would gather to *chazzer*—to review the *maamar*.⁴ Among them were individuals with tremendous capacity for remembering things who would recite the *maamar* verbatim. The head *chozer* was Reb Shilem Kuratin, who during the *maamar* would stand away from the



The “Bittul” of the Chassidim

In Lubavitch, it didn't matter who you were in your hometown; here, everyone was equal.

The great Chossid, Reb Shmuel Gurarie of Kremenchug, was a tremendously learned man, in both *nigleh* and Chassidus. He was wealthy and well-connected with the government. It happened many times that in the midst of meeting with a government official, he would ask their pardon to daven *Mincha*, the official acquiescing with respect. Reb Shmuel had a guard at his door who would only allow people in with an appointment, as was customary among the local elite.

This very same Reb Shmuel would leave his honor and prestige behind when he came to Lubavitch. In the *zal* in Lubavitch, Reb Shmuel would be among the people pushing to catch glimpse of the Rebbe. There was no trace of Reb Shmuel the well connected magnate, the sage. He was replaced by Reb Shmuel the Chossid, an equal amongst equals.

He would stand before the Rebbe with complete *bittul*, like a servant before his master.

(Mareh Kohen p. 50)

pushing and shoving, with his eyes closed in extreme concentration. While Reb Shilem's natural abilities may not have been as great as some of the other *chozrim*, he succeeded in remembering the *maamar* more precisely than anyone else by way of sheer effort and diligence. He would begin the *chazzara*, and the other *chozrim* would assist him.

After much time went by, the entire *maamar* was pieced together from memory. Only after this was completed did the *chozrim* daven *Maariv* and eat *seudas Shabbos*, long after midnight. After eating, they would gather again to go over the *maamar*, lest they forget it, and only then would they go to sleep for a short while.

The Small Zal

The small *zal* was used in the earlier years for the *maamarim*,⁸ and even later on (when the large *zal* was used for the *maamar*) it continued to be used for *tefillos*.⁹

The room was illuminated in the daytime by three large wide windows on the south wall. A water barrel stood in the northwest corner of the room. Another three wide windows were on the north wall. The *aron kodesh* was in middle of the south wall (Lubavitch being nearly due north from Eretz Yisroel -ed.). On the eastern side of the southern wall was the Rebbe Maharash's place. The next seat was empty, and it was followed by the seat of the Rebbe Maharash's son-in-law, Reb Moshe Arye Leib. Near him sat the Rebbe Maharash's sons—Raza, then the Rebbe Rashab, followed by Reb Menachem Mendel. The seventh seat was empty, saved for the future husband of the Rebbe Maharash's daughter Chaya Mushka. On the other side, the first seat was reserved for the Rebbe Maharash. Nearby, was the door to the *yechidus* room. The Rebbe Maharash would daven in the *yechidus* room, and come out to hear *krias haTorah*.

The *bima* was in middle of the room.¹⁰

On the western wall was the door to the *cheder sheini*, which had an *aron kodesh*, a *bima*, and some benches.

When the Rebbe would say a *maamar* in the small *zal*, they would prepare the southeast corner of the room for the Rebbe. They made a *shlos-mem* which consisted of the southern and eastern walls; the west side consisted of the davening benches (which had attached shtenders and compartments) and on the north side was a table. This *shlos-mem* extended until the *amud*, near the *aron kodesh*.¹¹

In 5668 the winter was especially cold, so the fires in the fireplaces had to be roaring with intense heat to combat the bitter cold. One evening, as the *talmidim* were learning, they noticed sparks flying out of the chimney. They told their *mashgiach*, who reproached them:

“Why are you concerning yourself with this? Keep learning!” About half an hour later, the fire spread too large to be ignored.

There was no fire department in Lubavitch, so a bucket line was quickly formed. All of the *talmidim*, as well as the family of the Rebbe, who lived in other buildings in the same courtyard as the *zal*, quickly took to the task, drawing buckets of water from the two wells situated in the courtyard of the yeshiva.

The Rebbe Rashab and the Frierdiker Rebbe came to the *zal* after the flames had been quieted, as the *talmidim* were still busy putting out the remaining fires and tearing down the ceiling as well as the wall of the *ezras nashim*.

For a number of months following the fire, *tefillos* did not take place in the small *zal*.

From then on, the Rebbe Rashab would say Chassidus in the big *zal*.¹² The crowd had also gotten bigger, and using the large *zal* allowed for more people to be present by the *maamarim*.¹³

The Large Zal

As one walked into the large *zal*, he would see long white tables surrounded with *temimim*, learning assiduously, each facing his *chavrusa*. Eighteen tables held a total of about 150 *talmidim* between the ages of 18 and 25.

The door to the room was on the eastern side.

The Rebbe Rashab gave numerous directives to the builders of the *zal*. Among these were that the ceiling should be supported by 13 columns, and each corner of the room should have a “*shin*” shape built into the architecture.

There was a *cheder sheini* in the eastern part of the *zal*, where the *mashpi'im* would learn Chassidus with groups of younger *talmidim*.

Two tables for the *mashgichim* of *nigleh* and Chassidus were situated on a platform.¹⁴

The room would be prepared for the *maamar* right after *Mincha* on Friday, with four long tables set up in a square in the center of the room. The Rebbe's chair was placed inside the square, at the middle of the northern table, facing north.¹⁵

Upon awakening, Reb Shilem and a select five or six of the *chozrim* would go to the Rebbe's house for *chazzara* while the Rebbe would drink tea. The Rebbe would sit, and Reb Shilem would say over the *maamar*. The Rebbe would clarify and connect any points that were unclear and correct anything that needed correction, occasionally explaining a difficult concept in the *maamar*.

Reb Shilem would then go out and recite the *maamar*, which he now knew clearly, and would say it over fluently.⁵

Davening

The Rebbe Rashab would enter the small *zal* at 9:30, davening with the *minyán* from *Ma Tovv* until *Baruch She'amar*. During *krias haTorah*, the Rebbe sat facing the *sefer Torah*. After the *minyán* concluded, the Rebbe would go home and continue *davening* for three hours or more.

After davening he would make *kiddush* on wine, and have a bite of *mezonos*, and then daven *Mincha* with a small *minyán*. After *Mincha*, the Rebbe would eat *seudas Shabbos*, stating beforehand that this did not take the place of *seuda shlishis*.

Meanwhile, after davening, the assistant *chozrim*, such as Reb Moshe the *chozer* from Zemin, would also say over the *maamar*, but everyone wanted to hear it from Reb Shilem, whose precision in repeating the Rebbe's words had no match.

After Shabbos, Reb Shilem would test many of the *talmidim* on the *maamar*, which they had reviewed over and over throughout Shabbos as an integral part of their *seder*.⁶

Publishing the Maamar

The Rebbe Rashab would give a manuscript of the *maamar* in his holy handwriting, to Reb Shmuel "the Writer." Reb Shmuel would hand-write

numerous copies, printing many more, and he would sell them.

However, not every *maamar* was released by the Rebbe Rashab for publication. When the Rebbe Rashab didn't give out a handwritten manuscript, the head *chozrim* would usually prepare a transcript on their own.⁷

This was Shabbos in Lubavitch. A day spent listening, studying, reviewing, and again reviewing the *maamar*. While plentiful *seudos* were provided for the *temimim*, they did not linger over their meals, nor did they sleep much; the holiness of Shabbos was palpable in the heartfelt *tefillos*, soulful *niggunim*, and the *maamar Chassidus*—the highlight of the week. 🕒

1. Mareh Kohen p. 49; Reshimos Devorim p.

335.

