



לזכרון  
הרבנית הצדקנית מרת ח' מושקא נ"ע זי"ע  
בקשר עם יום ההילולא כ"ב שבט  
נדפס ע"י משפחת האגער שי'  
לונדון, אנגלי'

# First Yahrtzeit

## CHOF-BEIS SHEVAT 5749

On Chof-Beis Shevat 5748, Chassidim across the globe were shaken by the news that the Rebbetzin was *nistalek* from this world. Throughout the ensuing year of *aveilus*, the Rebbe led most of the weekday *tefillos* and “dollars” from his home on President Street. On 21 Teves of 5749, eleven months following the Rebbetzin’s *histalkus*, the Rebbe concluded saying *kaddish*.

One month later, on Shabbos, 22 Shevat 5749, many guests came in to New York to commemorate the Rebbetzin’s first *yahrtzeit* with the Rebbe. In marking the *yahrtzeit*, the Rebbe led all the *tefillos* throughout Shabbos, and it was also the main focus of the *farbrengen*. In this *yoman*, we bring some of the special moments from that time.

### THURSDAY, 20 SHEVAT

In a sense, the extended special Shabbos really began on Thursday. In the evening, the *tankistin* from Eretz Yisroel (led by Rabbi Dovid Nachshon) held a *siyum* and *hachnasas sefer Torah* in the Rebbetzin’s memory. This wasn’t the first *sefer Torah*<sup>1</sup> written in honor of the Rebbetzin; what made this one special though, was it’s proximity to the date of the *yahrtzeit*. The timing also meant that many guests were already in town, obviously creating an even more special atmosphere.

As per the usual custom, various rabbonim and elders were honored with writing the final letters of the Torah. After doing *hagbah* and *gelilah*, the *pesukim* of “*Ata hareisah*” were chanted and followed by a lively circuit of *hakafos*. As the night

progressed, 770 became more and more packed with Chassidim, with the energy level increasing by the minute. *Hakafos* continued for a lengthy period of time and when they finally ended, everyone sat down to partake in the *seudas mitzvah* arranged by the *tankistin*. As can be expected when Chassidim come together, in no time, the *seudah* turned into a *chassidishe farbrengen*. Naturally, the talk centered around the life of the Rebbetzin and lessons that can be learned by Chassidim. Various people spoke about the amazing work of the *tankistin*; they are bringing a Jewish message across the world with them, even in the most remote places—remote in the spiritual and the physical sense.

What the participants didn't know, was that in less than 48 hours the Rebbe would attach special significance to this *sefer Torah*.

#### FRIDAY, 21 SHEVAT

Even on Friday, a day before the *yahrtzeit*, a special atmosphere could be felt in the air. This feeling was confirmed and magnified when a few minutes after *shacharis*, which took place at the Rebbe's home on President St., the Rebbe came back downstairs and distributed dollars to everyone present.

Later on in the day, the Rebbe went to the Ohel and remained there until shortly before Shabbos.



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THE REBBE LEAVES 770 FOR THE OHEL.

In the meantime, as it was getting closer to Shabbos, people began filling up the main shul at 770, and it was soon filled from wall to wall. All around the *amud*, people used tables and benches to build pyramid-like structures so that all could hear when the Rebbe davens the Shabbos *tefillos* at the *amud*. As Shabbos came in, the feeling was electric as the shul was packed with huge crowds; from one end to the other. Understandably, even someone who wasn't able to get close enough to hear the Rebbe's voice, wouldn't give up the chance to daven in the Rebbe's *minyan* and answer the *brachos* and *kaddeshim*.

Those who were in town throughout the year, or who had listened over the phone or heard recordings of the *tefillos*, had already experienced the Rebbe's davening on a weekday. But those *tefillos* cannot be compared to hearing the Rebbe daven on Shabbos. The special pleasantness and the *nigun* combining a sense of beseechment at some points, with a feeling of certainty at others.

