

# *A Chassidisher* **Derher**

א חסידישער דערהער

## עבודת התפלה in Dor Hashvi'i

### ***In Uncharted Territory***

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW  
WITH RABBI LAIBL WOLF

### ***Meiron***

THE CRADLE OF  
PNIMIYUS HATORAH

יְשֻׁעַ יִשְׂרָאֵל יְדֵי אֱלֹהֵי דָדִי / אֵלֶּיךָ  
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִלְּפָנֶיךָ יְהוָה  
וּבְכָל-מִקְדָּשְׁךָ יְהוָה וְיִשְׂרָאֵל  
אֵלֶּיךָ מִכָּל-חַיִּים וְיִשְׂרָאֵל מִכָּל-חַיִּים  
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חַיֵּי יִשְׂרָאֵל וּבְכָל-יְמֵי חַיֵּי יִשְׂרָאֵל



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### On the Cover:

In this issue, we explore the Rebbe's approach to one of the founding principles of Chassidus: the proper way to daven.

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לזכות  
הרה"ת ר' שלום וזוגתו מרת שרה

וילדיהם ישראל, ריסא, חי' מושקא, אמונה מלכה, ויעקב יהודה שיחיו  
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לרגל יום הארצייט השלושים ו' אייר תשמ"ט – תשע"ט

## Derher**Editorial**

Tomchei Temimim without *avoda pnimis* cannot exist, as the Rebbe Rashab explains in the *kuntreisim*.

One can engage in *avodas hatefilah* without infringing on the study of *nigleh*. For example: on Shabbos, Erev Shabbos, Yom Tov, Erev Yom Tov, *yomei d'pargra*, Monday and Thursday, or any time a *bochur* feels the need to "go out of himself" a bit.

This was the response given by the Rebbe in *yechidus* to Reb Meir Tzvi Gruzman, longtime *rosh yeshiva* in Kfar Chabad, about the importance of educating *bochurim* to daven properly and *barichus*.

It is clear from here and from many other *sichos*, letters, and *yechidusen* that the Rebbe expects Chassidim of today to fervently engage in *avodas hatefilah*, being one of the foundational elements of *darkei haChassidus*.

Building on all the preceding generations of the Rebbeim's elucidation and guidance in davening, the Rebbe teaches us a unique way of approaching davening. Thinking over the Chassidus we learned, focusing on the fact that Hashem's presence is constantly upon us, and of course overall davening every word clearly from a *siddur* with sincerity and with the knowledge that we are actually talking to Hashem.

In this issue we present a detailed overview of how to properly approach davening according to Chassidus, and especially the Rebbe's guidance on this most important matter.

The Rebbe constantly reminds us that a central theme throughout all of davening, repeated numerous times on a daily basis, is our pleading and beseeching of Hashem to put an end to the *galus* and bring the *geula*, כי לישועתך קוינו כל היום —we await Your salvation (not just every day, but) **all day!**

May it be *teikef umiyad Mammosh*.

**The Editors**

יום הבהיר י"א ניסן ה'תשע"ט  
שנת השבעים לנשיאות כ"ק אדמו"ר



## LEARNING BEYOND LOGIC

Shabbos Parshas Bechukosai, 5725\*

Before the Torah begins listing the rewards for observing the Torah, and the opposite for not doing so, we are first told what it is that we must do:

**אם-בְּחֻקֵּי תִלְכוּ וְאֶת-מִצְוֹתַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ וְנָשִׂיתֶם אֹתָם:**

**“If you follow My statutes and observe My mitzvos and perform them.”**

Rashi explains that since the Torah says “and observe my *mitzvos*,” the first half of the *possuk*—“if you follow My statutes”—cannot also refer to the mitzvos; it has to be telling us something else, something additional. Rashi says that **“It means that you must toil in the study of Torah.”**

You can’t do the mitzvos if you don’t learn about them first, so we must first “toil in the study of Torah,” and then we can observe Hashem’s *mitzvos*, as the *possuk* goes on to say.

But why do we have to *toil*?! Why couldn’t Rashi just say, “It means that you must *learn* Torah?” The word “בְּחֻקֵּי” must have told Rashi that it’s referring not just to “learning” but to “toiling.”

Rashi understood that the Torah could have said “אם בתורתִי תִלְכוּ” — “If you follow my **Torah**.” Instead, the word “בְּחֻקֵּי” — “My **statutes**” is

used. “בְּחֻקֵּי” is connected to the word “חֻקִּיקָה” — engraving.

Talking is easy; writing is not too difficult either. But engraving? That requires hard work and expertise. The Torah is telling us that we must work hard on our learning; anything less isn’t enough. It is no coincidence that the *mitzvos* whose reasons cannot be understood by man are called *chukim*—statutes. Doing a mitzvah without understanding why can be challenging, like carving something in stone.

The fact that “toiling in the study of Torah” and “*chukim*” are taught to us with the same word means that they are connected.

Firstly, the Torah is telling us that when you learn, you must work harder than your logic dictates. You must treat Torah-study like a *chok*.

And secondly, toiling in Torah leads a person to understand that those *mitzvos* that he *thinks* he understands are in truth far loftier than the mind can grasp. “The ultimate knowledge is to know that we do not know Hashem.” The more you learn, the more you realize just how much more there still is to understand.<sup>1</sup>

*Printed in Likkutei Sichos vol. 17*





לזכות  
החייל בצבאות ה'  
יוסף יצחק שיחי'  
לרגל הולדתו י"ג שבט ה'תשע"ט  
נדפס ע"י הוריו  
הרה"ת ר' שלמה מנחם מענדל  
וזוגתו מרת דבורה לאה  
ומשפחתם שיחיו  
מטלס

## WHEN CARROTS AND STICKS DON'T WORK

Shabbos Parshas Emor, 5725\*

*Kohanim* are prohibited from entering graveyards or otherwise making themselves *tamei*. This is despite the fact that today, every person is considered to be *tamei*. Doesn't that make this mitzvah irrelevant? The *Kohen* is *tamei* no matter what he does!

Nevertheless, they must still observe these *dinim*, because being a *kohen* isn't something you can earn and lose; it is a birthright—a status. Regardless of whether or not the *kohen* happens to be *tamei*, he is still a *kohen*, and he must 'guard' the *kehuna*.

But what form can the purity of the *kehuna* take in a time and place where everyone is presumed *tamei* and there is no way to become *tahor*?

The answer is that the purity of the *kehuna* today is asleep. As soon as Moshiach comes, and the purifying waters of the *para aduma* are sprinkled, it will awaken, and the *kohen's* pure

inner essence—which he has actively guarded throughout *galus*—will be revealed.

So too, every Yid has a *neshama*, a part of Hashem. In some, it may be sleeping, but it is always there.

The Frieddiker Rebbe told us that Moshiach is around the corner, and we must ensure not to sleep through these last days of *galus*, so that we will be prepared to welcome the *geula*. "Every Yid must know that when he encounters a fellow Yid, he must tell him, 'Listen, brother: don't sleep in! Dawn is about to break!'"

There is no need to *create* within a Yid the desire to do whatever it takes to hasten the breaking of the dawn of *geula*. We need only to make sure that each and every Yid is wide awake, and then, certainly, we will succeed in bringing the *geula*.<sup>2</sup>

Portions of this *sicha* are printed in  
*Likkutei Sichos* vol. 37



לעבן מיט'ן רבין

In honor of  
**Mordechai Leib ben Yael**  
For a full and speedy recovery  
Refuah shleima ukrova

5734, V SCHILDKRAUT VIA JEM 108458

# The Soldier and His Helmet

IYAR 5734\*



**W**e present the following account of the month of Iyar 5734\* in the Rebbe's presence, based on the diary of Reb Yitzchok Meir Sosover, a *bochur* at the time. The month ended with a terrible tragedy in Ma'alot, Eretz Yisroel which the Rebbe addressed, and after which the Rebbe bolstered the five existing *mitvzoim*.

## TUESDAY, ROSH CHODESH IYAR

The outgoing *kvutza* group was notified that instead of *yechidus klalis*, they would be going by the Rebbe in *Gan Eden Hatachton* before their departure tomorrow. At 6:00 p.m. it was announced

that because the Rebbe would be leaving to the Ohel tomorrow, they would be passing by the Rebbe beforehand, at 12:30.

Later at night the Rebbe asked Rabbi Krinsky if the entire *kvutza* was notified that it would be at 12:30 the following day. When Rabbi Groner handed in the members of the *kvutza's panim*, the Rebbe again asked if everyone was notified.

## WEDNESDAY, BEIS IYAR, TIFERES SHEB'TIFERES

At 1:05 p.m. the *kvutza bochurim* were brought into *Gan Eden Hatachton*. The Rebbe blessed them:



“Travel in good health, may it be an *aliya* both *b’gashmius uv’ruchnius*. Bring good tidings there, and send good tidings back here, and the main thing—fulfill all that’s written in the *michtav klali* and its addition.”

The Rebbe then handed each one of the *bochurim* a copy of the *michtav klali* from Yud-Aleph Nissan, which included an addition addressed to the *kvutza*, and three dollars. Before they began leaving, the Rebbe added: “The money should be given to *tzedakah*.” After they had left, the Rebbe conversed with Reb Shloime Maidanchik, who was also travelling to Eretz Yisroel. At 3:30, the Rebbe left for the Ohel.

#### SUNDAY, 6 IYAR

At 3:15, the Rebbe davened Mincha in the large *zal*, to accommodate a group of visitors that came to see the Rebbe. During the last *kaddish*, the Rebbe gazed at all the guests.

#### MONDAY, 7 IYAR, BAHAB FAST

Maariv tonight was early, at 8:30, because the Rebbe was fasting Bahab.<sup>1</sup>

The artist Reb Hendel Lieberman was standing near the Rebbe’s door at around 11:30 p.m. The Rebbe asked him about his work, and he replied that he’s currently doing some for Oholei Torah. The Rebbe then asked why he isn’t doing projects for the yeshiva in Miami,<sup>2</sup> to which he replied that it’s too difficult there. The Rebbe then wished him “*bracha v’hatzlacha*.”

#### FRIDAY, 11 IYAR

On the way to his room at 10:15 a.m., the Rebbe glanced into the *zal*. I was practically the only one in the room.

#### MOTZEI SHABBOS PARSHAS ACHAREI-KEDOSHIM, 13 IYAR

At Maariv, the Rebbe recited *kaddish yasom* after Aleinu, said the *mishnayos*, and again recited *kaddish*. This was immediately followed by Kiddush Levana. The crowd was large, with intense pushing. At one point, the Rebbe made a hand-motion toward the *bochurim*. After reciting *kaddish yasom* following Aleinu, the Rebbe shook the corners of his tallis katan, and proclaimed “*A gut chodesh*.”

Before leaving, the Rebbe turned toward the crowd and exclaimed (to Reb Meir Harlig): “People

are standing without uttering a word [of Kiddush Levana]! Was there a *minyán* that recited Kiddush Levana? Everything becomes a ceremony; people come out to be *mekadesh* the *levana* and are completely silent!”

#### SUNDAY, 13 IYAR

Today is the *yahrtzeit* of the Rebbe’s brother, Reb Yisroel Arye Leib. Someone is davening at the *amud* for the *yahrtzeit*. At “*Ashrei - Uva L’Tziyon*” the Rebbe entered Shacharis and recited all the *kaddeishim*.

#### MONDAY, 14 IYAR, BAHAB FAST

The Rebbe entered Mincha at 3:15. As the Rebbe exited the *zal*, Reb Itche Churgin, who is being hospitalized today, was standing at the door. The Rebbe gave him a pocket-sized siddur and blessed him.

#### WEDNESDAY, 16 IYAR

This morning, two *bochurim* submitted *tzetlach* to the Rebbe. One of them received the following answer within 10 minutes:





THE REBBE READS A NOTE DURING YECHIDUS FOLLOWING A SICHU TO N'SHEI U'BNOS CHABAD, ELUL 5730.

”ת”ח ת”ח ואזכיר עה”צ [על הציון] ומצו”ב [ומצורף בזה]  
המכתב כללי דל”ג בעומר.”

**“Many thanks, I will mention it at the Ohel. Enclosed is the *michtav klali* for Lag Ba’omer.”** (The *michtav klali*<sup>3</sup> was still at the printer then, and he received an advance copy.)

Despite the *michtav klali* not being published yet, the Rebbe instructed *mazkirus* to also give an advance copy to Tzvi Lieder, who is leaving town this afternoon. As he was entering Maariv, the Rebbe handed tzedakah to a pauper standing at the door.

#### THURSDAY, 17 IYAR

The Rebbe entered the *zal* for *krias haTorah* at 10:15. Upon exiting, the Rebbe handed several coins to a tzedakah collector standing at the door (three American coins and four Canadian).

#### FRIDAY NIGHT, 19 IYAR

Following Kabbalas Shabbos, the Rebbe left 770 and headed home via Kingston and Union (as opposed to the usual route via Brooklyn). On the way, the Rebbe gazed at the Tzach building, where the Kinus N’shei Chabad was taking place. Presumably that is why the Rebbe took this route.

#### SHABBOS PARSHAS EMOR, 19 IYAR

The Rebbe began leaving Shacharis before the *gabbai* announced what time Mincha would be, thus signalling that there would be a farbrengen today. During the farbrengen, the Rebbe elaborated on the *michtav klali*’s message regarding *kvius ittim l’Torah*, as we learn from Rashbi, whose Torah was his trade. The Rebbe also spoke at great length negating

*machlokes*. Two *sichos* were dedicated to explaining the passage in Pirkei Avos<sup>4</sup> “...כל כנסיה שהיא לשם...” “שמים” which the Rebbe connected to the ongoing Kinus N’shei Chabad.

During one of the *sichos* the Rebbe mentioned that *halacha* clearly states that it is forbidden to bite one’s nails on Shabbos. [It seems one of the attendees was biting his nails.] Following one of the *sichos*, the Rebbe instructed the Russian immigrants to say *l’chaim*. The Rebbe then summoned Reb Moshe Friedman who had emigrated from Russia to Nachlas Har Chabad, poured him a *l’chaim*, and handed him a bottle of *mashke*. The farbrengen was quite joyous, with the Rebbe often encouraging the singing and lasted longer than usual, from 1:30 to 6:00.

The Rebbe entered Maariv at 8:40. After Maariv, *chazzara* took place. Reb Yoel had a difficult time *chazzering* because he was very hoarse.

#### SUNDAY, 20 IYAR

At 7:40 p.m., Rabbi Hodakov knocked on the Rebbe’s door. Several minutes later, the Rebbe joined the Kinus N’shei Chabad in the big shul, via the stairs in the hallway. The *sicha* was followed by a *yeichidus* of sorts for out-of-town women. Each woman passed by the Rebbe—who was sitting in his place—and handed him their note. The Rebbe looked at each woman, taking their notes and reading them a bit (with reading glasses at times), and then placing them in a bag. On some of the pages the Rebbe made notations, some had just a few marks, others had several lines.

*Yeichidus* was held tonight, and ended at 2:00 a.m. The Rebbe then came out to daven Maariv.

#### MONDAY, 21 IYAR

The Rebbe returned from his house to 770 at 7:00 p.m. On the way into his room, the Rebbe was approached by Reb Itche Churgin, to whom he told that *kabbalas haTorah* must be in a joyous fashion.

#### WEDNESDAY, 23 IYAR

The Rebbe entered Mincha at 3:30 (instead of the regular time of 3:15). Some are speculating that the delay was due to what took place in Ma’alot. (Some five hours earlier, a number of Yidden were massacred, *r”l*, and many more injured, during a terrorist attack in the Netiv Meir school in Ma’alot, Eretz Yisroel.)



## THURSDAY, 24 IYAR

Everyone is discussing the news coming in from Eretz Yisroel. Rumor has it that the Rebbe had instructed that the *mezuzos* of the school where the children studied be checked, only to be found *possul*.

*Yechidus* took place tonight. In between *yechidusen* the Rebbe davened Maariv, at 11:30. Following Maariv, the Rebbe held *yechidus* with an Israeli Phantom pilot who was downed and captured in the War of Attrition, and released after the Yom Kippur War. He left immediately thereafter and no one managed to ask him about the *yechidus*.

Someone asked the Rebbe in *yechidus* tonight what he should be *misbonen* on before davening—a set *inyan* in Chassidus, or whatever he's learning at the time. The Rebbe answered with the latter.

An Israeli *bochur* who went in to *yechidus* mentioned to the Rebbe that he wants to get married. The Rebbe responded (amongst other things) : “You want to get married, yet you don’t possess life’s foundation... You have a choice to either stay here and receive guidance from the *hanhala* for your daily *seder*, and if you don’t desire this—pack your bags and return to Eretz Yisroel...”

## SHABBOS PARSHAS BEHAR-BECHUKOSAI, 26 IYAR

The Rebbe began the farbrengen invoking the *halacha* that “*mefakchin al tzarchei tzibur b'Shabbos*”—communal matters should be discussed on Shabbos,<sup>5</sup> in order to remedy whatever necessary. The Rebbe went on to quote the Rambam's words<sup>6</sup> that when a misfortune occurs, one shouldn't say that what happened was merely a chance occurrence but rather in such a situation, we must examine our own deeds, and see where we can improve.

The Rebbe began by lamenting the “*Mihu Yehudi*” decree, “first they register non-Jews as Yidden, then—one *aveira* leads to another...” Then the Rebbe continued and spoke at length that the rabbanim must emphasize and ensure that every house has a kosher *mezuzah*, its idea being “ה' ישמר” (Hashem will guard your going out and your coming in).<sup>7</sup> “And this is not exclusive for Lubavitch; it's a *possuk* in Torah.”

The Rebbe noted that at times, *hashgacha pratis* is necessary in order to understand the importance of *mezuzah*. The Rebbe continued: “Throughout the summer I spoke extensively about *mivtza mezuzah*,



CHOF AV 5734, V SCHILDKRAUT VIA JEM 108663

without knowing what was pushing me so much about this, and why I mentioned that this is a matter of 'שומר דלתות ישראל,' and so on. Now we're seeing that all that happened is related to *mitvza mezuzah*."

The Rebbe divulged: "They contacted me from Tzfas—where the children live—to be mentioned at the Ohel and to be davened for. They then told me that they checked the school's *mezuzos*, and 17 were found *possul*, the same number of those murdered.<sup>8</sup> The following day I was updated that there were 20 casualties, which astonished me. I asked them to check once more, and they found four additional rooms, two of the *mezuzos* were *possul* and the other two were questionably *possul*..."

### SUNDAY, 27 IYAR

A *bochur* who is travelling to Eretz Yisroel wrote to the Rebbe that he wants to learn in *kolel* there. The Rebbe replied: "Why are you writing to me that you want to learn in *kolel* in Eretz Yisroel, while here—you didn't learn..."

