

# Derher

A Chassidisher

א חסידישער דערהער

איך גיב דיר לעקאַח,  
און דער אויבערשטער  
זאָל דיר געבן אַ גוט יאָר

## Transforming the Nations

THE HEAVENLY EVENTS  
OF SUKKOS AND  
SIMCHAS TORAH 5731

## Yom Kippur with the Rebbe

A ROUNDTABLE  
DISCUSSION

The Rebbe's  
Capital City  
THE FOUNDING OF  
KFAR CHABAD



TISHREI 5779  
ISSUE 73 (150)  
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THE FOUNDING  
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### About the Cover:

The Rebbe distributes Lekach on Erev Yom Kippur 5750.

Featured on the cover are the words that the Rebbe quoted in the name of the Baal Shem Tov at the first distribution of Lekach, Erev Yom Kippur 5711: "I am giving you Lekach, and the Aibershter should give you a good year..."

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# Derher **Editorial**

Traveling by train can be done on one of two tracks: Either on the express track with minimal stops, or on the local one, stopping often and allowing passengers (and merchandise) to join the ride or disembark.

Before the train leaves the station, a loud whistle is sounded, alerting the passengers that departure is imminent. One sound is often not enough to catch the travelers' attention, so the whistle is sounded over and over. Finally, the train slowly begins moving, and then even the latecomers know that it's actually leaving for real!

In *ruchniyus*, we experience the same thing during the month of Tishrei:

Our *neshamos* are constantly on the move, reaching ever higher; whether on an express track ("אחישנה") or on a slower "local" one ("בעתה").

The month of Tishrei can be likened to a journey with many stops. Before the first stop, the *shofar* is sounded. It starts with small blasts, during the month of Elul. Then on Rosh Hashanah, the *shofar* is sounded with one-hundred blasts, awakening the people to do *teshuva*.

On the Tishrei "train" there are different "classes"; one class is the days of awe, where people can be inspired through tears and solemnity; another class is the days of joy, where people can join for spirited dancing.

The journey culminates at the end of Tishrei, on Shabbos Bereishis. While the actual *yomim tovim* are in session, some people may be distracted by all the "*giluyim*," the immense spiritual experience. Shabbos Bereishis is the time when these *giluyim* wind down and regular everyday life sets in. The celebration is over. It's time to translate all that inspiration into day-to-day *avoda*.

And that's where we actualize the purpose of it all.

From where do we derive the strength to carry out the *avoda*? The [Frierdiker] Rebbe answers this in his letter:

"גם החלש יאמר גבור אני"—Even someone who is weak will say 'I am strong,' for he possesses the great power of the light of our holy Rebbeim, by walking in the path they set for us..."

True, in one's own right he may be weak, but the power of the Rebbeim's light gives him strength to carry out the necessary *avoda*...

(*Shabbos Bereishis* 5711)

With the new year upon us, we are confident that the Rebbe's light will indeed illuminate our lives and give us the strength to continue our *avoda* and bring us a year of *geula*.

And with a new year comes a new series of Derher magazines.

In addition to our usual set of columns, these new columns will alternate every other month:

**The Rebbe's View**—highlighting a subject in Torah and Yiddishkeit as illuminated in the Rebbe's Torah.

**The Life of a Chossid**—a biography-like article with short highlights from the life of a Chossid of old. As the Rebbe noted, these stories serve as an example for us to emulate in our own lives as well.

**Mitzvas Hador**—guidance, *brachos*, and stories of the Rebbe involving the lives and work of shlichim. Each column will feature an interview with a shliach relating his personal experience in this regard.

Along with the popular *yechidus* column, these four columns will alternate every other month, sure to be enjoyed by our readership.

*Im yirtzeh Hashem* beginning in the month of Cheshvan, we will launch a new series with a fresh look at the topic of Moshiach, exploring its prevalence throughout all the years of the Rebbe's *nesius*.

With blessings for a *שנה טובה ומתוקה*,

**The Editors**

י"א-י"ג אלול ה'תשע"ח





# TRIPLE PERFECTION

Rosh Hashanah 5752

Studying the Jewish calendar, we know that the days of the week and the dates of the month vary from year to year, as well as many other changes and various intricacies.

Based on these differences, every year has a three letter code, indicating the way it varies in the most key points of the year.

This year's<sup>1</sup> code is ב"ש"ז.

The letter "Beis" (which corresponds to the number two), indicates that Rosh Hashanah is on Monday. The halacha is that Rosh Hashanah can never occur on a Sunday, Wednesday, or Friday; "לא אד"ו ראש." So in this year's *kevius*, Rosh Hashanah is as close to Sunday as possible, by beginning on a Monday. This is especially significant, since Rosh Hashanah is referred to as "Yom Rishon"—the first day of creation.

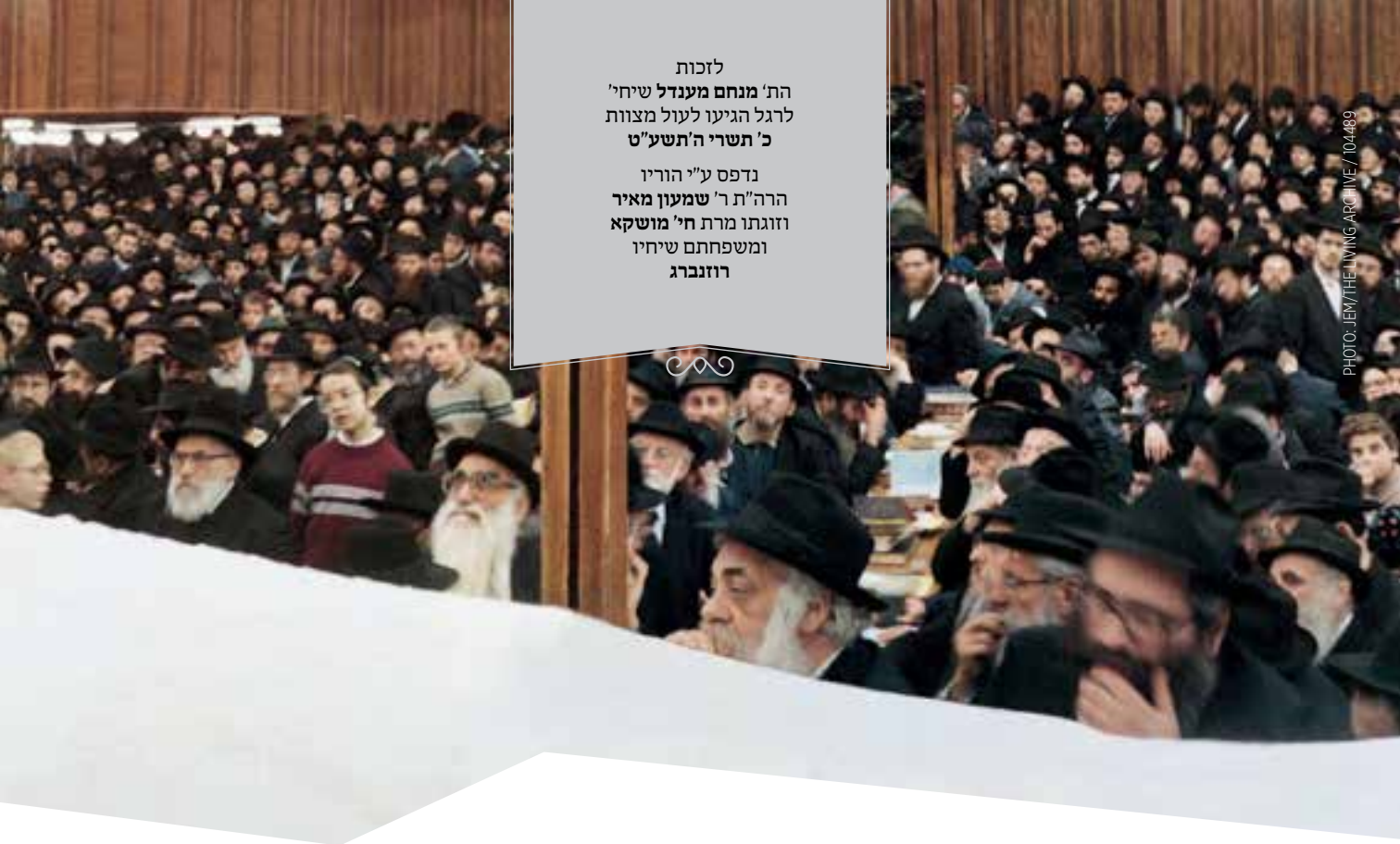
The letter "Shin" stands for "shleima," indicating that there are the maximum amount of days possible in this year, since Cheshvan and Kislev both have 30 days.<sup>2</sup>

When this happens, we have three months in a row that are all "full" months; each having 30 days.

The letter "Zayin" (number seven) indicates that Pesach begins on a Shabbos. When that happens, the seven weeks of *sefiras ha'omer* all begin on a Sunday and end on a Shabbos, making them into truly "complete" weeks in every sense.

Such a *kevius* has a trio of perfection.

May this siman of "ב"ש"ז" be interpreted in the best manner possible, bringing goodness and blessing in everything this year. Blessings from the **Beis**, from the **Shin**— which stands for *shleimus*, completion, symbolizing the completion and wholeness of the Jewish people (who are likened to the moon, and therefore count by the lunar year). As well as from the **Zayin**—alluding to Pesach occurring on Shabbos, the time of *geula* from *Mitzrayim*, and the prelude to the final *geula*, may it be speedily in our days!<sup>3</sup>



לזכות  
הת' מנחם מענדל שיחי'  
לרגל הגיעו לעול מצוות  
כ' תשרי ה'תשע"ט  
נדפס ע"י הוריו  
הרה"ת ר' שמואל מאיר  
וזוגתו מרת ח' מושקא  
ומשפחתם שיחיו  
רוזנברג

## ALL OF TORAH—IN RAMBAM!

Yechidus, Conclusion  
of Tishrei 5752

From a *yechidus* with  
*Temimim*, 30 Tishrei:

*Towards the end of the yechidus, the Rebbe blessed the talmidim that each one of them, wherever he may be, should learn the entire Torah, literally:*

This begins with having a daily *shiur* in learning Rambam, which contains the entire Torah within it. The Alter Rebbe explains the importance of knowing all the *halachos* of Torah, as has been said several times.

...and *yehi ratzon* that you should learn Torah, all parts of Torah, thereby fulfilling the will of the Alter Rebbe. This is a defined and attainable task, achievable through learning and knowing the Rambam from beginning to end. It can be accomplished in the manner that has become customary: to learn three *perokim* daily and finish

the Rambam—at least once—every year. We have recently completed one of the cycles of learning Rambam and immediately started learning it again from the beginning.

May you all add in your Torah study diligently, transcending all measures and limitations, to the point that when you wake up the midst of your sleep, Torah is on your mind. Furthermore: even during your sleep, you will dream about Torah!<sup>1</sup>

1. The year this *sicha* was said - 5752, as well as the current year of publishing, 5779.

2. Most months of the year have a fixed amount of days, alternating between 29 and 30. The only exceptions are Cheshvan and Kislev, which can both have either amount.

3. Based on *Sichos Kodesh* 5752 vol. 1, pp. 21-23.

4. *Sichos Kodesh* *ibid.* p. 249.



לעבן מיט'ן רבי'ן

לזכות החיילים בצבאות ה' שיחיו

**מנחם מענדל**

בן הרה"ת ר' יעקב יהודה

וזוגתו מרת חנה שיחיו

**מאיעסקי**

**יהודא ליב**

בן הרה"ת לוי יצחק מאיר

וזוגתו מרת סלאווא שיחיו

**דובאוו**

**לוי יצחק**

בן הרה"ת ר' שמואל

וזוגתו מרת ח' מושקא שיחיו

**ששונקין**

הוקדש ע"י זקניהם

הרה"ת ר' שלום דובער

וזוגתו מרת דבורה לאה

ומשפחתם שיחיו

**דובאוו**



KOS SHEL BROCHA, TISHREI 5732.

# Transforming the Nations

SUKKOS - SIMCHAS TORAH 5731



**T**ishrei—*chodesh hachagim*, is one of the times of the year that every Chossid desires to spend with the Rebbe. Starting with the solemn *Yomim Nora'im*, and culminating with the festive days of *Z'man Simchaseinu*, this season was always abound with *giluyim*.

Beginning with the unique style of the Rosh Hashanah *maamar*, continuing with the surprise

*maamar* on Vov Tishrei, and peaking with the revelations of Sukkos and Simchas Torah, Tishrei 5731 stood out. That year, the Rebbe put a strong focus on the idea of *הללו את ה' כל גוים*, one of the two *pesukim* in the Rebbe's *kapitel* this year (5778-5779). With this in mind, we present a vivid account of that time period, based on various diaries from the time, *hanachos* of the *sichos*, and



an article written by Rabbi Michael Seligson, who was a *bochur* at the time. וזכות הרבים תלוי בו.

## CHANGE OF SCHEDULE

At the beginning of Tishrei, rumors spread that the Rebbe would not be continuing his longstanding custom of farbrengen in the sukkah on the second day of Sukkos. A year earlier, the crowds had swelled tremendously, to the point that Rabbi Y. K. Marlow broke his leg amidst all the pushing. These reports were confirmed on Motzei Yom Kippur, when the Rebbe told Rabbi Hodakov that he would not be farbrengen in the sukkah, due to the inevitable danger it entailed.

After *Mincha* the following day, several guests, along with members of the *vaad hamesader*, approached the Rebbe with the request to farbreng on Sukkos. The Rebbe explained that this was an issue of *pikuach nefesh mamosh*, and he couldn't shoulder that responsibility.

When the representatives of Kfar Chabad presented the Rebbe with *esrogim*, Reb Shmuel Chefer approached the Rebbe and reasoned: Being that "[in the times of *ikvesa d'meshicha*,] *chutzpah* is prevalent," and "*chutzpah* is effective even toward Heaven," would the Rebbe please farbreng on Sukkos? The Rebbe contended that as per Shulchan Aruch<sup>1</sup>, it was forbidden for him to farbreng in a dangerous place. The Rebbe continued that he follows the same Shulchan Aruch as everyone, and being that there is concern of *sakanas nefashos*, Halacha rules that a *sufek*, or even a *sfek-sfeika* (a remote possibility of danger) is *l'chumra* (we remain stringent and extra careful) and he will therefore not hold a farbrengen.

So it remained until the second night of Sukkos.

## SECOND NIGHT OF SUKKOS

When the Rebbe returned to his room after that night's *Maariv*, the key could not be found. Reb Yisroel Shemtov climbed through the window and opened the door for the Rebbe after which the Rebbe thanked him.

Rabbi Hodakov then entered the room and stayed for a few minutes. Upon exiting, he conveyed that the Rebbe would recite a *maamar* in the shul the following afternoon, at the usual farbrengen time. Not everyone heard Rabbi Hodakov's words and some initial confusion ensued. Would a farbrengen on Sukkos be taking place inside? It soon became clear that the farbrengen would indeed be taking place downstairs in the big shul. As to washing for *hamotzi* and saying *l'chaim*—the Rebbe said that this farbrengen would be "dry [אין אש] [טרוקן]."

## SECOND DAY OF SUKKOS

At 6:05 p.m., the Rebbe entered the shul and requested for the *niggun Shalosh T'nuos* to be sung. This was followed by the *maamar-niggun*, after which the Rebbe began a *maamar*, beginning with the *possuk*: "הללו את ה' כל גוים שבחוהו כל האמים."

In this *maamar* (based on the *maamar* הללו את ה' of the Alter Rebbe), the Rebbe discussed the *chayus* that the nations of the world receive from *kedusha*, explaining that ultimately, this too, will be elevated. Quoting from the day's *haftorah* (which discusses the *goyim* being judged), the Rebbe explained its connection to Sukkos, when 70 bulls are offered, corresponding to the 70 nations of the world. The Rebbe concluded the *maamar* with special *brachos* for the coming of Moshiach.

At the *maamar's* conclusion, Chassidim realized that something unique was transpiring. The Rebbe's passionate words about the gentile kingdoms, beginning with the unique *dibur hamaschil* and concluding with *brachos* similar to those the Rebbe had said at the conclusion of the *maamarim* on Rosh Hashanah, Shabbos Shuvah, and Vov Tishrei, stood out as interesting. In addition, the entire setting of the farbrengen, and the fact that the Rebbe began right away with a *maamar*, was something unique.

After the *maamar* and *niggun simcha*, the Rebbe continued with two more *sichos*. (Initially the Rebbe had only notified that he would say a *maamar*, so this was also taken by surprise.) After elaborating



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on the *hashpa'ah* the *korbanos* of 70 bulls had on the ministers of the world's 70 nations, the Rebbe revealed that this wasn't just *ruchniyusdik*, but rather it was intended to affect the current goings-on in regard to the nations' relation to the Yidden. The U.N. General Assembly, marking the institution's twenty-fifth anniversary, was taking place at that time.

The Rebbe said:

"Everything is *b'hashgacha protis*, as explained in Chassidus, but we sometimes fail to notice this. Here, however, we see that when there was a need to gather representatives from all 70 nations of the world in the U.N., it was set for *Chag HaSukkos*.

"They didn't intend for it to take place on Sukkos, and they certainly didn't calculate this twenty five years ago. However, everything is *b'hashgacha protis*, and 'Although they did not see, their *mazal* saw it.'<sup>2</sup> This gathering is taking place on Sukkos, when we read in the *haftorah*: 'And I will gather all the nations, etc.,'<sup>3</sup> and is connected

with the fact that 70 bulls were offered in the *Beis Hamikdash*, corresponding to the 70 nations."

Intimating that he had asked someone what he's doing about the current goings-on in the U.N., the Rebbe said: "Those who *bichlal* don't know what the U.N. is—*תבא עליהם ברכה* (may they be blessed). They accomplish whatever is necessary with their learning and davening. However, those who *are* familiar with the U.N. (because they read the paper religiously; obviously after davening and learning their regular *shiurim*...) should attempt to do something in this regard. Otherwise, why are they wasting their time reading the news? It's *bitul Torah*!"

Declaring that despite the nations gathering to harm the Yidden, as is written, *למה רגשו גוים, ולאמים יהגו ריק...* על ה' ועל משיחו (Why have nations gathered and [why do] kingdoms think vain things? ...Against Hashem and His anointed one...)<sup>4</sup> the Rebbe said that nothing would come of it. Ultimately, all their *hashpa'ah* is derived from their 70 *sarim*, who in turn receive it when the Yidden offer the 70 bulls on Sukkos. This means that they are subservient to *bnei Yisroel*.

The Rebbe continued that the way to combat these evils was to organize gatherings of *kedusha*, just as the members of the U.N. did the opposite. The Rebbe specified that these gatherings should take place, first and foremost, at the *Kosel Hama'aravi*, where visitors come from many diverse "nations" and "kingdoms." But in addition to the gathering at the *Kosel*, the Rebbe stressed the importance of coming together in every locale, wherever Yidden are found, and especially here [New York], where *their* gathering is taking place. The Rebbe continued that this applies even where there is only one Yid who will thereby "singlehandedly subdue that nation's *sar*."

The *sicha* concluded with the wish that through this gathering of Torah, *tefilah*, and Sukkos-related matters, it will be possible to transform the entire U.N. to good! The Rebbe specified that by fulfilling *mitzvas lulav* and influencing others to do the same, we cause the entire world to shake, because the *lulav* signifies the Yidden's victory in judgement.