2. *Zikaron Livnei Yisroel* p. 12; *Mareh Kohen* p. 49, 53; *Reshimos Devorim* p. 342.

3. The detailed description of the *maamar* is culled from: *Zikaron Livnei Yisroel* p. 12; *Mareh Kohen* p. 50-54; *Reshimos Devorim* p. 342-343; *Lubavitch V'chayoleha* p. 24; *As I Heard Them* p. 102.

4. See *Retaining Chassidus*, Derher Adar I 5776.

5. *Lubavitch V'chayoleha* p. 24; *Mareh Kohen* p. 54-55.

6. *Reshimos Devorim* p. 343; *Lubavitch V'chayoleha* p. 24.

7. *Lubavitch V'chayoleha* p. 25.

8. *Zikaron Livnei Yisroel* p. 12.

9. *Reshimos Devorim* p. 342-343.

10. *Likkutei Dibburim* part 4. 5672 2.

11. *Zikaron Livnei Yisroel* p. 12.

12. *Ibid.* p. 15.

13. *Mareh Kohen* p. 49.

14. *Reshimos Devorim* p. 332.

15. *Mareh Kohen* p. 50.





Who Has Questions?

There was once a Chossid who was a lumber merchant and owned a forest near Polotzk. The lumber business was particularly active during the winter. When the forest floor was blanketed with snow forming a sheet of ice, it was easy to haul the long logs to the river. Then, at the riverbanks, they would wait until the weather warmed up and the river flowed again. The logs would then be turned into rafts and floated downstream until they reached the desired destination for sale.

This particular Chossid had a daily schedule: he worked hard during the day, and in the evening, following *Maariv*, he would spend time learning Torah in the shul. He wasn't alone during his studies as many people made time to devote themselves to Torah, usually in partners. There was one elderly man, however, who always studied alone. He figured the others were not as advanced as him and he therefore learned alone.

This particular Chossid, the lumber merchant, also learned alone. The elderly man noticed this and assumed he was too embarrassed to learn with a partner because he was probably not very well versed. The elder decided to approach the Chossid and feel him out. After a few moments of discussion he realized that, in fact, he was very knowledgeable and after a bit of convincing the Chossid agreed to learn with the older man.

One day, the Chossid noticed the elderly man hesitating to say something. He could see the man having an inner struggle whether to reveal what was on his mind or not. "Ask what you would like to ask and stop mumbling!" said the Chossid.

He replied, "I will reveal to you the truth and what is in the inner recesses of my heart. I have been learning *seforim* of *chakira* (philosophy) and I have many questions in *emuna*. The problem is that I have

no one to ask my questions. Please answer them for me!"

The Chossid replied, "Go ahead and ask. Maybe I will be able to answer the questions and you will be satisfied."

And so it was each day. The elderly man would ask questions and the Chossid would provide answers that he found satisfactory.

As Pesach approached and the work of the lumber merchant had come to an end, he informed his newly found friend and colleague that he would be heading home. The old man began crying when he heard this news and exclaimed, "This is very painful for me. Your departure is hard on me. You were a good friend when it came to learning *nigleh* and you answered my questions on *chakira*. What should I do now?"

The Chossid replied, "Listen to me. Here is my advice. Go to the Tzemach Tzedek and he will answer all your questions."

With that they parted and each man went on his way.

Being a devoted Chossid, the lumber merchant traveled to Lubavitch to spend Tishrei in the presence of the Tzemach Tzedek. As he was crossing one of the streets, he felt a hand tap him on the back and a man said, "Guess who I am?" The Chossid gave one look and immediately recognized him as the elderly Jew from Polotzk.

The man continued, "I heeded your advice. After Pesach I came to Lubavitch and went into the Rebbe for *yechidus*. When I entered the room, I began saying that I have many questions in *chakira*. The Rebbe said to me, 'Look: Abaye and Rava never had questions in *chakira*, why do you have these questions?'

"As the Rebbe said this, all my questions disappeared and now I spend my time learning Chassidus." ¹

(*Otzar Sippurei Chabad*
vol. 17, p. 52)


לזכות
הרה"ת ר' לוי יצחק
ומרת אסתר ביילא ומשפחתם שיחיו
חנאוויטש



FIRE *and* PASSION

REB LEIBEL RASKIN

Special thanks to Reb Leibel's sons, Rabbi Yitzchok Raskin of Vermont and Rabbi Hirshel Raskin of Montreal, who assisted in the preparation of this article.



REB LEIBEL ADDRESSES THE
KINUS TZACH, 18 TISHREI 5741.

***A Chossid first,
everything else second.***

As a young bochur in Eretz Yisroel, during his years by the Rebbe, on Shlichus in the distant world of Morocco, and even in the face of significant physical challenges, Reb Leibel Raskin's chayus and dedication to the Rebbe defined his existence.

LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 191328

Reb Leibel Raskin was born in 5693 (תרצ"ג) in Leningrad, Soviet Russia. During the war, his family escaped to Alma-Ata, Kazakhstan. There his father, Reb Yaakov Yosef Raskin, merited to be instrumental in bringing the Rebbe's parents, Horav Levi Yitzchok and Rebbetzin Chana, from their place of exile in Chi'yily to Alma-Ata, where they spent several months in relative comfort. The Raskin brothers had the opportunity to spend time with Horav Levi Yitzchok, and to come to his assistance in many ways before his *histalkus* on Chof Av.

After Reb Levik's *histalkus*, the KGB began harassing Reb Yaakov Yosef, and he was forced to flee the city. The Raskin children spread out to different locations, until they were able to obtain fake Polish passports and leave the country in the "Great Escape" of 5707.¹

His Own Man

After a period of time in the Pocking DP camp and in Paris, the Frierdiker Rebbe instructed Reb Yaakov Yosef to immigrate to Eretz Yisroel. He

planned on taking his youngest son Leibel with him, while the older boys, Dovid and Sholom Ber, would remain learning in Brunoy, France. Leibel protested. He was already fifteen-years-old, and he deserved to remain with his friends in yeshiva as well. When his father objected, he proposed a bold solution—he would write to the Frierdiker Rebbe!

In those days, it was unheard of for a young *bochur* to write directly to the Rebbe. Correspondence was always done through mature adults, especially in those years when the Frierdiker Rebbe's health needed to be taken into account.

Some time later, he received a response. The Frierdiker Rebbe instructed him to join his parents in Eretz Yisroel, and enroll either in Toras Emes or Tomchei Temimim.

The Telegram

Leibel arrived in Eretz Yisroel after Purim 5709 and enrolled in the yeshiva in Tel Aviv, first under the tutelage of Reb Chaim Shaul Bruk and later under Reb Shlomo Chaim Kesselman. Their

Horav Levi Yitzchok and Rebbetzin Chana

In his JEM interview, Reb Leibel related his memories of Horav Levi Yitzchok [printed in Derher Magazine, Av 5775]:

"Horav Levi Yitzchak would often sit and speak for hours at a time, sometimes taking a person's name and explaining its inner meaning with *gematrios*, etc. As I was a young child, I usually did not understand his words.

"There was one occasion, however, when I did understand his message:

"In Alma-Ata we had a shul located in a cellar, and he came to daven there on Shavuos [5704]. After davening he delivered a *drasha*. It was a speech that even we—young children—were able to understand.