*In subsequent farbrengens, the Rebbe continued to address the tragic massacre and what our response ought to be. The Rebbe explained that it wasn't Mihu Yehudi, or the lack of kosher mezuzos that caused it, but rather, like a soldier who wears a helmet for*

*protection, mitzvas tefillin, mezuzah, as well as learning Torah and giving tzedakah and abolishing the g'zeira of Mihu Yehudi are the "armor" Hashem protects us with.*

*The Rebbe vigorously encouraged the mitvzoim, stressing that in addition to all their other merits, they can prevent such a tragedy from occurring again, ch"v. It was during this period that the now iconic "mitzvah tanks" first began. For more on this, see Tanks Against Assimilation, Derher Tammuz 5776. **T***

1. Bahab stands for "beis, hei, beis," (Monday, Thursday, Monday) and refers to a series of fasts that follow Pesach and Sukkos, in the months of Iyar and Cheshvan. See Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch *siman* 492. The Rebbe explained (Hisvaaduyos 5748 pp. 257-260) that these days, most Yidden don't fast, because we are closer to the time of Moshiach. The Rebbe clarified, however, that those who do fast—*tavo aleihem bracha*, and they should continue doing so. Indeed, the Rebbe would fast Bahab, from before the *nesius*.
2. He would spend time in Miami during the winter.
3. Printed in Igros Kodesh vol. 29 p. 157.
4. 4:11
5. See Shabbos 150a
6. Hilchos Taaniyos 1:3
7. Tehillim 121:8
8. See Igros Kodesh vol. 29 p. 162.



CIRCA 5730S

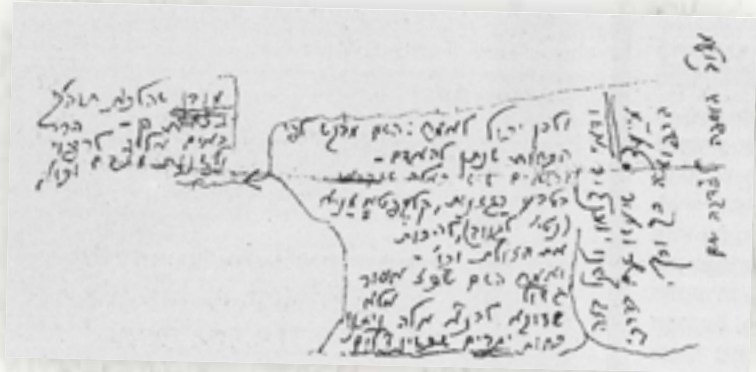


## כתב יד קודש

לע"נ  
אבינו הרה"ח הרה"ת  
ר' יוסף מנחם מענדל  
ב"ר יצחק ע"ה  
ולע"נ אמנו מרת זיסל דבורה  
בת ר' אלי הכהן ע"ה  
טענענבוים  
ת"צ'ב'ה'

# Overcoming Urges

The following is a note  
in the Rebbe's holy  
handwriting written to a  
practicing psychologist:



It is obvious that the laws of our holy Torah are eternal—the [patients] who come to you seek healing and wish to change their situation, etc.

Therefore [based on the above], you can tell them:

Hashem only demands of a person in accordance with the capabilities He gave that person. [On the one hand,] we see that there are those who were created with a natural instinct towards anger, kleptomania (the urge to steal), or to hit others, etc. [Yet at the same time,] Hashem tells us that all these are severely prohibited.

But these people [who possess these inclinations] were given **extraordinary** capabilities, which if they make use of, they will **certainly** be successful [in resisting and overcoming these urges]. In order to make their challenges easier, you [the doctor] also help them with medical advice, telling them to do such and such [remedies].

Enclosed is [money] to be given to tzedakah there.

מובן שהלכות תוה"ק נצחיות הן—הרי  
באים אליו לריפוי ולשנות מצבם וכו',

ולכן יכול לומר: השם מבקש לפי  
הכחות שנתן לאדם—ורואים  
שיש כאלו שנבראו בטבע רגזנות,  
קלעפטאמניא (נט' לגנוב), להכות  
את הזולת וכו'—

ואמר השם שכ"ז איסור גדול

אלא שדוקא לבנ"א אלה ניתנו כחות  
יתרים שכשינצלום ודאי שיצליחו,  
ולהקל בזה מייצעם שגם בדרכי  
הרפואה יעשו כך וכך.

מצו"ב לצדקה שם.





# Avodas Hatefilah IN DOR HASHVT'I



*WHO ARE YOU  
TALKING TO?*

לזכות  
אליהו צבי יהודה בן רייזל שיחי'  
לרפואה שלימה וקרובה

ענן





When the Alter Rebbe was approaching his twentieth birthday, he decided to travel away from home in order to grow in Torah and *avoda*.

“I was debating where to go,” he said later, “and couldn’t decide. My brother, the Maharil, is a man of common sense, and he advised me to go to Mezrich.

“I knew that in Vilna I could learn how to learn, and in Mezrich I could learn to daven. I already knew how to learn a little, but about davening I knew very little, so I went to Mezrich.”<sup>1</sup>

The foundation of Chassidus Chabad was to learn how to daven. Interestingly, the Alter Rebbe had already been learning the Chassidus of the Baal Shem Tov with his teacher Reb Yissachar Ber for a number of years before he went to Mezrich. In addition, he was fluent in the *siddur* Shaar Hashamayim of the Shal”a and knew all the *kavanos* of the *mekubalim*. Yet he still insisted that he knew almost nothing about davening. For that he had to go to Mezrich and study by the Maggid himself.<sup>2</sup>

From this we see that knowing how to daven is not necessarily a result of how much Chassidus one knows. A person can be *baki* in every *sefer Chassidus*, yet still be totally ignorant when it comes to davening.

To know how to daven, you have to go to the Rebbe.

With that in mind, let us delve into the Rebbe’s Torah to discover how a Chossid in *dor hashvi’i* should daven. Authentic *avodas hatefilah* is not something that belongs only in the olden days, while we must make due with a cheap imitation. Even today, in the year 5779, a Chossid can daven the way Chassidus Chabad truly demands.

## Yes You Can

The idea that davening is “*avoda*”—work—is not unique to Chassidus. In fact, *tefilah* is introduced in the Torah as “*avoda*” right from its conception. The Torah says

*I already knew how to learn a little, but about davening I knew very little, so I went to Mezrich.”*

לעבדו בכל לבבכם, and Chazal explain that “service (work) of the heart” refers to davening.

When a Yid davens, he is doing “*avoda*,” even if he has never learned a *maamar* in his life.

The Rebbe once told<sup>3</sup> the story of a Chossid of the Alter Rebbe who barely knew





*pirush hamilos*, yet he davened for many hours with intense concentration. When asked by Chassidim what he thinks about for so long, he said that he once heard a Torah from the Alter Rebbe on 'זכור ושמור' 'בדיבור אחד'.

*Zachor*, the Alter Rebbe said, means always remember. *Shamor*, keep (guard) in your mind. *B'dibur*, in every *davar*—thing. *Echad*, the oneness of Hashem. And with this *vort* he davened for 40 years.

The Rebbe concluded:

*This is the response to those who claim that proper avodas hatefilah does not apply to them because they lack a deep background in*

*Chassidus, and maybe they don't even know the meaning of the words.*

*From this story we see that a full and comprehensive hisbonenus is to contemplate that everything comes from Hashem. The avoda of a Yid is to find the 'Echad' in everything.*

*This story is a perfect example that even someone with very little knowledge, if he thinks about the 'Echad' in everything, he can daven with this for 40 years.*

One shouldn't postpone *avodas hatefilah* until they have the proper knowledge and background; to do so would be falling for another trick of the *yetzer hara*. As the Rebbe told a *bochur* in *yechidus*<sup>4</sup>:



*Just like we listen to the Rema when it comes to the halachos of בשר וחלב, we have to listen to the Rema when it comes to this as well!"*

*To daven slowly and patiently is a proper thing, but the nefesh habehamis and the yetzer hara don't want and don't let. The nefesh habehamis says that since it's not completely genuine, you shouldn't daven ba'arichus. Yet the opposite is true, one must certainly daven, what's the other option? To sit and wait for the davening to be genuine?! To wait until you have the kavanos of the Ramak and the Arizal?! You have to simply do it!*

*The Rema says clearly, that before davening 'contemplate the greatness of Hashem.' It doesn't mean to think a whole maamar... even a few lines would suffice. Just like we listen to the Rema when it comes to the halachos of בשר וחלב, we have to listen to the Rema when it comes to this as well!*

*Avoda doesn't mean breaking mountains and turning over the world. If during davening it takes effort just to keep in mind 'לפני מי אתה עומד'—that you're standing before Hashem—and yet you manage to do so, you have successfully accomplished avodas hatefilah!<sup>5</sup>*

*Avodas hatefilah means to work; for some, it may be work just to pretend to daven. The Rebbe once suggested at a farbrengen<sup>6</sup> that if a person absolutely cannot daven, he should at least sleep under the tallis so it looks like he's davening and that will inspire other people.*

*When asked if avodas hatefilah is for everyone, the Rebbe responded in a letter that indeed it is for everyone; the difference is only in quality and quantity.<sup>7</sup>*

In this context, davening is quite different than learning. An ignorant person cannot be expected to jump right into a sugya. Even if he is well versed in other areas, that won't help him. Learning Torah is a step-by-step process.

With davening however, you can jump right into it. No prior knowledge is needed to start. As long as you are willing to work, you can start davening immediately.<sup>8</sup>

There is no such thing as someone who can't daven.

## Before Davening

Tefilos were established in place of korbanos.<sup>9</sup> Just as korbanos required a Beis Hamikdash, so too davening requires a structure, and that is the hachanos for davening.<sup>10</sup>

*Everything has to be with an order, therefore davening must also be a process. The first step is to enter a spiritual mode through the hachanos before davening. Namely—mikvah, tzedakah, and learning Chassidus.<sup>11</sup>*

These days, there is an additional hachana: It is impossible to daven on an empty stomach, so one should also eat before davening.

As the famous adage of the Tzemach Tzedek says, "It's better to eat in order to daven then to daven in order to eat."

Eating before davening is not a compromise or something to feel bad about. It's a positive thing, we are infusing our davening with chayus!<sup>12</sup>

By eating before davening we demonstrate that for us, food is just another tool in serving Hashem. Like the famous story with the Rebbe Maharash, who asked Ivan the wagon driver why he eats, and he answered that it's in order to live another day and eat more. When Bentzion the meshares was asked the same question, he replied that he eats in order to have strength to serve Hashem.<sup>13</sup>



## Mikvah

Before performing the *avoda* in the Beis Hamikdash, a *kohen* would *tovel* in the mikvah.

Likewise today, before our *avodas hatefilah*, which is in place of *korbanos*, a prerequisite is to go to the mikvah.<sup>14</sup>

## Tzedakah

Another important *hachana* for davening is giving tzedakah. In the Hayom Yom of Beis Kislev, the Rebbe brings an explanation from the Frieddiker Rebbe for this:

*My grandfather (the Rebbe Maharash) once explained in a maamar why "Rav Elazar would give a pruta to a pauper and then pray." He explained that davening must be*

*with chayus, and by giving tzedakah before davening and giving chayus to the pauper, we bring a lot of chayus into the davening. While saying this, he raised his hands to express that tremendous addition of chayus.*

*Many times before davening, my father would search for a poor person to give them food.*

## A Perek Tanya

On several occasions the Rebbe instructed people to learn a *perek Tanya* before davening.<sup>15</sup>

## Who Are You Talking To

It's not always easy to daven, that's why it's called *avoda*, work. Some people



may find themselves identifying with the following description from the Friediker Rebbe:<sup>16</sup>

*He goes to shul and converses his fill with everyone around him. Then, when the minyan has finished, he starts thinking about avoda, about davening at length. By this point es davent zich nit—he's not feeling it. So he mouths the words and is yotze.*

*The reason is simply that he skipped all the hachanos. For starters, he's missing the basic condition: "One should only get up to daven with a serious frame of mind."*

*The most basic preparation requires to at least consider who is praying, and to Whom he*

*is praying. Even such a meditation is enough to infuse a little chayus in one's davening.*

*But if, instead, one's prayers are preceded by conversation, so that he misses an amen, or an amen yehei shmei rabba, or a barchu—that is the absolute opposite of davening. Obviously, as a result, when he finally does start davening, es davent zich nit. Yet he still deludes himself into thinking that since he davened late, that's avoda, and that is what makes him a Chossid...*

## The Solution

What this person is missing is one thing: to realize that he is talking to Hashem. If he would just stop for a moment and think,



“I’m about to talk to Hashem,” that would be davening!

This mindset is the most important part of davening. Much more integral than even understanding the meaning of the words.

A person can understand every word of davening, and even know multiple explanations for every word. He could appreciate the depth and the beauty of the *nusach*, and spend hours in *hisbonenus* thinking deep concepts, but could still be missing the most important ingredient: talking to Hashem.

On the other hand, a person could not understand a single word of *pirush hamilos*, and maybe even have trouble pronouncing some words, but by knowing Who he is talking to, his simple davening is true “*avodas hatefilah*.”<sup>17</sup>

The Mezritcher Maggid had an old friend from before he became a *talmid* of the Baal Shem Tov. This friend once met the Maggid and asked him why he davens for so long. “I also think all the *kavanos* of the Arizal,” he said, “yet my davening is not nearly as long as yours.”

Instead of answering his question, the Maggid asked him what he does for a living. He answered that his wife owns a store and earns a comfortable living, so he is free to learn Torah. Once a year though he has to travel to the wholesale market and buy products to keep the store stocked.

Of course, even while on the road, he never misses his regular *shiurim* so the journey ends up taking a few weeks.

“I don’t understand,” said the Maggid, “why travel all the way to the market and go through all the trouble? Wouldn’t it be easier to just imagine you were travelling, and then imagine you were buying the merchandise, and imagine you were coming home. That way, you can be done in a couple of hours instead of a few weeks!”

“But I need the merchandise!” his friend answered.

The same applies to davening, explained the Maggid. “I need the merchandise.”<sup>18</sup>

To think *pirush hamilos* or deep *kavanos* without דע לפני מי אתה עומד—knowing that you are talking to Hashem, is considered pretending to daven. It’s like thinking of a beautiful eloquent speech to say to the president, but not actually saying it; or rehearsing the speech that you plan on saying to the president, without realizing that he’s right there!

## Who Are You Really Talking To

Once a person is aware of the fact that he is standing before Hashem, he is then ready for the next step: to spend a moment thinking about **and admiring** Hashem and His greatness.

This process is not just for those with deep knowledge of the *eser sefiros* and various esoteric concepts—although that knowledge is very important as well, but for that one must study Chassidus at great length—but as we have already established, davening is for everyone, regardless of background.

We are referring to what is called in *halacha* לחשוב מרוממות הא-ל—to think about the greatness of Hashem.<sup>9</sup>

Yes, you read that correctly, **halacha**. This is not something that Chassidus came up with, or something reserved for the *eltere Chassidim*. As the Rebbe wrote to the Igud Harabbanim:<sup>19</sup>

*I have been disturbed by this matter for a number of years. Everything written in the Shulchan Aruch is clear halacha that must be followed. Even when there is a machlokes in Shulchan Aruch, there are rules to determine what the actual halacha is.*

*Yet, among certain groups of Jews, even those who are scrupulous in mitzvos, they*





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*make an exception regarding a clear halacha about which there is no machlokes.*

*I am referring to the din that before davening every person must think about “the greatness of G-d Almighty and the lowliness of man, and remove all mortal pleasures from his mind” (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chayim siman 98, end of seif 1).*

*Why and for how long will the rabbanim, poskim, roshei yeshiva, and teachers, be silent about this halacha? A halacha that has been so neglected that most people don’t even know about it!*

*This hisbonenus, meditation, is not a determined amount of time. It is adjusted*

*for each person based on his abilities but it cannot be abandoned entirely.*

The Rebbe Maharash once told a Chossid that if he cannot learn Chassidus for longer than 15 minutes a day, he should divide these 15 minutes over the course of the day.<sup>20</sup> The Rebbe explained<sup>21</sup> that the goal was for this Chossid to learn five minutes at a time, three times a day, before every *tefilah*.

You could ask, said the Rebbe, why are we demanding so little? The answer is that in order to daven properly, and for the davening to effect the whole day, even five minutes is enough.



*‘Why are we demanding so little? ...In order to daven properly, and for the davening to effect the whole day, even five minutes is enough...’*

Of course this is the lowest limit, a minimum of five minutes. For those who are able to, the Rebbe demanded much more:<sup>22</sup>

*He should make a true cheshbon tzedek, when was the last time that he was misbonen before davening?*

*He should sit in front of a mirror, point to himself, and say: when is the last time that you were misbonen in Chassidus before davening, as outlined in Kunteres Hatefila and in the countless maamarim from Nesi Doreinu since then?*

*He should think about when was the last time that he davened after a hisbonenus of at least an hour, a full hour of 60 minutes, or at least a half hour.*

*We’re not talking about during the week, it could be even on Shabbos.*

It’s worthwhile to note, that when we speak of **removed** Hashem is from us. That type of *hisbonenus* would be counterproductive to דע לפני מי אתה עומד. The Rebbe explained<sup>23</sup> that we mean the G-dliness which is within us, our *nefesh Elohis*. We think about how great it is and how distant it is from our *nefesh habehamis*—that is the second part of the *halacha*, ‘שפלות האדם’ the lowliness of man.

## What is Hisbonenus

The very mention of the word “*hisbonenus*” may scare some people away. Really? *Hisbonenus*? That’s not for me, I’m a simple person.

But this attitude comes from a lack of understanding of what exactly *hisbonenus* is.

*Hisbonenus* simply means to think about the Chassidus that you learned before davening in your mind. If for some reason you didn’t learn any Chassidus that day, there’s surely something that you are able to think about, the first *perek* of Tanya for example. Most people are familiar with that. In fact, this is exactly what the Rebbe advised a *bochur* to do:<sup>24</sup>

*Hisbonenus before davening is not the same as thinking words of Tanya in the street to purify the air. Rather, before tefilah one must think about a concept that you can relate to. Even in Tanya there are enough such concepts. Like the idea that אחר פנוי—there is nowhere that He is not. עובד אלקים—to be a true “servant” of Hashem. כי כל אחד יכול להיות בינוני בכל עת. ובכל שעה—any person can be a beinoni at any moment.*

*Even in the first perek of Tanya, which seemingly appears to be a “dry” perek: there are the five levels, tzadik v’tov lo, tzadik v’ra lo, etc. It’s all Torah shebiksav, and you can be misbonen in any part of it; how Hashem gives a person five levels to choose from, and through hard work, or even in an instant, he could reach higher levels.*

In other words, *hisbonenus* means to think Chassidus in your mind. Everyone is capable of doing that, at least on some level.