The Rebbe pointed out that one of the reasons for the *farbrengen* was to reveal all of this to those assembled; especially as individuals from many "nations" and "kingdoms" had gathered to hear words of Torah from the Rebbeim and their teachers, tracing back to Moshe Rabbeinu,





including the *maamar* beginning with the words “הללו את ה' כל גוים,” which discusses the Yidden’s offering of 70 bulls and its effect on the world’s nations.

The farbrengen ended with an instruction that the *maamar* of the Alter Rebbe be studied during Sukkos, this in turn leading to “הללו את ה' כל גוים”—all nations of the world recognizing that all of their *hashpa’os* derive from the *hashpa’ah* of *bnei Yisroel*.

Immediately following the farbrengen and *maariv* at Yom Tov’s end, a *hanacha* of the *sichos* was written up. After the *hanacha* of the *maamar* was submitted, the Rebbe agreed to edit it (something highly unusual in those years). Throughout Chol Hamoed, *bochurim* and *anash* continuously reviewed the *maamar*.

#### FIRST DAY OF CHOL HAMOED

Tremendous excitement was in the air. Spurred by the Rebbe’s words that the world at large is affected by our actions, it was decided that the *kinus* of Tzach that traditionally took place on

the first day of Chol Hamoed in 770 would be an “International Kinus,” with representatives from all over the world who had arrived to spend Tishrei with the Rebbe. Furthermore, the Rebbe told Rabbi Hodakov that each country’s delegate was not only its representative, but its *baal habayis*! The Rebbe also instructed that Rabbi Binyomin Gorodetzky should represent those countries without an envoy present.

And so it was. The “*baal habayis*” of Eretz Yisroel, exercising his power, ruled that the terrible decree of *Mihu Yehudi* be annulled, and that the *shtochim* not be given away to the Arabs. Following him was Russia’s representative, who proclaimed that the Yidden behind the Iron Curtain must be freed immediately, and that all who live there be able to freely practice Yiddishkeit. Several other delegates followed with similar words.

The entire gathering was taken very seriously as it was done with the Rebbe’s *kochos*, and rumor had it that the Rebbe was very pleased with what transpired. There had never been a Kinus Tzach of

the sort before and all the participants were greatly uplifted.

But if someone thought that with the heavenly affairs that the Rebbe conducted on Sukkos he had already taken care of “shaking the world” and subduing the *sarim* of *umos ha'olam*, he was in for a surprise...

#### EVE OF SHEMINI ATZERES

Upon entering *hakafos*, the Rebbe began singing his father's *hakafos niggun*, after which Shemini Atzeres *hakafos* proceeded as usual. As was customary, the Rebbe read the first round of “*Ata Hareisa*” and many people were honored with leading the *pesukim* of the subsequent rounds. After the first round, the Rebbe began<sup>5</sup> “*Ata V'chartanu*,” while the second was followed by “*Ki Elokim Yoshia Tzion*.” After the third, the Rebbe began singing “*Prazos Teshev*.”

Before *hakafos* began, the Rebbe instructed that Moshiach's Sefer Torah<sup>6</sup> be taken out from the *aron kodesh* without its crown and for the *chazan* of each *hakafa* to hold it during the *pesukim*-recital. During the dancing following the *pesukim*, it should be

returned to the *aron kodesh* until the next *hakafa*. The Rebbe oversaw this process from his place.

This was then followed by *hakafos*. As usual, the Rebbe was honored with the first and seventh *hakafos*. But just before the fourth *hakafa*, something out of the ordinary occurred: the Rebbe summoned the *gabbai*, Reb Moshe Pinchos Katz and instructed that the following be announced:

“Being that it is written “יצב גבלת עמים למספר” בני ישראל—He set up the boundaries of peoples according to the number of the children of Israel,”<sup>7</sup> the *ba'alei batim* of each country will now be honored. And being that everything must be done according to Torah, these will be individuals who have *smicha* or are *roshei yeshivos*. The Rebbe then instructed that each individual's name and respective country be announced.”

The representatives were as follows:

Rabbis: **Chaim Shalom Segal** - Eretz Yisroel; **Yehuda Kulasher** - Russia; **Chaim Mordechai Aizik Hodakov** - the Baltic states and Finland.

Rabbis: **Shmuel Levitin** - United States; **Yosef Goldberg** - France.

When the Rebbe announced Reb **Bentzion Shemtov** as England's envoy and someone remarked



that he's not a *rov*, the Rebbe responded that this is being done under his *achrayus*.

Rabbi **Binyomin Eliyahu Gorodetzky** - European countries that lack an envoy.

Rabbis: **Abba Pliskin** - Australia; **Hirshel Chitrik** - Brazil<sup>8</sup>; **Yitzchok Yadgar** - Iraq; **Zecharya Guri** - Yemen; **Avrohom Yitzchok Gluck** - Germany; **Yosef Wineberg**<sup>9</sup> - South Africa; **Refoel Tawil** - Argentina; **Yitzchok Hendel** - Canada; **Yehuda Leib Raskin** - Morocco; **Refoel Wilschanski** - Tunisia; **Avrohom Osdoba** - Denmark.<sup>10</sup>

Although absent from the *farbrengen* (remaining in Eretz Yisroel for Tishrei at the Rebbe's behest), Rabbi **Zalman Abelsky** was appointed *ba'al habayis* over Romania; the Rebbe later instructed that his son Yosef Yitzchok represent him (when it came time to say *l'chaim*, see below).

Reb **Moshe Pinchos Katz** represented Poland.

When the Rebbe appointed Rabbi **Shmuel Meir Silberstein** from Antwerp as the representative for Belgium, he said that he does not have *smicha*. The Rebbe responded that he should get *smicha*. [After Simchas Torah he indeed got tested on *smicha*, as the Rebbe had instructed].

Finally, the Rebbe turned to **Rashag** and said: "*Liche'ora* you once passed through Mitzrayim with the *shver* [Frierdiker Rebbe]."<sup>11</sup> When he answered affirmatively, the Rebbe appointed him the *ba'al habayis* of Egypt.

Then, after instructing that the *possuk* "צב גבלת" יצב גבלת" be announced again, the Rebbe proclaimed that the delegates are the *ba'alei-batim* according to Torah.

Rabbi Michael Seligson relates:

"After this introduction, where the *olam* saw how the Rebbe is literally conquering the world from the hands of the nations and proclaiming Yiddishkeit and *kedusha* as the *ba'alei batim* over the world, the excitement among the crowd reached new heights. When the Rebbe began singing the *niggun* "*Utzu Eitza*" (this being the signal for the start of the *hakafa*), the crowd sang and danced with great intensity. It felt as if the walls of the shul were shaking!

"This *hakafa*, which will never be forgotten by those present, continued for quite a while. The Rebbe danced with tremendous *chayus* to the words of '*Utzu Eitza*!' while vigorously encouraging the singing and dancing with energetic hand-motions. The atmosphere was electrifying and it was an

awesome sight to behold, even for Shemini Atzeres and Simchas Torah!"

At the *seuda* in the Frierdiker Rebbe's apartment after *hakafos*, Reb Yankel Katz from Chicago mentioned that since the Rebbe has appointed representatives for the many countries, wouldn't it be better if, instead of the U.N. making decrees that will need to be nullified by the Yidden, the representatives should be the ones to make good resolutions in the first place. "Nu," the Rebbe responded. When Reb Yankel repeated himself, the Rebbe's face became very serious. "This is not a joke," the Rebbe said. "If it were a joke, I wouldn't have asked to take out the *sifrei Torah* for it."

Reb Yankel said again that good resolutions should be made, and the Rebbe became serious again. The Rebbe quoted the Rogatchover, who says that the reason the *aron* is opened for Kol Nidrei is based on the Yerushalmi, which states that when the *aron* is open it is as if the *beis din* is sitting and judging.

Later at the *seuda*, Rashag mentioned how the Tzemach Tzedek would "make *sedorim* in Petersburg" on Rosh Hashanah, and connected Rosh Hashanah to Shemini Atzeres. The Rebbe pointed out that Rosh Hashanah and Shemini Atzeres indeed fall out on the same day of the week.

Over the rest of Yom Tov, as could be expected, an elevated feeling hovered over 770, with everyone being captivated by the previous night's heavenly events. It was in this spirit that the decision was made to hold a special gathering of all the "*rabbonim-baalei batim*." They reasoned: Being that all of them were appointed *ba'alei batim* of their respective locales, then the Rebbe is the *ba'al habayis* and leader of the entire world!

## SHEMINI ATZERES DAY

When the Rebbe arrived at 770 for *Mincha* on Shemini Atzeres afternoon, the delegates from the four largest world powers (Russia, England, France, and the United States), as well as that of Eretz Yisroel, were standing by his room. Rabbi Segal represented them all in informing the Rebbe of their resolution, namely that with the power vested in them as delegates of the various countries, they hereby appoint the Rebbe as the *ba'al habayis* of the entire world.

The Rebbe smiled when he heard this, and remarked: "You're already throwing the



*balebatishkeit* back on me? What has been accomplished thus far that it's being returned to me?"

Rabbi Segal responded by stating: Eretz Yisroel belongs to *am Yisroel*, Russian Jewry should promptly be released, and those living there should have the liberty of fulfilling Torah and *mitzvos* in a peaceful manner." The Rebbe then added: "*Mitoch harchava*—with abundance!"

The Rebbe also inquired if a *minyan* was present at the meeting.

## EVE OF SIMCHAS TORAH

*Maariv* that night was also an extraordinary experience. Upon entering the small *zal* for davening at 7:00 p.m., the Rebbe requested that a *lebediker niggun* be sung. Chassidim immediately burst into a Simchas Torah song, and it was not long before they began dancing in a circle. The surprise came, however, when the Rebbe approached the middle door of the *zal* and motioned for individuals who had arrived late to join in the dancing. Even after these Chassidim joined the dancing, the Rebbe remained near the door, waiting for more Chassidim to arrive and join.

At 8:00 p.m. the Rebbe came downstairs for the *farbrengen*. At this *farbrengen* as well, the Rebbe continued "arranging" the U.N. in a heavenly manner, stating that the nations are in a state of "רגשו, gathering," and want to seize our *tzitzis* and *tefillin*, as it says "נתקה את מוסרותינו ונשליכה ממנו"—Let us break their bands and cast off their cords from us." However, Hashem will not allow this, as is written: "יושב בשמים יחק"—the One who sits in heaven laughs."<sup>12</sup>

The Rebbe then asked, "Where are my 'Big Four?'"—referring to the representatives of the four major world powers who stood at the Rebbe's door earlier that evening.

When they approached, the Rebbe handed bottles of *mashke* to each of them to distribute amongst the crowd. (Reb Shmuel Levitin was not present, so the Rebbe appointed Reb Yisroel Jacobson as the representative for United States in his place.) The Rebbe also gave a bottle to Rabbi Segal for Eretz Yisroel, specifying that the *mashke* be distributed to the attendees who were present, and that there should be unto the Yidden אורה וששון ויקר. The Rebbe also handed him *mezonos* to distribute in the ladies section.

The Rebbe stood up and exclaimed: "The order is that following the summit of the 'Big Four,' all the minor nations are called upon," after which he proceeded to instruct the other "*ba'alei batim*" to say *l'chaim*. After they all said *l'chaim*, the Rebbe stood up in his place and explained:

"The way it works in the U.N. is that, following the superpowers' meeting, a vote is taken amongst all the nations. If they all agree on something unanimously, then the motion passes.

"Therefore, everyone together should rule that Yisroel is *emes*; Torah is *emes*; and Hashem is *emes*. It should also be ruled that everything in the world ought to conduct itself according to Torah, and all who agree should say *l'chaim* together."

After the assembled responded with a resounding *l'chaim*, the Rebbe began singing a *freilicher niggun*, to which everyone sang along. When the singing was over, still standing, the Rebbe proclaimed:

"Common practice at the U.N. is to visit the theater after meetings and resolutions. Being that this is the widespread custom, it probably is rooted in *kedusha*. And being that here is the *le'umas zeh* of their convention, so should be done here as well.

"But being that this doesn't belong here, and we're also short on time, my suggestion is that one person make a *kuleh*, and with that we'll be '*yoitze theater*.'"

England's *ba'al habayis* Reb Bentzion Shemtov promptly made a *kuleh* as did two others, after which the Rebbe told Reb Bentzion with satisfaction: "This will cover the entire world!"

The Rebbe then asked, paraphrasing several *pesukim* in *kapitel beis*: "Why do we need all this? Why must Yidden suffer at the hands of the nations until Hashem saves us? Hashem could have accomplished all of this without any effort on our part.

"The answer," the Rebbe explained, "is that Hashem desires for us to 'ask of him,' as it says,

—שאל ממני ואתנה גרים נחלתך ואחזתך אפסי ארץ—Request of Me, and I will make nations your inheritance, and the ends of the earth your possession."<sup>13</sup>

The Rebbe finished off by saying that every Yid can demand from Hashem that he be able to accomplish all this by himself. (This was all said while the Rebbe was still standing).

The Rebbe entered the shul for *hakafo*s of Simchas Torah eve at 12:00 a.m., at which time



the Israeli government's traditional delegation was present. The contingent was led by Consul General Zvi Caspi, and it included Aharon Boker, a member of Israel's U.N. delegation, as well as Yosef Shufman of the Herut-Liberal Bloc. The Rebbe conversed with several of them for some time.

When asked by Reb Gershon Ber Jacobson (who was then reporting for an Israeli newspaper) what the Rebbe told them, Boker related that the Rebbe demanded of them to promise that Yerushalayim will never be given away to Arabs.

When Boker asked why the Rebbe doesn't make *aliya* to Eretz Yisroel, the Rebbe just smiled. When he persisted, however, the Rebbe replied that this is a question he asks himself daily.



One cannot truly know how the Rebbe was affecting the U.N. that Sukkos; what kind of "*sedorim*" were arranged in heaven on behalf of

*shleimus ha'aretz, shleimus haTorah, and shleimus Am Yisroel.*

**T** אשרי עין ראתה כל אלה!

1. See Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch, 156:19
2. Sanhedrin 94a
3. Zecharia 14:2
4. Tehillim 2:1-2
5. The Rebbe would always begin the *niggun* following each round of *Ata Horeisa*. See *Simchas Torah with the Rebbe*, Derher Tishrei 5778.
6. It was completed some eight months earlier. See *Sefer Torah shel Moshiach*, Derher Shevat 5776.
7. Devarim 32:8. See Rashi.
8. Rabbi Chitrik spent a number of years on shlichus in Brazil.
9. Rabbi Winberg would visit South Africa when fundraising for Tomchei Tmimim.
10. Rabbi Osdoba was a rov in Denmark for a few years.
11. En-route to Eretz Yisrael in 5689.
12. Tehillim 2:3-4
13. Further in the *kapitel*.



כתב יד  
קודש

לזכות  
הרה"ת ר' דניאל זונדל הלוי  
וזוגתו מרת ראובנה לאה  
ומשפחתם שיחיו  
גרודניצקי

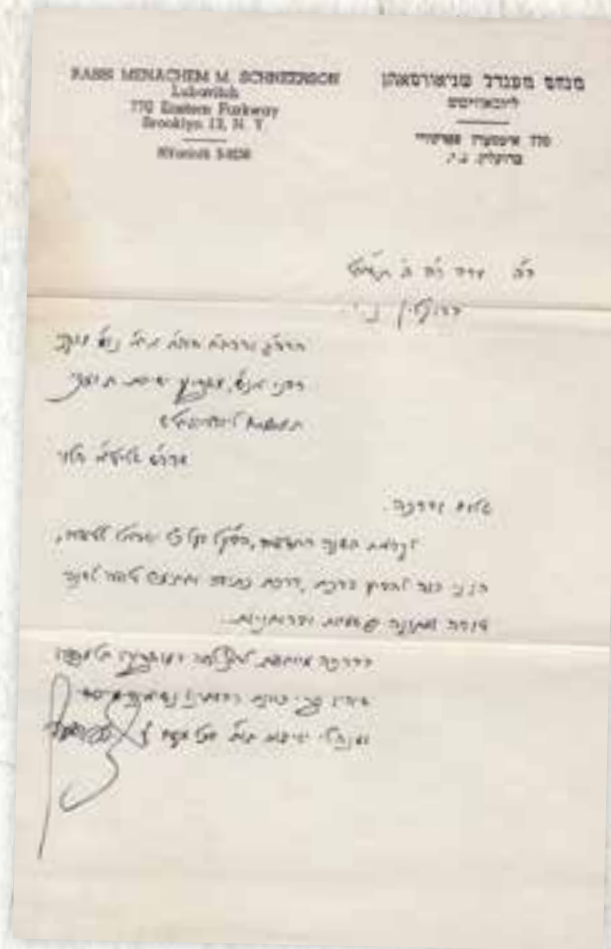


# The Real Success

Throughout the Rebbe's *nesius*, before Rosh Hashanah each year, the Rebbe sent a handwritten letter to the venerated *mashpia*, Reb Shmuel Levitin, blessing him with a good year.

The following *ksav yad kodesh* was the letter the Rebbe wrote to him sixty years ago, for Rosh Hashanah 5719:





B"H Erev Rosh Hashanah 5719

Brooklyn, NY

Harav Hagaon Harav Hachossid...Mashpia of Yeshivas  
Tomchei Temimim Lubavitch,

Harav Shmuel *shlit"a* Halevi

Greetings and Blessings.

In honor of the forthcoming new year, may it be a good one for us and for all of the Jewish people, I hereby express my blessing for you to be inscribed and sealed for a good and sweet year, materially and spiritually.

With special blessings for success with your students whom you influence; may they indeed turn out as intended by our Rebbeim, the founders and leaders of Yeshivos Tomchei Temimim everywhere.

[The Rebbe's signature]

(Teshura Rivkin-Farkash 5775)

ב"ה ערב ר"ה ה' תשי"ט

ברוקלין, נ.י.

הרה"ג והרה"ח הו"ח אי"א נ"מ  
מזקני רבני אנ"ש,

משפיע ישיבת תומכי תמימים ליובאוויטש

מהר"ש שליט"א הלוי

שלום וברכה.

לקראת השנה החדשה, הבע"ל ועל כל ישראל  
לטובה, הנני בזה להביע ברכתי ברכת כתיבה וחתימה  
טובה לשנה טובה ומתוקה בגשמיות וברוחניות.

בברכה מיוחדת להצלחה במושפיעו תלמידיו שיהיו  
כפי כוונת רבותינו נשיאינו מייסדי ומנהלי ישיבות  
תו"ת בכל מקום.

[חתי"ק]



# THE REBBE'S CAPITAL

THE FOUNDING OF KEAR CHABAD

*City*  
קרית



לזכר נשמת  
שיינא גאלדא ע"ה  
בת יבלחט"א ר' מיכאל הלוי שיחי'  
גוטלייזער

נדפס ע"י זקיניה  
הרה"ת ר' יצחק מאיר וזוגתו מרת לאה  
ומשפחתם שיחיו  
שפאלטר





Late one moonlit night, a caravan of trucks lumbered down a long and bumpy dirt road. Following an uncomfortable ride, they finally reached a clearing and ground to a halt. Fifteen families descended. Men, women, children and elderly, all looked around at the desolation. Houses in ruins, unkempt fields, and a small well. This was to be their new home.