When davening ended, old friends met one another with a special feeling of *ahavas Yisrael*; among the many people were also rabbanim, shluchim and *mashpi'im* who had all come in from across the world for the *yahrtzeit*. It was a very moving sight as the large crowds promptly sat down to diligently learn the *maamar* or *hadran* that the Rebbe had published specially for the occasion of the *yahrtzeit*. Others could be seen studying from the weekly pamphlet of Lekutei Sichos—this week on the subject of the unique advantage of Jewish women and why they got precedence at *matan Torah*: "כה תאמר לבית יעקב (אלו הנשים) ותגיד לבני ישראל: 'האנשים'." (האנשים)

Later, some people went home to eat, but not for long; because shortly afterwards, they were already streaming back to 770 to partake in the *siyum Mishnayos*. The *Shisha Sidrei Mishna*, studied in the Rebbetzin's memory, had been divided many times by many communities throughout the world over the past year. The event and the ensuing *farbrengen* were organized by the *gabbaim*, Rabbi Yehoshua Pinson and Rabbi Zev Katz.

#### SHABBOS PARSHAS YISRO, CHOF BEIS SHEVAT

As *shacharis* approached, the shul once again began to fill with people—many more than usual. Already a while before davening, people began





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streaming towards the area of 770. Men were hurriedly going to *mikvah* before learning the new *maamar*, and then trying to somehow push their way into shul, with the hope of finding a close place where they could hear the Rebbe's davening.

After davening, the excitement continued to build as people awaited the highlight of Shabbos: the Rebbe's farbrengen. In the short time people had between davening and the farbrengen, they managed to *chap arein* a *kiddush*, a small bite to eat, and then rush to find a place to stand at the farbrengen—no easy task when there are so many people all looking for the same thing.

When the farbrengen was set to begin, a path was somehow cleared through which the Rebbe could enter. The farbrengen lasted two and a half hours; time that was overflowing with Torah, Chassidus and *hora'os* in *avodas Hashem*. The *sichos* were interspersed with *nigunim* and Chassidim saying *L'chaim* to the Rebbe.

Much of what the Rebbe said focused on the Rebbetzin and her *yahrtzeit*, and of course its meaning for Chassidim and what they could learn from it. The Rebbe expounded on the *possuk* "והחי יתן אל לבו"; the lesson to take from such an occurrence is to ensure that the life of the deceased continues on through the living. It is one's responsibility to inculcate into his or her own life the special lessons to be learned from the Rebbetzin.

The Rebbe pointed out that the *neschama* continuously elevates from one level to the next throughout the course of the first year following the *histalkus*. These elevations however, pale in comparison to the significantly greater leap it experiences on and after the day of the *yahrtzeit*. Consequently, the Rebbe said, that all activities

and campaigns carried out in connection with the Rebbetzin should reflect this approach, and reach an entirely new measure of undertaking.

The Rebbe expounded on the daily Rambam, teaching a beautiful lesson in the nature of the *neschama*. The *halacha* is that one who burns wood on Shabbos is only liable if he did so with the intention of garnering the ashes afterwards and finding a use for them. This means that although fire naturally has a tendency to go upwards, always trying to return to its source, it is nevertheless the ashes—the utilitarian and corporeal part of the fire—which are *mechayev*.

Similarly, the same can be said of the *neschama*; that while it most enjoys living in the spiritual, it is only when confined to the physical that it fulfills its true meaning and purpose. Hence, the pain and sadness of a *neschama's* passing is still pronounced, despite reaching higher spirituality at this point, since it still cannot fulfill its greatest *avodah*—confining itself to a body and serving Hashem in this world.

Especially, since we are talking about the *yahrtzeit* of a *tzidkonis*, who lived a life of *mesiras nefesh*, we need to ensure that there be a tangible effect in our physical life. This can all be done now, since "just as her children are alive, so too is she alive" - מה זרעה בחיים, אף היא בחיים. This is also hinted in the Rebbetzin's names; "Chaya," which means life, the perfection of which is physical life in this world, and "Mushka," which, being a name in a language other than *Lashon Hakodeh*, shows on the concept of drawing down from a higher level to a lower level.