The Rebbe advised many *bochurim* to say and think specifically the beginning of *perek mem aleph* of Tanya, until the word “*hamelech*.”<sup>25</sup>

To someone who asked how to think about something for an extended amount of time, the Rebbe answered:

*As with all matters of holiness, this is something that can be achieved in stages. In other words, first get used to hisbonenus for a few minutes at a time, and slowly build up to a substantial amount of time. To make this*

*easier, you should have the sefer Chassidus or a siddur open in front of you.*

## I'm Just Not Feeling It

On several occasions the Rebbe was asked by Chassidim how do daven with more *chayus*, with more passion. What should I do if I'm just not "feeling it," not connecting with what I'm saying?

The Rebbe always answered that it's a matter of time. The more frequently you think about it, the more likely it is that you will start feeling passion towards it.

For *hisbonenus* to make an impression and really affect us we need to spend some time on it. The problem is that most people just don't seem to have the required time. The Rebbe recommends stretching the thought over a period of days and even weeks, each day continuing the thought from where we left off.

*Advice for hisbonenus and to feel excited and moved by pirush hamilos—it is obvious that the longer you do it the more passion you will feel. Another thing, when it's not possible to increase in time, you can divide the hisbonenus over a period of time. There is a well-known story that my father-in-law told, that some groups of Chassidim would be misbonen every day on a different part of davening, a deep hisbonenus, and the next day they would continue from the next section.<sup>26</sup>*

## True Greatness – Pirush Hamilos

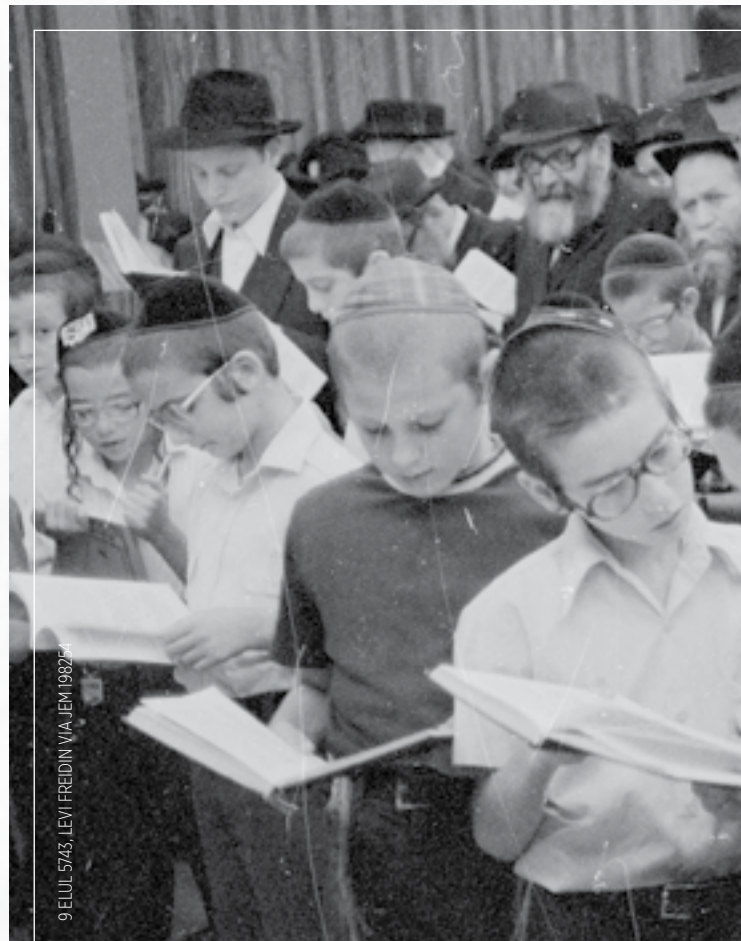
The famous Chossid Reb Shmuel Ber Borisover, known as Rashdam, once asked the Rebbe Maharash at the conclusion of a long and deep discussion on the nature of Chassidus, "*Un vos iz fort a Chossid*—after all that, what is a Chossid, really?"

The Rebbe Maharash replied, "Go observe my son," referring to the Rebbe Rashab, who was very young at the time.

Reb Shmuel Ber was confused by this answer. He was from the older Chassidim and had even been by the Mittlerer Rebbe. What could he learn from the Rebbe Rashab?

The Rebbe Maharash explained that one time, very early in the morning, he sent his assistant to report on what his son was doing. The assistant returned and said that he was sitting in front of a *siddur*, and had an Avudarham open (a *sefer* that explains the meaning of many parts of davening) and a *Nach*, and was studying davening. "*This is a Chossid, with all his greatness he can limit himself to simply translating the davening.*"<sup>27</sup>

Once we are davening with the feeling of דע לפני מי אתה עומד, the next step is to know what we are saying.



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The Frierdiker Rebbe related<sup>28</sup> how his father, the Rebbe Rashab, taught him the *pirush hamilos* twice. Once as a child, and then again starting from his bar mitzvah.

*When my father began teaching me pirush hamilos, he said, "Davening without knowing what you are saying is not an option." He then taught me the basic meaning of the words.*

Of course, there are also deeper meanings in davening. But simply knowing the translation of the words is the first step.

### It's Not About Time

*Years ago, not hundreds of years but just a few decades, avodas hatefilah did not take many hours. It was only 15 or 20 minutes, but it was real davening. Beforehand a person would learn a few lines of Chassidus, not a*

### The History of Davening

In the times of the Alter Rebbe, all religious organizations were regulated by the government.

We know that the *misnagdim* slandered the Alter Rebbe with various lies and unfounded claims, but the heart of the issue was that Chabad is a new and unauthorized religious movement. As such, the recognized "Jewish establishment" formally requested that the Czar's government declare the new movement to be illegal.

One of the proofs they offered is that Chassidim daven differently than all other Jews. The differences ranged from changes to the *nusach*, to the amount of time they spent davening.

In a fascinating deposition to the Russian authorities, the Alter Rebbe provided a rebuttal to the claims of Avigdor, the chief plaintiff on behalf of the *misnagdim*. The Alter Rebbe went into the history of davening to prove that Chassidus did not invent something new; on the contrary, Chassidus brought back authentic davening.

*The custom in all Jewish communities throughout our entire history was to have two large centers of worship in every city. One for davening and one for learning Torah [beis haknesses u'beis hamedrash].*

*The beis haknesses was for the masses who worked. Most of these people were unlearned and did not know how to daven as our sages demanded. All they could do is recite the words three times a day.*





*The beis hamedrash was for the learned class, to daven with the proper kavanos and at length, each person according to his own knowledge and capabilities. In the sefarim written until 200 years ago, it is clearly described how they would daven Shacharis for up to two hours every day.*

*After that, however, [starting 200 years ago] there rose amongst us unscrupulous rabbis, who purchased their titles from the local governments in every city. The king turned a blind eye, and the ministers, in return for money, issued a document called a “concession” to the local ‘rabbi.’ This allowed them to rule over the local Jews in all religious matters, and also to issue rulings in civil matters, although they did not have the necessary knowledge of the halachos.*

*It was also prohibited to start davening until the ‘rabbi’ arrived, sometimes even waiting until noon. The local community was forced to recognize these rabbis by order of the local governments.*

*These rabbis could not be bothered to daven properly, and in order to save face, they began to downgrade the importance of davening. They claimed that learning was more important, and should be done even during davening.*

*They would daven quickly and mindlessly, eager to get back to learning and lecturing on the Talmud in order to impress their students and make a name for themselves with their depth and sharpness.*

*All the learned students followed in their path, davening quickly and mindlessly, either because they were afraid of the rabbi or to flatter him, for he was the ultimate authority in the city.*

*Only a small handful of people in every generation continued the tradition of davening slowly with concentration, and these people were known as ‘Chassidim’ since time immemorial.*

*It is understood in every religion in the world, that it is impossible for all people to be equal in their observance of the religion and in their spiritual conviction. This is true for us Jews as well. For although by now we have been freed from the reign of those ‘rabbis,’ many people who are capable of davening with concentration choose not to, due to laziness. The truth is that this is very difficult even for very learned people, much harder even then toiling over the Talmud.*

*Therefore, those who make the effort to concentrate on their davening, whether they are young or old, are a tiny minority compared to the masses of our people. The masses call these people ‘Chassidim’ in all the regions of Russia, Poland, and most of Lithuania. They are called Chassidim just like the ancient Chassidim that I described before, even though they cannot be compared to the Chassidim of those earlier generations.*

*(Igros Kodesh of the Alter Rebbe  
[new edition] page 207 and on)*

*lot—only four or five lines, but he was totally immersed in them. While his tallis was on his shoulder, he would meditate on those lines, and then when davening, he really davened. But today...<sup>29</sup>*

Davening doesn't have to take many hours. In Tanya<sup>30</sup> the Alter Rebbe writes that davening should take an hour and a half. For our generation, the Rebbe told Reb



Nissan Nemonov in *yechidus* that weekday davening should take an hour.<sup>31</sup>

## The Siddur

The question can be asked, if davening is a personal conversation with Hashem, then why is there a “script” that we read from? It is only natural that after a while it will become boring and repetitive. How can people be expected to say exactly the same words three times a day, every day, without eventually davening on autopilot and just mouthing the words without thinking.

The truth is that this question can only arise from a lack of true דע לפני מי אתה עומד.

Consider that you are about to daven. You, a human being, are about to address

G-d Almighty Himself. Is there really anything you can say? Is anything in your life, your simple desires and needs, important enough to say to Hashem? The very idea sounds ridiculous. In fact, the moment you consider that you are standing before *Melech Malchei Hamelachim*, the creator of all things, all words should escape you.

Ultimately, however, it is this feeling of *bitul* that we are working towards. If you don’t feel this way, then in truth you really do not have anything to say. Once this feeling is achieved, when you are speechless before Hashem, then the gates of heaven are opened and you can daven.

But what can you say if you are speechless? For that, the *Anshei Knesses Hagedola* established a *nusach hatefilah*.<sup>32</sup>

The Zohar tells us that davening is like a ladder. Every step we take brings us higher, closer to reaching our goal of connecting to Hashem.

This *mashal* enables us to understand the unique role that the *siddur* and *nusach* play. When trying to climb somewhere, one can attempt to invent his own ladder, or even try out a new ladder every day in order to keep things interesting. Alternatively, he can use the tried and tested ladder, one that he knows will take him to his destination.

The ladder that we use for davening was created by the *Anshei Knesses Hagedola*. We say the same words three times a day because those are the words that work. Every *tefilah* presents a new opportunity to climb. Should we waste our time complaining that the rungs are boring because we already know them? On the contrary, we should be happy that we're on a solid footing!

## All Inclusive

Another reason we don't use our own words to daven, is because anything we could say is already included in the *nusach*. The *nusach* is incredibly precise, down to the number of words.

Therefore we don't repeat words in davening, even in places where a *hefsek* is allowed. We also don't add details to our requests for health or livelihood.

In response to a suggestion to add a certain *tefilah* to the *nusach*, the Rebbe responded that by looking deeper into the current *tefilos*, we will discover that it is already there.<sup>33</sup>

## Davening With A Niggun

At one *farbrengen*<sup>34</sup>, the Rebbe recalled his time in Paris over 30 years earlier, when

*When we davened together on Shabbos, I noticed some of them davening ba'arichus, while singing a chassidisher niggun and snapping their fingers.*

he traveled to accompany Rebbetzin Chana to the United States.

*Over 30 years ago, I witnessed something, and I never imagined that it would become relevant so many years later.*

*When my mother left Russia, I travelled to Paris to greet her and bring her back to America.*

*During my time in Paris, I met Chassidim who had also recently left Russia. When we davened together on Shabbos, I noticed some of them davening ba'arichus, while singing a chassidisher niggun and snapping their fingers.*

*True, I can't know for sure what their motivations were but when you see someone learning Chassidus before davening, and after that he is davening ba'arichus with a chassidisher niggun, you can assume that it's connected with avodas Hashem.*

*Some of those Chassidim that I saw davening ba'arichus in Paris are here with us now. And just this very day I saw them davening with no chayus and no shturem in avodas hatefilah!*

*In the state they were in then, recent immigrants, they were busy with avodas hatefilah. But after they came to the United States with Hashem's help, and were blessed with parnasa, healthy families, and even with wealth, suddenly there is no avodas hatefilah anymore!*





*When I saw this 30 years ago, I never imagined that this would become relevant in the year 5742\* in 770.*

Davening with a *niggun* was always the hallmark of a *chassidisher* davening. On Chof Av 5723\*, when the Rebbe was *chazzan* for his father's *yahrtzeit*, by א-ל אדון the Rebbe sang from פאר וכבוד until the end to the tune of "Shamil."

Even when not singing a *niggun*, you can always hear the Rebbe davening with a rhythmic tune.

There is a bit of a misconception that a *niggun* during davening must burst forth spontaneously, as a natural expression of the inspiration. Otherwise, the thinking goes,

it's *chitzonius*, i.e. you're fooling yourself and others by forcing a *niggun* that didn't come naturally.

This couldn't be further from the truth. Singing a *niggun* during davening is not an expression of one's inspiration, rather it is a means to become inspired.

On the last Motzei Shabbos before the *histalkus* of the Alter Rebbe, the Tzemach Tzedek was davening Maariv next to the Alter Rebbe. Understandably, given the state of the Alter Rebbe's health, the Tzemach Tzedek was davening with a *niggun* of *marashichora*—a serious and gloomy *niggun*.

The Alter Rebbe immediately stopped him and told him to switch to a *freilicher*



A MORNING SHIUR CHASSIDUS IN 770.

*niggun*. He explained that whatever mood one expresses in this world is reflected back from Heaven.<sup>35</sup>

In Reshimas Hayoman<sup>36</sup> the Rebbe records the Frierdiker Rebbe wondering why Chassidim don't daven *ba'avoda*, "especially considering that they can sing a *niggun* and become inspired."

The Frierdiker Rebbe also said once,<sup>37</sup> "Moshe Rabbeinu was a Lubavitcher. How do we know this? Because when he davened, he did it with a *niggun*, אז ישיר משה—Moshe sang!"

### Also for Women

Davening with a *niggun* is not limited to men. In a farbrengen in 5752\*,<sup>38</sup> the

Rebbe mentioned that women should also daven with a *niggun*. The only difference is that they must take precautions not to be overheard by men.

We could learn from here that everything discussed here about *avodas hatefilah* applies to women as much as to men. Although they are not obligated to daven three times a day, they are certainly not exempt from *avodas hatefilah*!<sup>39</sup>

### Arichus vs. Minyan

*With regards to your concern that you daven ba'arichus, thereby missing saying kedusha with the minyan, and you ask whether to continue this practice, or to daven quicker and say kedusha.*



*No matter the lofty level of one's davening, without a siddur in front of you it is very unlikely that your thoughts won't wander.*

*Obviously, based on the principle that the kavana is the most important element of davening... you should not skimp on the hisbonenus or davening ba'arichus, even to hear kedusha.<sup>40</sup>*

In this letter, the Rebbe lays out an integral principle in the discussion of davening.

Every element of davening that is not directly related to having more kavana, is tangential, and can be changed in the quest for enhanced kavana.

A prime example of this is eating before davening, which we discussed earlier. Abstaining from eating used to be considered a vital preparation for davening but when it will negatively affect the kavana, it's better to eat.

*Regarding how to daven, the directive is known that if it will help with kavana, which is the most integral aspect of davening, then you should at least start with the minyan, but afterwards you can go as long as is necessary.<sup>41</sup>*

It must be stressed that the Rebbe says to start with the *minyan*. Delaying davening indefinitely is not the way to go, but once you start with the *minyan*, there is no need to keep pace, even if it means sacrificing *kedusha* and *barchu*.

In another letter,<sup>42</sup> the Rebbe even advises someone to take a rest during davening if it becomes tiring!

## **Davening From The Siddur**

*Since during davening one must think only about Hashem, and in addition, one must*

*think the pirush hamilos, the simplest way to accomplish this is to daven from the siddur. Then it is easier not to get distracted, and certainly to not miss any words.*

*My father-in-law the Frierdiker Rebbe was careful to daven every tefilah from the siddur (besides for some specific parts), even though he surely knew all the tefilos by heart. This is my custom as well, to behave as the Frierdiker Rebbe did.<sup>43</sup>*

No matter the lofty level of one's davening, without a *siddur* in front of you it is very unlikely that your thoughts won't wander. Indeed, this is one practical thing that all levels of davening have in common, aside for the general kavana of *דע לפני מי אתה* דע עומד as discussed above.

*Regarding kavana in davening, you are correct that not everyone is equal in this, and even the advice to the same person may change with time. However there are some basic ideas which help in every time and situation. They are: giving tzedakah before davening... observing טבילת עזרא, and having a siddur open in front of you. Meaning even if your eyes are closed because of your passion or introspection, the very fact that the siddur is open keeps your thoughts focused.<sup>44</sup>*

## **It Doesn't Work for Me**

A common problem people seem to have is that they don't see any results from their davening efforts.

What's the point, they say, if my life and Yiddishkeit were not changed by investing in davening? It's obviously not for me, it must be for people much more refined and holier than myself. I took the dive, I invested, and it just didn't work.

To respond to this, it is important to know what changes we are expecting from davening, and how to detect them.

First of all, if you davened the way Chassidus lays out, then something good must have come from it. It is quite different to search for something you already know is



## Hot and Cold

I remember one time in *cheder*, two children were debating; one came from a *Litvishe* family, and the other was a *Poishisher Chossid*. The *Litvisher* was bragging that he davens slowly, relishing each word. His *Poishisher* friend answered him, “For me it’s the opposite; davening is so precious that I grab it quickly because I can’t wait. But you don’t appreciate it so you take your time.”

The *Litvishe* child then brought a proof from the *melamed*, that he surely appreciates davening, yet he davens slowly.

“How can you bring a proof from the *melamed*?” said the *Poishisher*. “His davening is fiery and hot, and something that hot can’t be grabbed quickly. But our davening is not as warm, and is possibly even cold, so it can be snatched quickly.”

(*Toras Menachem* 5747  
v. 3 page 418)

there, than searching for something to see if it’s really there. There is no doubt that a change has occurred, now we just need to find it.

The result of davening is to behave like someone who just spoke with the king himself, with Hashem. This is certainly different than the behavior of someone who has not seen the king in months and has but a vague recollection of him.

To someone who complained that they did not see results from davening, the Rebbe wrote, “Just imagine how things would look if you stopped investing in davening...”

The Rebbe concluded, that it is certain that davening made a difference in him, but for whatever reason his eyes are not picking

it up. So the Rebbe gave him some direction on how to enhance his “eyesight.”<sup>45</sup>

## In conclusion

The bottom line of all the above is that at the very least davening is a peaceful and enjoyable experience, a solemn moment between you and Hashem.