But this was no regular home. This was to be Kfar Chabad, the Rebbe's town. This was to be the center of Chabad in Eretz Yisroel; a haven for the Chassidim, and the nerve center from where it would spread its influence throughout the entire land.

It was to be a powerhouse. There was a lot of work to be done.



THE DESOLATE RUINS UPON WHICH THE VILLAGE OF KFAR CHABAD WAS BUILT.



## Contemplation

Two years earlier, in 5708, a meeting had taken place on the other side of the world, at 770 Eastern Parkway in Brooklyn. Zalman Shazar, who would eventually become the president of Israel, came for a *yechidus* with the Frierdiker Rebbe.

On the evening before the United Nations voted whether to establish a state for the Jewish people in Eretz Yisroel, the Frierdiker Rebbe had assured Mr. Shazar via a phone message that it would be a success.

In a subsequent *yechidus* with Mr. Shazar, the Frierdiker Rebbe brought up another issue. Being that he was a prominent member of the Jewish Agency, the de facto government of the Jews in British Mandate Palestine, the Frierdiker Rebbe wanted to know about the possibility of founding a Chabad village there.

Talk of a Chabad village had begun several years earlier<sup>2</sup> amongst the Chassidim in Eretz Yisroel. During those years, the Chabad community in the Holy Land was very small and

## THE FRIERDIKER REBBE WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF FOUNDING A CHABAD VILLAGE THERE.

spread out throughout the country. The Chassidim worried that the lack of a strong sense of community would have dire implications for the next generation. They also felt that a central location would do wonders for their poor economic situation. Additionally, it could be an impetus for more effective *hafotzas hama'ayanos*.

The close of World War II brought a new sense of urgency. Hundreds of Lubavitch families were stranded in displaced persons camps in Germany and Austria with nowhere to go. A village in Eretz Yisroel could be the perfect answer.

Over Tishrei 5708 (תש"ח), Reb Leizer Karasik and Reb Moshe Gurary, the heads of Agudas Chassidei Chabad in Eretz Yisroel, came to spend Tishrei with the Frierdiker Rebbe. During their *yechidusen*, they brought up the

suggestion and asked the Frierdiker Rebbe for direction.

Mr. Shazar's *yechidus* took place a short time later, where he assured the Frierdiker Rebbe that it was indeed a practical plan. Over the next year, the Chassidim in the DP camps began receiving instructions from the Frierdiker Rebbe regarding their future; some were sent to Australia, some to United States and Canada, but a very large number was instructed to go to Eretz Yisroel.

## Becoming a Reality

More than a year passed without any progress. The War of Independence was fought with vengeance. Streams of Lubavitch families arrived at the shores of Eretz Yisroel, and were settled in *ma'abarot* (refugee absorption camps) throughout the country. The Frierdiker



Rebbe established a committee to deal with the refugees on his behalf. The members were Reb Leizer Karasik, Reb Shaul Ber Zislin, Reb Moshe Gurary and Reb Pinye Althaus.<sup>3</sup>

On Yud-Tes Kislev 5709, Mr. Shazar participated in the farbrengen at the Nachlas Binyamin shul in Tel Aviv, and the committee utilized the opportunity to speak to him about a village. Mr. Shazar was very enthusiastic about the idea. He said that a wide array of choices had become available since the country had declared independence; there were many empty villages with homes and land that would serve their needs perfectly. Later that month, Mr. Shazar introduced them to the top brass of the government, many of whom had positive sentiments about the idea.

The final approval and *brocha* of the Friediker Rebbe came in a letter toward the end of Kislev.<sup>4</sup> Mr. Shazar had suggested that the Lubavitchers be settled in Meron, due to their connection to *primum haTorah*, but in his correspondence, the Friediker Rebbe stipulated that the village be located in the central part of the country, where they would be able to have the greatest possible influence. The village, obviously, wasn't only meant to be a haven for the refugees.

A possibility arose. The Mizrachi political party offered the committee an abandoned Arab village near Lod, called Safriyya. There was only one condition: The residents had to become card-carrying members of Mizrachi.

It sounds bizarre today, but in those early days of Eretz Yisroel's independence, everything was controlled by political parties. The schools, medical coverage, and all sorts of government programs were provided by each party separately. To remain apolitical meant that one would remain outside the normal system of subsidies and have to fend



AN INSTRUCTOR FROM THE JEWISH AGENCY TEACHES THE NEW SETTLERS OF KFAR CHABAD HOW TO USE AGRICULTURAL MACHINERY, TISHREI 5710.

for himself. Every grant would be a battle.

Nevertheless, the instructions from the Friediker Rebbe were clear. Come what may, Lubavitch must not belong to any political party.

They began negotiations with Mizrachi over the property, when suddenly, some Mizrachi families moved into the village without government approval, claiming it belonged to them. The committee realized that soon all would be lost, and decided to "invade" the village as well, while simultaneously pushing for government approvals.

Seeing the reality on the ground, Levi Eshkol, the then director of the Jewish Agency, decided to split the

village in two. One side of the main road would be given to Chabad, and the other side would be called Tochelet, for the Mizrachi families. Things remained this way for several years, until the majority of the Mizrachi families moved away, and Tochelet was subsumed by Kfar Chabad.

*Mud, Mud and  
More Mud*

In an interview with *A Chassidisher Derher*, Reb Boruch Gopin, one of the first residents of Kfar Chabad and today one of its respected elders, described the scene of their arrival:

"When the people arrived in the middle of Iyar 5709, there was nothing





ISRAELI GOVERNMENT PRESS OFFICE

but desolation and destruction. The roofs of the stone structures had been destroyed, and all that remained intact were a few clay homes. The fields had been neglected for over a year. A small well stood at the center of town, and one outhouse served the entire community.”

Work immediately began to make the town habitable. The families settled in the clay huts, six families per hut, while the larger families received tents. The most pressing job was to prepare 70 stone structures to serve as homes for the founding families. The work was done “by the people, for the people,” under the guidance of a contractor hired by the Jewish Agency.

“The work was back-breaking,” Reb Boruch relates, “but the Jewish Agency paid each worker one *lira* and 40 *agorot* for a day’s work. That was a lot of money. A package of butter was ten *agorot*, and a liter of petrol was only three.”

For months, the new inhabitants energetically went about their new line of work; installing roofs and windows, fixing floors, and so on. When the work was finally done, the newly renovated homes were raffled off: larger families received the larger homes and smaller families entered a raffle for the smaller ones. Then the next phase of the work began; they needed a proper shul, schools, a mikvah, and basic infrastructure. The

initial work to establish Kfar Chabad lasted a full six months.

Another hurdle was electricity. Light came from kerosene lamps. For the streets lights, Kfar Chabad employed a real-life *lamternchik*—Reb Yisroel Yitzchok Zalmanov—straight out of the stories in the Rebbeim’s *sichos*, who would light the street lamps every evening at dusk.

Although none of the new Israeli villages were connected to the national grid, Kfar Chabad ultimately received power early on, thanks to the connections of Reb Pinye Althaus. He invited his prominent friends to the Yud-Tes Kislev farbrengen in Kfar Chabad, while subtly hinting that it would be inappropriate for such a



THE ROV OF Kfar CHABAD RABBI SCHNEUR ZALMAN GARELIK LEARNS GEMARA WITH THE SETTLERS. NOTICE THE PARAFFIN LAMPS ON THE TABLE, AS THERE WAS NO ELECTRICITY YET IN Kfar CHABAD. ELUL 5709.

### *Hanging On Tight*

Reb Yitzchok Mendel Lis *a"h*, the first secretary of Kfar Chabad, related:

“Personal vehicles were unheard of in those years. The only way in and out of the Kfar was by public transportation. One single bus would pass Kfar Chabad every morning and evening, traveling to and from Tel Aviv. The problem was that the bus was very narrow, and seated only about 20 people, while over 70 families lived in Kfar Chabad. Often, the able-bodied men would have no choice but to ride on top of the roof or holding onto the ladder at the rear of the bus.

“Convincing the train to make a stop in the village was also a battle. Reb Pinye Althaus helped arrange that the train should make two stops every day in Kfar Chabad. Later, when I developed a friendship with the board members of *Rakevet Yisrael*, I once traveled along the entire route to count how many people got on and off at each stop. Seeing how the numbers compared to the numbers of Kfar Chabad, they finally agreed to a more regular pattern.”



THE TRAIN-STATION IN Kfar CHABAD.

farbrenge to be held in the dim glow of kerosene lamps. He also convinced a donor, Reb Shlomo Palmer<sup>5</sup> from Chicago, to pay \$20,000 for the expenses.

Over many years, Kfar Chabad developed more and more of its infrastructure. Paved roads were a luxury still years away, and when the first proper bus made a stop in Kfar Chabad, the entire community, together with the *rov*, Reb Shneur Garelick, went out to greet it. Later, when the first train arrived, it received a similar greeting. But the *shtetl* image of Kfar Chabad would remain with it for many years to come.

### *The Inauguration*

At the end of Nissan that year, the Frierdiker Rebbe sent Rashag to Eretz Yisroel to see the situation on hand and to assist in settling the refugees.<sup>6</sup>

Several weeks later, a few days after Lag B'omer 5709, he was joined by Reb Avraham Pariz who brought a *sefer Torah* from the Frierdiker Rebbe.

“When we heard,” relates Reb Boruch Gopin, “that Reb Avraham was bringing a *sefer Torah* from the Frierdiker Rebbe, it generated a lot of excitement. At the hour he was to arrive, we all walked the length of the dirt road, a kilometer and a half, to meet him at the entrance to the village.”

The Frierdiker Rebbe also sent along a letter, containing the “charter” for Kfar Chabad:

“Baruch Hashem, Friday, Erev Shabbos Parshas *Ki Savo'u El Ha'aretz*, *V'shavsa Ha'aretz Shabbos LaHashem*.

“As you settle in the Holy Land, you must contemplate and internalize the fact that Divine providence has brought you to the land *'asher einei Elokecha bah*, which the eyes of Hashem are upon, from the beginning of the year through its end,<sup>7</sup> and you are now present in the palace of the



King of kings, *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*, at every moment.

“This *sefer Torah* should serve as a constant reminder to lead your lives in the path shown to us by the Rebbeim, to educate your children without compromises, and to spread your light to the rest of the Jewish people and guide them in the path to G-dliness: Torah study with fear of heaven and scrupulous fulfillment of the *mitzvos*. This should be accomplished in a loving manner, stemming from *ahavas Yisroel* and Chassidisher *middos*.

“May each of you be a light illuminating the current exile, until Hashem will redeem us.”<sup>7</sup>

The official inauguration of Kfar Chabad took place on Yud Beis Tammuz 5709, at a grand farbrengen, with the participation of prominent officials, led by Levi Eshkol.

### *Fields and Animals*

Part of the idea to found an independent village was for the source of income it would provide for its residents. For this purpose, the surrounding fields were raffled off among the villagers, and they began to work the land.

The concept was a complete anomaly. The Chassidim were city people; they had lived most of their lives in Russian urban centers and had no experience with agricultural work whatsoever. Content with their new home, however, they were willing to give it a try.

The sight of long-bearded religious Jews toiling in the fields and raising animals went against the stereotypical image of religious Jews in the country, and was often praised by many government officials. One comment was even attributed to Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion: “If all of them were like this, I would agree to be a minority in this country.”

Because of this unique image, many government officials were willing to

“IF ALL OF THEM WERE LIKE THIS, I WOULD AGREE TO BE A MINORITY IN THIS COUNTRY.”



REB YITZCHOK BILINITZKY MILKS A COW ON A FARM IN KFAR CHABAD.

### *Safariyya - Shafrir - Kfar Chabad*

Reb Yitzchok Mendel Lis related:

“Upon the founding of the village, the Rebbeim named it Kfar Chabad. However, the legal name was originally Safariyya, and was changed to Shafrir. That was the name we used in our official documents and correspondence, and sometimes we called it Shafrir-Chabad. Over the years, the Rebbe mentioned to us that we should change the legal name, but unfortunately, with so much on our hands, we never managed to pull it off.

“Changing the name proved to be quite a difficult task. The committee responsible for the names maintained that Shafrir was a historic name, mentioned even in Gemara; why should it be removed? During one meeting with the head of the committee, Hashem gave me the right words to convince him.

“He said, ‘Why should we change the name if the creek that passes nearby is also called Nachal Shafrir?’

“I jumped on his statement: ‘The creek preserves the historic name,’ I told him, ‘so the village’s name can be changed without concern.’”

The name was officially changed in Av of 5715, but took several years to become widespread. After the attack on *Beit Sefer L'Melachah* in 5716, the Rebbe wrote a strong letter to the Vaad, asking why the newspapers were still using the name Shafrir, and encouraged them to work toward raising awareness in this regard.

lend a hand. Some equipment was provided (the first truck was driven by Reb Boruch Gopin), and teachers were hired to show the Chassidim the ropes. The wife of one prominent official spent many days in Kfar Chabad teaching the women how to plant vegetable gardens. Everyone got busy planting wheat, barley, corn and more.

To their consternation, the hopes they invested in their new work were for naught. The first year's harvest was very poor, and the second year wasn't much better. The next year, 5712, was *shmitah*, so the workers spent their days in shul—learning, davening, and farbrenging, hoping the coming year would yield something better.

Notwithstanding all the setbacks, the inhabitants persevered. Month after month, year after year, they slowly built up the Kfar, and with

the Rebbe's *brachos* they began to see success.

### Guidance

The new immigrants had settled down, but life was far from easy. The hardships of learning an entirely new trade and beginning anew with large families proved very difficult for the Russian Chassidim. They had already lived through several lifetimes' worth of suffering during their years under Communism; many had lost countless family members to the purges of Stalin and the Holocaust. Beginning all over again was no easy task.

From the earliest days of the *nesius*, the Rebbe sent innumerable letters to Kfar Chabad full of advice and encouragement. The Rebbe would receive the minutes of all meetings that were held and would constantly reply with comments, advice, *brachos* and—often—critique. No step, big

or small, was taken without the Rebbe's instructions. (In recent years, a full two volumes (!) of the Rebbe's correspondence regarding Kfar Chabad have been published in *Kfar Chabad* by Vaad Kfar Chabad, 5763).

"On one trip to New York," related<sup>8</sup> Reb Yitzchok Mendel Lis a"n, the first secretary of Kfar Chabad, "I went into *yechidus* for three hours! The Rebbe wanted to know every detail of what was going on.

"At that occasion I suggested to name the roads of Kfar Chabad after the Rebbeim, so that even young children will be familiar with the names of *raboseinu nesi'einu*. The Rebbe listened, and said it was a good idea, but since Kfar Chabad wasn't fully developed and there would be new main streets and new neighborhoods, 'It will be hard to play around with holy names,' so it shouldn't be done yet."<sup>9</sup>

As a town founded upon the ideals of Chabad, the Rebbe held the spiritual state of Kfar Chabad as a primary concern. When a *vaad ruchni* was founded, the Rebbe was very pleased that an entire committee was established just to deal with matters of spirituality. Years earlier, when a resident of Kfar Chabad shaved his beard, the Frierdiker Rebbe sent a sharp letter,<sup>10</sup> saying that the individual should understand in no uncertain terms that living in Kfar Chabad demands a higher level of spiritual behavior.

"When the city was founded," the Rebbe noted in a letter in 5712, "my father-in-law, the Rebbe said '*az di zach firt er alein*—he is personally managing this project,' and therefore, all the affairs of Kfar Chabad need to be approached from the standpoint of his *ratzon*; it is no private matter."<sup>11</sup>

The Rebbe viewed Kfar Chabad as much more than a private religious community. The Rebbe emphasized that the *ufaratza* of Eretz Yisroel must

"DI ZACH FIRT ER ALEIN, HE IS PERSONALLY  
MANAGING THIS PROJECT."



THE REBBE SEES OFF THE GUESTS FROM ERETZ YISROEL WHO JOINED THE REBBE FOR TISHREI 5721.

JEM 103616



emanate from Kfar Chabad. In a *yechidus* with Reb Boruch Gopin, the Rebbe described it as “the *ir habirah*, the capital city,” a place where “*hert men uhn gilui Elokus*—there is a clear revelation of G-dliness.” On many occasions, the Rebbe quoted the *possuk* “*Sham tzivah Hashem es habracha*—Hashem has set His blessing there,” regarding Kfar Chabad.

The goal was very clear from the beginning: Kfar Chabad’s first and primary goal was to be a center of *hafatzas hama’ayanos*, and the Rebbe constantly pushed for more to be done in this regard.

### *The Spiritual Nerve Center*

The first significant foray into *hafatzas hama’ayanos* for the Kfar’s residents took place outside the village, in cities throughout the country, when the Rebbe opened *Reshet Oholei Yosef Yitzchok*, a network of schools that would provide a Torah education for Israeli children. When the schools opened in 5712, many Chassidim left the agricultural work and began teaching Torah full time.

Within the Kfar’s borders, one of the earliest institutions in this spirit was *Beit Sefer L’Melachah*, a vocational school for teenagers to teach Torah along with a trade. The Carpentry School, Agriculture School, Metal Working School, and Printing School educated thousands of youth in the ways of Yiddishkeit.

There were also opportunities for people throughout Eretz Yisroel to come for a short visit to “replenish” their spiritual energy. The *hakafos shniyos* held—and still held each year—on Motzoei Simchas Torah drew many participants each year (the Rebbe sent a special telegram for the event each year), and the matzah bakery hosts thousands of school-children, teaching them about the *mitzvos* of Yom Tov.



ISRAELI PRESIDENT ZALMAN SHAZAR JOINS THE YUD-TES KISLEV FESTIVITIES IN KFAR CHABAD, 5726.

ISRAELI GOVERNMENT PRESS OFFICE



STUDENTS OF THE BEIT SEFER L’MELACHA IN THE EARLY YEARS OF ITS ESTABLISHMENT.

This section would be incomplete without an honorable mention of the legendary Yud-Tes Kislev farbrengens. Thousands of people stream to Kfar Chabad for what was, at the time, Chabad’s largest event each year. It was an exceptionally joyous farbrengen, attended by prominent politicians and military officials.

Reb Yitzchok Mendel Lis related:

“I was one of the organizers of the Yud-Tes Kislev farbrengen. Each year, the presence of President Zalman Shazar would stand out. I remember the first time he came; he entered the shul and sat down with everyone else. When I asked him to sit at the head

table, he refused. ‘I’m only a *mechutan* here, nothing more,’ he said.

“Each year, Radio Kol Yisrael would record the proceedings, and we would send the Rebbe a copy. One year, the Rebbe wrote back to us asking for the second half of Shazar’s speech, which had been mistakenly omitted from the recording. It was a few days after *nittel nacht*, so my assumption is that the Rebbe listened to the recordings then.”

Over time, Kfar Chabad indeed became the physical center of Chabad in Eretz Yisroel. All the central institutions were located there, as evident in the *vaad’s* logo, which



REB ZALMAN SUDAKEVITCH MANAGES THE VILLAGE STORE IN KFAR CHABAD, ELUL 5709.



SOME OF THE RESIDENTS OF KFAR CHABAD.

### *The Rebbe's Home*

When the Rebbe first spoke about the theft of the *seforim* from the library in Tammuz 5745, the Rebbe asked that a replica of 770 be built in Kfar Chabad to serve as the center of Agudas Chassidei Chabad in Eretz Yisroel. The stolen *seforim* that had reached Eretz Yisroel could be returned there, the Rebbe said.