"He spoke about *matan Torah*. His speech was directed primarily to the children, saying that we need to know that we should not be *nispaal* from anything around us, we need to grow in *limmud haTorah* and fulfilling *mitzvos*, and not be afraid of anyone; our will must be the Aibershter's will. He spoke very clearly, elucidating his idea very well. Since I was a young child, I do not remember all the details, but his main message was that we must behave in a way that even our fear of the government will not hinder our activities."

Rebbetzin Chana When Leibel arrived in New York, his brother Reb Dovid Raskin brought him to visit Rebbetzin Chana. Throughout his years in New York and later, he merited to return for visits and to assist Rebbetzin Chana in several ways. (For example, he participated in *bedikas chametz* in the Rebbetzin's home.)

The first time he visited after moving on Shlichus to Morocco, Rebbetzin Chana stood up to greet him. "*Vos mach ihr*," she asked.

The honorific title "*ihr*" surprised Reb Leibel, and he asked the Rebbetzin why she chose to address him so.

"What do you mean," Rebbetzin Chana replied, "*Du bist mein zun, der Rebbe's a Shliach*, you are the Shliach of my son, the Rebbe."

Reb Leibel's brother, Reb Dovid, related that Rebbetzin Chana would often give him "*A grus fun dein bruder—regards from your brother.*" The Rebbe would share stories about Reb Leibel's shlichus in Morocco with Rebbetzin Chana, and she in turn, would share them with Reb Dovid.

material state had what to be desired, but the *bochurim* thrived in a truly *chassidishe* atmosphere.

On Motzei Shabbos Parshas Bo the following year, Reb Leibel later related, the *bochurim* fabrenged throughout the night. Their colleague, 20-year-old Yoel Kahan, was to embark the next morning on a voyage to 770, to learn by the Frierdiker Rebbe.

In the morning, when Reb Shlomo Chaim arrived at the yeshiva, a *yungerman* called him into a side room to share some important news. From the *zal*, the *bochurim* overheard Reb Shlomo Chaim cry out, “It can’t be; it’s impossible!”

The media had reported that the Frierdiker Rebbe was *nistalek* on Shabbos in New York. Nevertheless, Reb Shlomo Chaim wasn’t sure of the report’s validity, because no official telegram had been received from 770. As it turned out, the telegram had been addressed to Reb Moshe Gurary, who was away at the port in Chaifa to see off his son Nosson and his friend Yoel on their way to New York.

“In those days,” Reb Leibel related in his JEM interview, “communication with New York wasn’t the best, but we nevertheless heard from the *bochurim* in 770 that they had accepted the Rebbe’s *nesius*. Thank G-d, we were inspired by their *hiskashrus*, and we also got very involved in *hiskashrus*.

“This attitude grew stronger after my brother Dovid wrote to us about the Rebbe’s *farbrengen* with the *bochurim* on Beis Iyar 5710.² We would sit for nights, reading the *sichos* again and again, and saying *lchaim* with the fervent wish that we merit to go to the Rebbe very soon.

“Meanwhile, we had to suffice with letters. The Rebbe would answer our *panim* at special times of the year, like Rosh Hashanah, with a letter with his holy signature, and that only heightened our resolve to travel to the Rebbe some day.”

“We have a Rebbe!”

“Several days after Yud Shevat 5711, a letter arrived from Gedalia Korf, in which he described the events of Yud Shevat; he related that the Rebbe had said a *maamar* ‘Basi Legani.’

“When I read the letter, I immediately ran over to Reb Shlomo Chaim to share the news.

“Azoi?” he said, “The Rebbe said a *maamar*? Where is ‘Itche’s’?”



RASKIN FAMILY / MY ENCOUNTER WITH THE REBBE

THE RASKIN FAMILY IN THE DP CAMP IN POKING, GERMANY, CIRCA 5707. A YOUNG REB LEIBEL IS ON THE TOP LEFT.



RASKIN FAMILY / MY ENCOUNTER WITH THE REBBE

REB LEIBEL (L), HIS BROTHER REB DOVID (R), AND THEIR FATHER REB YAAKOV YOSEF (C).

“Reb Leizer Gurevitch, the son of Reb Itche der Masmid, was our *mashgiach* for *nigleh*. Reb Shlomo Chaim gave me five *lirot* to buy *mashke*, and instructed us to bang on the table and announce the conclusion of *seder*. Reb Leizer looked quizzically at Reb Shlomo Chaim, and Reb

Shlomo Chaim called out, ‘*Mir hoben a Rebbe*—we have a Rebbe!’

“The farbrengen lasted late into the night. Reb Shlomo Chaim encouraged us to all say *l’chaim*, and the boisterous singing ultimately disturbed the neighbors. When they came to find out what the noise was about, Reb Shlomo Chaim called out to them, ‘*Mir hoben a Rebbe!*’”

Dachak V’nichnas

The *bochurim* received letters from their colleagues in New York about life near the Rebbe, and they desperately wished to join. Several *bochurim* wrote to the Rebbe asking for permission, yet for the most part the Rebbe’s answer was in the negative. The Rebbe wrote that there was much to be achieved in Eretz Yisroel, and the *bochurim* therefore had no justification for weakening the yeshiva and traveling to the United States.

Leibel too, asked for permission, and he received the Rebbe’s permission to apply for a visa. Later, when he wrote to the Rebbe about the various difficulties in obtaining one, he received a unique letter³ in response.

In the letter, the Rebbe repeated his opinion that much can be accomplished in Eretz Yisroel, and that nevertheless Leibel had written to the Rebbe about coming to the United States numerous times, through numerous channels. The Rebbe then wrote the following:

“If, after all of the above, you still desire to travel here, it is well-known that there is a method called ‘*dachak v’nichnas*’ (although it is not always appropriate and not applicable to everyone); you can speak to Aguch who will surely help you in this regard.”

Directly to the Top

Reb Leibel had the Rebbe’s permission to come, but he was of draft age—20 years old—and needed a permit from the Ministry of Defense to absolve him of army-duty. For several months, he tried the regular channels but to no avail. They weren’t willing to allow him to leave the country.

In desperation, he decided on a bold move. He wrote letters to the president, the prime minister, and the defense minister, where he explained that a Rebbe is a spiritual father, and he therefore asked them to personally approve his *petur* so he could visit the Rebbe. When his friends heard about his



REB LEIBEL RASKIN, LEFT, WITH RABBI YEHUDA KRINSKY IN JAMAICA ON MERKOS SHLICHUS, SUMMER 1957.

audacious move, they berated him. “Who are you to start messing around with the prime minister? Your actions could have severe implications for the entire Chabad in Eretz Yisroel!”

Truth to be told, as Reb Leibel related, he wasn’t so sure that they were wrong. Nervously, he waited for a response.

It wasn’t long in coming. A letter arrived from Nechemia Argov, the military secretary of the prime minister, inviting him to his office in Yerushalayim.

When he arrived at the meeting, Argov was interested in hearing about his life as a religious Jew in Russia. Reb Leibel told him about the *chinuch* of Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim in Lubavitch, about the Rebbeim, and explained that he wanted to continue that tradition near the Rebbe in New York.

Argov was impressed. He told Leibel that the government was sympathetic to Chabad, because of the encouragement Shazar had received from the Frierdiker Rebbe before the UN vote of 5707, and culminating with the founding of Kfar Chabad in 5709.

“I don’t know how you merited this,” he concluded, “but we decided to give you a *petur* for one year.”

B’Hatzlacha Gedolah

Leibel related the entire story about the *petur* and his upcoming journey in a letter to the Rebbe,⁴ to which the Rebbe responded with a *bracha* that the journey should be “with *hatzlacha*

gedolah.” On Friday, Erev Shabbos Parshas Nitzavim-Vayelech, just several days before Rosh Hashana 5714, Leibel arrived in New York.