During davening a Yid gives himself over to that which transcends his understanding.

During davening a Yid feels like a child standing before his father.

Ultimately, davening should be a special moment, to a point that while caught up with the hustle of the day, you look back at it with desire, longing, and nostalgia.<sup>46</sup>

For additional insight on davening, see Derher, Teves 5778 p. 44. **❶**

- 1 Sefer Hasichos 5705 page 132. Sefer Hasichos 5708 page 197.
- 2 See Sefer Hasichos 5708 ibid.
- 3 Toras Menachem vol. 22, p. 121.
- 4 Yechidus following Simchas Torah 5714, Tzaddik L'Melech vol. 7, p. 250.
- 5 Hayom Yom 2 Adar I.
- 6 Likkutei Sichos vol. 5, p. 288 (Parshas Noach 5725).
- 7 Igros Kodesh vol. 26, p. 32.
- 8 Sichos Kodesh 5731 vol. 2, p. 285
- 9 Brachos 26b.
- 10 Toras Menachem vol. 25, p. 84.
- 11 Toras Menachem v. 16 page 341.
- 12 Toras Menachem v. 25 page 36. Hayom Yom, Yud Shevat. Igros Kodesh v. 6 page 142.
- 13 Igros Kodesh of the Friediker Rebbe vol. 7 p. 70. Also printed in Kovetz Michtavim in back of the Tehillim.
- 14 Toras Menachem vol. 9, p. 169.
- 15 Toras Menachem 5749 vol. 3 p. 68, 75. 5750 vol. 2, p. 161.
- 16 Sefer Hasichos 5691 p. 151.
- 17 Toras Menachem vol. 29, p. 47. Igros Kodesh vol. 15, p. 239. Sichos Kodesh 5736 vol. 1, p. 518, et. al.
- 18 Toras Menachem vol. 3, p. 239. Reshimas Hayoman p. 391.
- 19 Igros Kodesh vol. 11, p. 230.
- 20 Sefer Hatoldos Admur Maharash, (authored by the

Rebbe) page 66.

21 Sichos Kodesh 5732 vol. 1, p. 28.

22 Toras Menachem 5748 vol. 3, p. 214.

23 Sichos Kodesh 5736 v. 1 page 518

24 Yechidus following Simchas Torah 5714, *ibid.*

25 See Derher, Iyar 5777 p. 51 in sidebar. Igros Kodesh vol. 17, p. 111.

26 Igros Kodesh vol. 18 p. 126; vol. 10, p. 58; vol. 19, p. 195.

27 Sefer Hasichos 5699 page 305.

28 Sefer Hasichos 5707 page 140.

29 Sefer Hasichos 5705 page 113.

30 Igeres Hakodesh *siman* 1.

31 Sefer *Reb Nissan*.

32 See Toras Menachem vol. 22 p. 262. Sichos Kodesh 5732 vol. 2, p. 3.

33 Toras Menachem v. 35 page 60. M'beis Hamalchus page 133.

34 Toras Menachem 5742 v. 2 page 1108.

35 Igros Kodesh Tzemach Tzedek p. 325.

36 Page 220.

37 Sefer Hasichos 5702 p. 134.

38 Sichos Kodesh 5752 vol. 2, p. 594.

39 Toras Menachem 5747 vol. 2, p. 517. See also Toras Menachem 5745 p. 2509.

40 Igros Kodesh vol. 11 p. 176. See also Toras Menachem vol. 2, p. 113.

41 Igros Kodesh v. 20 page 133.

42 Igros Kodesh v. 10 page 396.

43 Toras Menachem 5743 v. 1 page 144.

44 Igros Kodesh v. 18 page 121.

45 Lekutei Sichos v. 38 page 135. Igros Kodesh v. 9 page 295. V. 12 page 149-150.

46 Toras Menachem v. 32 page 125. Hayom Yom 26 Tammuz. Sefer Hamaamarim Kuntreisim v. 1 page 230.



# The Life of a Chossid

## Reb Alter Simchovitch

Born: 5650\*

Passed away: 7 Nissan 5699\*

Chossid of: The Rebbe Rashab,  
the Frierdiker Rebbe

### From Rostov to Warsaw to Yerushalayim

The year was 5681\*. World War I had just ended and Communism had descended upon Russia. In Rostov, starvation and suffering were rampant. Many of the *temimim* were forced to leave the hallowed halls of Tomchei Temimim and earn a few kopeks in whatever occupation they could find.

On a dusty street corner stood Reb Alter Simchovitch. Just eight years earlier, he had been among the group of seven hand-picked *temimim* who were sent by the Rebbe Rashab to establish Yeshivas Toras Emes in Chevron. Now, he stood in the freezing cold of the Russian winter selling *kvas*—a peasant drink made of fermented bread.

Reb Yitzchok Goldin found him in this state. While the *temimim* wore rags, they thirsted for Chassidus; they needed a *mashpia*, and Reb Yitzchok hired Reb Alter to serve as *mashpia* in Tomchei Temimim in Rostov.<sup>1</sup> Reb Alter would go on to serve as *mashpia* in Tomchei Temimim in Warsaw, before journeying to Yerushalayim, where he served as *mashpia* of Toras Emes until his passing on 6 Nissan, 5699\*.

### The Rebbe's Chozer

At the Yud-Tes Kislev farbrengen in 5673\*, the Frierdiker Rebbe asked Reb Alter to *chazzer* the *maamar* that his father, the Rebbe Rashab, had said that previous Shabbos. Reb Alter, who had said some *l'chaim* at the time,

replied that he did not recall the *tochen* of the *maamar*. The Frierdiker Rebbe then instructed him to *chazzer* a different *maamar*, to which Reb Alter replied that he had forgotten everything.

The Frierdiker Rebbe questioned him: had he really “forgotten everything?” Reb Alter responded that he recalled that the Rebbe Rashab told him to say *l'chaim*. The Frierdiker Rebbe responded: “Know, Reb Alter: When my father speaks to a Yid, he speaks *nefesh* to *nefesh*, *ruach* to *ruach*, *chaya* to *chaya*, *yechida* to *yechida*.”

### A Chassidishe Chasuna

Reb Alter's *chasuna* took place on Friday (as was often the custom in that time). Because the day was short, there was time only for the *chuppah* to take place, with the *simchas chasan v'kalla* planned for the next day.

The next morning—Shabbos—before Shacharis, Reb Alter's new father-in-law, Reb Shlomo Zalman Havlin, asked him not to daven at length, as a lavish *kiddush* was planned. After the *minyán* concluded davening, Reb Shlomo Zalman set out the *kiddush*, and Reb Alter remained in his place in the *cheder sheini*, trying his best not to daven for too long. When he reached *Nishmas*, however, he could not bear to continue at such a (relatively) fast pace, and he reverted to his accustomed, drawn-out pace. A bystander later recalled how Reb Alter stood in the midst of “*Nishmas*,” and his father-in-law pleaded with him, “Please, have pity! I invited everyone to a *kiddush* for the wedding!” Reb Alter's only reply was to continue davening soulfully with his *niggun*, “...מי ידמה לך ומי ישוה לך”

### The Gemara of a Chossid

Reb Alter's *chassidishkeit* permeated every fiber of his being. One of his students, Rabbi Moshe Ashkenazi, told



how Reb Alter explained the difference between how a *misnaged* learns Gemara and how a Chossid learns.

The *misnaged* reads the words of the Gemara, “Let us say that the Mishnah is not in accordance with Sumchus,” and interprets them as fact: Sumchus’s words contradict the Mishnah. In contrast, the Chossid refuses to accept that. He wonders, “Let us say the Mishnah is not like Sumchus?!” Could Sumchus possibly contradict the Mishnah?!

## How a Chossid Learns Tanya

Reb Alter instructed his students that when they learned Tanya, they should point at themselves with their thumbs, as if to say, “I’m not excluded from this.” They would remind themselves that the Alter Rebbe’s words are directed at each of them, not just at someone else. In this way, the teachings would have their desired effect.

## Pretend it’s an Empty Room

Reb Alter put great emphasis on *chazzering* Chassidim properly. One of his students, Reb Yosef Menachem Weintchok related: “Reb Alter asked me to say over a *maamar*, but I was a young *bochur* and had stage fright. He advised me to imagine that around me were only empty, unoccupied *shtenders*.”

*Rabbi Moshe Weber would often tell his students stories about Reb Alter. Here are several he related:*

- It was the custom of the Chassidim that when they visited the holy resting place of the Alter Rebbe in Haditch, they would stay there for some time before entering the Ohel, as a preparation for their entry to this sacred place. Each person would take as long as they felt was necessary. Reb Alter, however, related that he would enter immediately upon arrival, for he felt that even after making preparations, it would be the same as before.

- When Reb Alter studied in Tomchei Temimim, he wore—as was customary in Tomchei Temimim in those days—a long coat. This coat stood out and was a cause for scorn and derision among the neighbors where his father lived. He poured out his heart to the Rebbe Rashab, and the Rebbe Rashab strongly encouraged him to continue wearing the coat.

## At the Rebbe’s Wedding

Reb Alter was the *mashgiach* in Tomchei Temimim in Warsaw in 5689\*, the year of the Rebbe’s marriage to Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka. At the *chasuna*, the Frierdiker Rebbe charged Reb Alter with the duty of distributing *l’chaim* to the *temimim*.<sup>2</sup>

The *bochurim* in Toras Emes once asked Reb Alter to *chazzer* a *maamar* for them and to *farbreng* with them as well. Reb Alter replied that he could only do one of the two, since each one required eight hours of internal preparation.

## “Create a Healthy Set of Lungs”

Reb Alter contracted tuberculosis, a dreaded lung disease, and suffered agonizing pain as a result. He once turned to the students sitting around his bed and shared what he was thinking: “Hashem! You create the world every moment anew. Does the fact that yesterday you created a sick set of lungs mean that you should continue to do so every moment?”

Reb Alter truly felt with all his being that Hashem “Creates the world, in His goodness, each day, constantly.” ❶

1. Toldos Chabad B’Russia HaSoveitis p. 246.  
2. Sefer Hasichos 5688-91 p. 54.



JEM 194239

# AWAKENING



JEM 291821

**RABBI SHMUEL  
AVIDOR**

5728\*

**Shmuel Avidor:** What should I write in the newspaper about maintaining the spiritual awakening of the Six-Day War?

**The Rebbe:** I began with *mitvza tefillin*, but the truth is that people can be influenced even in the most difficult areas—even *taharas hamishpacha*, which is extremely difficult; even someone who understands [its importance] may not agree to [begin] observing it, because he does not wish to create a difference between children [who were born while *taharas hamishpacha* was not being observed] and children [who will be born while *taharas hamishpacha* is observed].

We must see to it that Yidden should attend shul on Shabbos; but not by making the argument that “since today is Shabbos, you must go to shul,” because that will have no effect. Everyone differentiates between Shabbos and the weekdays. Even people who go to the beach [on Shabbos] take different food than they do on other days of the week. The day is not ordinary; they feel a bit festive. But even though they feel festive, they’re not observing all the other [Shabbos] observances; the things they do because it’s Shabbos don’t extend to the rest of their activities. For this reason, impressing upon them to come to shul “because today is Shabbos” will have no effect.

The very fact that a person goes to shul makes him feel more connected to all Yidden. Even someone who doesn’t daven at all—if he spends time in shul, he will eventually end up saying a short prayer, or a *kapitel Tehillim*, until,

eventually, he will daven together with everyone. A person might hear a speech that will bring fundamental change in his daily life. Just as davening Shacharis is intended to bring holiness not only into the time spent davening, but into the entire day, transforming it; so too, [bringing Yidden to shul] will transform them.

The Six-Day War deserves a real response; it must bring fundamental change in Yidden—*mesiras nefesh*. Not *mesiras nefesh* of the body, rather as the Alter Rebbe explains: to give up one’s will, as the *possuk* says “My will (*nafshi*) is to this nation.”

I argued about this with a certain *rosh yeshiva*, and he told me that the transformation must be in the form of an increase in fixed times for Torah-study. *The Rebbe explained:* This isn’t particularly connected to the Six-Day War—one should always be increasing and improving in all areas. Here, there needs to be a fundamental transformation, which will be caused by [bringing Yidden to shul]. *The Rebbe continued at length to describe the positive affect this would have.*

Regarding settlement in [the newly reclaimed] Old City of Yerushalayim the Rebbe asked why it is being prevented. It was a mistake not to expel the Arabs. They should have told each Arab: “In truth, you have incurred the death penalty for treason, but instead, take 100 Israeli Lirot, pack your bags and leave.” Then, they would have come to Egypt or Syria and settled there, telling of the good that there is in Israel—how in truth, they had incurred the death penalty,



In Memory of our Mother,  
Bubbe and Great Bubbe  
Zissel Bas Dovid A”h  
Reiter  
In Honor of Her First Yartzeit  
Second day of Rosh Chodesh Iyar 5779  
Dedicated by her  
Loving Family sheyichyu



but the Jews are merciful and descend from merciful people, and therefore allowed them to go.

Instead, the Arabs were allowed to remain in their places, where they speak badly [of the Israelis]. The elections are coming up, and since Israel is a democracy, they will vote, and who knows what will be. Certainly, the Israelis will build them new neighborhoods in the place of their ruins.

I was never in Egypt and I never spoke to [Egyptian President] Nasser, but I am certain that he had no doubt that the Sinai Peninsula belonged to Israel, and he did not dream that he would get it back. The rest of the world thought the same. Israel itself allowed the thought [of returning the land] to hold sway. This is an enormous, irreparable mistake. If they were motivated by fear of Russia, America should be afraid of Russia, not Israel.

They’re waiting for immigrants to arrive in Israel, but who knows when they’ll come. Even when they do come, they aren’t native-born Israelis and aren’t as capable of developing it. They need to urge an increase in the birth rate—to say that Israel has grown larger and must be settled. I am certain that [the Israeli citizenship] will listen, and there will be tens of thousands, or even 100,000 more children born. Native-born Israelis are more familiar with the land and are more capable of developing it.

Rebbi Chanina Ben Dosa was accustomed to miracles occurring for him constantly, but we are not. When a miracle happens, it increases people’s *emuna*. But if there are many miracles, people can be under the impression that it was their own power that caused it. This is what happened during the Six-Day War—there were many miracles, and there was reason to expect people to claim that it was their own power. So Hashem said, “Try it on your own, and see if you have the power.” So far, there has been failure after failure.

Is the awakening in Israel still going on?

**Shmuel Avidor:** It has cooled off a lot, but some still remains, particularly among our Sefardi brethren.

**The Rebbe:** Everyone has been awakened, but only by the Sefardim is it revealed. In general, it’s easier to have an



SHMUEL AVIDOR (LEFT) SPEAKS WITH SHIMON PERES AFTER HIS YECHIDUS, SHEVAT 5730\*.

effect on them, for by nature, they show their feelings, while the Europeans conceal their feelings.

**Shmuel Avidor:** Should newspapers publish debates between religious and secular people?

**The Rebbe:** No. If people ask questions on their own, they must be answered and the question must be resolved, but if no one is asking, you don’t need to create questions. Especially since by doing so you would be giving them prominence and turning them into a force to be reckoned with. You would be inviting them to the newspapers and this in itself will cause them to be obstinate, especially since once they write a question, it’s taken as a valid question, and because it is possible that there will not be a good answer, the question can have more of an effect than the answer.

**Shmuel Avidor:** They demolished houses in the area of the Kosel. The government deliberated whether or not to do it.

**The Rebbe:** They did well. Even had they not done this, they would have been asked for compensation. It’s good that there was one *chutzpadike* person who took a bulldozer and demolished the houses. In truth, [U.S. President] Johnson also knew that the bulldozer wasn’t driving around there by accident, but the higher-ups required there to be an explanation.<sup>1</sup> ⑦

1. On the fifth night of the Six-Day War, Yerushalayim’s Mayor Teddy Kollek called upon civilian contractors to demolish the old Moroccan neighborhood that was built right next to the Kosel, paving the way for the Kosel Plaza to be built. To avoid outcry and to distance any official government organizations, civilian contractors, rather than military, were used, and it was done at night. Those who made the decision to demolish the buildings intentionally did not seek international approval.

לזכות  
 החתן הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל שיחי  
 שפאלטר  
 והכלה המהוללה מרת מרים ברכה תחי  
 בכור  
 לרגל חתונתם בשעתומ"צ  
 ח"י אייר, ל"ג בעומר ה'תשע"ט  
 נדפס ע"י  
 הרה"ת ר' צבי יוסף וזוגתו מרת חנה שיחיו  
 שפאלטר  
 הרה"ת ר' שלמה וזוגתו מרת גיטל בריינדל שיחיו  
 בכור



# Meiron

The Cradle of  
Primius Hatorah

HANS PINN / ISRAEL GOVERNMENT PRESS OFFICE

YIDDEN FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE VISIT KEVER RASHBI ON LAG BA'OMER, 5699.

## Freilicher...

"At 4:15 a.m. we traveled to Kfar Meiron," writes the Frieddiker Rebbe in his diary. "Fifteen minutes later we arrived, and before davening, I prayed at the resting place of Rashbi a"l."

The Frieddiker Rebbe records how he lit candles in the merit of his family members (including "my daughter C.M., her husband Reb M.M., our daughter Sheina, *anash* and the *temimim*...") and then began to daven

with a minyan at a brisk pace. The Frieddiker Rebbe was honored with *pesicha* and received *shlishi*.<sup>1</sup>

Of the many gravesites and holy spaces spanning the Holy Land, Meiron holds a special status among

Chassidim, being the resting place of Rabbi Shimon Ben Yochai, the author of the Zohar, the foundation of *pnimius haTorah*.

In fact, Meiron was even proposed twice to host a community of Chabad Chassidim.

The first such instance was following the *aliya* of the Mitteler Rebbe's Chassidim. (It is unclear why it ultimately did not happen.)

The second time took place in our generation, proposed to the Rebbe by Israeli President Zalman Shazar. In his letter to Mr. Shazar, the Rebbe writes that, "In general, I am enthusiastic about the idea of a Chabad settlement in the area of Tzfas–Meiron, however, the idea still lacks details, especially regarding the types of people who would settle there..."<sup>2</sup>

In recounting the Frieddiker Rebbe's visit to Eretz Yisroel in 5689\* (תרפ"ט), Rabbi Shimon Glitzenshtein writes in greater detail:

"The Rebbe *shlita* locked himself in Rashbi's cave, lit several candles and did *hishtatchus* on the *tziyun*. He broke into heartrending sobs that shook all the listeners to the core. He again read all the *pidyonos* and then instructed to daven Shacharis briskly."<sup>3</sup>

In later *sichos*, the Frieddiker Rebbe describes his pleasure in being close to Rashbi. "When I was in Eretz Yisroel, I visited all the *kevarim*. At Rashbi's resting place, I felt *heimisher* [more at home], meaning *freilicher* [more joyous]..."<sup>4</sup>

Fascinatingly, a letter was discovered revealing the Frieddiker Rebbe's plan to visit there once again, on Lag Ba'omer no less! In a letter written to Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka and the Rebbe, the Frieddiker Rebbe describes his plans and adds that he hoped the Rebbe would join him for the journey as well.<sup>5</sup>

In our generation as well, the Rebbe placed great value on visiting Kever Rashbi in Meiron.