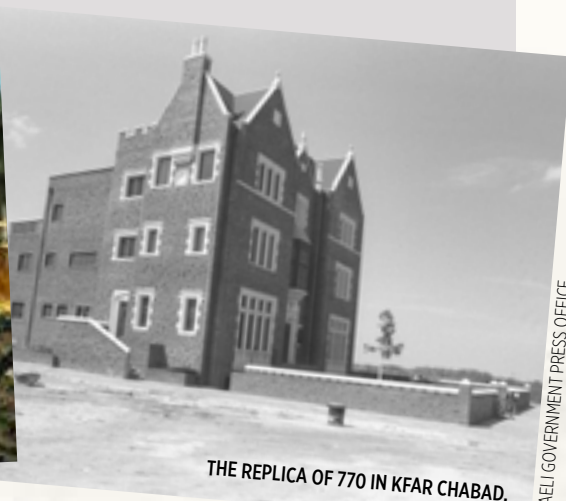
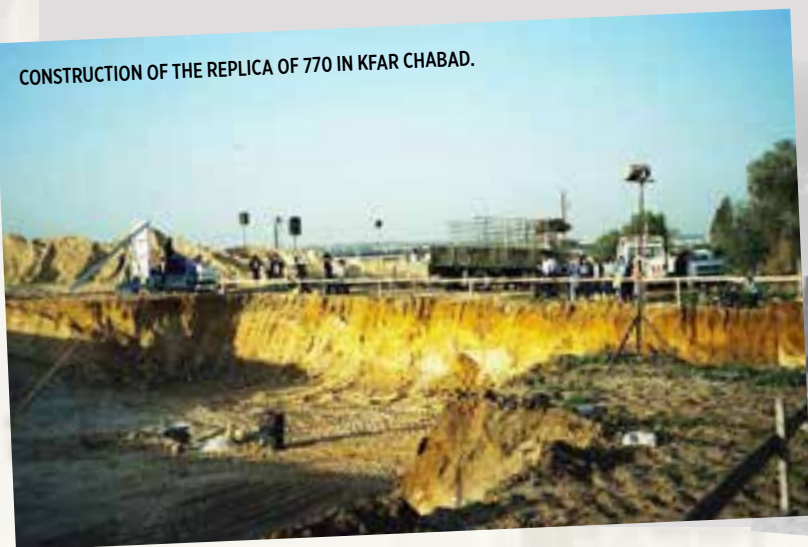
An architect was sent to map out 770 in New York, plans were drawn up and a prime location on the top of a hill was chosen, but the work didn't move very quickly.

Many months later, during the *fabrogen* of Lag B'omer 5746,<sup>12</sup> the Rebbe gave a deadline: the building should be completed by Yud-Beis Tammuz.

This was a huge surprise; at that point only the shell of the building was built! Although the contractors said it was impossible, work began around the clock and, amazingly, the building was completed in time. The *chanukas habayis* was held on 15 Tammuz, and it was mentioned by the Rebbe during the *yechidus klolis* on that day.<sup>13</sup>

Today the building serves as a center for people who wish to connect with the Rebbe. People from all over Eretz Yisroel come to daven in the replica of the Rebbe's room and write *panim* which are later sent to the Ohel. The small *zal* is a *kollel*, and the basement houses Kehos of Eretz Yisroel.

CONSTRUCTION OF THE REPLICA OF 770 IN KFAR CHABAD.



THE REPLICA OF 770 IN KFAR CHABAD.





ISRAELI PRESIDENT ZALMAN SHAZAR JOINS THE FESTIVITIES MARKING THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY SINCE THE FOUNDING OF KFAR CHABAD, 5729.

depicts Kfar Chabad on a map of Eretz Yisroel, with arrows moving in all directions, declaring, “*Ufaratzta yamah vakeidmah tzafonah vanegbah.*”

### Setbacks

One of the most significant problems in those early years were from bands of Arab marauders, who would sneak in over the border from Jordan or Gaza, and steal, maim and kill at will. Small villages located in middle of vast orchards and forests were prime targets.

Reb Yitzchok Mendel Lis related:

“At first, Kfar Chabad was hit with a wave of thefts. Almost on a nightly basis, animals and equipment would disappear. The damages reached hundreds of thousands of *lir*; a cost the destitute villagers could not afford.

“Seeing the uselessness of the police, we organized our own *shmirah*. During harvest, when we were in the fields late into the night, someone would always stand guard to chase away the potential thieves.

“The Arabs became more and more audacious. In addition to thieves, there was a great danger from the *fedayeen*, bands of terrorists who would commit

terror attacks throughout the country. We petitioned the government to help us with extra security, but we were turned down. The official who made that decision later paid with his job.

“One day, a *bochur* named Aryeh Dubruskin disappeared on his way through an orchard from Lod to *Beit Sefer L'Melachah*, where he taught a group of students. After days of searching, his body was found. Obviously, the entire village was deeply shocked.”

The danger of the *fedayeen* came to a head on Rosh Chodesh Iyar 5716. Students of *Beit Sefer L'Melachah* were gathered in their *beis midrash* to daven *Maariv*, when a group of terrorists attacked the school, shooting from the doorway. In a matter of minutes, they were finished and made their escape.

Four of the students and their teacher *hatomim* Simcha Zilbershtom lay on the floor, no longer amongst the living. A number of others were wounded, one of whom passed away a few days later.

The attack sent shockwaves throughout the country. Parents of the students traveled to Kfar Chabad,

to take their children home. The safety of their children was at stake, they felt, and they no longer wanted their children to remain in the *Beit Sefer L'Melachah*. A spirit of dejection spread amongst the Chassidim as well and many wanted to move away. Some proposed that the fledgling village be disbanded. It was simply too dangerous!

The only comfort was the firm messages of the Rebbe which came through letters and telegrams in the days following. Immediately following the *shiva*, an encouraging letter from the Rebbe arrived, and during the following weeks and months, many more followed.

In the first letter, the Rebbe wrote:

“I strongly hope that with the help of Hashem who guards with a wise eye and oversees with *hashgacha protis*, you will overcome every obstacle, strengthen both personal and communal affairs, and expand all the organizations in quantity and quality.

“From Kfar Chabad, the wellsprings of Chassidus and the deeds of our holy Rebbeim should be spread until they reach *chutza*, in

order to bring all of *bnei Yisroel* closer to our father in heaven—*b'chesed ub'rachamim*—and to speedily bring the complete *geulah* through Moshiach Tzidkeinu.”<sup>14</sup>

In the winter before the attack, the Rebbe had already encouraged an expansion of the *Beit Sefer L'Melachah*. Following the attack, the Rebbe urged that the expansion materialize quickly. Hastily, a new division called *Yad Hachamisha*, dedicated to teaching the skill of printing was opened, and plans were drawn up for a new building.

At the *siyum hashloshim* of the slain *talmidim*, a groundbreaking was held for the expansion. The chief rabbis, along with distinguished *rabbanim*, politicians, community leaders, and an enormous crowd, took part in the event.

A month and a half after the attack, Kfar Chabad was informed of an exciting development. The Rebbe would be sending twelve shluchim to visit Eretz Yisroel to lift their spirits. On Shabbos Chazon, the shluchim spent a Shabbos in Kfar Chabad.

That Shabbos was like Simchas Torah. Hundreds of Chassidim spent Shabbos in Kfar Chabad in order to see the shluchim. Young and old listened raptly as they spoke. The life infused by the shluchim remained with the inhabitants of Kfar Chabad for many years to come.

As many elderly Chassidim will relate today, it was this group of shluchim that really “brought the Rebbe to Eretz Yisroel,” and were the inspiration for many young *bochurim* to come to the Rebbe. The entire story at length was covered in “Transforming Tragedy,” *A Chassidisher Derher* Iyar 5775.

## Peace

The close atmosphere of a small village made everyone feel at home with each other, but to an extent, had a very strong disadvantage. Being that

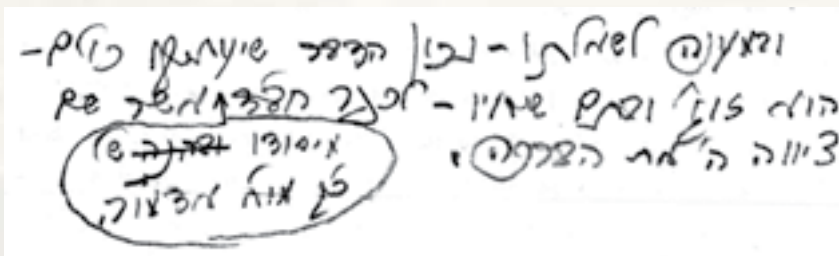
## The Vessel of Peace

“...To the Vaad of Kfar Chabad...

“In regards to the unholy occurrence of a hand being raised *vechulu*... I am obliged to write the following words:

“It is very noticeable, that throughout all the years of the village’s existence, it has been protected and watched over in supernatural ways, thank G-d. This is surely through the efforts of our Rebbeim, and especially my father-in-law, the Rebbe, the founder of the Kfar and its leader. This is to the extent that from the day Kfar Chabad was founded in 5708 until now, thank G-d, not a single resident has passed away. This is clearly an open miracle. Now, Hashem’s mercy must be channeled through proper vessels, and the vessel that holds His blessing is peace. This is certainly the case to receive the blessings of the Rabbeim, who sacrificed their lives for *ahavas Yisroel*, as I’ve written several times. It is **obvious**, that each and every resident of Kfar Chabad must be extra scrupulous in matters of peace and harmony.”

(Igros Kodesh vol. 16 p. 7.)



ובמענה לשאלתו-נכון הדבר שיעתיקו כולם - הוא זוג' ובתם שיחיו - לכפר חב"ד מיסודו של כ"ק מו"ח אדמו"ר, אשר שם ציווה ה' את הברכה.

IN RESPONSE TO YOUR QUESTION: IT IS APPROPRIATE FOR YOU ALL—YOU, YOUR WIFE, AND DAUGHTER SHEYICHYU, TO MOVE TO KFAR CHABAD, FOUNDED BY MY FATHER-IN-LAW THE REBBE, FOR THERE HASHEM COMMANDS HIS BLESSING.

the mayor, city council and everyone in the town were all Lubavitchers, the lack of comfortable distance allowed for some individuals to fuel the flames of *machlokes*.

From the very beginning, the Rebbe’s letters are full of encouragement on the topic of peace and harmony, and the blessing it would bring on the Kfar. In 5718, the Rebbe sent a very strongly worded letter, with an overwhelmingly powerful message in it (see sidebar).

In 5743, a protracted conflict plagued the town over administrative issues. At the end of the following Tishrei, the Rebbe held a special *yechidus klolis* exclusively for the

residents of Kfar Chabad, speaking about the significance the Rebbeim placed in Kfar Chabad’s success and the importance of peace for that goal to be achieved. “The Rebbe *nessi doreinu* is begging everyone, stand together and receive all the *brachos* that are waiting for you,” the Rebbe pleaded. “You need only to stand together with *ahavas Yisroel*...” The Rebbe asked that everyone should put all the past occurrences behind them and turn a new page with one-another.

Just before leaving the shul at the end of the *yechidus*, the Rebbe asked that a *farbrenge* should be arranged where *hachlatos* can be made in the right direction. “I will participate in



the farbrengen as well,” the Rebbe added. “Physically I’ll be somewhere else, but in spirit, I’ll be here...”

The divides had been deep, but the clear pain expressed by the Rebbe shook Kfar Chabad to its core. That night, Reb Mendel Futerfas, the *marshpia* of Tomchei Temimim in Kfar Chabad, farbrenged throughout the night, and during the farbrengen, several people previously at odds with each other made amends.

### *A Holy City*

In light of its special status, the Rebbe encouraged people to support Kfar Chabad in countless ways. One *minhag* where Kfar Chabad was singled out by the Rebbe was during Sukkos every year: After *bentching lulav*, the Rebbe would conduct *na'anuim* with an *esrog* from Kfar Chabad.

The Rebbe constantly encouraged them to grow in numbers, inviting more families to join; Ashkenazi, Sephardi—people from all backgrounds.

The Rebbe also directed the building of Kfar Chabad Beis—a small settlement near Kfar Chabad which today houses the Beis Rivka girls’ school and several dozen families. (At one point there was even talk of a Kfar Chabad Gimmel.)

Reb Yitzchok Mendel Lis related:

“The work in the Kfar Chabad secretariat was very difficult, and several times I asked the Rebbe for permission to leave it. I always merited to receive a letter of encouragement in response, and the Rebbe would write amazing things about the holiness of Kfar Chabad.

“In one letter, the Rebbe wrote:

“In regards to your question whether to remain in the *avodas hakodesh* of Kfar Chabad or to look for other jobs—I am very surprised to receive this question from people

again and again, after I have already answered it...”

“My opinion is clear. Settling in Kfar Chabad, and especially working towards its development, is a gateway and conduit for Hashem’s blessings.”

The Rebbe’s view of Kfar Chabad was expressed succinctly in a *yechidus* to the father of Rabbi Mordechai Shmuel Ashkenazi *a”h*, the rav of Kfar Chabad, when he asked the Rebbe where his son should settle after his wedding. When he suggested Yerushalayim or Tel Aviv, the Rebbe asked,

“Why not in Kfar Chabad, *ir habirah fun Eretz Yisroel*, the capital city of Eretz Yisroel.” **T**

1. Motzei Shabbos, 4 Kislev 5708 (תש”ח)
2. In 5704 (תש”ד)
3. Reb Pinye Althaus was a respected Chossid and a beloved *askan* in Russia and Eretz Yisroel during those early years. To read more about

his fascinating personality, see *Derher Sivan* 5775, “A Friend of Every Jew.”

4. *Igros Kodesh Admur Harayatz* vol. 10 pg. 47.
5. Reb Shlomo was a prominent benefactor who sponsored many projects during the early years in America, for the Friediker Rebbe and the Rebbe. More on this topic can be found in *Igros Kodesh* vol. 20 pg. 606.
6. *Igros Kodesh Admur Harayatz* vol. 10 pg. 161
7. *Ibid* pg. 167.
8. Reb Yitzchak Mendel’s interview was printed in several installments in Kfar Chabad Magazine issues 788-791.
9. In recent years, as Kfar Chabad is a fully developed area, street names were indeed given.
10. *Igros Kodesh Admur Harayatz* vol 10, p. 298
11. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 6 pg. 257.
12. *Toras Menachem - Hiva’aduyos* 5746 vol. 3 pg. 355.
13. *Ibid* vol. 4 pg. 76.
14. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 13 pg. 30.



THE REBBE DELIVERS A BROCHA WITH THE ESROGIM FROM KFAR CHABAD ON THE TABLE.

14 TISHREI 5751, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 174390

# The Life of a Chossid

## Reb Pesach Molostovker

Passed away: Kislev 5631.

Chossid of: The Alter Rebbe,  
Mitteler Rebbe, Tzemach Tzedek.

*Our Rebbeim often emphasized the importance of telling and hearing stories of Chassidim as a means of bettering our own lives.<sup>1</sup> Being a Chossid isn't just being exemplary in any one area, rather it is a lifelong effort to improve in every part of one's avoda. We have a lot to learn from the Chassidim of previous generations. This column is not meant to be a comprehensive biography on the life of the Chassidim that we are covering; it is an opportunity to have a glimpse into their lives so we can improve our lives as Chassidim. This takes on many areas such as hiskashrus, ahavas Yisroel, davening, mesirus nefesh and kabbolas ol. With these stories and anecdotes, we have attempted to highlight these areas.*

Reb Pesach was a Chossid of three Rebbeim: The Alter Rebbe, the Mitteler Rebbe and the Tzemach Tzedek.

He was widely acclaimed for his ability to teach Chassidus in a clear and captivating manner, such that his listeners would be motivated into action. As a rule, he was strict about teaching Chassidus only to his *talmidim*.

Reb Pesach was commonly known as Pesach Molostovker, a reference to his hometown. He owned a mill, but his primary “profession” was clearly his being a devoted Chossid.

### Living the Lesson

Reb Pesach was a passionate teacher of Chassidus, especially the concept of *bitul hayesh*. What made him stand out as an exceptional teacher was his ability to help his student take the concept he was teaching, *bitul*, from an intellectual idea to tangible reality. This is demonstrated in an incident that took place with one of his *talmidim*:

Walking down the Russian streets, possibly after a curfew, a Russian police officer called out, “*Kta idyot?*” (“Who is walking?”) to which the *talmid* naturally replied, “*Bitul idyot?*” (“*Bitul* is walking!”)

This concept that he learned from Reb Pesach was so deeply ingrained in him, to the extent that this was his honest reply.<sup>2</sup>

From Kislev תקפ”ח, following the *histalkus* of the Mitteler Rebbe, until Shavuot of that same year, the Tzemach Tzedek did not yet accept the *nesius*.

For Shavuot, many Chassidim came to Lubavitch and returned home through Dubrovna. One of these Chassidim was Reb Pesach Molostovker. In Dubrovna they met Reb Nechemiah<sup>3</sup> who told them that he dreamt of the Alter Rebbe and understood that he needs to go to Lubavitch. Right then and there, this group of *eltere Chassidim* decided to return to Lubavitch with him. On that Shabbos the Tzemach Tzedek said Chassidus three times and from then on the *eltere Chassidim* became *mekusharim* of the Tzemach Tzedek.

After the *histalkus* of the Mitteler Rebbe, the older Chassidim took upon themselves to encourage the Chassidim to be *mekusharim*. They divided the country, each receiving an area where to travel. Reb Pesach was part of this group and also received an area.

Years later, the Rebbe Rashab told the Frieddiker Rebbe that this is the real *avoda* of Chassidus—to be *me’orer* other Chassidim even though they knew that personally they weren’t yet at the ideal level of *hiskashrus*. Working for three years, explaining and teaching the younger Chassidim to connect themselves to the Rebbe with a true *pnimiyusdiker hiskashrus*, in turn brought out the true *hiskashrus* in the elder Chassidim as well.<sup>4</sup>

### Be prepared!

Reb Pesach was once in *yechidus* by the Tzemach Tzedek, when the Rebbe asked him, “Reb Pesach, what do you do before davening?”

He replied that he follows what the Alter Rebbe writes in Likkutei Torah that one should go to mikvah, give tzedakah, and learn Zohar.

The Tzemach Tzedek told him, “Regarding Zohar, my grandfather (referring to the Alter Rebbe) explained that this means studying Chassidus.”<sup>5</sup>

### A Journey for Amens

Being a great *oved*—one who focuses intently on the *avoda* of *tefilah* through contemplation and meditation—Reb Pesach would daven for hours on end. In his old age, he wasn’t physically capable of continuing this practice so instead he would travel around from *minyán* to *minyán* and answer *amen*, *borchu*, etc.



## The Soldier or his Uniform?

Czar Nikolai the First once let it be known that he was to visit one of his regiments the next day and expected them to be in perfect order. The soldiers prepared anxiously, well aware that nothing less than perfect would be tolerated. It was a hot day and with all the running around to be ready, one of the soldiers felt the need to jump into the nearby river for a quick swim. Much to his dismay, the trumpets announcing the Czar's arrival sounded before he had a chance to put his uniform back on. Making a quick decision, he joined the ranks as he was, dripping wet and completely naked.

Needless to say, the Czar was not amused and asked the soldier why he had not prepared properly. The soldier replied, "Your Excellency, who serves you—me or my clothing?" The Czar was quite impressed with the answer and exclaimed with the typical Russian "Bravo!"