“Finally,” Reb Leibel related, “the anticipated moment had arrived, and *baruch Hashem* I arrived to be near the Rebbe. I still remember my emotions during that first *Mincha*. It was Friday and the *zal* was empty. To my best recollection, I was the only visitor from Eretz Yisroel that Tishrei. I stood in the corner, under the clock, and saw the Rebbe for the first time during that *Mincha*. It was the greatest *geshmak* I had ever experienced.”

“Your Place is Here”

For the next six years, Reb Leibel merited to learn by the Rebbe in 770, and had the *zechus* to participate in countless *farbrengens* and enter the Rebbe’s room for *yechidus*. He was also heavily involved in *hafotzas hama’ayanos* during those years, and was one of the main organizers of the Lag Ba’omer parades.

Reb Leibel would also write letters to his father and to others, describing the events in 770. Several letters serve as the only extant documentation of the events he described. They have been published in *teshuros* of his grandchildren’s weddings.

Lekutei Sichos

One of the Rebbe’s earliest campaigns was for *bochurim* to deliver words of Chassidus in shuls every week. Before Pesach 5718, Reb Leibel and two other *bochurim* formed an official *vaad* to help oversee the project, and each week they would choose a *sicha* for the *bochurim* to *chazer*.⁵

“For Shavuot 5718,” Reb Leibel related,⁶ “we arranged, for the first time, a *tahalucha* to Boro Park. Before Shavuot, I submitted to the Rebbe a list of the shuls where *sichos* would be *chazered*, together with the selected *sicha*.

“Erev Shabbos Parshas Bamidbar (Shavuot was on Sunday and Monday) Rabbi Hodakov called me and asked if I submitted a *sicha* to the Rebbe. I answered that I did. He then showed me the *sicha*, and it was *mugah* by the Rebbe!

“It is impossible to describe the enormous *simcha* we had, that we were *zoche* to such an *ohr gadol*! We immediately printed 500 copies by stencil. That Shavuot and its *tahalucha* were very special. Even though it was raining like a *mabul*, the *hisorerus* of *anash* and the *temimim* was tremendous. This was particularly thanks to the *mugadike sicha* (with the theme of ‘our children are our guarantors).’

“Consequently, for Shabbos Parshas Nasso I submitted another *sicha*.

“Thursday night I came to Rabbi Hodakov to inquire about the *sicha*. He told me:

“On the Rebbe’s desk there are more than 800 letters, a large portion of them dealing with matters of life-and-death, *pikuach nefesh*; what is more important, to answer these letters or to be *magiah* a *sicha*?!”

“I answered: ‘The *sicha* will strengthen ‘*chazaras dach*’ in the shuls, thousands of Jews will hear these *sichos*; it is a spiritual *pikuach nefesh*!’

“Rabbi Hodakov told me to wait. After contacting the Rebbe by phone, he called me back and informed me that in half-an-hour the Rebbe will return the *sicha*—*mugah*!”

“I asked: What name should we give to these *sichos*-pamphlets? He suggested: תוכן ענינים בדא"ח לחזור בבתי כנסיות [Roughly translated: Concise concepts in Chassidus for delivery in shuls].

“At the outset, the Rebbe requested that we send in *sichos* he had previously edited for publications like Bita’on Chabad and Kovetz Lubavitch.⁷ There were very few such *sichos*. For Parshas B’haaloscha we found one in Kovetz Lubavitch, for Shelach we sent in two *sichos*—one *mugah* and one not, and for Korach we sent something brand new. The Rebbe was *magiah* it, and so it continued.

“Before we left for Merkos Shlichus, we sent the Rebbe six *sichos*, so the *bochurim* would be able to deliver them on their visits, and the Rebbe edited them within two days!”



“TOCHEN INYONIM B'DACH,” THE FIRST BOOKLETS OF THE REBBE’S MUGADIKE SICHOS, FOR BOCHURIM TO CHAZER IN LOCAL SHULS.

The connection the *bochurim* of those years had with the Rebbe was very unique. The *bochurim* felt as if the Rebbe was their father and mother and would often write to the Rebbe about their lives in great detail.

One experience Reb Leibel related about his correspondence with the Rebbe, related to his *hafotzas hama'ayanot* within 770:

There was a group of younger *bochurim* who studied in Tomchei Temimim at Bedford and Dean (the younger division of the yeshiva) who moved into the *zal* of 770. Some needed extra *chizuk* in their *chassidishkeit*, and Reb Leibel would spend time with them, learning and speaking about *chassidishe inyanim*.

During his birthday *yechidus*, Reb Leibel asked the Rebbe for permission to join a group of older *bochurim* in their visits to other *yeshivos* where they would teach Chassidus. The Rebbe's answer was: since you already deal with *bochurim* in 770, you should not leave them.

Tachlis

One watershed moment for the *bochurim* in 770 was on Yud Shevat 5715. During the *farbrengen*, the Rebbe addressed an issue: the

"*klipah*" of "*tachlis*." Young American children are told to prepare for a livelihood from their earliest days in school.

"*Es volt geven a gleiche zach*," the Rebbe announced, "it would be appropriate, if a group of *bochurim* would decide to remove themselves from the ways of the world ("*hanachos ha'olam*"), and dedicate themselves to study Torah without thoughts of *tachlis*."⁸

Needless to say, after the Rebbe dedicated an entire *sicha* to the topic, the *bochurim* of 770 refused to think about any future plans. Their futures would be decided when they entered *yechidus* for their birthdays; if the Rebbe would instruct them to look for a *shidduch*, it meant that it was time to move on.

In 5718, Reb Leibel related, a Lubavitch woman from Eretz Yisroel accosted him in the street. "Why aren't you married yet? What sort of thing is this?"

Leibel retorted that the Rebbe hadn't instructed him to look for a *shidduch*, and he would do so only at the Rebbe's behest.

Several days later, he met her in the street once again.



REB LEBEL (SECOND FROM LEFT) JOINS A FARBRENGEN IN 770, CIRCA YUD SHEVAT 5730. SITTING NEXT TO HIM IS REB SHLOMO CHAIM KESSELMAN (RIGHT) AND RABBI NACHMAN SUDAK (LEFT).

"I need to apologize," she said. "Yesterday I was in *yechidus* and I told the Rebbe about our conversation. The Rebbe said that you were right."

A Firm Answer

In 5719, the Rebbe instructed Reb Leibel to look into *shidduchim*, and within a short time, he became engaged to his future wife, Hoda Raizel, תבלחט"א, the daughter of Reb Chaim Hillel Azimov of Paris.

At the time, Reb Leibel served as a temporary *mashpia* in Tomchei Temimim of Newark, and the faculty wanted him to stay on permanently. Reb Leibel, on the other hand, insisted he would do nothing without the Rebbe's direct instructions. When he told Rabbi Hodakov about the discussions, Rabbi Hodakov approved of his answer. "The Rebbe has something in mind for you," he said. "Just tell them you'll think about it."

On Isru Chag of Simchas Torah 5720, Reb Leibel was called into Rabbi Hodakov's office.

"Being that you told me," Rabbi Hodakov said, "that you are waiting for the Rebbe's instructions, I want to inform you that the Rebbe would like you to travel to one of the countries in North Africa, either Tunisia or Morocco. Do you agree?"

"What's the question?!"

"I need a straight answer. Yes, or no?"

"Of course, I agree."

Rabbi Hodakov lifted the telephone on his desk. "*Er iz doh, un er iz mekabel*—he is here, and he has accepted the mission."