As usual, the Rebbe delved deeply into the *parsha* of the week, which tells the story of *matan Torah*, connecting it to today's theme—the *yahrtzeit*.

At the conclusion of the farbrengen, before reminding those who needed to say a *brocha acharona* to do so, the Rebbe asked that "Yehi ratzon...sheyibaneh" be sung, with the prayer that "*sheyibaneh*" be not just some time in



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the distant future, but that we merit to be able to sing it in the past tense—“*nivneh*” Beis Hamikdash. “Additionally, we will sing the *nigun* expressing the idiom of *ein od milvado*” (referring to *Nyet Nyet Nikavo*). But first, the Rebbe said, everyone should say *l’chaim*, as “Hashem is wishing *l’chaim* to the entire congregation, with a single great response, with a single great *geulah* (מיט איין עני גדולה און מיט). (איין גרויסע גאולה). “*Lchaim, l’chaim, l’chaim!*”

At approximately four o’clock, after singing *Sheyibaneh* and *Nyet Nyet Nikavo*, the farbrengen ended. *Mincha* commenced immediately afterwards; one final opportunity to hear the Rebbe daven at the *amud*. As the Rebbe left the shul, the Chassidim started singing *Nyet Nyet Nikavo*, which the Rebbe began singing earlier at the conclusion of the farbrengen. One could feel the special excitement and energy which was brought on by the farbrengen.

## MOTZAEI SHABBOS

Motzaei Shabbos marked a full year since the *histalkus* of the Rebbetzin and the end of *aveilus*. Aside for the personal feelings that everyone had, all were curious to know what the Rebbe’s *seder* would be from then on. Since the passing of the Rebbetzin, the Rebbe had held most of the weekday *tefillos* at his house; and now, with the end of *aveilus*, nobody was sure how things would be; if the Rebbe would continue from his house or return to 770.

The suspense didn’t last very long, for soon after *havdalah* the Rebbe returned home. It was announced that *tefillos* and Sunday “dollars” would take place at the house.

Later on in the evening, another farbrengen was held. The shluchim who had come in from around the world made a *siyum Hashas*, which they had learned over the course of the year. The division of Shas was overseen by Rabbi Nosson

Gurarie and Rabbi Aharon Slonim, with the participation of many shluchim. The shluchim had, among themselves, learned the entire Shas several times since the *histalkus*. The *siyum* was held at a particularly auspicious time, in that it came so shortly after a farbrengen with the Rebbe. All the speakers quoted a *vort* from the Rebbe said earlier in the day, and they based their talks on it.

## SUNDAY, 23 SHEVAT

In the evening, after the Rebbe returned from the Ohel, he addressed the crowd once again with another *sicha* in connection to the *yahrtzeit*.

The Rebbe began by repeating what he said on Shabbos on the *possuk* “והחי יתן אל לבו”, and focused on the many activities and accomplishments done over the year in memory of the Rebbetzin. The Rebbe said that he had read all the reports at the Ohel, and he extended thanks to all those who had submitted reports, and also to those who would do so in the future.

The Rebbe concluded with a *brocha* that we will speedily merit *הקיצו ורננו שוכני עפר* - the return of the departed souls with the coming of Moshiach. Especially for those who are still alive now within their bodies; the ones who perform the *והחי יתן אל לבו* - they should certainly merit the *geulah* as well. ❶

1. The first *sefer Torah* in honor of the Rebbetzin after Chof Beis Shevat was written by N’shei U’bnos Chabad. The *siyum* took place on Rosh Chodesh Kislev 5749.



THE REBBE HEADS UPSTAIRS FOLLOWING DAVENING SHACHRIS AT HIS HOME, 1304 PRESIDENT STREET.