Reb Pesach saw in this a fundamental lesson in our *avodas Hashem*. When we make a sincere self reckoning before davening and realize that our "garments" (thought, speech, and action) are not where they should be, we need to keep in mind that the essence of our *neschama* is always pure and it is with this that we come before Hashem to daven.<sup>6</sup>

Reb Pesach once related about himself, "Throughout the year I collect all my questions that arise in Chassidus so that when I go into *yechidus* I can ask the Rebbe. However, the moment I enter the Rebbe's room all my questions vanish and I have all the answers I need."

Reb Shmuel Gronem once explained this phenomenon: "Questions are sourced in *kelipa*; in the Rebbe's room *Elokus* is revealed, so when Reb Pesach would enter and his *neschama* would feel *Elokus*, all the questions disappeared."<sup>7</sup>

His exceptional dedication to davening was well known and even the *misnagdim* in his town recognized its specialty. This did not sit well with them and out of great jealousy they decided to stop him. They arranged, through the powers of black magic, that he should start having sinful thoughts. Reb Pesach was deeply disturbed by this and turned to the Alter Rebbe for help. The Alter Rebbe immediately understood that these thoughts were coming to him through the power of *kelipa*.

The Alter Rebbe took an apple, stared at it briefly, and handed it to Reb Pesach, telling him to say that he doesn't want it. Reb Pesach replied, "How can I say I don't want it, if I really do?"

The Alter Rebbe took the apple a second time and the scene repeated itself. By the third time Reb Pesach said, "Now I truly don't want it!" The Alter Rebbe then gave him the apple, he took a bite and was cured from his sinful thoughts.<sup>8</sup>

## For the Sake of Another

Running for her life, a young girl was racing breathlessly away from her ruthless Cossack pursuers. Watching this

מוקדש  
לחיוזוק ההתקשרות לכ"ק אדמו"ר  
נדפס ע"י ולזכות  
הרה"ת ר' שמואל אהרן וזוגתו מרת חנה  
ובניהם שניאור זלמן, מנחם מענדל,  
דוד ואליהו שיחיו  
נובק

horrendous scene was Reb Pesach, who immediately leaped into action to save her, completely disregarding his own safety.

Being a strong and well built man, he chased off the few Cossacks who were threatening the girl but they quickly regrouped and returned with backup. They were now out for revenge and for blood; Reb Pesach's blood. Being no match for the oncoming attackers, he ran into a courtyard full of barrels and hid under one of them.

When the Cossacks searched the area and couldn't find him, they began beating and spearing the barrels with their weapons with the hope that they would beat Reb Pesach no matter where he was hiding. To an extent they were successful as Reb Pesach did indeed sustain a severe injury to his head and suffered constant headaches as a result.

When he went to the Alter Rebbe and told him about his pains, the Alter Rebbe placed his hands on Reb Pesach's head and the pain disappeared. After the *histalkus* of the Alter Rebbe, the pains returned. He went to the Mittlerer Rebbe and the same thing happened. This repeated itself a third time with the Tzemach Tzedek as well.

## Quick Facts

- The Tzemach Tzedek would send Chassidim just to "sit" and observe the special conduct of Reb Pesach.<sup>9</sup>
- The Rebbe's father, Horav Levi Yitzchok Schneerson, was a *talmid* of Reb Yoel Chaikin. Reb Yoel had learned under the guidance of Reb Pesach.<sup>10</sup>
- Reb Pesach was very talented and well versed in *niggunim*. Each year before Shavuot, he would send a newly composed *niggun* to Reb Hiller Paritcher. Reb Hillel would arrange for a *niggun* to be sung before the Rebbe said a *maamar* and thereafter. Reb Pesach's *niggun* was one of these.

1. See *Telling it Like it Is—Darkei Hachassidus*, Derher, Iyar 5776.

2. This story was repeated numerous times by the Rebbe. See: *sichos* Yud-Tes Kislev 5698; Yud-Tes Kislev 5716, et. al.

3. Reb Nechemiah Dubrovner was a great Chossid and incredible *ga'on*, married to the Alter Rebbe's granddaughter.

4. Sefer Hasichos 5691, p. 245.

5. *L'Sheima Oizen* (Duchman), 202.

6. Teshura, Rot, Kislev 5764.

7. *Lmaan Yeidu* (Schusterman), p. 269

8. *Ibid.*, p. 270.

9. Reshimas Hayoman, p. 22.

10. Kovetz Lubavitch p. 62.



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# FOCUS ON THE OTHER

7 Iyar 5710

*In the early months of the Rebbe's nesius, on 7 Iyar 5710, a bochur was privileged to have his first yechidus with the Rebbe. He later wrote down his recollections of the yechidus, and the Rebbe edited them.*

*I bemoaned the state of my spiritual avoda; that my avoda kept changing. The Rebbe responded:*

If there are changes above (i.e. even in heaven), will there not be changes below (i.e. here on earth)?

This is what many *bochurim* are lacking: they think about themselves too much. It is necessary to think about others for at least an hour a day.

This was one of the things that the [Frierdiker] Rebbe demanded in *sichos*, letters, and the like; to do things for others. The Rebbe took you on his shoulders, but you must accomplish on your own as well.

If a thought about yourself falls into your mind, and you feel depression setting in distracting you from your *avoda*—you must push the thought away. If you cannot shake the depression, because you're not in a good state, you should remind yourself of how crucial it is that you do things for others' benefit; think of how you can help someone else.

You must be especially meticulous about *hisbonenus* (contemplation) during davening, since the [Frierdiker] Rebbe told you to do so. You should contemplate the meaning of the words you're saying. For example, in the *hemshech* titled "*Moshcheini*" of 5701, which you're learning now, it explains the *possuk* "*Halelu es Hashem min hashamayim* (Praise Hashem from the heavens)" which is part of *pesukei d'zimra*.

The *brachos* of *krias shema* are a time for introspection.

Your contemplation during davening need not cover an entire *maamar* at once; one concept from a *maamar* is enough. Do so even if it seems like the concept of the

*maamar* you learned before davening has nothing to do with the meaning of the words of davening. I once asked the [Frierdiker] Rebbe whether this would be considered an interruption, and he responded that it is not. Your *hisbonenus* should take place at the points in davening where it is not halachically considered an interruption, for a length of time that is not considered an interruption; don't extend the amount of time it would take to finish *davening*.

*The Rebbe explained to me how to learn a subject and understand it well, using the subject of Chezkas Habattim [the third perek of Gemara Bava Basra] as an example. The Rebbe then told me:*

The [Frierdiker] Rebbe gave you work for an entire lifetime.

*In regard to an individual who I was being mekarev, the Rebbe said:*

When you help others, it will help your own *hisbonenus*. As the Alter Rebbe stated, [that through *tzedakah*], "[a person's] mind and heart become a thousand times more pure." This teaches us two things: Firstly, that *hisbonenus* is always necessary; even if your mind and heart are already pure to a certain degree, you must still work on them. Secondly, [*tzedakah* accomplishes that] when you do *hisbonenus*, it will be much easier and more effective.

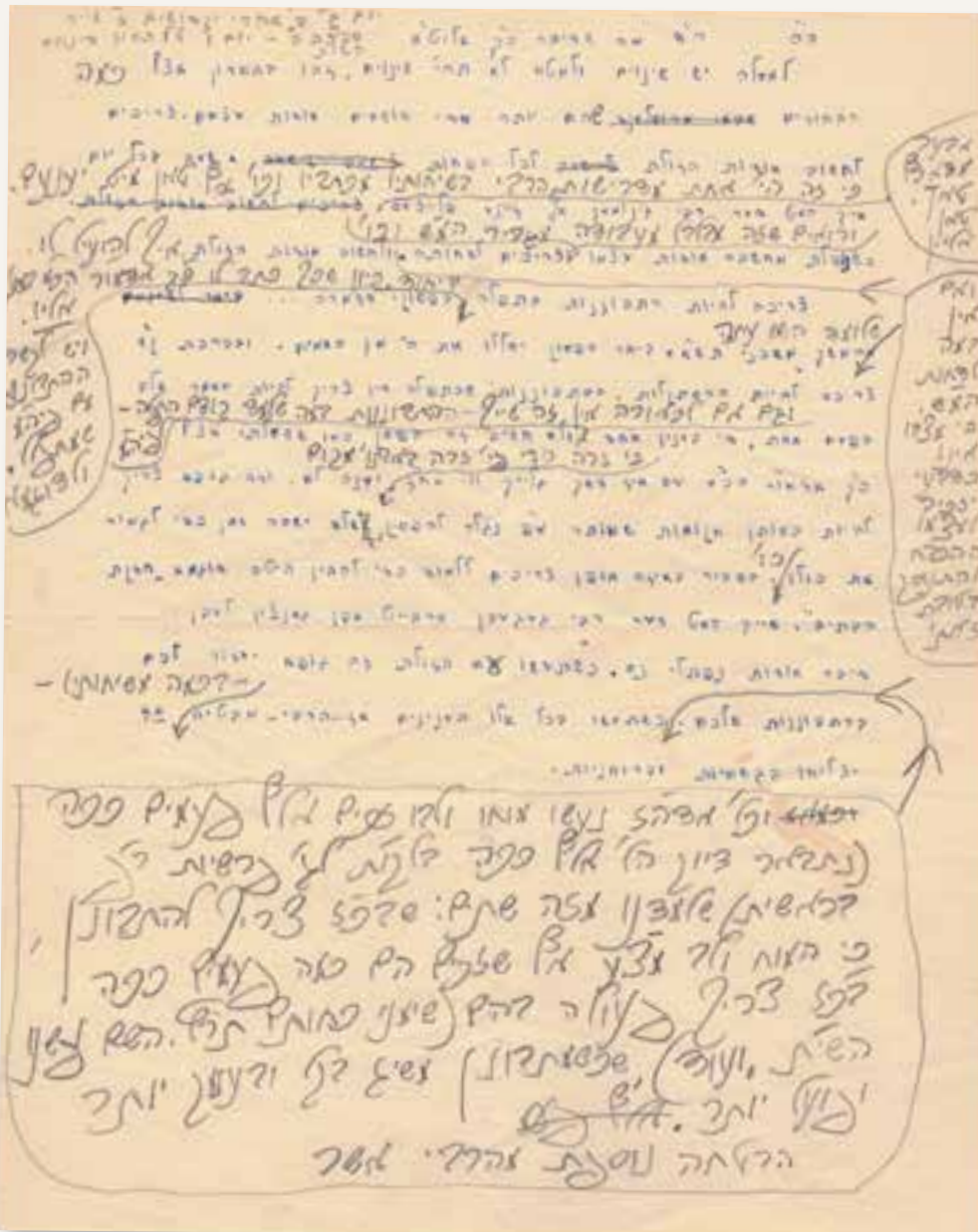
The Rebbe guarantees that if you will do all of this, you will succeed both materially and spiritually. **T**

*(Full transcript of the yechidus, along with the Rebbe's edits, is published in Yemei Bereishis p. 148)*



לזכות  
ילדינו היקרים  
יצחק צבי, מנחם מענדל, אברהם מאיר,  
יהודית וישראל ארי' לייב שיחיו  
שיגדלו להיות חסידים  
יראי שמים ולמדנים  
נדפס ע"י הוריהם  
הרה"ת ר' אליעזר וזוגתו חנה שיחיו  
וואלק

# THE REBBE'S EXTENSIVE HAGAHOS ON THE TRANSCRIPTION OF THE YECHIDUS.



לע"נ  
הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' שמעון ע"ה  
בהר"ר שמואל זאנוויל ע"ה הי"ד  
גלב"ע כ"ט תשרי ה'תשע"ז

ולע"נ זוגתו  
מרת אסתר ע"ה  
בת הרה"ח ר' יוחנן ע"ה  
גלב"ע ט"ב תשרי ה'תשע"ד

תנ"צ'ה

נדפס ע"י בנם  
הרה"ת ר' שמואל זאנוויל  
וזוגתו מרת צירל שיחיו  
גאלדמאן



**The Alter Rebbe's great-grandfather, Reb Moshe of Posen, was a descendent of the Maharal, an astounding gaon, scholar of many sciences, and a linguist. This is the story of how he reconnected dozens of young Jews to Yiddishkeit in the Vatican University.**

**Adapted from Sefer Hazichronos Chapters 108-113.**

Reb Moshe was appointed head of the Jewish community of Posen at the age of twenty-five and served in that capacity for 22 years. It was a time of immense pressure for Jewish communities throughout Europe. There were constant banishments, heavy taxes, and local laws barring Jews from many professions or owning land.

Worse than the physical persecution, the Catholic Church endeavored to strengthen its influence

# AT THE VATICAN UNIVERSITY

by forcing local Jewish leaders into public religious debates. These debates were never organized in a fair manner and always ended in disaster for the Jews.

Posen was no exception and the local church leaders tormented Reb Moshe with endless debates that led to baseless libels and incitement against the community. Reb Moshe realized it was impossible for him to continue leading the community effectively and he decided to resign and secretly relocate to another community. He smuggled his vast estate out of the country and eventually settled in Minsk over the course of several years.

During this transition period, Reb Moshe visited the *yeshivos* and Torah scholars of Padua, Italy, where he had spent several years of his youth learning Torah and the sciences. He continued on to visit other Italian communities, until he arrived in Rome and visited the Vatican Library with its priceless collection of rare *seforim* and unknown Torah manuscripts.

The Vatican librarian was impressed with Reb Moshe's scholarship, noble character and charisma. He shared his impressions of the venerable Jewish scholar with his colleagues and they invited Reb Moshe to publicly debate with them. He reluctantly agreed on condition that the debate be conducted in a room without religious symbols and that even the cardinals not wear their religious symbols during the debate. Some were deeply insulted by this but eventually agreed to his conditions and the debate was set.

Although Reb Moshe's initial conditions were followed (no symbols were in the room nor on



# MEESHAMOS SAMING

their clothing), he found himself representing Yiddishkeit alone against 30 Vatican representatives, including 12 famous scientists.

After a cardinal opened the debate with a long speech on the importance

of faith in life, Reb Moshe protested, in fluent Italian, the unfairness of the arrangement. He demanded that the two sides be represented equally and that he should be allowed to present the Jewish perspective in *Lashon Hakodesh*. (An interpreter could translate for the benefit of the majority who were unfamiliar with it.) Furthermore, the opening remarks should be reserved for the representative of Judaism, since it predates Christianity.

His logic and eloquence vexed the cardinals and some calumored that he be punished for his insolence. Ultimately, they realized he was correct and the debate was adjourned and postponed indefinitely. The Vatican librarian felt guilty for the discomfort Reb Moshe experienced as a result of the entire episode and

he was extra friendly with him from thereon.

Meanwhile, Reb Moshe was perturbed by the fact that during the short debate he noticed a young student who was clearly Jewish sitting among the prominent Vatican guests. Curious to discover this fellow's identity, he asked his librarian friend what he knew about him. At first he demurred, explaining that this information was top secret. This obviously intensified Reb Moshe's urgency to get to the bottom of the matter.

Finally, his friend relented and shared with him everything he knew. The young Jewish genius hailed from Poland and travelled to Venice to study astronomy. While there, he enrolled in a theology course and the professor recommended he transfer to the Vatican University, where he would benefit from the best theology courses in the world. The professor clearly hoped the young Jew would ultimately convert, but the young man did not sense this and heeded his advice.

At first, he remained a committed Jew, but after several months under the influence of the Vatican theologians, he started to be lax in his observance, although he was still careful with Shabbos and *kashrus*. The cardinals hoped that in due course he would convert and serve as a powerful tool for their proselytizing endeavors. Until then, his identity was kept top secret to ensure that no Jew have the opportunity to interfere with their grand plans.

R' Moshe was overcome with feelings of gratitude to Hashem for being presented such an opportunity during this otherwise regretful experience. He now understood the real reason for his being in Rome and entering into the debate at the Vatican—to save this young Jew from *shmad*, *r"l*.

**THE MAHARAL**



**HARAV BETZALEL**



**HARAV SHMUEL**



**HARAV YEHUDA LEIB**



**HARAV MOSHE**



**HARAV SHNEUR  
ZALMAN**



**HARAV BORUCH**



**THE ALTER  
REBBE**

With two weeks to go until the debate resumed, and cognizant of the fact that he was under constant surveillance, Reb Moshe strategized how to meet the young man in a way that would not arouse suspicion. After some research, Reb Moshe started eating his meals at the kosher guesthouse frequented by the young man each day. On Shabbos, during the Shabbos meal, the young man entered and introduced himself to Reb Moshe as Gedalya Moshe Gordon of Vilna.

“Ever since I heard your speech during the debate, I have many doubts in the legitimacy of Christianity,” he said. “When I asked my mentors to introduce me to you they told me you had left town.”

His naiveté was evident, so Reb Moshe advised Gedalya Moshe to keep his newfound relationship with him a secret from his mentors and offered to meet with him secretly to discuss all matters of faith. Gedalya Moshe gladly accepted.

During their first conversation, Gedalya Moshe shared his story with Reb Moshe. His father was a *talmid chochom* and a prominent doctor in Vilna. After many years of Torah study, he travelled to Venice to study the sciences and languages. At the Venetian Academy he studied theology and transferred to Rome upon the recommendation of his professor.

He enrolled in a mathematics and astronomy course and a philosophy course on the development of religions. Under the influence of the religion professors he was attracted to Christianity, however, as a result of his discussions with Reb Moshe he

realized that he had much more to learn and discover. He was far from the end of the road...

Reb Moshe's influence over Gedalya Moshe became absolute and he advised him to move off campus so that he not be so strongly influenced by the church environment. He lived with a Jewish family and came to the Vatican campus only for classes.

Reb Moshe was surprised to discover that there were dozens of Jewish students enrolled at the Vatican University. Since most European universities did not accept Jewish students at the time, those seeking a higher secular education had no choice but to attend classes at the Vatican, which accepted Jewish students with open arms—for obvious reasons...

Many of the professors were also Jewish. This included many priests who had converted, *r"l*, as well as professors and scientists who were apathetic and hostile to Yiddishkeit although they had not taken the dramatic step of conversion.

After a short while, Gedalya Moshe's commitment to and observance of Yiddishkeit intensified, to the chagrin of his professors and mentors. He started debating the religion professors during class, successfully disproving all of their points. As long as there was the possibility that he would ultimately convert and serve as a powerful proselytizing tool for the church, Gedalya Moshe was adored by the faculty. Now he was treated with obvious disdain and ridicule.



He graduated the mathematics and astronomy course with honors, but failed the philosophy course and was even admonished for his stubbornness and naiveté for rejecting the “true faith.” Gedalya Moshe was angry and bitter from the unfairness he was subjected to, but was happy to receive his doctorate in the exact sciences.

His conversations with Reb Moshe became longer and more frequent and he even started inviting fellow Jewish students to join these sessions. They formed a support group and strengthened each other in all matters of Yiddishkeit. Gedalya Moshe was the pride and joy of the group due to his exceptional talents and genius and became their de facto leader. The fact that he had returned to a life of absolute Torah observance and passion for Yiddishkeit had a great effect on the rest of the Jewish students. Many were inspired to follow in his ways.

The members of the group openly discussed the importance to reach out and be *mekarev* the other Jewish students, who had never merited a proper Jewish education and were completely unfamiliar and distant from Torah and *mitzvos*.