Two minutes later, the Rebbe left for the Ohel.

Meanwhile, word of the new shlichus spread immediately in 770 and it became the news of the day. On Shabbos morning, as Reb Leibel was leaving the mikvah, an elder Chossid joined him for the walk down Eastern Parkway.

"How can you agree to move to a country that is so dangerous for Jews," he argued.

Reb Leibel argued back. "If the Rebbe sent me, what is there to worry about?"

In the heat of the argument, they didn't notice someone motioning to them from further down the street. Suddenly, as they approached 770, they saw the Rebbe quickly overtake them and enter the building. The Rebbe had been following them, and had overheard the entire conversation.

Later, the Rebbe mentioned to Rabbi Hodakov that he had enjoyed hearing Reb Leibel's answers, and added that that is the proper way to behave;

to follow instructions without *chachmos* and to encourage others to do the same.

This Month

Meanwhile, the couple had been engaged for some time, and the Rebbe hadn't given any instructions regarding a wedding date.

One day in the beginning of Kislev, Leibel was sitting in the small *zal* learning, when he was called into Rabbi Hodakov's office.

"You wanted a *yechidus* as a *chossan*," he told Leibel. "Go over to the Rebbe's room; your *yechidus* will be right now."

Shocked at the prospect of a *yechidus* without any prior notice, Reb Leibel walked over to the Rebbe's room and knocked on the door. The Rebbe buzzed him in, and smiled as he walked in.

"You asked about a wedding date," the Rebbe said, "I wanted to tell you that during Teves and Shevat, we try not to hold weddings, but Kislev is a good month to get married." The Rebbe specified the second half of the month, and said to choose one of the nights of Chanukah.

This was Vov or Zayin Kislev. Reb Leibel was in New York, his parents were in Eretz Yisroel, and the *kallah* was in Paris.

Reading his thoughts, the Rebbe continued, "If you tell them [the *kallah's* parents] that it was my suggestion, they will agree."

The Rebbe concluded the *yechidus*, "It should be with *hatzlacha rabba*, and *besha'a tovah u'mutzlachas*."

Shlichus

The wedding indeed took place later that month on the fifth night of Chanukah (the *finfter lichtel*) in Paris. The Rebbe instructed Reb Nissan Nemanov to cut short his then visit to New York, and to be *mesader kiddushin* at the wedding as the Rebbe's personal representative.

After the wedding, the young couple awaited the Rebbe's instructions. Soon enough, Reb Binyomin Gorodetzky informed them that the Rebbe wanted them to move to Casablanca, Morocco, to join the shliach serving there from before, Rabbi Shlomo Matusof, who ran the Reshet Oholei Yosef Yitzchok schools. On Isru Chag Hapesach 5720, the couple moved to Casablanca.

At first, Reb Leibel began working in the administration of the *mosdos*, and then he became

the principal of Beis Rivkah. Alongside his work in *chinuch*, he opened “Ufaratzta,” a medium for *hafatzas hama’ayanos*, which basically served as the Tzach of North Africa.

Stay Put

After his first few months in Morocco energetically meeting and dealing with the Jews of Casablanca, Reb Leibel missed being by the Rebbe greatly. He bought a ticket for Tishrei 5721, and informed the Rebbe of his plan. He soon received a letter in express mail from the Rebbe, saying that it was too early to visit, and that he should rather spend Tishrei on shlichus.

What a Surprise!

During their few months in Paris, Reb Leibel immediately began working in *hafatzas hama’ayanos* in the city, something that had been previously lacking. Shortly after he left Paris, in a letter to Reb Sholom Mendel Kalmenson, the Rebbe wrote about his work:

“You mention the impact of Reb Leibel and his wife...

“Obviously, it is greatly surprising that after requesting and begging and writing endlessly to *anash* of Paris about the greatness of engaging in *hafatzas hama’ayanos*, only a bit here and a bit there was accomplished [with the excuse that there isn’t any more to do].

“With Hashem’s grace, someone arrived and pointed out several central locations in the city which were well known to all, and began doing work there, and nevertheless, almost nobody helped him...”

The first time he returned to New York was at the end of 5721. While in *yechidus*, he asked the Rebbe how to connect with the *nefesh* of the Moroccan Jews, and the Rebbe said two points:

“First of all, explain to them that we are not being *mechadesh* anything; North African Jews always studied Kabbalah and Zohar, etc. We are coming to strengthen what already exists, and mainly, to help bring in *lebedikeit*. Secondly, tell them stories of *tzaddikim*; that will be *mekarev* them.”

In those days, the Rebbe didn’t allow shlichim to come to New York often (—the official permission was for once in two years—) so similar trips to the Rebbe were a seldom event.

When Reb Leibel traveled to New York in honor of Yud Shevat 5730 (marking 20 years of the Rebbe’s leadership and the *siyum* of Moshiach’s Sefer Torah), he asked the Rebbe that this trip should not be counted, so that he would be able to come again for Tishrei the coming year. He also complained that he feels like he lost his *chassidisher hergesh*. The Rebbe responded that the very fact that he came to New York demonstrates that he still has a *chassidisher hergesh*, and the Rebbe agreed that it wouldn’t be counted.

This travel policy also affected his family visits. His parents lived in Eretz Yisroel, which he couldn’t visit from Morocco due to the hostile relations between the countries. He would see his father by the Rebbe in New York, but at one point Reb Leibel hadn’t seen his mother for 17 years!

There were additional times the Rebbe didn’t allow him to leave the country, due to security concerns. When his oldest son’s *bar mitzvah* took place in New York shortly after the Yom Kippur War, the Rebbe told Reb Leibel to remain in Morocco, while his brother, Reb Dovid Raskin, arranged the *bar mitzvah* in New York.

Even when he was granted permission to come, he wasn’t off the hook. On one of his trips to New York, Rabbi Hodakov told him that his shlichus always continues; in 770 his shlichus was to talk to the young people about shlichus, and to impart the meaning of *hiskashrus* and true dedication to the Rebbe.

The Rebbe in Every Home

Reb Leibel was full of life and enthusiasm, with a warm heart and a pleasant disposition. People in the community were immediately drawn to him



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and his warm words and gentle but persuasive talk were always met with positive feelings. His very presence energized the Jews of the city.

When it came to *inyanim* of *hiskashrus*, Reb Leibel was a firebrand. Everyone who came in contact with him immediately understood that he operates with one thing in mind: bringing the Rebbe *nachas*.

“A characteristic expression of my father’s *hiskashrus*,” says Rabbi Yitzchak Raskin of Vermont, “was before my *bar mitzvah* when my father wrote to me to include a statement in my *pan*, that I will dedicate myself to the Rebbe entirely, *beish ub’mayim*. In *yechidus*, when the Rebbe read those words, he looked up at me and broke into a broad smile.”

Although Chabad had been present in Morocco before Reb Leibel’s arrival and had established very successful educational institutions (See *The Building of an Empire, Derher Tishrei* 5778), Reb Leibel Raskin brought a new genre to the region. Reb Leibel had spent years in 770 near

the Rebbe, and now he brought the excitement of 770 along with him. *Hafotzas ham’ayanos*, through *mitvzoim*, Lag Ba’omer parades, *siyumei haRambam*, *shiurim*, and a great deal of *shturem*, brought the Rebbe’s work in Morocco to a new level.

“My father,” says Rabbi Mendel Raskin of Montreal, “came to Morocco directly from the Rebbe’s *shturem* of “*Ufaratzta*” in 5718-19, and that personified his entire being. He would walk down the street singing *Ufaratzta*, his Chabad House was called *Ufaratzta*, to the extent that when he would walk into a house, people would say, ‘Here comes *Ufaratzta*.’”