THRONGS OF YIDDEN TRAVELING TO MEIRON FOR LAG B'OMER, CIRCA 5680S.

## HE BROKE INTO HEARTRENDING SOBS THAT SHOOK ALL THE LISTENERS TO THE CORE.

In 5736\*, when the Rebbe sent the group of shluchim to live in Eretz Yisroel, some of them were sent to settle in Tzfas, "Near the resting place of Rashbi in Meiron," the Rebbe pointed out.<sup>6</sup>

Likewise, the first group of shluchim to Eretz Yisroel in 5716\* made a point to visit Rashbi's *tziyun*, and in a record of a *yechidus* to *bochurim* in 5735\*, the Rebbe instructed them to specifically visit Meiron on Lag Ba'omer and gave them dollars to give to *tzedakah* there.<sup>7</sup>

### Three Day Celebration

The tradition of visiting Meiron on Lag Ba'omer was founded by the Arizal. Each year, he would travel from his home in Tzfas to Meiron for a three day period, amid great celebration. (In 5740\*, when the Rebbe held three farbrengens over the Lag Ba'omer period, he associated it with this tradition of the Arizal.)<sup>8</sup>

Over the ensuing centuries, it became an established custom among the Jews of Tzfas to carry on the Arizal's tradition.

"They would travel each year," the Rebbe once described, "to the resting place of Rashbi on Lag Ba'omer, beginning with the evening of Lag Ba'omer when it is customary to light bonfires (at a time when fire stands out—at night) in honor of Rashbi..."

"Moreover, whenever Lag Ba'omer fell out on Sunday ... they would go to Meiron on Erev Shabbos together with their wives and children ... and *shecht* a lamb for the Shabbos meals ... they would celebrate the entire Shabbos with extra joy, associated with the *hilula* of the Rashbi."<sup>9</sup>

The tradition of bonfires was also started by the Arizal. In later years, the custom spread to Yerushalayim, Chevron and other locations in Eretz Yisroel. The merit of dedicating the *hadlaka* was available for purchase, and there were several instances that the Rebbe Rashab bought the *hadlaka* in Chevron.<sup>10</sup>

### The Tahalucha

"In times past, there weren't many *chofshim* [individuals who threw off the yoke of Torah and *mitzvos*] in Eretz Yisroel," the Frieddiker Rebbe





noted on Lag Ba'omer 5699\* (תרצ"ט).<sup>11</sup> "However, later the *chofshim* grew in numbers, and the *yerei'im* would suffer from them when visiting the resting place of Rashbi on Lag Ba'omer. They would scoff at them and even threw stones at them. They would have to go in groups, [protecting themselves] until they would be able to reach and spend time at the *kever* of Rashbi.

"Someone once related to my father [the Rebbe Rashab] that *chofshim* spend time at the *kever* of Rashbi in Meiron, but do not put on tefillin. My father responded, that if the Berditchever Rav would be here today, he would have fashioned an entire chandelier from it. Besides for being *melamed zchus* on a person, [the Berditchever] would also influence him to do *teshuvah*..."

The presence of non-observant Jews in Meiron on Lag Ba'omer presented a unique opportunity. In 5712\*, just one year after the Rebbe assumed the *nesius*, the newly established Tze'irei Chabad in Eretz Yisroel was looking for opportunities to fulfill the Rebbe's call for *hafatzas hamaqanos*, and they decided to utilize the pilgrimage to Meiron just for this purpose.

"On Erev Lag Ba'omer," the trip is described in Bitaon Chabad,<sup>12</sup> "a caravan of five automobiles left Tel Aviv to Meiron. When they arrived that evening, a microphone was set up on the roof of the *kever* and they broadcast a program of Tze'irei Chabad, including speeches about the Baal Shem Tov, Rashbi, as well as *niggunim* and *chazzaras dach*..."

"At daybreak, the caravan proceeded to Tzfas, and continued to stop in many locations. They sang and danced, and encouraged the bystanders to strengthen their Yiddishkeit."

In response to their *duch*, the Rebbe wrote how happy he was to receive news of the initiative, and encouraged them to make more stops in the future, comparing their trip to the Chassidim of the Mittlerer Rebbe who famously stopped in every village on their way back from Lubavitch to review the Chassidus they had heard from the Rebbe.<sup>13</sup> In many letters over the following years, the Rebbe strongly pushed for the continuation of the tradition, and encouraged all those "*hashayachim lazeh*—those appropriate for the task" to make the journey.<sup>14</sup>

The Rebbe would also participate in the costs of these activities, and

encouraged Chassidim to keep up the relationships with those they met in Meiron.<sup>15</sup> Detailed reports were expected from the participants.

The annual *tahalucha* to Meiron became an official tradition. Dozens of *anash* would board buses that would slowly make their way to Meiron, stopping off in many towns and cities along the way to speak about Yiddishkeit, and each year, the military would arrange a sound system and radio broadcast for the Chassidim from the roof of Rashbi's *kever*. In later years, mitzvah tanks also became part of the scene.

After receiving the report of the second year of activities in 5713\*, the Rebbe noted that they weren't utilizing the opportunity presented by the *upshterinish minhag*—as many Jews in Eretz Yisroel customarily celebrate their children's *upshterinish*, known there as a "*chalakeh*," in Meiron. The Rebbe suggested that Alef-Beis cards be distributed to the children along with some additional information for the parents.<sup>16</sup>

In 5717\*, Bitaon Chabad reported a special "Mivtza Hanachas Tefillin," where "pairs of *bochurim* made rounds among the endless streams of people and gave more than 1000 people the opportunity to put on tefillin. It was an amazing scene to watch; many of the people pledged to once again begin putting on tefillin every day."<sup>17</sup> It is important to note that this was a full 10 years before the Rebbe officially launched *mivtza tefillin*.

The trip to Meiron in those days was a significant journey, especially with all the stops on the way, which meant that the yeshiva *bochurim* would miss a significant amount of *sefer hayeshiva*. There were times when the *hanhala* suggested in letters to the Rebbe that the trip be canceled that year, but the Rebbe always encouraged them to continue.

“Because they did have the custom [to travel to Meiron] in years past,” the Rebbe writes to Reb Shlomo Chaim Kesselman, “it isn’t worthwhile to cancel it entirely and to give place for people to learn *pirushim*, including some unwanted *pirushim* [from the cancelation]. On the other hand, there is no necessity that the *entire* yeshiva make the journey, along with all the teachers and *roshei yeshiva* etc. I am surprised that you write that an entire week of learning will be canceled, because in this regard, it isn’t the quantity that matters, but the quality.”<sup>18</sup>

In a similar letter to Reb Shmuel Eliezer Heilperin, Rosh Yeshiva of Toras Emes, the Rebbe writes that “obviously, it was correct to allow the *talmidim* to travel to Meiron on Lag Ba’Omer, for several reasons, and in this regard it is stated, *‘eis la’asos laHashem vegomer’* [heifeiru torasecha—in a time of need, it is appropriate to...]”<sup>19</sup>

### Personal Gain

Several years later, a new element was added to the *hafatzas hamaayanos* in Meiron:

## “IT ISN’T WORTHWHILE TO CANCEL IT ENTIRELY AND TO GIVE PLACE FOR PEOPLE TO LEARN *PIRUSHIM*.”

The Rebbe’s *sichos* at the Lag Ba’Omer Parade were transmitted via live hookup so that everyone in Meiron could hear and participate.

In 5736\*, the Rebbe declared the year as “Shnas Hachinuch” to promote Jewish education for children. Although Lag Ba’Omer was not on Sunday that year, a parade was still arranged in New York in honor of the special campaign. However, they were not sure if the Rebbe would attend.

Then, word leaked out. “We still aren’t sure,” writes Reb Lipa Brennen, a *bochur* at the time, “but the Rebbe will probably attend the parade. We assume so because the Rebbe instructed to arrange a hook-up to the *kever* of Rashbi in Meiron.”<sup>25</sup>

The Rebbe cherished those hookups. This was actually expressed by the Rebbe several years earlier, in 5733\*, when he had announced that he would not attend the Lag Ba’Omer Parade that year due to certain unfortunate events that took place between Chassidim. After receiving a

deluge of mail begging him to attend, the Rebbe addressed the issue on Shabbos, Erev Lag Ba’Omer.

After explaining how precious the parade was to him, more than anyone else, the Rebbe added, “I will admit that I was informed that they would hear [the *sicha*] in Meiron, because they arranged a hook-up with the military. It is therefore possible that I will have gain from [attending the parade]... and [the hook-up] definitely is important to me, and I am happy about it. Nevertheless...”

### They Pulled the Plug...

“During the *hilula*,” reports Reb Efroim Wolff to the Rebbe, “Reb Nochum Kaplan spoke for 15 minutes about *mivtza tefillin*. When he began talking about Mihu Yehudi, the police pulled the plug (possibly upon the instructions of the officer from the Ministry of Religious Services). Only later did we find another source of electricity, and he continued his speech.”<sup>26</sup>



MIVTZOIM AT MEIRON, LAG B'OMER 5730.



A GROUP OF LUBAVITCHER CHASSIDIM SING NIGGUNIM OVER THE LOUDSPEAKERS AT MEIRON ON LAG B'OMER 5717.

## Upsherenish at Rashbi

The Arizal began an additional custom: Holding an *upsherenish* at the *kever* of Rashbi. When his own son came of age, he brought him to Rashbi's *kever* and held a great celebration.<sup>20</sup>

The Rebbe also encouraged people to bring their children to Meiron, whether the *upsherenish* was on Lag Ba'omer or not.<sup>21</sup> (Although some maintain that an *upsherenish* may be held during the days of *sefira*, the Rebbe advised against this custom, and suggested instead that the *upsherenish* be held on Lag Ba'omer in Meiron, as per the concept of combining meritorious elements—בגלגל זכות על ידי זכאי.)<sup>22</sup>

However, when one father suggested delaying the *upsherenish* several months until they would be able to make the trip, the Rebbe rejected the idea. "I don't see the value in delaying the opportunity to educate him in the mitzvah of *peyos*."<sup>23</sup>

Rabbi Zev Zalmanov in Kfar Chabad received similar instructions: "About the third birthday of your son Yisroel *sheyichye*, which is on Rosh Chodesh Shevat, and you considered postponing the haircut until Lag Ba'omer: I have already written my opinion to a few members of *anash* not to postpone the haircut without a very good reason..."<sup>24</sup>

publicized Tehillim recital was held at the *kever*.<sup>27</sup>

## Supernatural...

"*Sefarim* relate a wondrous thing," the Rebbe said before Lag Ba'omer 5738\*. "That those who will spend Lag Ba'omer in Meiron would experience a wondrous and totally inexplicable joy. That's what they felt. And why was it so? Because at that moment, Rashbi is on his most sublime level.

"The explanation of this concept is simple:

"Just as no one can compare to Moshe Rabbeinu, yet every person has a spark of Moshe Rabbeinu within him ... so too with Rashbi, who is compared to Moshe in his generation. He is present within every Jew, and this is especially the case during the generation of the 'footsteps of Moshiach,' because we have a special relation to *pnimius haTorah*."<sup>29</sup>

With this message about Rashbi in mind, we can begin to comprehend the great emphasis the Rebbe places on the Lag Ba'omer parades at 770, and on the visits to Meiron, both to do *mitvzoim*, especially on Lag Ba'omer, but also at any point in the year due to its spiritual significance.

The Lag Ba'omer parades took place in 770 for a span of close to 30 years. Then, several days before Lag Ba'omer 5740\*, the Rebbe announced that it was time for Rashbi to be brought to the Jews outside of Meiron, throughout Eretz Yisroel. The Rebbe instructed that those parades be quickly organized and held in all cities, especially in Eretz Yisroel.

From that year on, the *hafatzas hamaayanos* associated with Rashbi was brought to a whole new level. To this very day, hundreds of thousands of children throughout Eretz Yisroel participate in the celebrations.

The Rebbe encouraged every single Chossid to participate in these parades. As the Rebbe said in 5743\*,



AN UPSHERNISH AT MEIRON, LAG B'OMER 5730.

During the early 5730s\*, the Rebbe spoke continually about the need to rectify the law of "Who is a Jew." The issue was considered extremely controversial, and the Rebbe said that every opportunity must be utilized to spread awareness about it. In those years, Rabbi Wolff's reports to the Rebbe describe how, during the trip to Meiron, Chassidim distributed

thousands of pamphlets and spoke to many individuals in both private and public settings about the importance of correcting the terrible law.

Mihu Yehudi was also the cause for a special *atzeres tefilah* that was held at the *tziyun* in Meiron. The day of 7 Adar 5731\* was declared as a *yom tefilah* regarding the law, and a widely



“*Rashbi gefint zich un tantzt mit di kinder*, Rashbi is at the parade and dances with the children, and you want to go home to eat lunch? Such behavior suites a *pereh adam*, a wild person!”<sup>30</sup>

With the advent of the parades, visiting Rashbi’s physical resting place received less focus. If you want to connect with Rashbi on his day of joy, the Rebbe maintained, the most profound way to do so was through spreading his light to another Jewish child.

In addition to participating in the parades, the Rebbe spoke of another

way of connecting with Rashbi on Lag Baomer:

“In the *nusach* we recite at the Ohel, as it is printed in Maaneh Lashon, we recite:

“In the merit of the *tannaim* and *amoraim* ... and in the merit of the *tzaddikim* buried in this place.’ We can infer that at the *tziyun* of a *tzaddik*, all other *tzaddikim*, *tannaim* and *amoraim* are present as well, including, and especially (in relation to Lag Ba’omer) Rashbi.

“Therefore, I would suggest that tomorrow, on the day of Lag Ba’omer, *yom hilula* of Rashbi, his ‘day of joy,’

a great joy, comparable to the joy of a marriage, a *hilula* ... everyone should visit the Ohel, where the Rashbi is present as well.”<sup>31</sup> **T**

1. *Masa Harebi B'Eretz Hakodesh* pg. 104.
2. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 23 pg. 27.
3. *Masa Harebi B'Eretz Hakodesh* pg. 105
4. Lag Ba’omer 5699. *Sefer Hasichos* 5699 pg. 332.
5. 9 Nissan 5694. *Igros Kodesh Admur Harayatz* pg. 184.
6. *Sichos Kodesh* 5736 vol. 1 pg. 272.
7. 9 Iyar 5735. *Sichos Kodesh* 5735 vol. 1 pg. 72
8. Lag Ba’omer 5740. *Sichos Kodesh* 5740 vol. 3 pg. 26.
9. Shabbos Parshas Emor 5750. *Sefer Hasichos* 5750 vol. 2 pg. 460.
10. Lag Ba’omer 5699. *Sefer Hasichos* 5699 pg. 330. Interestingly, in a letter to Reb Shneur Zalman Slonim of Chevron, we find that the Rebbe Rashab actually asks him to specifically buy the *hadlaka* of Chevron, but not that of Meiron: “I would like to acquire the *hadlaka* in Chevron, but do not buy the *hadlaka* on the *kever* of Rashbi for me.” (22 Adar 5648. *Igros Kodesh Admur Harashab* vol. 3 pg. 14.)
11. Lag Ba’omer 5699. *Sefer Hasichos* 5699 pg. 330-1.
12. Bitoon Chabad issue 1 pg. 16.
13. 19 Sivan 5712. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 6 pg. 132.
14. 11 Iyar 5716. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 13 page 50.
15. 21 Iyar 5717. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 15 pg. 172.
16. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 7 pg. 274
17. Bitoon Chabad Issue 15 pg. 58.
18. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 11 pg. 61.
19. 21 Iyar 5717. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 15 pg. 172.
20. Pri Etz Chaim, Shaar Sefiras Haomer chap. 7.
21. 1 Elul 5722. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 22 pg. 311.
22. 21 Iyar 5714. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 9 pg. 58
23. 3 Iyar 5715. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 11 pg. 60.
24. 26 Kislev 5717. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 14, p. 220.
25. Nitzutzei Rabbi, Hiskashrus issue 501.
26. Yimei Temimim vol. 5 pg. 313.
27. Yimei Temimim vol. 5 pg. 125-6.
28. Kfar Chabad Magazine issue 853.
29. *Sichos Kodesh* 5738 vol. 2
30. Shabbos Behar-Bechukosai 5743. *Hisvaaduyos* 5743 vol. 3 pg. 1457.
31. Lag Ba’omer 5710. *Toras Menachem* 5710 pg. 68.

## “RASHBI IS AT THE PARADE AND DANCES WITH THE CHILDREN, AND YOU GO HOME TO EAT LUNCH?”

### A Spiritual Welcome

Rabbi Elchanan Yakobovitch of Nachlas Har Chabad related:<sup>28</sup>

“In 5729\*, the first year that Nachlas Har Chabad was established, the Rebbe instructed that *anash* who had settled there should travel to Meiron on Lag Ba’omer together with the new immigrants from Gruzia, who had also settled in Nachlas Har Chabad. The Rebbe said he would participate in the expenses of the trip.

“Indeed, we all traveled together to Meiron in three big buses, and it caused a significant *hisorerus*.”



MIVTZOIM BOOTH IN MEIRON, LAG B'OMER 5735\*.



# A Word From The Wise

Dovid<sup>1</sup> lived in the home of his brother-in-law, Avraham, in the city of Novo-Ratzevsk which was located in Pskov, outside the Pale of the Settlement.

Only Jews with a profession that was deemed necessary were given permits that allowed them to live in that area. Avraham was a glazier by trade which earned him the residence status that he needed. However, his actual work was as a merchant of silverware and ornaments, a well kept secret that could lead to trouble.

In the first floor of the same house lived a tailor. The tailor was very jealous of Avraham and of the double life he lived and to top it off he felt that his peace and quiet was disturbed because of him. The tailor, looking to settle the score, went and informed the government that indeed this man was

living in the city under a false pretense because he was not a practicing glazier but rather a merchant.

The government immediately acted on this information and evicted him from town and also confiscated all his possessions. The final blow was the command that he must relocate to the city of Polotzk.

Dovid was allowed to stay on and he continued doing the business. His brother-in-law, on the other hand, was not faring well in Polotzk.