Reb Moshe observed these developments with much joy and satisfaction. He felt that this was his reward for his extended stay in Rome.

Meanwhile, the debate with the cardinals resumed. After much negotiation, Reb Moshe opened the proceedings with a brilliant three hour speech in eloquent Italian proving the truth of Torah-true Judaism. Everyone in attendance was forced to admit

that Reb Moshe was the undisputed victor in the debate and this made an indelible impression on the many Jewish students and lecturers at the Vatican.

Although Reb Moshe was pained from the fact that his forced debate could possibly cause the church authorities to become more hostile and vengeful of the Jews, he was delighted at the opportunity to reach these Jews who were in such spiritual despair. Many young Jewish students who were previously ignorant of Yiddishkeit were returning to a life of Torah and *mitzvos*.

Many came from assimilated families. Their parents were shocked to hear that their sons had adopted completely Jewish lifestyles, in the Vatican, of all places! Some were understanding and supportive of these developments, but others were upset and distraught.

Anthony Yanovsky came from a family in Warsaw so assimilated that he did not even have a *bris milah*. They did not have the courage to convert to Christianity, so they sent Anthony to study the Vatican University with the hope that he would convert, settle in Italy, after which they would follow him there and convert as well.

Anthony became a member of this special group of students, had a *bris mila*, and started living a complete Jewish life. He did not notify his parents of these developments until he graduated.

His parents were thunderstruck to learn from their son, the newly ordained professor, that he was now Avrohom Yanovsky, a fully observant

Jew. He moved to Krakow, married into a prominent Jewish family and secured a professorship in the academy of Prince Radziville.

Another student came from an assimilated Jewish family in Sweden. His parents also did not have the courage to officially convert to Christianity. They sent their son to study at the Vatican University hoping that at least he would ultimately do so. Now they heard that he was living a Torah-true life!

His father sent him a long letter, admonishing him for his foolishness and for the life-threatening danger he was causing for himself and his family back home. The young man responded by disproving all of his father’s arguments, and clarified that although the Torah obligates him to honor his parents regardless of their spiritual state, with regard to Torah and *mitzvos* he need not follow their instructions.

He notified them that after graduating the Vatican medical school, he planned on moving to Amsterdam, which boasted a vibrant Jewish community, as he would never return to the spiritually devoid and anti-semitic environment of Sweden. He invited them to join him there.

He indeed moved to Amsterdam, married into a prominent family and became a well renowned physician as a *yarei shamayim*. His parents ultimately joined him there and started living a life of Torah and *mitzvos* as well. ❶

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



LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 204415

THE REBBE ENTERS HIS  
ROOM AT THE CLOSE  
OF YOM KIPPUR, 5737.





# Yom Kippur *with the* Rebbe

*a roundtable discussion*

*Every Yom Tov in the festive month of Tishrei has its special moments with the Rebbe. Even a day like Yom Kippur, being solemn and serious and not necessarily a time of lively occurrences, has its special story to tell. Lekach, the brocha to anash, the special brocha to the bochurim, and the climax of Napoleon's March; these are some of the most special moments with the Rebbe throughout the year.*

*We are privileged to record the following zichronos of these special moments with the Rebbe as recounted by **Rabbi Sholom Duchman** of Brooklyn, NY, **Rabbi Avraham Mann** of Toronto, ON, and **Rabbi Yosef Nemes** of New Orleans, LA.*

*See similar roundtable discussions we've held about Rosh Hashanah, Derher Tishrei 5777; Simchas Torah, Derher Tishrei 5778.*



JEM108990

THE REBBE EXITS 770 HOLDING THE KAPOROS CHICKEN FOR THE SHECHITA, EREV YOM KIPPUR 5729.

## Let's begin with the seder on Erev Yom Kippur.

**Rabbi Duchman:** On Erev Yom Kippur in the morning, the Rebbe would arrive at 770 early for *kaparos*. After performing it in his room, the Rebbe would come out to the back of the building where he would give the chicken to the *shochet*, and after the *shechita* the Rebbe would perform *kisui hadam*. The Rebbe would then go to the mikvah and come out for *Shacharis*.

Generally, the Rebbe did not visit the Ohel on Erev Yom Kippur (with the exception of 5750).

**Rabbi Mann:** One thing we always noticed was that during the *shechita*, the Rebbe shuddered a bit and had an uncomfortable face. Then the Rebbe

covered the blood five times with the feathers, after making the *brocha* “*al kisui hadam*.” This can be seen on video.

Throughout the day (and specifically by *kaparos*), the Rebbe's face was extremely serious, perhaps even more than on Yom Kippur itself. Sometimes it appeared as if the Rebbe's eyes were red from tears.

After *Mincha*, for instance, when the Rebbe gave a *brocha* to *anash* in the shul, the Rebbe was very serious throughout. (One exception to that was in 5752, when the Rebbe spoke in a very joyous tone; more about that later on.) The vibe was a seriousness that seemed to imply concern that all the Yidden should have a *shana tova umesuka*. The content of those *sichos* after *Mincha* were always about

positive things; *brachos* and assurance for a good year ahead, etc. The Rebbe also often spoke of *teshuva ila'a*, the higher level of *teshuva* that we all hope to attain; a *teshuva* done with joy.

Later on, on Yom Kippur night, the Rebbe was still serious, but slightly more relaxed.

Interestingly, in 5750 the Rebbe put things in a fascinating perspective. On Shabbos Shuva, the Rebbe said that there should be *farbrengens* every day until Yom Kippur. Then he listed all the remaining days, and when he came to Yom Kippur he said, “*Af Yom Kippur farbrengt yeder Yid mit Atzmus u'Mehus alein!* On Yom Kippur, every Yid “*farbrengs*” with Hashem Himself!”

**Rabbi Duchman:** Throughout most of the years of the Rebbe's *nesius* (until Chof-Beis Shevat 5748), one of the few





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THE REBBE DISTRIBUTES LEKACH EREV YOM KIPPUR, 5749.

days a year that the Rebbe davened *Shacharis* on weekdays with the *minyan* was on Erev Yom Kippur. It was a special time when we were able to see the Rebbe during *Shacharis* and daven with him. It was usually a fairly quick davening, as it is a very busy day.<sup>1</sup>

## Lekach

**Rabbi Duchman:** After concluding *Shacharis*, the Rebbe began distributing *lekach* at the door to his room. Sometimes, when there were still people that hadn't received, the Rebbe continued giving out *lekach* after *Mincha*.<sup>2</sup> Men and children all passed by, receiving a piece of cake, and a *brocha* for a *shana tova umesuka*. (Women would come by the Rebbe for *lekach* on Hoshana Rabba.)

**Rabbi Nemes:** The distribution of *lekach* was obviously a very special part of the day. The Rebbe stood for

hours greeting each individual and blessing them with a good year. A very long line would form to get *lekach*. We used to go to mikvah, daven, and say lots of Tehillim to prepare ourselves before seeing the Rebbe.

## Mincha and Brocha to Anash

**Rabbi Duchman:** The Rebbe came downstairs to the large shul for *Mincha* holding bags of coins. Plates (makeshift "*tzedakah pushkas*") were set up and the Rebbe dropped money into each one. After *Mincha*, the Rebbe gave a *brocha* to *anash* and then the Rebbe would go home, returning later for *birkas habanim*.

As early as I can remember (5727 or 5728), the Rebbe davened *Mincha* on Erev Yom Kippur in the big shul downstairs.

# On Yom Kippur, every Yid 'farbrengs' with Hashem Himself!"



LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 190094

ON HIS WAY TO MINCHA, THE REBBE STOPS  
AT THE TABLE WITH PUSHKAS AND PLATES  
COLLECTING FOR VARIOUS CAUSES, PLACING  
A COIN IN EACH ONE. EREV YOM KIPPUR 5741.





In the earlier years, when I was a young child, the Rebbe gave a short *brocha*. In the later years it evolved into more of a *sicha*. I remember the Rebbe once standing on a table to give this *brocha*.

**Rabbi Mann:** Many times, the Rebbe gave a long *brocha* specifying a word beginning with each letter of the entire Aleph-Beis.

At times, we were able to see what seemed to be heavenly occurrences during this *sicha*. Two examples that I remember: On Erev Yom Kippur 5748, the Rebbe spoke about the concept of a *kli cheres*, an earthenware utensil that was not made with the intention of being an absorbent *keli* is not *mekabel tumah*. The Rebbe connected this with the concept of “*adam yesodo me’afar*,” that man was created from dust of the earth and is likened to a *kli cheres*. As long as we are not absorbed with our own *metzius*, we are *bottul* to Hashem, then we too will not be *mekabel tumah*. While discussing this concept, the Rebbe was crying.<sup>3</sup> In retrospect, we understood that this alluded to the Rebbetzin’s *histalkus* later that year on Chof-Beis Shevat.

Another example was during the *sicha* of 5745, when the Rebbe concluded with a *brocha* for young and old, using the words of the *possuk* “*binareinu u’bizkeineinu*.” It seemed as though the Rebbe was “stuck” on those words. Later that evening, during *Kol Nidrei*, one of the elder Chassidim, Reb Shmaryahu Gurary from Eretz Yisroel, passed away in 770. (The Rebbe actually came out to his *levaya* on the day after Yom Kippur.)

In 5752, the Rebbe said an amazing *sicha* with *brachos* and hopes that Moshiach would come before Yom Kippur, and then we wouldn’t have to fast; because the *Beis Hamikdash* will be built, and we would celebrate—just like the *chanukas Beis Hamikdash* in the times of Shlomo Hamelech, when the fast of Yom Kippur was suspended.



RABBI PINNY LEW

FOLLOWING MINCHA, THE REBBE GIVES A BROCHA TO THE CHASSIDIM, EREV YOM KIPPUR 5728.



JEM

THE REBBE BENTCHES THE BOCHURIM WITH BIRKAS HABONIM, MOMENTS BEFORE THE ONSET OF YOM KIPPUR, CIRCA 5740S.

The Rebbe turned toward us and started waving his hand, motioning that we should come up on the *bima*.

The expressions the Rebbe used and the joyful look on his holy face were incredible, *shtureming* about the imminent *geula*. The Rebbe concluded by starting his father's Simchas Torah *niggun*! This was unprecedented for a time as serious as Erev Yom Kippur.

### Birkas Habanim

**Rabbi Nemes:** In the 5740s, the *brocha* to *anash* lasted quite a while, until around 4:15 p.m., leaving a little more than two hours until *Kol Nidrei*.

Just before *Kol Nidrei*, the Rebbe famously came out to the *bochurim* to *bentch* them with *birkas habanim*. This was a custom the Rebbe started in 5712, the first Tishrei after *kabbolas hanesius*, when the Rebbe said that the *bochurim* are the “Rebbe’s kinder” and should therefore come in to his room to receive a *brocha* just as a father *bentches* a child.

As soon as the Rebbe finished the *brocha* to *anash*, we hurriedly ate something for *seudah hamfsekes* and then ran back to 770 to get a place for *birkas habanim*. Many *bochurim* brought small containers of food with

them earlier so that they wouldn’t have to leave 770 for the *seuda*.

**Rabbi Duchman:** I was a sixteen-year-old *bochur* in 5730 and I remember that in those years the Rebbe gave the *brocha* to the *bochurim* in *Gan Eden Hatachton*. There were hundreds of *bochurim* crowded in to the tiny area and many more all the way up the staircase. Then in 5731, it was moved to the hallway right at the entrance of 770. It was so crowded—it was literally *sakanas nefashos*. The following year, the *brocha* was moved to the small *zal* upstairs.

The Rebbe would wear his *tallis* and *kittel* and his head was covered. In the years that I was a *bochur*, it was a short *brocha*; not really like a long *sicha*.

**Rabbi Nemes:** The doors to the *zal* were locked until 6:00 p.m. Also the *chatzer*, the yard where the sukkah stood with the big windows open to the *zal*, was closed until 6:00. But people still came earlier to be first in line and get a good place when the doors did open.

There were three sections in which *bochurim* stood: The younger *bochurim*



stood in the *chatzer*. Those who were 21 or older (as well as the “*kvutza bochurim*”) stood in the *cheder sheini*, where they saw the Rebbe through the large window between the two rooms (the shelves in the window were taken out). Those who were 22 or older were allowed in the *zal* with the Rebbe.

The most pushing was outside in the *chatzer*; we are talking about all the *bochurim* younger than 21—hundreds and hundreds. But there is nothing in the world that can compare to being there at that moment. Receiving a “father’s *brocha*” directly from the Rebbe is an incredible *zechus* that every *bochur* lived for.

**Rabbi Mann:** There was often a strong sense of emotion heard in the Rebbe’s voice during this *brocha*, although the Rebbe seemed to try and “tone down” the emotion a bit. The earlier *brocha* to *anash* sounded more like a *sicha*, but the tone of this *brocha* was more like a *yechidus*. The Rebbe spoke quieter. As you can see in the videos, the Rebbe covered his eyes with his *tallis*, like a father giving a *brocha* to his children, spreading his *tallis* over their heads...

**Rabbi Nemes:** I was *zoche* to stand right near the Rebbe in 5749. I remember how the Rebbe walked in and looked around at everyone present. Then the Rebbe covered his eyes with the *tallis*. From under the *tallis*, some were able to notice the Rebbe’s tears. There was a great level of closeness we felt at that moment.

Here the Rebbe is on his way to *Kol Nidrei*, a time when Jewish children around the world are each receiving blessings from their fathers, and the Rebbe was taking the time to *bentch* us. The whole room and the yard outside fell totally silent.

The Rebbe began with the traditional *pesukim* of *birkas kohanim* and continued with a *brocha* that we should succeed in all the *inyanim* of a *bochur* in *Tomchei Tmimim*. The

Rebbe often spoke about everything that is expected of a *bochur*, learning *nigleh* and *Chassidus*, davening, and being “*neiros le’hair*,” but it was all delivered in a tone of *kiruv*.

**Rabbi Mann:** After Chof-Beis Shevat, the Rebbe *bentched licht* for Yom Tov before arriving at *birkas habanim*, so a microphone was no longer used. I remember that in 5751, I had a good place by the window and was able to hear very well, even though there was no microphone.

## Moments later the Rebbe would come downstairs for Kol Nidrei.

**Rabbi Nemes:** Davening with the Rebbe on Yom Kippur was a special thing. More than any other day of the year, we were with the Rebbe for so many hours; almost the entire day. From *Kol Nidrei*, to *Maariv*, to *Tehillim*, *Shacharis*, *Musaf*, *Mincha*, and *Ne’ila*. The Rebbe came into shul for *Kol Nidrei* at around 6:30 and would remain with us until after *Tehillim* at 10:30 at night! And the next day again, we were with the Rebbe all day. This was obviously very special and uplifting.

**Rabbi Duchman:** When the Rebbe arrived for *Kol Nidrei*, he would recite *Tehillim* for a while. Then the *sifrei Torah* were brought out; the Rebbe would go down from his place, stand next to the *chazzan* and was given the first *sefer*. Reb Shmaryahu Gurary from Tel Aviv had a special *kvius* to hand the *Sefer Torah* to the Rebbe. As mentioned earlier, in 5745 he collapsed right before the *aron* was opened. The entire shul waited until he was taken out and the Rebbe stood and spoke to the doctors for a while.

After *Maariv* the Rebbe would remain in the shul for the recital of the entire *Tehillim*. In the earlier years, my grandfather, Reb Zalman Duchman, would be the *chazzan*. Later after he

passed away, he was replaced by Reb Zalman Schmerling from Tel Aviv.

**Rabbi Mann:** Reciting the entire *Tehillim* on Yom Kippur is not mentioned in the *minhagim*; the Rebbe himself instituted this practice in 5712. Interestingly, the Rebbe sometimes remained in shul even after the *chazzan* concluded, until he finished the entire *Tehillim* himself. (On Shabbos Mevorchim, the Rebbe would leave the shul as soon as the *chazzan* concluded, even if he hadn’t yet finished the entire *Tehillim*.)

I remember in 5752, the Rebbe asked Rabbi Klein where the *yahrtzeit* candles were and if they were actually in the shul, not in a side hallway. The Rebbe wanted to confirm that the candles were lit in the shul.

## Shacharis

**Rabbi Duchman:** Yom Kippur morning was quite relaxed, as far as pushing and the like. It was a quiet *Shacharis*. The Rebbe wasn’t called up to *maftir* in the morning (he received *Maftir Yona* in the afternoon), and Rabbi Hodakov read the *haftorah* instead. This was one of the only times during the year that the Rebbe was not called up for *maftir* (the one other time was *Simchas Torah*).

## Mincha and Maftir Yona

**Rabbi Duchman:** The real “pushing” started by *Mincha*, of course.

*Mincha-Ne’ilah* was when everyone wanted to get the best places. I remember that in certain years, after *Maftir Yona* the *bima* that was used for *kriah* was moved all the way to the back of the shul, in order to not obstruct the view. Other times, people stood on the *bima*. I always made sure to have a good place, and after I got married I had a place right behind the Rebbe. I made sure to get there right after the Rebbe recited *Maftir Yona*.

It was a tough decision that one had to make: Stand near the *bima* of *krias haTorah* and hear the Rebbe's *maftir* or stay close to the front of the shul and have a good place for *Ne'ila* and Napoleon's March?

The Rebbe always came in to shul for *Mincha* wearing his hat. Upon reaching his place, the Rebbe placed the hat inside his *shtender* and covered his head with the *tallis*.

Very often while reciting *Maftir Yona*, the Rebbe cried profusely; heart wrenching *bechiyos*. I remember this specifically occurring while reciting the *pesukim* of *yud gimmel middos* at the end. In the later years this happened less frequently.

## Ne'ila

**Rabbi Duchman:** In earlier years, *bochurim* stayed up the entire night of Yom Kippur to reserve their place near the Rebbe for *Ne'ila* some 20 hours later. But that was before my times. Then in 5728, the Rebbe spoke about this and rebuked those "*vos men kukt, un men davent nisht*—who just stand and look, not davening at all." After that, things got somewhat calmer.

Either way, *Ne'ila* was the climax of Yom Kippur; the culmination of the momentum that built up throughout the day.

Reb Shmuel Zalmanov was the *chazzan* in the earlier years. Later it was Reb Mordechai Teleshevsky, and then Reb Mottel Berkowitz.

**Rabbi Nemes:** In addition to the pushing and trying to get a good place for the "March," there was a certain intensity in the air. There was an unbelievable energy in the whole room. During *chazzaras hashatz*, the Rebbe encouraged the singing with his hand much more intensely than at any other time on Yom Kippur; notably during the singing of "*Ki Anu Amecha*" and "*Ata Vechartanu*." The energy was set by the Rebbe's intensity, and it impacted us as well.

At times, the *chazzan* was slightly ahead of schedule. In these instances the Rebbe would encourage the singing of some *niggunim* many times over, especially during the second half of *Ne'ila*, depending on how much time was left. (The Rebbe had a watch in front of him on his *shtender* indicating the *z'man* when it would be acceptable to blow the *shofar*.<sup>4</sup>) By the time we reached *Avinu Malkeinu*, the Rebbe's encouragement got much stronger and much more intense. The Rebbe was now not only motioning with his hands; his whole *guf* was shaking.

## Heavenly Affairs

**Rabbi Duchman:** In 5734 (the year of the Yom Kippur War), the Rebbe cried loudly and profusely. I remember this occurring during *Avinu Malkeinu*; the Rebbe was banging very strongly on the *shtender* and *poshut* sobbing. It was a sight to behold. We could see the Rebbe's face literally moving up and down.