“One early project,” relates Reb Leibel’s son, Rabbi Hirshel Raskin of Montreal, “was to bring the Rebbe into every home in Morocco—literally. As soon as the Rebbe approved of the publishing of a specific picture, he immediately commissioned the printing of thousands of copies, and distributed them throughout the country.

The King and the Six Day War

Morocco is a Muslim country. In the early years after the Raskins' arrival, many Jews were leaving the country and relocating to Eretz Yisroel and France. Although Jews had a long history in Morocco, the local population became antagonistic and anti-Jewish with the founding of the State of Israel in 1948.

However, in a practical sense, living in Morocco was safe for a Jew because of the king's personal protection. He appreciated the Jewish population and took great strains to ensure their safety.

The king had very good relations with Lubavitch in the country, and would meet with them occasionally. He personally arranged free campgrounds for the Chabad summer camp and encouraged his people to help Chabad as much as possible.

However, there were periods when living in Casablanca was quite perilous, primarily after the Six Day War. The attitude towards Jews became very hostile, often to the point of violence, and a Jew was killed *r"l*.

A worried family member abroad wrote to the Rebbe, suggesting that the shluchim leave the country until the situation calms down, and the Rebbe responded in the negative. "*Di shluchim vet dos nit shaten. Di Yidden zeinen doch shluchim fun shluchim, vet zei oich nit shaten.*" The shluchim will not be affected. The Jews are the shluchim of shluchim, and they won't be affected either." (This was first said regarding the shluchim in Tunis, and the Rebbe said it applies to Morocco as well.) Indeed, the volatile situation calmed down, and the shluchim were left untouched.

During other situations too, Reb Leibel always remained fearless in the face of danger. At one point, he was moments away from being evicted from the country, but that never took away one iota from his shlichus.



REB LEIBEL MEETS THE KING OF MORROCO.

Soon enough, every Jewish home had a picture of the Rebbe."

Another big project was translating the *sichos* into French, a language commonly spoken amongst the youth of Morocco, and distributing thousands of copies. When he reported this project to the Rebbe, the Rebbe responded that Merkos would cover a full 10 weeks of the publishing.

The Balebos of the Country

Several times over the years, Chassidim witnessed the Rebbe's view of the shlichus in Morocco, and what it represented in the stages of *hafotzas hama'ayanos*. On Simchas Torah 5731, when the Rebbe announced the creation of an alternative United Nations⁹ and appointed the shluchim and Chassidim from those countries



REB LEIBEL LEADS THE SIYUM HARAMBAM IN THE RAMBAM'S HOME IN FES, MOROCCO, 5745.

as the representatives, the Rebbe announced Reb Leibel as "*der balebos fun Marok.*"

At one point during his shlichus, Reb Leibel decided to commission the translation of Tanya



REB LEIBEL PASSIONATELY ADDRESSES THE CROWD AT HIS SON MENDEL'S BAR MITZVAH IN MOROCCO, 19 TAMMUZ 5735.



REB LEIBEL JOINS FELLOW CHASSIDIM IN A L'CHAIM, CELEBRATING YUD SHEVAT 5750, 40 YEARS OF THE REBBE'S NESIUS.

into Arabic. It turned out to be a very difficult task; finding a qualified translator, a publishing house, and everything else the printing entailed proved to be very hard in an Arab country, and the work took more than 10 years to complete.

When the first portion, Shaar Hayichud V'haemunah, was concluded in 5737, the Rebbe sent a very special *maaneh* and dedicated an entire *sicha* to the topic during the following farbrengen.¹⁰ The Rebbe spoke about the stages

Assassination Attempt

In 5731, Reb Leibel arranged a group trip to the Rebbe for the teachers of Beis Rivkah of Casablanca. The date of the trip was set for Sunday, 18 Tammuz.

As they were planning the trip, Reb Leibel received a mystifying answer from the Rebbe.

“Because of the constantly changing political climate [in our country as well], and the difficulty in predicting the situation in a few months time, it is not worthwhile for our institutions to get involved in things other than *chinuch* and *yiras Shamayim* etc. and especially not to arrange trips out of the country, even if they currently do not oppose it.”

No one understood the Rebbe's intent. President Nixon was then in the process of making peace with China, but how did that relate to Morocco?

Nonetheless, the project was shelved.

Months passed and the date approached. On Thursday, 15 Tammuz, when the Rebbe returned from the Ohel, he asked Rabbi Hodakov to inform Chassidim throughout the world that farbrengens should be held on Shabbos, Shiv'a Asar B'Tammuz, explaining, “*kivan sh'idche, idche*, because [the fast] was pushed off [to Sunday], it should be pushed off forever.”

In those days, *hora'os* like these would pass through a chain of command. *Mazkirus* would phone the regional offices of Chabad throughout the world, and they were responsible for passing on the information to their local branches.

Reb Nachman Sudak of London was tasked with informing Europe and North Africa. When he called the Raskin home, Reb Leibel wasn't available. Later, he called a second time and asked them to inform him of the Rebbe's *hora'ah*. It turned out that the Rebbe had called in Rabbi Hodakov and Reb Dovid Raskin to find out if the information had indeed been passed on throughout the world, “*Un tzu Marok oichet?*”

Hearing the Rebbe's question about Morocco specifically, Reb Dovid Raskin phoned London to make sure Morocco got the message, and Rabbi Sudak phoned a second time.

Implementing the Rebbe's instructions proved to be difficult. The students of the Chabad schools were on break, and many families were traveling on vacation. Nevertheless, on Shabbos afternoon, dozens of Jews gathered in the yeshiva for a grand farbrengen, which lasted well into the afternoon.

Minutes before Shabbos ended, a Jew ran into the room in panic. “Did you hear what happened? The king was assassinated by revolutionaries; the streets are empty and all the Jews are barricaded in their homes!”

The death of the king, the personal protector of the Jewish community, could spell disaster for the Yidden of Morocco. The farbrengen ended immediately; the gates of the yeshiva were locked, and *Maariv* and *havdalah* were quickly recited.

Reb Leibel rushed home, and found his house packed with Jews who lived in the surrounding area. Apparently, they felt the safest place in times of danger was the home of the Rebbe's shliach.

As the night progressed, the news began to trickle out. The king had actually survived the assassination attempt by a hairbreadth, and he quickly regained control over the country. During the investigations that followed, the police found stashes of guns and knives prepared for the murder of the local Jewish community...

Although calm was restored, an intense investigation was held, and the airports were shut down for several days. If anyone insisted on flying, he would be immediately arrested and interrogated to see if he was somehow connected to the attempted assassination.

Suddenly, the Rebbe's mysterious message several months earlier, and the *hora'ah* for that past Shabbos, all became understood.



REB LEIBEL WITH HIS GROUP THAT HE BROUGHT TO THE REBBE.

in *hafotzas hama'ayanos* of all the Rebbeim, how Chassidus translated into other languages was the stage of the Frierdiker Rebbe, and that the translation into Arabic was another step in that journey.

Later that year, during the farbrengen of Yud-Alef Nissan, Reb Leibel presented the Rebbe with a different publication that had been published in honor of the Rebbe's birthday. However, the Rebbe asked, "Could you bring me a Tanya as well?"

On various occasions, the Rebbe mentioned the uniqueness of this translation, that it brought Tanya into the *lashon haYishme'ilim*, and also that it was the language of Moreh Nevuchim.