On one occasion, Dovid travelled to visit the resting places of some members of his family who were buried in Vitebsk. He happened to meet his brother-in-law there, who bemoaned the miserable life he was having and all the challenges he was facing. Avraham then shared his idea to help him out of the dire situation

he found himself in. "I am therefore going to travel to Lubavitch to ask the advice of the Rebbe [Maharash]. Since you are already here, why don't you join me on my trip?"

Dovid agreed and off they went to Lubavitch.

When Avraham went into *yechidus*, Dovid stood on the side to observe what would happen.

After Avraham poured out his heart, the Rebbe asked him, "What skills do you have?"

"I am a glazier by trade," he replied.

"Are you well versed in this craft?" pressed the Rebbe.

"Yes!"

"In that case," advised the Rebbe Maharash, "Travel back to Novo-Ratzevsk and go into the town office building. On the second floor you will see a broken glass window. Offer to repair it and tell

the secretary to mark it in your name. When you have done this, go make an acquaintance with the minister of the city."

The Rebbe then made notice of the gentleman standing silently in the corner, "Who is this man?" He asked. "He is my brother-in-law," he replied.

"Where do you live and what is your occupation?" the Rebbe asked, turning his attention to Dovid. "I live in Novo-Ratzvesk." After hearing his response the Rebbe continued, "You should leave your current residence and resettle in Vitebsk!"

Without fully grasping who he was talking to, Dovid brazenly replied, "I lack nothing in Novo-Ratzevsk and besides I did not ask for advice about what I should do!"

"Don't you see that Novo-Ratzevsk is a dangerous place!" persisted

לע"נ  
השלוחה מרת הינדא גיטל אלטע ח'י  
בת ר' עזריאל ע"ה  
שיימאן  
נלב"ע כ"ז אייר ה'תשע"ג  
תנ"צ ב'ה'  
נדפס ע"י  
משפחתה שיחיו



the Rebbe and with those words the *yechidus* ended.

After they had left the Rebbe's presence, Dovid berated his brother-in-law for schlepping him to Lubavitch and made it clear that he had no intentions of relocating.

In contrast to Dovid, Avraham had every intention of following the directives of the Rebbe. He travelled to Novo-Ratzevsk and carried out all the instructions he had been given.

He then went to the house of the minister but he was not home at the time.

Seeing the minister's wife there he went inside with some ornaments and tried to persuade her to buy something. "I will discuss it with my husband," she replied.

In an attempt to catch her attention and draw her into a conversation, he removed a fancy pocket watch from his jacket and pretended to be looking at the time.

His ploy worked and she was drawn to the watch. "How much can I buy that for?" she asked.

At that point he realized the Rebbe's advice was already materializing and he spilled out his whole story to her.

She replied, "Come back tomorrow morning, and in the interim I will speak to my husband about your situation."

The next day he woke up early and met up with the minister before he went to his office. The minister instructed him, "Come over to my office today and

present your case; I will react strongly and shout at you, however, don't back down and push back at me with conviction. In the end everything will work out well."

Sure enough, a short while later, as soon as he had entered the office and began presenting his case, the minister began to yell and shout at him. "I am a glazier! I am really a glazier! In fact I fixed a window in this very building yesterday."

The secretary, who was working nearby and overheard the conversation, chimed in, "Indeed it is true. I watched him do it with my own eyes and I even have it recorded in my ledger.

The minister then gave him the appropriate

documents and he was able to return home.

The tailor who had been the informant was not too happy that his plan had failed so he schemed again. This time he laid his eyes on Dovid. He informed the authorities that Dovid was in the city illegally and without anyone knowing him or having connections with higher ups in the government he was forced to move to—lo and behold—Vitebsk!

The Rebbe's words were true, each man made the choice of how to end up where he was supposed to. **T**

(*Otzar Sippurei Chabad*  
vol. 18, p. 19)

1. The names do not appear in the original, they were added here for the sake of clarity.



# What We're All About

*Discovering Moshiach  
in every detail of  
the Rebbe's nesius*

## Part 5: Shlichus

ווערט שלוחים און גייט אייננעמען די וועלט מיט אידישקייט!

### BECOME SHLUCHIM AND CONQUER THE WORLD WITH YIDDISHKEIT!

If there is one phenomenon that can characterize *dor hashvi'i*, certainly it is the Rebbe's unrelenting call to all Chassidim to become shluchim, to spread Yiddishkeit and Chassidus to every corner of the globe.

Throughout Lubavitch history, the Rebbeim have taken responsibility for the spiritual welfare of *klal Yisroel*, appointing Chassidim to strengthen Yiddishkeit in dozens of capacities. Whereas in the past this was a mission for a select few, the Rebbe declared that today it is the "Mitzvas Hador"—everyone must become a shliach and do this holy work.<sup>1</sup>

In the *maamar* of *Basi Legani*, the foundation of *dor hashvi'i*, the Rebbe clearly articulates the way our generation will fulfill its mission of accomplishing the ultimate *dura betachtonim*, by presenting a vivid description of *avodas hashlichus*.

"We must behave like Avraham Avinu... come to such places where there is no awareness of G-dliness, no knowledge of Yiddishkeit or even Alef Beis. Specifically in such places, put your own spiritual needs aside... and even though they knew nothing until now, inspire them to understand and teach others [the deepest levels of Elokus and bittul ha'olamos]."<sup>2</sup>

Another unique element of this campaign to bring Yiddishkeit and Chassidus to every Jew and every place, is the fact that everyone involved in this mission

is called a "shliach." *Bochurim* doing *hafatza* during the summer months are called Merkos **Shluchim**. The Rebbe referred to those joining the customary *tahalucha* three times a year, with the purpose of bringing *simcha* and Chassidus to neighborhood shuls, as **shluchim**.<sup>3</sup> Older *talmidim* sent to out of town yeshivos are called *talmidim hashluchim*.

Those who merit to dedicate their entire lives to this holy endeavor are called **shluchim**; even if their respective roles have other traditional titles, such as *rabbanim*, *roshei reshivos*, *askanim*, *melamdin* and *shochtim*. Their wives are called **shluchos** and their children are considered **shluchim** as well.

And finally, the Rebbe declared that every yid is a **shliach** to spread Torah, Yiddishkeit and Chassidus to the world and bring Moshiach.<sup>4</sup>

Why has "outreach" become the mission statement of Chabad Chassidus specifically in our generation and why the emphasis on the title shliach?



GROUP PHOTO OF THE SHLUCHIM, KINUS HASHLUCHIM 5779.

## Going on the Offensive

### נערים פני זקנים ילבינו... למעליותא!

During the Simchas Beis Hashoevah farbrengen of 5717\*, the Rebbe explained how the institutional approach of the broader Jewish community to assimilation must change in these final stages of *galus*.

There are two strategies in warfare:

Defensive: Defend your territory when the enemy strikes.

Offensive: Attack the enemy before it strikes.

There are several advantages to offensive warfare. (a) The initiator can choose the best time and place for the attack, maintaining strategic superiority in battle. (b) Since war causes destruction, invading enemy territory ensures that the devastation happens in their territory and not in yours. (c) It is challenging to maintain a semblance of normalcy at the homefront during wartime. However, when planning an offensive, there is sufficient time and energy to ensure that civilian life continues to function as normally as possible, an impossibility when responding to a surprise attack. (d) The chances for victory are much greater.

The same is true with the battle between *kedusha* and *kelipa*.

The defensive strategy is to respond with emergency measures when people with lifestyles foreign to Torah and *mitzvos* try to lure our communities away from the proper path. Taking the offensive means going into their circles and bringing them closer to Torah-true Yiddishkeit.

For many generations, the global Jewish community adopted the defensive strategy and the results speak for themselves. We never succeeded in completely blunting these attacks and many times there were those who felt the need to resort to compromises, hoping to minimize the damage.

By adopting the offensive strategy, not only will we broaden the numbers of the Torah community, we will lose nothing on the way, strengthen our own positions and wage the spiritual battle on our terms, without compromising an iota of *halacha*.

The enormous spiritual challenges facing *klal Yisroel* in these final moments of *galus* leaves no room for doubt that we must go on the offensive. Even though this was not the approach of our ancestors, one of the signs of *ikvesa d'Meshicha* is that the youth will “embarrass” their elders<sup>5</sup>—in a positive way:<sup>6</sup> Rejecting the old strategies and adopting the bold and refreshing approach of bringing Yiddishkeit to the uninitiated and uneducated.

# What We're All About

We must venture into “their territory,” work with their youth and Jews of all ages, and illuminate their environment with the light of Torah and *mitzvos*.

Many wonder how it is possible that this generation will bring Moshiach when previous generations, who were greater in every respect, failed to do so. The answer is that today we are going to adopt the new strategy of going on the offensive and thereby succeed in preparing the entire world for the *geula*.<sup>7</sup>

Thirty years later, during the farbrengen of Shabbos Chayei Sara 5747\*—in connection with the Kinus Hashluchim—the Rebbe explained that in our generation there has been a great decline in the observance of Torah and *mitzvos*. Even though there are many *askanim* working on the issue, after all is said and done, at least three quarters of the global Jewish community is lacking a proper Jewish education!

*“Everyone has the opportunity and solemn obligation to ‘turn over the world’ in a positive way, by going out and bringing Yidden closer to Yiddishkeit, in a pleasant and peaceful manner... no matter how many people are already involved - there is so much more to be done and so many more Yidden we can and must help.*

*“Therefore we must declare to all Yidden, especially to the talmidim of Tomchei Temimim, whom the Rebbeim educated (with mesiras nefesh) that they should go out and fight the מלחמת בית דוד to bring Moshiach: **Become shluchim and conquer the world with Yiddishkeit!**”*

In these concluding stages of *galus*, everyone must participate in the final battle.

## A Taste of Things to Come

The Torah discusses two types of wars *am Yisroel* needs to engage in: (a) A war to conquer the original borders of Eretz Yisroel. (b) A war to conquer the additional territory that will be given to *am Yisroel* at the final *geula*, as expressed in the *possuk*<sup>8</sup> “ירחיב ה' אלוֹקֵיךָ אֶת-”גבולךָ”—Hashem will broaden your borders, referring to the lands of קניזי וקדמוני.

The first type of war is in the category of defensive warfare and the second type of war is in the category of offensive warfare.

Although this offensive warfare will only be relevant when Moshiach comes, the Alter Rebbe explains in Tanya that all the revelations of Moshiach will result from our *avodas Hashem* during *galus* and our current *avoda* needs to be a reflection and a taste of *geula*.

The *galus* version of this offensive warfare, and the taste of Moshiach in this regard, is through broadening the “borders of Eretz Yisroel” by bringing more Yidden closer to Torah and *mitzvos*.

(*Toras Menachem* vol. 51 p. 208)

## Defining the Shliach

### שליחו של אדם כמותו - ממש!

The title “shliach” carries with it immense halachic ramifications. When one is appointed to be a shliach by a *meshalei'ach*, a deep bond is forged between the two, to the point that the shliach becomes the very same essence as the *meshalei'ach*. When the shliach fulfills the mission, even when thousands of physical or spiritual miles may separate the two, it is as if the *meshalei'ach* himself is fulfilling the mission.<sup>9</sup>

It follows, that the fact that the thousands of Yidden around the globe strengthening Yiddishkeit and





THE REBBE SAYS A SICHA TO THE SHLUCHIM AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE YECHIDUS FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE MACHNE ISRAEL DEVELOPMENT FUND, 25 ADAR 5750.

spreading Chassidus are **shluchim** of the Nossi Hador, this brings the Nossi Hador to every Yid and to every corner of the globe.

This is crucial to the overall mission and purpose of bringing Moshiach.

Chassidus explains that there are five levels of the *neshama*, and the highest level is *yechida*. Moshiach is the general *yechida* of *klal Yisroel*, and every Yid has a spark of Moshiach within them (since every Yid possesses the level of *yechida*). This spark must have an impact on his or her life and in turn connect with and reveal the spark of *Eloku*s contained in every detail of creation he or she comes in contact with. For many, this spark is not yet revealed and operational to its fullest capacity.

The Nossi Hador, the Moshe Rabbeinu, Moshiach and *yechida klolis* of the generation, illuminates these sparks by appointing shluchim through which the *meshalei'ach* can shine. When every shliach illuminates his or her own *yechida* by strengthening his or her own *hiskashrus* to the Nossi Hador, they in turn can connect with and illuminate the *yechida* within every Yid they encounter and engage with.

When the *yechida* in every Yid is awakened and shining brightly, this paves the way for the revelation of the general *yechida*—Moshiach Tzidkeinu.<sup>10</sup>

### Shliach + 10 = Moshiach

The *gematriya* of the word **shliach** is 348.

The *gematriya* of the word **Moshiach** is 358.

By properly utilizing all ten כוחות הנפש to accomplish the mission, the shliach reveals his or her inner Moshiach.<sup>11</sup>

## A Microcosm of Moshiach

**שלח נא ביד תשלח - ביד משיח שהוא עתיד לגלות.**

When Hashem appointed Moshe Rabbeinu as His shliach to redeem *am Yisroel* from Mitzrayim, Moshe hesitated and begged Hashem to send Moshiach instead.

Two glaring questions emerge from this statement.

Moshe Rabbeinu was surely aware that Hashem knows Moshiach will be the ultimate redeemer at the time of the final *geula*, and still Hashem was appointing Moshe Rabbeinu for the task of *yetzias Mitzrayim*. Why did he insist that Moshiach do his job instead?

On the other hand, as the embodiment of *Toras Emes*, Moshe Rabbeinu's request was rooted in the

# What We're All About

truth of *kedusha*. How is it possible that his request never materialized?

In reality, through this request, Moshe Rabbeinu linked himself and his shlichus of *yetzias Mitzrayim* to Moshiach and his shlichus of the ultimate *geula*, so that although they are two separate people, from two separate *shevatim*, each with his own respective missions—they are nevertheless united as one essence (as will be presently explained).

Chassidus explains that the goal of creation is that a Yid should forge a true union between his *neshama* and his body. These two are polar opposites. The *neshama* is a part of Hashem, utterly nullified to and united with *Elokus*. The physical body is defined by its apparent independence from *Elokus*.

Through Torah study and mitzvah observance with physical objects, the Yid achieves the inconceivable: the unification of the infinite *neshama* and the finite body. When the body aids the *neshama* in fulfilling the will of Hashem, the *neshama* refines and elevates the body, revealing its inherent divinity.



THE REBBE ESCORTS THE GROUP OF TALMIDIM HASHLUCHIM LEAVING FOR AUSTRALIA.

The combination of these two opposites is expressed in the halachic parameters of a “shliach.” On the one hand, a shliach must be an independent person with a mind of his own. On the other hand, the shliach must be completely subservient to the will of the *meshalei’ach*. Deviating one iota from the wishes of the *meshalei’ach* revokes the title shliach automatically. Moreover, the shliach must be fully aware that success in the mission is only due to the power of the *meshalei’ach*!

This is why Moshe Rabbeinu and Moshiach are both called shlichim.<sup>12</sup> Not only because they are “sent” on divine missions, but also because the title “shliach” and the unification of opposites that it represents, best defines their respective and joint missions.

Moshe Rabbeinu was the catalyst through which *matan Torah* occurred, the historic moment when the barrier between spirituality and physicality was removed and the process of *dira betachtonim* commenced.



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Moshiach will complete the task of making a *dira betachtonim*, by ushering in the era of *geula*, when the union of the *neschama* and the body and the union of *Elokus* with our physical reality will be revealed in its ultimate glory.<sup>13</sup>

"Shlichus" is the embodiment of the monumental task of *dira betachtonim* and every shliach today is a

microcosm of the shlichus of Moshe Rabbeinu and Moshiach. T

**The next installment will discuss several themes in the Rebbe's Torah and their connection to geula.**

ועוד ועיקר: וויבאלד אז מ'האט שוין פארענדיקט  
די עבודת השליחות - קומט צו גיין יעדער שליח צו  
דער משלח האמיתי, דער אויבערשטער, און איז מודיע:  
עשייתי את שליחותי, און איצטער איז געקומען די צייט  
אז דו כביכול זאלסט טאן דיין שליחות [וואס אויך דער  
אויבערשטער איז א שליח ("מגיד דבריו ליעקב ג'") און  
צוזאמען מיט די עשר ספירות - איז עצמות ומהות אליין  
משיח צדקנו]: "שלח נא ביד תשלח" - שיק אונז משיח  
בפועל ממשי!

סה"ש תשנ"ב ח"א ע' 112

1. Sefer Hasichos 5747 vol. 1 page 135.
2. Sefer Hamaamarim Melukat vol. 1 page 9.
3. Yechidus with administration of Tzach, 3 Sivan 5728.
4. Sefer Hasichos 5752 p. 109.
5. Sotah 49b.
6. Likkutei Torah Bechukosai 48a.
7. Toras Menachem vol. 18 page 61.
8. Parshas Shoftim 19:8
9. Likkutei Torah Vayikra, 1c. Teshuvos HaRivash #228. Sefer Hasichos 5751 vol. 1, p. 152 fn. 101.
10. Toras Menachem Hisvaduyos 5746 vol. 1 page 343.
11. Ibid page 342.
12. About Moshe Rabbeinu the Torah states "לך ואשלחך אל פרעה" and about Moshiach Moshe Rabbeinu said "שלח נא ביד תשלח".
13. Sefer Hasichos 5752 page 97.





# In UNCHARTED Territory.

Exclusive Interview with Rabbi Laibl Wolf,  
a pioneering shliach on campus.

לזכות השלוחה הצעירה  
ברכה פעסל שתחי'  
לרגל הגיעה לגיל י"ב שנה  
היא עונת בת מצוה  
ביום ט"ו אייר ה'תשע"ט  
יה"ר שתגדל להיות ראוי'  
לשם בת חב"ד כברכתו ורצונו של  
כ"ק אדמו"ר זי"ע ולנחת רוחו  
נדפס ע"י הוריה  
הרה"ת ר' אברהם יהודה הלוי  
וזוגתו מרת דבורה לאה שיחיו  
סאסקינד  
נוביי, מישיגין

For many decades, Rabbi Laibl Wolf has been a world-renowned lecturer, famous for his books explaining Chassidus and his profound speeches. He is one of a very small group of early Lubavitcher speakers that pioneered the art of articulating Chassidus to a modern crowd, and his travels have taken him to hundreds of Chabad Houses around the globe.


As a young Australian newly-wed, only recently introduced to Lubavitch, the Rebbe sent him on a mission to work with college students in the United States. It was during the height of the hippy-era. The Rebbe guided him on issues large and small through fascinating letters and *yechidusen*, and he continued his work with students for many years.

As a shliach who was sent by the Rebbe to head a Hillel House, quite a unique and extraordinary position, we are certain that our readership will enjoy this interview.