**Rabbi Nemes:** There are certain things that occur throughout one's lifetime that will never be forgotten. For me, one of those moments was when I was 10 years old. Let me share what took place:

It was during the break between *Musaf* and *Mincha*. A group of friends and I, maybe six or seven of us went all the way over to the front of the shul where all the *bochurim* usually stood. At first there was a little bit of extra room, but then, as many of the *bochurim* began pushing forward, we ended up getting shoved further up, eventually reaching very close to where Rashag, the Rebbe's brother-in-law, davened.

At some point toward the end of *Mincha* or the beginning of *Ne'ila*, the Rebbe turned and glanced at us a few times. Then the Rebbe called Rabbi Groner and told him to make sure we

weren't pushing Rashag, or the *aron kodesh*.

But as Rabbi Groner was talking to us to convey the message, the Rebbe turned toward us and started waving his hand, motioning that we should come up on the *bima*. At that point we went up to the *bima*, standing just a few feet behind the Rebbe; *mamash* right there. This lasted literally through the entire *Ne'ila*, maybe even from the end of *Mincha*. It was incredible. Every time there was a *nigun*, the Rebbe encouraged the singing of the crowd with his left hand, and he also encouraged us with his right hand.

At some point, I think it was right before *Avinu Malkeinu* or perhaps even earlier, the Rebbe called over Rabbi Groner and told him something. Rabbi Groner immediately stood at the other end of the *bima* and screamed out that the Rebbe asked for all the children to come up!

I don't remember exactly what he said but it was clear that this wasn't for very young babies. Only children of six or seven and older were passed up. It was unbelievable! Children were being passed over heads from every corner of the shul and brought up to the *bima*. Pandemonium erupted; it was very noisy.

The Rebbe himself picked up the *shtender*—I was standing just a few feet away when this happened—and moved it all the way to the left side of the *bima*, closer to the *chazzan*, so there would be more space for the children on his right side and behind him. Eventually there was no place left on the *bima*, so the Rebbe motioned to the *bochurim* to move back, leaving room on the side of the *bima* for more children who came afterwards. To me it seemed like there were 200 or 250 children there.

Then came *Avinu Malkeinu* and again, the Rebbe encouraged the singing with both hands. We heard





THE REBBE TURNS TO WISH "GUT YOM-TOV!" AT THE CLOSE OF YOM KIPPUR.

terrible *bechiyos* from the Rebbe; I was very close, but I understand that even people who were behind the Rebbe's *bima* heard these tremendous sobs.

The Rebbe was standing with his back to us but we were still able to hear. It was not like when the Rebbe would choke up slightly during a *sicha* or the like; this was full-on crying. At the time, I didn't necessarily realize the depth of it, but as I got older, I began to think about what had

happened that Yom Kippur: There was obviously some heavenly affairs being orchestrated right before our eyes; the Rebbe, the *nossi hador*, standing with all the children next to him. It's unbelievable when you think about it! It was like a "*Baal Shemsker ma'aseh*."

If I remember correctly, after the *shofar* was blown and *kaddish* was over, the Rebbe told Rabbi Groner that now the children can return to their places.

**Rabbi Mann:** A similar scene took place when I was an eleven-year-old child, in 5742. Right at the beginning of *Mincha* we were standing near the Rebbe's *bima* and the *gabbaim* were chasing us away. Seeing this, the Rebbe told them to allow us to come back, so I was standing right near the Rebbe.

All of a sudden, during *Ne'ila*, we heard crying. It was the Rebbe! While the crowd sang *Avinu Malkeinu*, the Rebbe was waving both of his hands very strongly, indicating that we should sing it over and over. The Rebbe banged on the *shtender* very strongly, not just banging but picking up his hands very high. He repeated this same *tenua* with both hands over and over and the *nigun* was repeated 10 times! All during this time, the Rebbe was crying loudly.

## Napoleon's March

**Rabbi Duchman:** Napoleon's March was one of the most incredible moments with the Rebbe. In the earlier years, the Rebbe would stand on his chair and then (starting in 5743) the Rebbe went up a special set of stairs with a platform. Imagine, the Rebbe was approaching 80 and *mamash* jumping and dancing on the chair. It was incredible!

Notably, the Rebbe would not look at the crowd. He stood with his eyes closed and for most of the time, his *tallis* was over his eyes. The time that the Rebbe stood on the chair was relatively long; maybe three to five minutes. Perhaps even longer.

**Rabbi Nemes:** As the Rebbe was standing and encouraging the singing on his chair, he would hold on to the *tallis* tightly as it kept falling at the sides as a result of the jumping and dancing.

But it all happened in stages. The Rebbe didn't begin on the chair; first he encouraged the singing at his place. Then he would get up on the chair (or the stairs), face the crowd, and



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start clapping and swinging his hands vigorously.

The Rebbe exhibited great *simcha*, the march symbolizing our *nitzachon*, but the intensity of Yom Kippur was prevalent. The jumping and dancing of the crowd was like Simchas Torah, but the Rebbe himself was joyous and serious at the same time.

It was one of those times when everyone was able to see the Rebbe (although his face was usually covered). The Rebbe was very high up, on top of his chair or the platform, which was on top of the *bima*.

**Rabbi Mann:** It is hard to describe the *simcha* in the room during those moments. The movements the Rebbe made with his hands were unbelievable. I'll never forget those *tenuos*, how the Rebbe waved his hands from side to side. It was a great expression of *simcha poretz geder*—joy breaking all boundaries.

As a young *bochur*, I remember thinking how I'm not going to have enough strength at the end of the fast to sing and dance; I thought I'd be hungry and weak. But once we saw the Rebbe in his full glory dancing and moving from side to side like that, we forgot about everything in the world.

Usually the Rebbe's face was covered with his *tallis* during the March. However, there were a few times when the Rebbe's face was not covered. In 5748, at first the Rebbe's face was uncovered; but then, all of a sudden, the Rebbe pulled his *tallis* down over his holy face.

Because I was standing right there, I was able to see that the Rebbe was in middle of encouraging the singing when suddenly he burst out crying. Immediately, the Rebbe pulled down the *tallis* and covered his face.

In 5752, we witnessed something extraordinary:

Throughout the entire singing of the March, the Rebbe's face was not covered by his *tallis*. The Rebbe

stood on the steps for a much longer time than usual, remaining there until after the *shofar* blowing. Then the Rebbe called out "*Lshana haba'a b'Yerushalyim*" along with the entire crowd. It seemed as though the Rebbe was continuing the great joy of that year's Erev Yom Kippur.

## Maariv and Havdala

**Rabbi Duchman:** When the Rebbe turned around, the singing concluded. The *chazzan* finished *Aleinu* and *Tehillim*, the Rebbe put on his hat, and davening would conclude as usual.

Ironically, one of the most incredible moments of Yom Kippur was actually after Yom Kippur, when the Rebbe turned around after *havdala* and swung his hand, wishing a loud "*Gut Yom Tov!*" three times. From that moment on, the Rebbe's face was glowing!

It was a turning point: In one instant, the mood shifted from seriousness to joy. You could feel it in the air.

Everything changed in that split second when the Rebbe exclaimed "*Gut Yom Tov!*" In the earlier years this was actually the only time this occurred throughout the year; the Rebbe never called out "*Gut Yom Tov*" any other time, only on Motzei Yom Kippur! The Rebbe would then begin singing a *freilicher niggun* (*Vesamachta* or his father's Simchas Torah *niggun*).

**Rabbi Nemes:** Even the people who were outside when the Rebbe went out to *kiddush levana* could still see that the Rebbe's face was glowing. We felt like we were witnessing the face of the *Kohen Gadol* after the *avoda* of Yom Kippur; the "*mareh kohen*."

That moment marked the beginning of *Zman Simchaseinu*. Instant change. There was such a shine and glow; a ways away from the seriousness of Napoleon's March only 15 minutes earlier. It was incredible.

Once we saw the Rebbe in his full glory dancing and moving from side to side, we forgot about everything in the world.

“...They davened *Ne’ila*, the expression of *yechida shebenefesh*, but when Motzei Yom Kippur arrived, everyone rushed through davening!”

## Where’s the Moon?

**Rabbi Mann:** I remember how in 5749, the Rebbe davened *Maariv* at the *amud* (it was the year of *aveilus* for the Rebbetzin), and afterwards he turned around and said with a large smile “*Leich echol b’simcha lachmecha*—go and eat your bread with joy.” It is a phrase that the Alter Rebbe cites in *Shulchan Aruch*, quoted from the *Midrash*. It was a time of incredible *simcha*.

That same year, one of the Chassidim (Reb Sholom Ber Levitin) had come into the shul and announced: “*Nishta kein levana*”—there is no moon (for *kiddush levana*).

THE REBBE RECITES KIDDUSH LEVANA OUTSIDE FOLLOWING YOM KIPPUR, 5750.





The Rebbe was in a very “*simchadiker*” mood and responded, “*S’da, ober s’iz fardekt*—there is [a moon]; it’s just covered.” The Rebbe’s mood was shining.

## Kiddush Levana

**Rabbi Mann:** I’d like to conclude with a very interesting *vort* from the Rebbe:

In 5750, after the whole day of fasting and davening, the Rebbe came out to *kiddush levana* and said a short *sicha* afterwards.

Later, on Simchas Torah the Rebbe said that he saw how some people were rushing their davening on Motzo’ei Yom Kippur, eager to be over with it.

They davened *Ne’ila*, the expression of *yechida shebenefesh*, but when Motzei Yom Kippur arrived, everyone rushed through davening! Some might say it is because they are concerned about their health. But the truth is, people were just eager to eat...<sup>5</sup>

Chassidim understood that perhaps the Rebbe was thereby explaining why he had caused *kiddush levana* to last longer by saying a *sicha* afterwards, even though everyone was fasting. It’s as if the Rebbe was saying, “Why the rush? Yom Kippur is such a holy time, the *gilui* of *yechida shebenefesh*...” And when Simchas Torah came around, the Rebbe used the opportunity to

reprimand the Chassidim, because—as the Rebbe often repeated—“Simchas Torah *shadt nisht*, Simchas Torah does no harm.”

May we be *zocheh* to the time when we will no longer need these *zichronos* and printed stories. We will see the Rebbe again and behold his holy presence, *b’karov mamash!* **1**

1. See Sefer Hasichos 5699, p. 304.
2. In the later years the distribution of *lekach* began a few days before Yom Kippur, leaving time for the ever growing crowd to receive.
3. Hisvaaduyos 5748 vol. 1, p. 130.
4. Although it is halachically permitted to blow the *shofar* earlier, the Rebbe was careful to wait.
5. Hisvaaduyos 5748 vol. 1, p. 230.

THE REBBE ENCOURAGES THE JOYOUS SINGING WHILE LEAVING FOR HOME AFTER YOM KIPPUR 5738.



# My Yom Kippur with the Rebbe— Niflaos Bakol

*The following is a letter written by Reb Yaakov Cohen of Potomac, MD, after spending an uplifting Yom Kippur with the Rebbe in 5752. In order to preserve the authentic sentiment of the original letter, we have left the material mostly raw with very minimal editing.*

## Motzo'ei Yom Kippur 5752

What are my feelings after spending Yom Kippur in Crown Heights with the Rebbe Shlita? When I arrived, there were lots of people on the streets, sukkahs were being built everywhere, and people were crowded around “770.” My first action was to drop my bags at the Butmans and run over to “770” to check my seat and get *lekach* from the Rebbe. People were lined up and I squeezed my way in, and then there was our Rebbe. His eyes were looking at everybody so intently while giving you his *brocha*.

After *lekach*, it was time to get back for the first *seudah* at 2:00 p.m. It was a nice meal with plenty of food. As we were eating, the siren went off two times indicating the Rebbe was saying a *sicha*. We *bentched* and went off to “770.” The Rebbe was speaking but it was too crowded to get a spot where we could see him. This is the most frustrating part; not being able to understand the Rebbe as he speaks. At times like that I feel like a foreigner among my own people. I left early because it was getting late and I knew I had to be back early to insure my seat at *Kol Nidrei*.

After the *seudah hamafsekes*, I got my *tallis*, *kittel*, and *machzor* and rushed over to “770.” At this point I was still apprehensive and not sure what to expect. I was saying Tehillim, anxiously waiting for the Rebbe. The shul was filling up and up... the usual “770” scene. Then the Rebbe came in but I could hardly see him due to the crowd and he was covered in his *tallis*. I could see him as he went to his *shtender* and *Kol Nidrei* began. I remember the feeling that I couldn't concentrate because of all the people, and that it was different than what I was used to at Beth Shalom. This feeling continued throughout *Kol Nidrei*. Then after *Aleinu* the Rebbe sits down and we start saying Tehillim for the next hour and a half.

One problem I had was standing, due to the benches, but how do I sit in front of the Rebbe? I didn't finish the

whole book of Tehillim like everybody else but I got to *Nun* or thereabout. When a full “770” starts to sing *Avinu Malkeinu* it's unbelievable! We would sing this whenever the Rebbe came in.

After the Rebbe left, I walked to the Butmans thinking I was disappointed in my davening and was determined to get up early to finish Tehillim, and prepare for davening. I awoke at 8:30 a.m. and felt tired, but I got up and headed to shul. It was not crowded because *Shacharis* didn't start until 10:00 a.m., so I started saying Tehillim.

When the Rebbe came in we were quite crowded, but I had my seat.

As the day went on I felt glad that I was with the Rebbe. My davening wasn't like normal but I was feeling like I was part of a very unique spiritual event. When the Torahs came out this was the first time you could see the Rebbe's face under the *tallis* as his eyes followed the Torahs to the *bimah*. It was like a “*malach*” was standing there. I wish I could have been closer. The man next to me said to his grandson, “Look at the Rebbe on Yom Kippur, it's beautiful.”

When the *leining* started the Rebbe turned back around. I wanted to make eye contact with the Rebbe, but I was too far away. Meanwhile the grandfather was telling his grandson, “the Rebbe is looking right at you and he knows what you are thinking, therefore you should be thinking of *Yud, Kay, Vav, Kay...*” This man loves the Rebbe and Chassidus. He kept telling his different grandchildren thoughts of Chassidus and questioning them. He said learning Tanya is a *kapparah* for everything.

The anticipation was growing as *Musaf* approached. I kept wondering what the Rebbe looked like and what he was thinking. It was getting difficult to hear the *chazzan* and I felt I was getting weaker and getting a headache. I think it was Hashem's way of keeping me with a taste of reality.



(In retrospect, that was reality; this *golus* outside is the bad dream.)

It was getting extremely crowded as we approached *Aleinu* and everybody, small or large, wanted to see the Rebbe as he bowed. I actually saw him getting up and then I bowed under my bench. When the *chazzan* got to the first *V'hakohanim* in the *avoda*, I saw the Rebbe bow, you could feel the Bais Hamikdash... I started to think about the Rebbe and I contrasted him to my *avodas Hashem*, and I am embarrassed. Here he is doing *teshuvah* for all our *aveiros*, and I need to do much more than I currently am. The *avoda* service was very quick in "770."

Then the *chazzan* got to *Ki Anu Amecha*, it was BOOMING and you see the Rebbe's left hand moving up and down pushing for more. It's hard to explain the feeling of security that Hashem is going to answer *klal Yisroel* for good. By the end of *Musaf* I was drained physically and mentally. People were getting very anxious for the Rebbe's *Mftir Yonah* and *Ne'ilah*.

When I returned to "770" everybody was talking about Napoleon's March (the *niggun* which breaks out at the end of Yom Kippur and the Rebbe dances on his chair).

The kids are everywhere and it's amazing how they climb around over the people and benches. I thought about the kids near me, how beautiful they are and how lucky they are to be growing up with the Rebbe in their midst. Their heartfelt singing and their love of the Rebbe is unbelievable.

The people of Lubavitch don't over-venerate the Rebbe; they love him and he loves us! How do we let him down by not carrying out his lead in bringing Moshiach?

The Rebbe came down at 5:30 p.m. and you saw his face as he watched the Torah... One little kid said to his friend "the Rebbe has a happy face on." It was hard for me to tell but you cannot explain the feeling you get seeing the Rebbe on Yom Kippur.

When the Rebbe is called for his *aliyah*, he took his blue *machzor* with him and I had a perfect view of him at the *bimah*, although his face was covered by his *tallis*. Several times during the *brocha* he lifted up the end of the Torah and I kept thinking "I wonder what his *kavanos* are?"

After his *aliyah* the Rebbe said the *haftorah*. I could barely make out the words but I could see him and I watched his hands. They look so frail but they have the strength of Hashem in them. How does he have the ability to do what he does? The only answer is that the spiritual level the Rebbe is on somehow gives him the physical strength.

The next set of *Avinu Malkeinu* was getting louder and more powerful. By the end of *Mincha* the place was wild. I had no seat left, and Rabbi Raichik, who is so frail, came to sit next to me. As time was passing the excitement was

building. I tried to remember it's *Ne'ilah* and to give myself completely over to Hashem, not just in words, because they weren't flowing very well, but I said to Hashem "I am exhausted, my body has no strength, I'm tired, I have a headache, and I came to be with my Rebbe on Yom Kippur... I can't do anymore, please accept my *teshuva*. I am going to work much harder on my *avoda*."

Then came the end of *Neilah* and everybody was standing on the benches crowded to the inch. Rabbi Raichik told his son to lift him onto the bench so he can see the Rebbe. Here is an old, frail, rabbi standing on a bench so he could see the Rebbe. He said "at the end of Yom Kippur, I need to see the Rebbe." This rabbi is so attached to the Rebbe you could see it in his eyes as he stared, stooped over, at the Rebbe dancing on his platform. This is what a Chossid is; he attaches himself to holiness.

Then the booming "*Shema Yisroel*" is said. I tried to have the correct *kavana*. Then, the Rebbe climbed the steps to the platform and a booming *niggun* was being sung by thousands of men. The Rebbe was leading it and dancing, completely covered by his *tallis*. I was jumping up to see him and singing and crying at the same time... Just writing this brings tears to my eyes. I can't explain the feelings of love and hope I had at that time.

The Rebbe came down and we finished *Neilah* and *Maariv*. I saw the Rebbe standing there with his hat and watching *havdala*. I was drained and extremely emotional as I left "770." I walked back thinking I can't let the Rebbe down this year. Then I heard my name being called and it was Avremel Goldberg asking me to come up to his house and break the fast. There was a house full of children and activity around; it seemed like the table went on for about a block.

I sat down and they brought me juice and a piece of cake which I needed badly. I tried to socialize but found it very difficult. I needed time to think. As I walked to the Butmans I started to feel better and we ate a long meal. I enjoyed being with them immensely. I left early the next morning at 5:15 a.m. to catch the train back home. That is where I am sitting writing this. I feel like I was in a dream and the only thing missing was my family. I thought about them throughout the day, including them in all my *tefillas*.

In retrospect I can say my personal davening was not as intense as normal, but I really gave my body and soul over to Hashem with the resolve to be a better Chossid and help bring Moshiach today.

One day I hope my children will read this and get a glimpse of my feelings of being with the Rebbe on Yom Kippur...

Motzo'ei Yom Kippur 5752

*Niflaos Bakol*



# Downfall of a Rasha

In Czarist Russia, the law required every male to serve a tour of duty for the country. This was obviously a terrible prospect for young Jewish men and they did anything they could to get out of this.