Over the last two years of his life, Reb Leibel became terribly ill and underwent long periods of suffering. Nevertheless, he insisted on remaining in Morocco as long as possible, and in between bouts of treatment, he would return home to the Rebbe's shlichus, notwithstanding the intense discomfort.

Before the Kinus Hashluchim of 5764, Reb Leibel was in Canada for treatment, and the doctors forbade him to return to Morocco, but

he insisted. "To the Kinus Hashluchim, one must come from his shlichus." Even from his sickbed in North America, he directed the *peulos* of his shlichus, making sure that every Jewish child would properly celebrate Chanukah and Purim.

Reb Leibel Raskin passed away on 12 Iyar 5764 and was buried near the Ohel. A Chassid who breathed *hiskashrus* and who, indeed, went *b'eish ub'mayim* for the Rebbe. ❶

1. See *Toldos Chabad B'Russya HaSoveit's* p. 390.
2. *Toras Menachem* vol. 1 pg. 37.
3. Part of the letter is printed anonymously, in *Igros Kodesh* vol. 7 pg. 60. The full version, with the included quote, was published in *Kfar Chabad Magazine* issue 1135 pg. 26.
4. *Teshura Eber-Raskin* 5774, pg. 17.
5. For the complete story, and an overview of Likutei Sichos, see *Derher* Tammuz 5777.
6. Reb Leibel related the story on several occasions. This account is taken from his letter to Rabbi Hodakov in 5748, printed in *Derher* Elul 5775 page 18. Some details have been added from his address at the Kinus Hashluchim 5763.
7. For the story of Kovetz Lubavitch, see *Derher* Elul 5775.
8. *Toras Menachem* vol. 13 pg. 247.
9. See *Derher Magazine*, Tishrei 5779.
10. Shabbos Parshas Shemos 5737. *Sichos Kodesh* 5737 vol. 1 pg. 370



Moshiach Now— Not Only for Lubavitch!

Over the years, the Rebbe educated us as Chassidim as to what it means to long for Moshiach and an end to the bitter golus we currently find ourselves in.

At one farbrengen, the Rebbe sadly admonishes Chassidim that even after all of the Rebbe's teachings on this theme, it still hasn't seemed to resonate with everyone:

I received a letter from someone who writes that he often meets *misnagdim* who don't "hold" of Lubavitch and they ask, "Why does Lubavitch proclaim, 'We Want Moshiach Now!?' " They intimate that since they are not Lubavitchers they don't have to say "We Want Moshiach Now." He goes on to request advice on how to answer them. This question is truly shocking—but what is even more amazing is that often when this question is posed, the Lubavitchers become intimidated and don't know what to answer!

Ponder on this for a moment.

Belief in and longing for the coming of Moshiach is a basic principle of our faith. "אני מאמין באמונה של ימינו בביאת המשיח... אחכה לו בכל יום"

לע"נ
הרה"ת ר' רפאל משה הכהן ע"ה
שפערלין
גלב"ע י"א מר-חשוון ה'תשנ"ה
תנ"צ'ב'ה'
נדפס ע"י משפחתו שיחיו



שיבוא—I believe in the coming of Moshiach... I await his coming every day,” is one of the 13 principles of our faith.

Every Jew prays daily:

את צמח דוד עבדך מהרה תצמיח... כי—
Speedily cause the scion of Dovid Your servant to flourish... for we hope for Your salvation every day.” And “ותחזינה—
עינינו בשוכר לציון ברחמים—May our eyes behold Your return to Tziyon in mercy...”

Is it possible, that with all this there are still people who think that the request and cry “We Want Moshiach Now” is an innovation of Lubavitch!?

Lubavitch is not ashamed of such an accusation. On the contrary, happy are we that we have merited such importance. But it is important to negate the argument that this is something new!

What is most perplexing is that those who have heard this so many times should still not know what to answer.

So let us add the *possuk* of Tehillim, *kapitel* 42, to the proof. “כאיל תערוג על”

As a roe-deer, faint, pants for the springs of water above... My soul thirsts for Hashem!” This is a longing and pining which conveys a sense of extreme thirst and desire, as one who needs water to restore his life!

If perhaps they will argue that not many people study Tehillim with commentary—well, there are tens and hundreds of thousands who do recite Tehillim every day, as the [Frierdiker] Rebbe instituted, in order to complete the whole Tehillim each month—so they are familiar with the *possuk*.

If not the Tehillim, then certainly the daily *Shmoneh Esrei*: “Speedily cause the scion of Dovid Your servant to flourish... we hope for Your salvation every day!”

Can it be more explicit and clear?! Are they not paying attention to the meaning of the words they say?!

The only plausible answer could be a few *pesukim* further [in Tehillim 42]: “באמר אלי כל היום איה אלקיך”—While they say to me all day: where is your G-d?” The simple meaning of this *possuk* is that in the time of *golus* the

scoffers attack us and say, “Where is your G-d?” as the commentaries add: “Why doesn’t He help you?” or, “If He is the true G-d and you worship Him why doesn’t he redeem you from your exile?”

These words are repeated again later in the *kapitel* which indicates that there is an esoteric meaning here as well. The *possuk* asks us: “All day—where is your G-d?” True, you think of Hashem while you daven, but what about the rest of the day—do you think about the coming of Moshiach all the time?!

This is why some fool can come along and say that to ask for Moshiach is an invention of Lubavitch.

Yehi ratzon that by discussing this matter we will skip to the actual coming of Moshiach, speedily in our days, and with joy and gladness of the heart! **1**

(Adapted from *sichas Shavuot* 5745.

See also *Shabbos Parshas Mishpatim* 5744)



דער רבי וועט געפינען א וועג...

לזכות
החייל בצבאות ה'
לוי שיחי'
לרגל הולדתו כ"ו אייר
ולרגל הכנסו לבריתו של אאע"ה
ד' סיון ה'תשע"ח
הוקדש ע"י הוריו
הרה"ת ר' יואל
וזוגתו מרת ריקל
ומשפחתם שיחי
גיו

I Received My Sign

AS TOLD BY RABBI MENDY ZAKLOS (BRYANSK, RUSSIA)

During the winter of 5751 there was a raffle among *anash* of Nachlas Har Chabad for a plane ticket to travel to the Rebbe. My father won the raffle (*zoche b'goral*) and he took me along for a two week trip to the Rebbe. I was nine-years-old at the time.

We passed by the Rebbe for "dollars" on both of the Sundays we were there and I merited to receive a total of four dollars from the Rebbe, which I cherished and guarded very well.

Years later, while we were moving on shlichus to Briansk, Russia, I decided to keep my four dollars and the Rebbe's letter that my parents received in connection with my birth in a safe place. I placed them all in an envelope which I hid in a cupboard in the home of my in-laws in Har Nof, Yerushalayim without mentioning it to anyone.

A year later, after we were fully settled on shlichus, I returned to my hiding spot to retrieve the envelope and was shocked and saddened to see that the envelope was



not there. At one point, that specific cupboard had been cleaned out and all its contents disposed of! I searched the home for a few days until I concluded that there was no possible way to find them. I was obviously greatly pained at losing these precious items.

Recently we experienced several strange and challenging episodes in rapid succession. The situation was unnerving and tense and I even considered making a special trip to the Ohel.

Every month there is a raffle for a trip to the Rebbe among the shluchim in remote cities in Russia. I won the raffle for the month of Iyar. It came at the perfect time. I decided to travel immediately and on Rosh Chodesh Iyar I arrived in New York.