*This article is based on an extensive interview with Rabbi Wolf conducted by A Chassidisher Derher. We were also greatly assisted by Rabbi Wolf's interview with JEM's My Encounter with the Rebbe project. We extend our heartfelt thanks to Rabbi Yechiel Cagen and the My Encounter team for making it available to us.* זכות הרבים תלוי' בהם.

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Rabbi Laibl Wolf grew up in Melbourne, Australia. His father, a Radomsker Chossid, had settled there with his family after surviving the Holocaust. Together with the other impoverished immigrants, his father slowly restarted life in Melbourne, building a small hat business, operated out of his backyard into a thriving enterprise. Laibl was on a fairly typical track for a young Jewish boy: he attended the local Jewish day school, completed high school, and went on to the University of Melbourne to obtain a law degree.

While in college, however, he met Rabbi Zalman Serebryanski, who was one of a few Lubavitchers that had been instructed by the Friediker Rebbe to settle in Australia in the post-war years. Reb Zalman asked him if he would learn with him. Laibl had been familiar with Lubavitch as a child: This small group of Lubavitchers loomed large in the lives of all the Jews of Australia, because they were at the forefront of building the local Jewish infrastructure, including *mosdos chinuch*, *kashrus*, and so on.

“I was quite adventurous,” Rabbi Wolf relates. “I was looking into every corner, nook, and cranny—and so I agreed, and we began learning every week.” These classes, which would continue for many years, affected quite a change in Laibl’s outlook. “Rabbi Serebryanski got hold of me and never let me go. He allowed me to enter

into the depths of Chassidus, which brought much more meaning to my life, and brought me much closer to understanding the beauty and depth of the Torah. I had been a student leader, president of Jewish student societies and the like, and I always had a sense of personal responsibility to the Jewish community. But as the Rebbe entered my life in a profound way, my personal orientation as to where I was leading the students became much more acute.”

Towards the end of his legal studies he married his wife Leah, and following his wedding, while completing his degree, spent half the day in “*kolel*”—which essentially meant studying in the Lubavitch Yeshiva Gedola, because there was no actual *kolel* in Australia at the time.

About a year after his wedding, with his law degree complete, Laibl went on to study for a master’s degree in psychology. At a crossroads, unsure which route to take, law or psychology, he decided to write to the Rebbe asking for advice.

But instead of choosing one of the two options, the Rebbe replied that it would be best for him to continue his work with the academic youth.

After clarifying with *mazkirus* that the Rebbe was referring to university students, he asked the *mazkirus* how he should go about doing such a thing. They told him to speak to Hillel, which was then the primary Jewish

organization on campus and based mainly in America. Laibl immediately turned his focus to fulfilling the Rebbe’s directive. Without making too many calculations, he sat down and wrote letters to several Hillels in America asking if there were any posts available.

To his surprise, they answered that they were actually trying to expand internationally and were looking to bring Australians to America for training as Hillel directors. They suggested three campuses, and Laibl forwarded these options to the Rebbe. The Rebbe underlined “Madison, Wisconsin.”

Not long afterwards, in the winter of 5730\*, the twenty-four year old Laibl, who had only recently begun having a strong connection with Lubavitch, and his young wife, who had grown up in a Litvishe family no less, were on the plane out of Australia with their three-month-old baby, leaving behind their families and everything they knew, for a strange new country and a job they knew very little about.

On their way to Wisconsin, they stopped for a few days at the Chabad House at UCLA, at the time one of the very few Chabad Houses on campus. It was quite a learning experience. Campus life in America in 1970 was wild and raw, and the shlichim were adept at channeling these energies themselves. “I remember one character



in particular in that *Beis Chabad*,” Rabbi Wolf relates. “Everyone called him Baruch Hashem. I asked why he was called Baruch Hashem, and they said he had a violent tendency, and if he didn’t hit you, you would say ‘Baruch Hashem.’ That’s why he was called Baruch Hashem...”

“Of course there were many straighter individuals as well, but the Chabad House became a real beehive of activity in terms of attracting students, because the shluchim were on the wavelength of the students—equally ‘way out there’ as the students were. Not that the shluchim were necessarily that way themselves, but they were able to tap into that energy and express it.

“Those several days already taught me what I would be needing to express and do when I got to Wisconsin...”

They arrived in Wisconsin soon after, where they were greeted with a Midwest winter at its finest.

Being that he was officially going for training, Rabbi Wolf had been given the role of assistant to the then Hillel director of Madison. When Rabbi Wolf asked the Rebbe about how to go about this position, the Rebbe didn’t answer the specific question but just gave a *bracha*. As fate would have it, soon after Rabbi Wolf arrived in Madison, the director unfortunately contracted a serious heart condition and passed away. Laibl was left with an entire Hillel House, a three-story building, with the responsibility for seven thousand Jewish students.

The University of Wisconsin was a particularly radical college at the time, and there were constant demonstrations against the Vietnam War and many other issues on the table. These often turned violent, and there were many clashes between police and students.

Rabbi Wolf quickly learned how to adapt to the climate. He relates:

“We created a first aid center in the Hillel House, because whenever there was an altercation—every other day, the police and students would throw canisters of tear gas at each other—the students would come to the Hillel to wash their eyes out. The police didn’t consider the Hillel House sacrosanct either, and every once in a while a few gas-canisters would be thrown into the Hillel as well. That was my first experience with tear gas, not a very pleasant experience... As a consequence, I became very good friends with many students, especially the activist ones, many of whom went on to become quite famous people throughout the United States.

“It was a very, very serious period of time, when people took the revolution they were part of very seriously, but there was also a childish naivete; the same students who would throw bombs would throw frisbees all afternoon, or sing songs and play guitar. The Rebbe recognized that there were wonderful energies there that needed to be tapped into and directed; that the youthful revolutionary zeal was something that could be utilized. The students were

prepared to be moved because there was an *emes*, there was a truth and there was an energy.

“The Rebbe saw this well ahead of time and directed the early Chabadniks on campus to tap into that and redirect it, and this became the *baal teshuva* movement. That’s why there was such a wonderful success in terms of Chabad on campus and moving students towards Yiddishkeit.”

In terms of activities on campus, Rabbi Wolf’s campus operations were quite similar to what one would see at a Chabad House today: he would give *shiurim* and lectures, he had a table on campus where he put tefillin on students, and so on. His background would often come in handy as well, as a lawyer who had studied psychology, and he was accepted in the fraternity of academia.

## The First Yechidus

Soon after arriving in Madison, Rabbi Wolf and his wife—both of whom had moved across the world at the Rebbe’s behest, but had never met the Rebbe—flew to New York for their first *yechidus*. It was an utterly new experience for them, and they had no idea what to expect. They were



told that their time was scheduled for approximately 2:30 a.m., and to arrive at around midnight.

“We found ourselves in a rather long line,” Rabbi Wolf relates. “I could see so many different characters, individuals, and behaviors. Some were quite sedate and grounded, saying Tehillim; others were conversing with members of *mazkirus* seeking advice, and yet others were very nervous. It was a highly charged arena, and we waited there in *gan eden hatachton* for two hours. It was an absolutely wondrous experience.

“Finally, the last person in front of us went in. People’s time with the Rebbe varied from about two minutes to ten minutes, and now we were finally the next in line. It was almost three o’clock in the morning, and we waited and waited for a half hour, forty five minutes, an hour—finally the person ahead of us came out. I was later to learn that this young man was Adin Steinsaltz...”

Finally it was their turn to go in. “I remember preparing myself, and I said to myself, I’m going to remember every detail of this room, I’m going to have photographic memory. But I can tell you right now, I recall precious little of the room...”

They approached the Rebbe’s desk. The Rebbe was looking down at a letter he was holding—evidently Rabbi Wolf’s most recent letter, in which he had written about a dozen questions. Rabbi Wolf also noticed another pile of letters nearby: all (or many) of the letters he had written to the Rebbe over the years.

The Rebbe looked up and said, “Do you want me to respond to these questions now, or provide you with written answers?” In those days the Rebbe spoke to him in English, though later it would change to Yiddish. Rabbi Wolf wasn’t ready for the question, and he remained silent, weighing the merits of the two options. Finally, the

Rebbe said, “Let me therefore respond to you now.”

## Seven on Seven

One of the challenges Rabbi Wolf was having on campus was that there were seven thousand Jewish students who were his responsibility—an overwhelming amount—and he wasn’t sure what the right approach was: Should he be working in a *makif* sort of way, macro, creating some greater impression of Yiddishkeit on the campus, or should he be working in a more micro setting, with individuals?

The Rebbe answered pointedly and deliberately, with a very serious demeanor. “Your job is not to work with seven thousand. Your job is to work with seven. Those seven will find their seven, and those seven will find their seven. But your work is to work annually with seven.”

Rabbi Wolf says, “I understood that to mean that I should make sure to work in a way that there would be success that could be measured in terms of individuals, moving them from point A to point B, and since, of course, every individual is an *olam katan*, every one of them would have a worldwide effect. Obviously one must work on both scales—micro and macro—but the Rebbe’s emphasis was on individuals. This was a very, very important message for me.”

## The True Meaning of Geirus

Another question was about *geirus*. This was a time when students were very adventurous as far as their spiritual meanderings, and Rabbi Wolf wasn’t quite sure what his policy should be when approached by students to discuss conversion.

The Rebbe read the question and said: “You are a chaplain and you have other colleague chaplains; if a student should approach you for conversion, ask this student to first meet with their

respective chaplain, in the pathway in which they were raised (or that they might have had some connection to), so they can investigate better and know where they come from.

“If, after meeting with the other chaplain, the student comes back and still wants to be Jewish, then you should make sure that the student is placed in the hands of someone who can teach them in an authentic way. There should be a period of learning, each time pointing out the difficulties of changing the way they eat, the way they behave on a Shabbos—pointing out all the difficulties a change of lifestyle would entail, so that they’re fully conversant with what they are getting themselves into, and at that point many a student will decide that it’s not for them.”

Then the Rebbe added: “Once they go through with the *geirus*, you should recognize that what has taken place is not a conversion, because there is no such thing as conversion.”

The Rebbe elaborated (—“I must have raised an eyebrow,” Rabbi Wolf says): “In *Lashon Hakodesh*, you have words and their opposites, the Rebbe said. For example, a servant who becomes free is עבד שנשתחרר; a poor man who becomes rich is an עני שנתעשר. Notice that the *shorashim* of these words are very different: עבד and עשיר and עני and שחרור.

“But a person who who went through a *geirus* is called a גר שנתגייר—the identical *shoreish* in both instances. When a person goes through a *geirus*, we know retroactively that this *neshama* was always Jewish—nothing was converted, nothing was changed.

“For reasons best known to the *Aibershter*, this *neshama* was placed into this particular set of circumstances of a non-Jewish mother, and this is the *nisayon* of this *neshama*. The *pintele Yid* within that *neshama* is what caused it to seek to be Jewish, and after the *geirus* we come to the

recognition that this always was a *Yiddishe neshama*. The Rebbe went on and said that this is why the Shulchan Aruch exhorts us to give *kavod* to a *ger* and a *giyores*, even more so than a naturally born Jew, because this is a *neshama* that has gone through a much more difficult test—and passed it.”

Here the Rebbe emphasized that the *geirus* must be according to *halacha*, with a properly constituted *beis din*, and if not, we will never know whether this was a Jewish *neshama* or not.

## Politics

Another question Rabbi Wolf asked was regarding his responsibility as a Hillel director as far as the political activities on campus: Should he get involved in the anti-Vietnam demonstrations and so on? The reason he had this question was because the Jewish students in Madison felt a

responsibility to society at large, and they expected the Jewish leadership on campus to take a stand on the anti-war issue. The question was: What public relations stance should they take vis-a-vis this issue, and to what extent should he be involved?

The Rebbe answered: “If you see two people drowning, G-d forbid, and one of them is your brother while the other is a stranger, and you have the capacity to save only one of them, no one will have any complaints, morally or ethically, if you choose to save your brother.

The Rebbe said: Your Jewish brothers and sisters are drowning. If you have the time to cover everybody, then you have the responsibility to do so.

“Then,” Rabbi Wolf relates, “the Rebbe looked up at me, looked me directly in the eye, and asked, ‘Have you used all available time to save your brothers and sisters?’”

## Campus or Community

There was another question about priorities: There was a fairly small Jewish community in Madison, about five hundred families, in addition to the Jewish student-body. Rabbi Wolf had very limited contact with them, because his work with the students was all absorbing, day and night. He asked the Rebbe what his responsibility to the community was.

The Rebbe gave a very direct response: “The older people have had their chance. It is now the turn of the younger people.”

Rabbi Wolf says, “Keep in mind that many of these answers were for that particular moment and that particular time; i.e. this was *my* mission at the time. I’m not sure how much you can generalize from that... But the Rebbe recognized that the fertile ground was with the younger people; that’s my own sense of it.”

## Public Speaking

“I was giving a good number of lectures on campus at the time,” Rabbi Wolf says, “and I asked the Rebbe if he had any advice as to how I should present myself publicly in terms of public speaking. The Rebbe gave me two pieces of advice that have held me in good stead.

“Number one,” the Rebbe said, ‘you should speak one level above the audience.’ This in itself was surprising, because generally we say that we should bring it down to the level of the audience, so they should understand. But the Rebbe said to keep it one level above the audience.

“Then the Rebbe said a second thing, which might be related to the first: ‘Make sure that when you finish, you leave them wanting to learn more.’

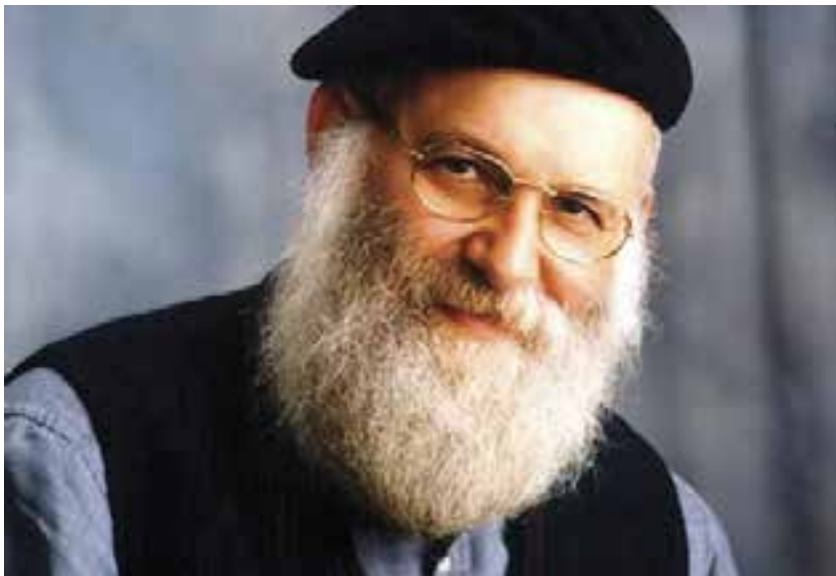
“These two guidelines have guided me in all my presentations (and for the past twenty six years, my work has been primarily public speaking in many *Battei Chabad* around the



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RABBI WOLF SPEAKS AT A FUNCTION IN MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA.





world)—to arouse the curiosity of the audience, to help them realize that if they are interested in other Eastern religions because they’re spiritual and mystical and wonderful, Yiddishkeit has plenty to offer in this arena.

“Putting in all these different snippets provides many different pathways, so that each person in the audience can find something that hits the mark of their *neshama*, an opening that they will be able to further pursue. Most of the young people who are college-educated find themselves in a sophisticated academic arena and study sophisticated books, but they dump their Yiddishkeit because it seems so simplistic and childish compared to what they see in the wider world. So it’s very important to be able to present the depth, meaning, and spiritual relevance of Yiddishkeit, and to couch it in language that is equally sophisticated. Chassidus affords the opportunity to do so.”

The *yechidus* went on for fifty-five minutes, certainly longer than they had expected. Rabbi Wolf says: “My wife and I came out of the *yechidus* with a sense of confidence and reassurance that we were involved in something purposeful that was

important for *klal Yisrael*, and we had a clarity in our marching orders.”

During the *yechidus*, the Rebbe also advised him to maintain contact with Rabbi Yisroel Shmotkin, who had moved on *shlichus* three years earlier to Milwaukee, about seventy or eighty miles away. Rabbi Wolf had been in touch with him before: Before Rabbi Wolf came to Madison, Rabbi Shmotkin would drive in every week to give a class to students. “Although he couldn’t speak English,” Rabbi Wolf says, “he did not allow that to be an impediment to having heart-to-heart conversations and having *hashpa’a* on students. When I came, he delegated that role to me.

“Rabbi Shmotkin helped me in many, many different ways. At one point, he advised me that we should have a Shabbaton similar to the *pegisha* for students that would take place in Crown Heights. So we invited a couple of other young *shluchim*, in addition to Rabbi Shmotkin, to come for Shabbos to lecture and *farbreng* with the students: Rabbi Manis Friedman, who had just started out in Minnesota, and Rabbi Yitzchok Meir Kagan, *a”h*, from Detroit. It was a wonderful Shabbos.”

## Writing to the Rebbe

“I didn’t lift a finger without reporting to the Rebbe,” Rabbi Wolf says. “Throughout the years, I always sent a detailed monthly report, which went to five or six pages, and very often the Rebbe commented, usually with short confirmations and acknowledgements.

“My sense over various *yechidusen* was that the Rebbe admired initiative. And I was not slow in taking initiative—I enjoyed it (hopefully most of the time it was wisely). When I was asking whether I should do this or that—and it was often a little bit off the beaten track—the Rebbe always wrote “ת”ת” (“Thanks”), acknowledging my letter and giving confirmation. The Rebbe encouraged me to express things that I could do that someone else might not be able to do. I’ve learned from other *shluchim* as well that the Rebbe encouraged them to take initiative. By creating that new *keili*, you allow the *brachos* to flow in a new way into your success and *hatzlacha*.

“One time, I sent in an advertisement for Pesach that I was putting in the student paper. I was very proud of the way it was worded, using the terminology of campus to ‘call Jewish students to arms,’ to be radical and adopt Pesach in the way of the Jewish radicals of old.

“Within twenty-four hours I received a phone call from Rabbi Hodakov: ‘The Rebbe asks you, why didn’t you put any of the *mitzvos* of Pesach in the ad?’ I learned a very significant lesson: you can be as radical and contemporary and flowery in your language as you want, but if you leave out the *mitzvos* themselves—what’s the point of it all?”

## Finding Joy in Your Shlichus

“Although we were seeing tremendous success in our work in Madison, my wife felt lonely there,”

Rabbi Wolf relates. “She had been raised in a large Jewish community, and in Madison there was no Orthodox community whatsoever. We wrote to the Rebbe about it, and he indicated that it was very important for my wife to feel comfortable and happy in her circumstances, and only then would there be success.”