The Tzemach Tzedek bought bonds for each of his grandchildren with each bond valued at 500 ruble. This was the sum it would cost them years later to secure an exemption from military service.

The Rebbe Rashab's brother, the Raza, was not physically fit to serve so although he had cashed in his bond money, he received it back. The Rebbe Rashab, however, could not find a way out of military service so he sold the bond to secure a pass.

The governor of the Vitebsk region in which the Rebbe Maharash and his family were registered was a man by the name of

Vierevkin. He had his eyes set on a Schneerson; what a victory it would be if only just one Schneerson served in the Russian army. He knew that if any member of the illustrious Schneerson family was conscripted into the army, many other Jews would follow suit.

He was so determined to make this happen that he was even ready to offer certain concessions for the Rebbe Rashab, such as ensuring the uniform be *shaatnez* free and allowing him to live in a regular house while the rest of the soldiers stayed in the army barracks.

Unfortunately, Vierevkin was in a powerful enough position to push through this agenda. He requested permission for this plan from his superiors in the Mohilev region, which was where the Schneerson family actually lived even though they were registered

in Vitebsk. They responded that they would not interfere but they would also not assist him in any way.

That was good enough for Vierevkin. He quickly dispatched soldiers to Lubavitch with the draft letter in their hands.

As the net was beginning to spread over the Rebbe Rashab, his father, the Rebbe Maharash put a rescue plan into place. He summoned his driver Ivan just 45 minutes before the messengers arrived.

He told Ivan to hastily prepare for a journey. He then gave him very specific instructions, "You should quickly travel to Husyan, which will take approximately an hour and a half; travel speedily even if the horses will die from exertion.

"After that, continue traveling for two kilometers past the city of Smolensk.

The entire trip should take you close to four hours."

The Rebbe Maharash told the Rebbe Rashab and another Chossid to sit in an due to the winter cold raging outside.

Upon arriving in Smolensk, Ivan returned as instructed, however, his horses had died and could not make the journey. The Rebbe Maharash gave him ten ruble as compensation.

With the Rebbe Rashab safely hidden, the Rebbe Maharash made the necessary preparations back at home. The courtyard of the Rebbe had four guards protecting it at all times; two were stationed inside the courtyard and two right outside.

That day, the Rebbe Maharash instructed the guards to turn away anyone who came, by telling them that the instructions were not to open the gate until six in the morning. Indeed,



לע"נ  
הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' אברהם דוב  
בן הרב יהושע ע"ה  
נלב"ע כ"ד טבת ה'תשע"ג

ולע"נ  
זוגתו מרת ליבא בת ר' ברוך ע"ה  
נלב"ע כ"א טבת ה'תשס"ד  
ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

נדפס ע"י  
הרה"ת ר' אליהו וזוגתו מרת דליה  
ומשפחתם שיחיו  
העכט

לאורך ימים ושנים טובות  
ובראות ולהצלחה רבה ומופלגה  
בעבודת השליחות בגשמיות וברוחניות

the law was that it was forbidden to conduct a search on the house of an honorary citizen in the middle of the night.

As expected, the soldiers of the governor arrived that night but were informed that they would have to return in the morning.

The officer and his men showed up again at nine, however, the Rebbe Maharash told them that he would not be able to see them until twelve noon.

When they finally went in to the Rebbe's room, the officer explained that he needed to conduct a search of the property.

The Rebbe Maharash replied, "Nu, search. Generally they don't search me. I am accustomed to them asking me questions and acting upon my word."

The officer asked the Rebbe Maharash if he knew who had sent him.

"Yes, I know who he is," he responded. "But does he know who I am? I will be in Vitebsk and deal with him directly. Now you can search!" With that the Rebbe Maharash left the room and went out to the sukkah.

Indeed, the governor thought he knew exactly who he was dealing with but things wouldn't turn out the way he had planned.

The governor of Mohilev would periodically travel through his provinces to check out the different villages and cities under his jurisdiction. This time, he made the trip earlier than usual and diverted to Lubavitch. He met the Rebbe Maharash and told him the whole scheme of the governor of Vitebsk and the response he had given him.

The Rebbe Maharash traveled to Vitebsk together with four or five Chassidim. They went to visit the governor in his office where he greeted people (not in his home). The governor, Vervekin, greeted them warmly. When he heard why they had come he replied, "The decree regarding the drafting of your son was made in Petersburg and therefore only they can make the decision for it to be annulled. I am just following orders I received from my superiors there."

The next day the same thing happened again. At

the conclusion of the second meeting, the governor requested that the Rebbe Maharash visit him a third time but on this occasion it should be in his private home.

Vierevkin was a short tempered man, and when the Rebbe Maharash arrived at his house and duly informed him that "my son will NOT serve in the army," he flew into a rage and began saying harsh things.

The Rebbe Maharash told him, "This very evening I am travelling to Petersburg. Tomorrow night I will arrive and on the third day from now I will be meeting with ministers and officials to annul the decree against my son. If they don't agree to do this, I will be left with one choice. I will pack up all my belongings and take my family to Eretz Yisroel. I am requesting that you prepare the paperwork that I will need for this trip; if, however, it us up to you, rescind the edict and don't force me to make

this journey because you will pay a heavy price. I am giving you until I leave on my trip."

The governor responded coolly, "Budtye zdaroveh!" (Be well).

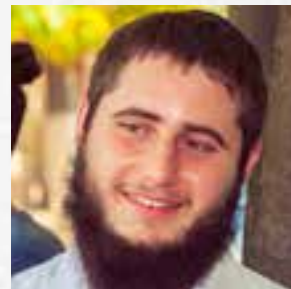
The Rebbe Maharash travelled to Petersburg and spent a few days there.

After doing some research he discovered that in the Mohilev-Vitebsk region Jews were not avoiding army duty as Vierevkin had claimed. After some effort, the Rebbe Maharash was able to accomplish his mission and have the decree annulled.

On his journey home, the Rebbe Maharash went through Vitebsk and repeated a *maamar*. In middle of the *maamar* he said the words "the plague started" which seemed to have no connection at all to the subject matter being explained. Following this, he journeyed back to Lubavitch.

Immediately after this, Vierevkin became very sick, causing him to suffer terribly. His wife sent a messenger to Lubavitch begging for forgiveness. A short time later he died, and many Yidden were spared from this *rasha*. **1**

(Based on Reshimas Hayoman p. 200)



# דער רבי וועט געפינען א וועג...

לזכות  
החייל בצבאות ה'  
ישראל אר" לייב  
לרגל הולדתו י"ג אייר ה'תשע"ח  
ולרגל הכנסו בבריתו של אאע"ה  
כ' אייר ה'תשע"ח

ולזכות הוריו  
הרה"ת ר' יוסף וזוגתו מרת יהודית  
ומשפחתם שיחיו  
וולבוסקי

נדפס ע"י  
הרוצה בעילום שמו

## The Timely Email

AS TOLD BY HATOMIM MENACHEM WOLF (KHERSON, UKRAINE)

In the summer of 5777, three of my friends and I, fellow shlichim in Ukraine, wished to create a unique Merkos Shlichus opportunity: A mitzvah tank to visit over 20 Ukrainian towns and villages that do not currently have a full-time shliach, in the span of three weeks.

The projected costs of the project were quite large, especially for young *bochurim* as us, with no fundraising experience. We had no idea where the money would come from but we were certain that the mitzvah tank would become a reality, since this was surely something that would cause *nachas ruach* to the Rebbe.

Together with my friend Mendy Gottlieb we started to contact individuals we knew in the New York area to offer them the opportunity to partner in this special endeavor. On a Thursday morning in Sivan, we went to the Ohel to request a *brocha* to succeed in raising the necessary funds.

In my note I described all the details of the project. The exact itinerary of the trip, the supplies we would take along, and the *peulos* we envisioned to do in each place. I included the projected budget and the people we planned to solicit for financial support.

The Rebbe explained on several occasions that sometimes the *brocha* needed is ready for you, however, it





has not yet materialized since you did not request a *brocha* on behalf of another. כל המבקש על חבריו הוא נענה תחילה.

My brother Aryeh Leib was in the midst of working on publishing a Russian-language Tanya with explanations and needed a lot of money to bring the project across the finish line. In my note I requested a *braocha* for the success of my brother's project as well.

I was in the Ohel for approximately 20 minutes.

After washing my hands in the tent near the Ohel, I turned on my phone and an email from a certain Yid caught my eye. We had contacted him several days earlier, asking him to contribute to the project. In his response, which arrived while I was in the Ohel, he notified me that he would be honored to participate by donating five times the amount we had expected!

I turned to Mendy and simply said, "We have the Rebbe's *brocha* for the mitzvah tank!"

Although this generous donation did not cover the entire budget, it was a major push and gave us the needed momentum to fundraise the rest of the money.

After Tisha B'Av, the four of us set out on our journey in our "synagogue on wheels" and experienced unbelievable

success. In addition to distributing numerous care packages, teaching *shiurei Torah*, mounting over 100 *mezuzos*, and all the other *mitvzoim* we did, two boys we met merited to have a *bris* and one of them currently learns in a Lubavitcher *mossad* in Eretz Yisroel!

We also influenced a young Jewish man to marry Jewish and connected him with one of the shlichim in the area. Within the year, he married a Jewish woman with a proper Jewish wedding and they now live in the Jewish community of Zaporozhye.

We felt that the Rebbe was with us the entire time.

The unprecedented success we experienced proved to us how essential this project is and we decided to arrange three mitzvah tanks for the summer of 5778, to reach many more towns and villages. We are certain that all of our successes are due to the Rebbe's *brachos*. **1**

## YOUR STORY

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







13-14 TISHREI 5750, LEVI FREDIN VIA IEM 234822

לעילוי נשמת  
מרת רחל לאה  
בת הרה"ח שו"ב ר' ישראל שמעון ע"ה  
הבר  
לרגל היארצייט הראשון  
כ"ו תשרי ה'תשע"ט  
ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.  
נדפס ע"י בנה  
הרה"ת ר' שניאור זלמן הלוי  
וזוגתו מרת מרים ומשפחתם שיחיו  
הבר

# DALED MINIM

## EREV SUKKOS

The sorting and selecting of the Rebbe's *daled minim* began in the late summer in the Southern Italian region of Calabria. Several dozen of the most beautiful *esrogim*, featuring the *hiddurim* in shape and size unique to Lubavitch, were handpicked for the Rebbe by Rabbis Yisroel Jacobson, Moshe Lazar, and Mordechai Altein.



## SELECTING THE DALED MINIM

The Rebbe would choose his esrog the night before Yom Tov (though some years it was the next day). After *Shacharis* on Erev Yom Tov, the Rebbe would select several *lulavim* out of a collection of about 30, as well as *hadassim* and *aravos*. While the Rebbe would spend a long time meticulously selecting a *lulav* and *esrog*, the *hadassim* and *aravos* were chosen more quickly.





14 TISHREI 5751, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 174248

14 TISHREI 5752, CB HALBERSTAM VIA JEM 86291

14 TISHREI 5751, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 218770

14 TISHREI 5752, CB HALBERSTAM VIA JEM 86297





## CHASSIDIM PICKING DALED MINIM

After the Rebbe chose his *daled minim*, a select group of Chassidim were allowed into the Rebbe's room (and in later years, into *Gan Eden Hatachton*) to take from the remaining *daled minim*. This group included *mazkirim*, representatives from various countries, and certain elder Chassidim. The Rebbe would glance at a list of participants and scrutinize the attendees. After each person chose his set, he would pass by the Rebbe, and the Rebbe would *bentch* him that he should draw down all the *hamshachos* for the entire year.





14 TISHREI 5737, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 204627



14 TISHREI 5738, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 22530



14 TISHREI 5749, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 255588

## ESROGIM FROM ERETZ YISROEL

Representatives from Eretz Yisroel would then bring *esrogim* to the Rebbe, and the Rebbe would give them a short *brocha*. (Although the Rebbe always said the *brocha* on an *esrog* from Calabria in accordance with minhag Chabad, later in the day the Rebbe did the mitzvah again with an *esrog* from Eretz Yisroel).



14 TISHREI 5752, LEVI FREDIN VIA JEM 218593



# Derher**Letters**

A forum for readers to send their feedback, add to, or ask any questions about articles. Submit your letter to [feedback@derher.org](mailto:feedback@derher.org).

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



## Early Morning Tefillin Surprise

Dear Editors,

Reading the Elul magazine, I came across a very interesting story told by Rabbi Zalman Lipsker [“Better than the Best Father”, Issue 72 (149)], where he describes how he was sent by Rabbi Hodakov to the house of a Yid in Long Beach at six o’clock in the morning to put on *tefillin* with him. The man had been in *yechidus* the night before and the Rebbe had asked him about his schedule and whether he puts on *tefillin*.

Let me share a very similar story that was told over by my father, Rabbi Hershel Fogelman a”h. My father was a *bochur* in 770 in the early 5700s and this story took place in 5703. My father related:

One evening in the summer of 1943, following a day of learning in yeshiva, a fellow by the name of Mr. Herbert Goldstein burst into 770, desperately seeking to meet with the Frierdiker Rebbe. After he was handed a *yarmulke* he explained that his brother had telephoned from Boston with the news that their brother was dangerously ill, and requested that he contact the Lubavitcher Rebbe to pray for him.

After Rabbi Simpson, one of the Frierdiker Rebbe’s *mazkirim*, assured him that he would inform the Frierdiker Rebbe, I

had a conversation with Mr. Goldstein. He related that he and his brothers had met with the Frierdiker Rebbe three years earlier, when he had just arrived in the United States and was staying at the Greystone Hotel. He continued that he was then suffering from a major alcoholic addiction, to a critical degree. The Frierdiker Rebbe took hold of his hand and instructed him to be strong and resolve to quit, assuring him that he would succeed. *Baruch Hashem* he had since recovered.

After noting that every night he kisses the hand that the Frierdiker Rebbe touched three years earlier, he surmised that the Frierdiker Rebbe would probably not recognize him. Our conversation was stopped short as Rabbi Simpson came to inform him that he could now enter *yechidus*.

Twenty minutes later, he came back downstairs and excitedly told us that amazingly, the Frierdiker Rebbe immediately recognized him. He went on to repeat the Frierdiker Rebbe’s words: “Three years ago, you visited me together with your brothers; one standing on your right side, one on your left, and you in the middle.” He continued, that the Frierdiker Rebbe discussed putting on *tefillin*. At our conversation’s end I asked him where he lived. He gave me the name of the Mayflower Hotel in New York and went on his way.

About half an hour later, Rabbi Simpson appeared together with the Rebbe (then referred to as “Ramash”), and they said that they would like to speak to me. After relating to them all I had heard, they instructed me to travel to the said hotel the following morning with a pair of *tefillin* that I would receive from Rabbi Simpson. I should impress upon Mr. Goldstein to don the *tefillin*, and that I should return to him for the next few days. The Rebbe underscored the importance of this all, adding that if the individual wished to pay for the *tefillin*, I should accept it, thus demonstrating its importance.

I arrived at his hotel room at eight o'clock the following morning. He agreed to put on the *tefillin*, adding that he was impressed the Rebbe “caught” him while he was still “warm” from the visit. After speaking for a bit, we made up that I would return the next morning. The following day he told me that upon awakening, he remembered the “*Modeh Ani*” his mother had taught him. The next time I came, he said that he would like to pay for the *tefillin*, and handed me 10 dollars. He continued that he will be leaving town for a while, promising he would put them on daily. When I returned to 770, I relayed it all to Rabbi Simpson, knowing that he would be submitting a report to the Frierdiker Rebbe.

**Rabbi Levi Fogelman**  
Natick, MA



## Three Steps Forward

**Dear Editors,**

With great delight and pleasure I read the Av issue of *Derher*. May you continue to be *mezakeh* Chassidim young and old with this content-filled publication!

In the *Mincha* and *Maariv* moments pictorial section on page 64 it stated erroneously that the Rebbe would wait after *shemoneh esrei* until after *kedusha*

before taking the steps back to his place. This is obviously incorrect, as the Rebbe would take the steps back to his place immediately before *kedusha*.

Also, it states there that after *Maariv* the Rebbe would wait until after *תתקבל*, which might not be so clearly understood. The Rebbe would begin walking back forward as the *chazzan* would begin saying *תתקבל*.

In this context I would like to add another interesting point: At *Maariv* on Motzo'ei Shabbos, when *ויהי נועם* is recited and only *חצי קדיש* is said after *shemoneh esrei*, the Rebbe would begin walking back forward to his place already at *אמן יהא שמיה רבה*.

*Hatzlachah rabbah* in your *avodas hakodesh*.

**Rabbi Pesach Schmerling**  
Far Rockaway, NY



## Interviews with Shluchim

**Dear Editors,**

This note is long overdue, as I've been meaning to write for some time to thank you for the thoughtful and inspirational publication.

In particular, I wanted to thank you for the interviews and biographies of senior shluchim, both those who have passed on and *יבלחט"א* those who are still with us. Reading the stories of Rabbi Alevsky of Cleveland [Issue 67 (145) Iyar 5778], Rabbi Deren of Stamford Issue [70 (147) Tammuz 5778], Rabbi Groner of Melbourne [71 (148) Av 5778] and so many others, is simply uplifting and helpful in my *shlichus*.

Younger shluchim, myself included, who are driven to reach out to each *neschama* non-judgmentally, are sometimes too quick to be judgmental of our senior colleagues who in our estimation could have done more in their respective cities.



In truth, we are somewhat clueless as to the intricacies of each particular shlichus and the many *hora'os* these shluchim received from the Rebbe and what they did in order to lay the groundwork for what we do today.

Please keep these shlichus interviews/biographies coming. I think I speak for many when I say it is truly a breath of fresh air.

With appreciation,

**Rabbi Chaim Shaul Bruk**  
*Bozeman, Montana*



## **RE: Rav Yolles's Final Visit**

**Dear Editors,**

I read the letter (from R.D.M.) in the Av magazine ["Derher Letters", Issue 71 (148)], in continuation to the article where you wrote about the last visit of Rav Yolles to the Rebbe on Pesach 5748. The article contained a picture of Rav Yolles walking down the steps 770 backwards as the Rebbe saw him off, and the letter stated that this could not have been the last visit, because "during that visit, he was in a wheelchair."

According to my recollection, this picture is indeed from the last visit. I remember

it like yesterday. It was a few months after my *chasunah*, and I traveled together from Argentina with my wife to spend Pesach by the Rebbe. That day, just after Rav Yolles arrived at 770, we went to the grocery store to pick up a few things. As we finished shopping, I said to my wife that I wished to stop by at 770 and see if anything is going on.

As I approached the entrance, I saw that the Rebbe and Rav Yolles were standing at the door; Rav Yolles was about to leave. Although he was very weak and spent most the time in his wheelchair, here he was being held by his children; he didn't want to show his back to the Rebbe. As Rav Yolles walked out, I heard the Rebbe blessing him with the words "יראה כהן" "בציון".

I stood the whole while on the left side of the entrance and the Rebbe was literally standing next to me. The Rebbe scanned me from bottom to top with my big bag of groceries. I will never forget this.

The Rebbe waited until the car was out of view and only then did he return to his room. This was the last time Rav Yolles came to the Rebbe.

**Rabbi Shaul Moshe Elitov**  
*Kfar Sitrin, Eretz Yisroel*

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