In my *tzettel* I wrote a long and detailed report of everything that had occurred in the past few months regarding our shlichus in Briansk and concluded my *tzettel* asking the Rebbe for some type of sign.

I returned to Briansk the very next day.

On Friday, as I was sitting in my office reflecting on my quick and unusual trip to the Rebbe, the phone rang with my mother-in-law on the line.

"I have a surprise for you, Mendy. Your letter and dollars were found!"

A street cleaner had found a pile of documents next to the garbage with my in-laws' name on them, together with an envelope of dollars, and decided to return it to them.

How did the envelope show up all of a sudden? Why did the street cleaner pay attention to the documents? Why now?

I do not know the answers to these questions.

But I certainly received the sign I so desperately needed. **T**



YOUR STORY

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





לזכות
החייל בצבאות ה'
ישראל שיחי'
לרגל יום הולדתו
י"ז חשוון
נדפס ע"י הוריו
הרה"ת ר' יעקב
וזוגתו מרת חי' מושקא שיחיו
סטמבלר

ויעקב הלך לדרכו

The year begins with a month packed with *yomim tovim*, each filled with its own observances and meaning. As the month comes to a close, the *avoda* changes to that of regular routine, to channel all the energy gathered over the past few weeks to serve Hashem throughout the forthcoming ordinary days of the year.

In this month's installment of the *Moments* column, we feature a collection of images depicting life in 770 in the days immediately following Simchas Torah.

26 TISHREI

Krias HaTorah

Upon entering the shul in middle of *Shacharis*,
the Rebbe distributes coins to children.



LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 18251

The Rebbe encourages the singing.



LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 18254

The Rebbe wishes *mazel tov* to two *bar mitzvah* *bochurim* who have just received their first *aliya*.



LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 18275

YECHIDUS KLOLIS

The Rebbe holds a *yechidus kloris* for the guests that have come to spend Tishrei with the Rebbe, for *chassanim* and *kallots*, and for bar and bas mitzvah boys and girls with their parents.





LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 19360

Following the *yechidus*, the Rebbe hands a dollar to all those gathered and receives their *panim*.

LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 19434

KINUS TORAH

As per the Rebbe's hora'ah, a *kinus Torah* is held in the upstairs zal of 770 for bochurim and anash.



LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 18352



LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 18357

29-30 TISHREI

Krias Hatorah



LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 1973



LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 1993

3 CHESHVAN

Krias Hatorah



LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 20154



LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 20177

Derher**Letters**

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

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



RE: Wedding Pictures

Dear Editors,

Thank you for the Elul Derher.

In the “Letters” section [“Derher Letters,” Issue 72 (149)], Yitzchak Cohen writes that when the Rebbe stopped being *mesader kiddushin*, Reb Uriel Tzimmer was in *yechidus* and asked the Rebbe why he was no longer doing this. To which the Rebbe responded:

“The money that people spend on pictures [at the weddings] is enough to cover the costs of a *cheder* in Morocco for six months. Why should I take part in this?!”

This is not exactly accurate. Let me share the exact details, as this conversation happened in connection to my parents’ *chasuna*. I heard the story from my father, Reb Pinye שיחי'.

Reb Uriel was *mekarev* my mother (among many others) to Lubavitch. My mother was very close to him and, in a sense, he felt like a father to her. Being that the Rebbe had just recently stopped being *mesader kiddushin* at the *chasunos* of *anash*, Reb Uriel made a special request to the Rebbe that he at least come to my parents’ *chasuna*. He said to the Rebbe that if the Rebbe does not come to a *chasuna* then it is not guaranteed that the *chasuna* will take place in the proper manner, but if the Rebbe comes that will surely have its

effect for the *chasuna* to take place in a *chassidishe* manner.

To this the Rebbe answered (my father doesn’t recall the exact *lashon*):

בשעת די חתונה נעמט מען פיקטשערס און דערנאך זיצען די מוזרות בלבנה און מען רעדט וועגן די פיקטשערס און מען גיט אויס גרויסע געלט אויף די פיקטשערס וואס מיט די געלט קאן מען שטיצען א כחה גדולה אין מרוקו פאר א שנה תמימה איז וואס דארף איך זיין אינמיטען?

“At the wedding, they take pictures and then the “night weavers” [an expression from the Mishna describing “*yentes*”] sit and discuss the pictures. Vast amounts of money are splurged for these pictures; money that could have supported a big class of students in Morocco for a full year. Why do I need to be in the middle of all this?”

Bentche Korf,
Miami, FL



The Rebbe’s Semicha

Dear Editors,

I was reading the timeline of the Rebbe in the Av magazine [Issue 71 (148)]. It is very interesting and informative.

On the first page, for the year תרפ”ה, it says that the Rebbe met the Rogatchover Gaon during his visit to Leningrad, and “the

Gaon gives the Rebbe *semicha*.” It could seem from the context that this was the Rebbe’s only *semicha*.

It is important to note that the Rebbe received at least one other *semicha* that we know about. This *semicha* was given to the Rebbe just two months earlier on 19 Av 5684 (תרפ”ד) by his uncle, Rabbi Shmuel Schneersohn.

The “Early Years” book by JEM sheds light on this *semicha* (p. 170): “Rabbi Shmuel Shneerson, the Rebbe’s uncle and the official Rabbi of Nikolayev confers *semicha* upon the Rebbe in three fields of Jewish law and practice: “*Yoreh yoreh*,” for matters of religious law pertaining to daily life such as the laws of *kashrut*, *niddah*, and the laws of Shabbat and festivals, “*Yadin yadin*” for monetary and property law, and “*siddur gittin vechalitzah*,” in the areas of divorce and *chalitzah*.”

A photo of the original *semicha* document was published in the book on page 219.

Avromel Hayman,
Pittsburgh, PA



Index on the Alter Rebbe’s Torah

Dear Editors,

Thank you for the article about the indexes [“*Oznayim L’Torah*”, Issue 71 (148)] which the Rebbe strongly encouraged in all parts of Torah. One of the more significant sagas in the history of indexes in *dor hashvi’i* was the index on the *seforim* of the Alter Rebbe. This was not included in the article. Let me share more about this as it appears in the *hosafos* to Sichos Kodesh.

On Sunday, Rosh Chodesh Kislev 5741, the Rebbe called in Rabbi Hodakov and told him to arrange the publication of an index to all of the works of the Alter Rebbe, both those that were published and those that were still in manuscript. The most astonishing part of the *yechidus* was the due-date for the project: The entire work needed to be published in a book by Yud-Tes Kislev, less than three weeks later!

The Rebbe gave an exact schedule of when each stage needed to be completed: the cards (with which the index would be made) were to be done by the day that the Rebbe went to the Ohel; the proofs needed to be ready by 14 Kislev, and it would be published by 19 Kislev. The Rebbe said that those who would be working on it would receive payment from the *kupa* of the Frierdiker Rebbe, who was also joining the project.

Rabbi Hodakov notified the Rebbe that a committee had been put together to work on it and that their first meeting would either be at 1:15 p.m. or after *Mincha* (at 3:30). On the second option the Rebbe responded, “After *Mincha*? Why so late? The meeting should happen at 1:15 p.m.”

During the following days and weeks, the Rebbe was involved to an extent that no one could have imagined. See the *hosafos* to Sichos Kodesh 5741 vol 1 (p. 831) for a play-by-play account of the Rebbe’s responses to the daily reports.

This account truly brings out how important the indexes were to the Rebbe, especially on the Torah of the Rebbeim. I recommend that the Derher do a full article just about this story.

Zalman Goldman
Monsey, NY

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