Rabbi Wolf asked Hillel if there were any other positions available closer to a Jewish community, and they offered him a post in Hofstra University, in Long Island, NY. After two years in Madison [5730\*-5731\*] they moved to Hofstra, where they continued working with Jewish students.

It was a commuter campus, and they found a home twenty-five minutes away, in Long Beach. Considering that they were located relatively close to Crown Heights, Rabbi Wolf thought about moving there. “I thought to myself, if I’m commuting anyway, wouldn’t this be

a wonderful opportunity to live in Crown Heights?

“The Rebbe sent us a very strong letter, though it was couched in rather friendly terms. The Rebbe said, why would you want to move to Crown Heights? You have seen that living where you are now has given you so much success, more than other people. Stay where you are in order to be able to continue the success in your work.”

Rabbi Wolf was very much enjoying the work on campus, but again it wasn’t so comfortable in a sense that they had left all their friends and family in Australia. They asked the Rebbe whether they might continue their work back in Australia, where they had been invited to open a Hillel. “I didn’t realize how *chutspadik* it was to keep asking the Rebbe to move,” Rabbi Wolf says, “but I must tell you that the Rebbe was very patient with us and very forbearing.”

The Rebbe replied, in a letter: “In answer to your basic question as to whether to return to Australia, or to

continue your work in the the U.S.A., I must point out the obvious, namely, that the fullest success in one’s efforts can be attained only if your work is done with joy and enthusiasm.

“Judging by the information that was conveyed to me... and as I also see from your letter, both you and your wife seem to have strong longing for Australia... In the light of this, I withdraw my previous opinion, and leave the decision to you as to where you think you will have the greatest inspiration and most conducive atmosphere to have Hatzlocho in your work. Accordingly, you should decide whether you should return to Australia, or continue here in the U.S.A.”

“The Rebbe, however, did point out,” says Rabbi Wolf, “that for me there was a far greater scope for success in the United States than Australia, which was much more constricted and limited.”

They had several options for what to do in Australia itself; one option



RABBI WOLF RECEIVES A DOLLAR FROM THE REBBE, YUD-ALEPH SHEVAT 5750.

LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 238252

was to open a Hillel in Melbourne, another was to take a certain position in Sydney.

Rabbi Wolf relates: “My wife felt that I was not learned enough to take that position. When I asked the Rebbe about this position during a *yechidus*, my wife said—right in front of me—‘But he’s not capable of this position!’

“The Rebbe smiled, and without batting an eyelid said: ‘The position will make the person.’

“I think this point is true of the vast majority of shlichim,” Rabbi Wolf adds. “I don’t think I’m in any way undermining the qualities of shlichim when I say that there are some—including myself—whose personal typology does not initially seem suitable to the role. We feel that we’re not always fully up to the task. Yet we see how shlichim are so successful in ways that can only be described as miraculous, and the *kochos* that each one of us possesses somehow come out when the responsibility is thrust upon our shoulders. Almost all shlichim go out with no professional or organizational training whatsoever, yet because the Rebbe has confidence in us, we have the confidence, and this allows the position to make the person.

“After telling this to my wife, the Rebbe turned to me and said, ‘Do you know *Alef*?’ I wasn’t quite sure what the Rebbe meant, but I said ‘yes.’ The Rebbe said, ‘If all you know is *Alef*, then that’s what you will teach people—*Alef*.’”

## A Soldier Does Not Leave the Front Lines

Rabbi Wolf felt that he hadn’t really had the opportunity to sit and learn on his own, and he wanted to delay his work for a year and go to *kolel*. The Rebbe sent him a very strong letter emphasizing that going to *kolel* would not be the right thing at this point.

In the letter, the Rebbe wrote that there are different fields; some people’s main task is Torah study, while others are supposed to focus more on communal work or *chinuch*. “In your case, however,” the Rebbe writes, “since you have already been active in youth work for a number of years and have seen that you have had Hatzlocho in your work, and Hatzlocho in an area where it is very doubtful that anyone else could have had such Hatzlocho, namely the area of academic youth, and, moreover, in an area where the time element is very important, since the sooner a Jewish boy or girl begins to observe the Mitzvoth, the more certain it is that

they will be saved—your option has already been decided by Hashgocho Protis. Consequently, I can see no justification for you to abandon this sacred work, G-D forbid.”

The Rebbe went on to say: “If you have a strong desire to learn Torah and increase your knowledge, etc., you can do so by taking time off matters of *reshus*, but not at the expense of the time which you have to devote to the Chinuch of G-D’s children, so to speak.”

The Rebbe added: “If you may still be apprehensive as to how much you can accomplish in your Torah studies under such limited conditions, I would like to remind you that the beginning of the...Torah Or, i.e. the first drush and on the first page, contains the quotation...שע"י" נתנית צדקה נעשה מוחו וכלבו זכים אלף פעמים ככה giving tzedakah his mind and heart become refined a thousand times more so"... In other words, the great zechus of your continuing in this area [of *chinuch* activities] will bring extraordinary Hatzlocho in your own Torah studies in your spare time—a thousandfold.” According to the Tzemach Tzedek... the said phrase is not just a manner of speaking, but actually means what it says, without exaggeration.”





## Kosher Meditation

Rabbi Wolf relates: “In 5739, the Rebbe spoke publicly in an unusually explicit *sicha* about meditation, and the hurts and dangers of a Jewish person being involved in some of these Eastern practices. The Rebbe said that he would like to see therapists and professionals use the methodologies of what we might call today relaxation response—the Rebbe spoke Yiddish in the *sicha*, but that term was in English—to calm people’s nerves, and to remove the theological, *avoda zara* overtones that usually accompanied these practices.<sup>1</sup>

“In my own limited way, I began to evolve programs of meditation. I sent the outlines to the Rebbe, and each time the Rebbe acknowledged my letters and ideas. At one point I asked the Rebbe if I could introduce concepts of Chassidus into the meditation, which would allow me to bring Chassidus to people in a more profound way. I asked for permission because the Rebbe had asked that the meditation be stripped of its religious connotations, and be only a therapeutic tool. To my surprise, the Rebbe again answered with ‘*Tach*,’ giving his confirmation.

“For the past fifteen years-plus, I’ve been very involved in this endeavor, and the current *mosad* that I run in Melbourne with my son, SpiritGrow, is a place where meditation plays a central role. In my own small way, I hope I’m conforming to the Rebbe’s request of many years ago even in the present tense.”

When it came to choosing a final position in Australia, the Rebbe told them to ask two *yedidim* for advice. After a short time in one position on a campus, Rabbi Wolf opened a campus operation under the auspices of Rabbi Yitzchak Dovid Groner in Melbourne, where he eventually directed seven campuses throughout Australia. [Interestingly, in his first *yechidus* with the Rebbe, Rabbi Wolf was told that he should work with seven students, and those seven will find their seven, and those seven will find their seven.]

After spending seven years on campus in the mid 5740s\*, Rabbi Wolf decided—with the Rebbe’s agreement—to take up traveling and speaking as his full time occupation.

“Before every lecture tour,” Rabbi Wolf says, “I would send the Rebbe a list of all the Chabad Houses and institutions I would be visiting. Whenever I would go by ‘dollars,’ the Rebbe would inevitably say the same

thing: ‘A dollar for you, and a dollar for your *mekuravim*.’

“Throughout the years, in the Rebbe’s letters to me, there would always be a separate little letter directly to my wife. Essentially, whenever I asked the Rebbe something that deserved a response, the Rebbe took the opportunity to write to my wife, always encouraging her to continue her work.”

## Continued Effect

“The Rebbe once told Rabbi Yitzchok Dovid Groner, *a”h*, that the marching order is *kibbush Australia*, to overtake and transform Australia with Yiddishkeit. If we just live within our *mosdos* and try maintaining them, then we’re stepping backwards; we must always have an expansionist strategy.

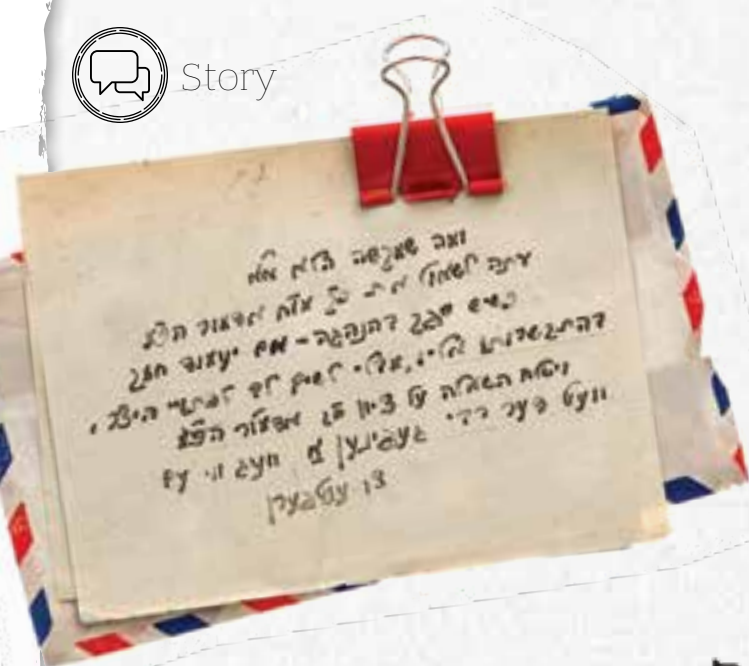
“I saw this growing up in Australia: The Frierdiker Rebbe sent several families, survivors of the Holocaust,

to Australia, and they went on to establish the Chabad *mosdos* there. In fact, they were the founders of the Jewish community in general, because when they showed the courage of building Jewish learning—in a community that was made up of Jews who were essentially destroyed by the Holocaust—many other groups followed suit. What distinguished them was that they were not only in survival mode—how to make a living and so on—but they felt a communal responsibility. They divided the tasks in terms of what they were to achieve as a community, and it was the initial thrust of Chabad wanting to introduce *chinuch* that sparked the awareness in others to develop a Jewish educational system. And since Chabad always maintained a strong standard, in terms of personal practice and public posture of Yiddishkeit, it also had a very profound influence on other institutions, because there was always a standard to measure against.

“There was also a lot of daring, which is so true of Chabad everywhere; you would buy a property for a *mosad* without a penny in your pocket because there was a *brocha* and you needed to build the *keili*. It was that kind of pioneering adventurous spirit that Melbourne’s early Chabad pioneers demonstrated that made Melbourne into what it is today.”

“The Rebbe’s position is that if we’re not out there building, creating, growing—if we’re not moving upwards—then we’re moving backwards. Even within Chabad communities, we must always make sure that the ‘*Ufaratzta*’ continues with the original zest. As the Rebbe once said, Yidden are simply gold coins in the street; all we have to do is go there and pick them up.” **T**

1. See Sichos Kodesh 5739 vol. 3, p. 314.



# דער רבי וועט געפינען א וועג...

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



## Children

*Lag Ba'omer was one of the Mitteler Rebbe's particularly noteworthy Yomim Tovim. He and the Chassidim would go out to the fields that day... Many wonders were seen at that time, most of them involving the blessing of children for childless couples - and all year long people waited for Lag Ba'omer.*

### Hayom Yom - Lag Ba'omer

*In honor of Lag Ba'omer we present three stories of couples who merited the Rebbe's bracha for children after Gimmel Tammuz.*

### AS TOLD BY RABBI ZALMEN FARKASH (BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA)

Shortly after our marriage in Adar 5755\* my wife had an ectopic pregnancy, and she underwent an operation to remove it. Although she recovered from the ordeal, the necessary procedure caused permanent damage and it became clear that becoming pregnant again would not be easy.

For three years we davened, constantly wrote to the Rebbe asking for *brachos*, and tried every possible natural method. We finally realized that it was time to look into the

possibility of using more intense medical measures to merit having children.

Throughout this time we were on shlichus in Argentina and we had been to the Ohel many times. But our visits to New York were always a stopover on our way to a different destination; to visit family in Eretz Yisroel, participate in *simchos*, etc.

Teves and Shevat are the summer vacation months in Argentina, and my wife and I decided to travel to New York for Yud Shevat for the sole purpose of coming to the Rebbe to beg for our greatest desire.

We arrived in New York on 6 Shevat 5758\* and went directly to the Ohel. We remained in New York for several weeks and went to the Ohel at every opportunity to ask for children.

Upon our return to Argentina, we started scheduling the medical procedures we had planned to undertake. After conducting certain tests, the doctor notified us that the procedure would not work this time around and that we should plan to begin in a few months time.

A few weeks later, my wife started feeling some discomfort and a visit to our doctor confirmed the miraculous news that she was pregnant! Specifically during the time period that we had been told that it was biologically impossible!

On 6 Shevat 5759\*—exactly one year to the day that we arrived at the Ohel for the sole purpose of coming to the Rebbe—our first child Yosef was born.

#### AS TOLD BY PINNY BRANDEIS (MANCHESTER, UK)

We were married in Elul 5751\* and did not have children for 12 years. In the summer of 5763\* I was in New York for a wedding. It was 2 Tammuz when I called my cousin Dov Ber Weiss who lives in Crown Heights and told him I would like to visit with him.

We met in Flatbush and Dov Ber said I must come with him to the Ohel to daven for a *bracha* for children. We drove to the Ohel in his car and he advised me on how to write my letter and how to behave and daven in the Ohel.

Over the years we had been to many doctors for medical help, visited many *rabbanim* and holy *kevarim* for *brachos*, but within the month of my visit to the Ohel, my wife became pregnant! Our first daughter was born nine months later, on 10 Nissan the following year, our second daughter was born some years later on Gimmel Tammuz, and we were blessed with a third daughter as well. All in the merit of my visit to the Ohel on 2 Tammuz 5763\*.

#### AS TOLD BY LISA GOEL (ENCINO, CA)

Growing up in New York City, I attended modern orthodox day schools up until my high school graduation in 5755\*. My earliest memory of a school trip was when my second grade Judaic studies teacher, Morah Eichler, took our class to visit the Rebbe. There were a lot of people and the Rebbe placed a coin in my little hand. I remember being so happy to have received money—and then when someone passed around a tzedakah box I put the coin in the box for charity!

In my high school years I attended a yeshiva in Brooklyn. I met a good friend that lived in Crown Heights and spent a lot of time in her house throughout the years, but I never really appreciated the significance of the dollars taped to her walls or the pictures of the Rebbe in her living room.

In 5763\* I married my husband and moved to Montreal. My husband introduced me to the JLI (Jewish Learning Institute) classes that he was taking with Rabbi Ronnie Fine and I started to learn more about the Rebbe and Chassidus. When we moved to Los Angeles in 5764\*, we joined the JLI classes at the Chabad of Pacific Palisades and were warmly embraced by the Cunin family. Even after we moved to Westwood, I continued attending Chabad women's events as often as possible.

At that point, it was four years since we were married and we were still not blessed with a child, so we went to pray at the Rebbe's Ohel in New York. The Rebbe would always encourage people in need of a blessing to take upon themselves a new mitzvah or enhance a mitzvah they were already observing. So during this trip, my husband became inspired to be more diligent in his *kashrus* observance.

I found out that I was expecting our first child the very next month, and nine months later we were blessed with a boy! His little brother came shortly afterwards, thank G-d.

With two active boys we decided it was time to buy a home and moved to Encino, CA, where we joined the Chabad of Sherman Oaks, led by the Weiss, Lipskier and Teitelbaum families.

I will forever be grateful to the Rebbe for advocating on my family's behalf. The Rebbe and his shluchim have been a guiding light through all the major transitions in my life. I thank Hashem for them everyday. **T**

#### YOUR STORY

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





# LAG B'OMER PARADE

5720

לע"נ  
יעקב ליבער בן גמליאל ליב ע"ה  
נלב"ע ט"ו אייר ה'תשס"ד  
ת"צ'ב'ה'

נדפס ע"י בנו  
הרה"ת ר' ישראל ליב  
וזוגתו מרת פרומא רחל  
ומשפחתם שיחיו  
רעזניק



In honor of Lag Ba'omer, we present an overview of the Lag Ba'omer parade of 5720\*, including a collection of rare and never-before-seen photos.

We are deeply grateful to those who have shared their private collections for this article, including the Goldstein family, who have shared the newly digitized photo collection of their father Rabbi Yosef Goldstein; Rabbi Aharon Goldstein and Rabbi Yossi Bukiet, who took photos of this parade as young children under bar mitzvah; the Living Archive photo collection of Jewish Educational Media; and others.





GOLDSTEIN FAMILY

The Lag Ba'omer parade attracted thousands of Jewish families from the tri-state area. Chassidish, veltish, and not-frum—the parade attracted all kinds to celebrate this special day in the Rebbe's presence.



GOLDSTEIN FAMILY



GOLDSTEIN FAMILY





GOLDSTEIN FAMILY

As the children would arrive at Eastern Parkway for the parade, Rabbi Yosef Goldstein would open the program, making *brachos* with the children on their snacks, introducing the schedule and meaning of the day, and singing songs along with the orchestra.

The area behind the Rebbe's platform is packed with Chassidim. Many iconic figures from the early years of the Rebbe's *nesius* can be seen in this picture.





In the *sicha* the Rebbe connected the theme of Lag Ba'omer, the life and teachings of Rebbi Shimon ben Yochai and the story of the passing of Rebbi Akiva's students, with the Baal Shem Tov (whose 200th *yahrtzeit* would be a few weeks later, on Shavuot) and the mission of *hafatzas hamaayanot*.



“

**“It is you children, towards which all eyes are looking with the hope, that you will establish the *Yiddishe* world and the world at large, that it should progress more and more, not by waging wars and spreading fear; rather you should utilize all your energy to make the world around you brighter, more beautiful, purer, and holier.”**

”



A special banner was hung behind the Rebbe's platform, marking the Baal Shem Tov's 200th *yahrtzeit* and the message of יפוצו מעינותיך חוצה, "Let the fountains of Chassidus spread forth."







After the Rebbe finished speaking, Rabbi JJ Hecht translated the *sicha* to English. It is interesting to note that this was the first year that Rabbi Hecht had his own *shtender* to the Rebbe's side. In the previous years he would share the *shtender* and microphone with the Rebbe.

This parade also saw the now-famous and iconic marching band for the first time, led by musician Eli Lipsker.

As the children passed by, the Rebbe looked and smiled at them, while encouraging the joyous music throughout.



Following the parade, the children would go to Prospect Park for a picnic lunch and more fun.

The Rebbe went to visit the children in the park, and walked amongst the children.

This picture was taken as the Rebbe was leaving the park, waiting for a green light to cross the street to the car taking him back to 770.

# Derher**Letters**

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

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



## Tomchei Temimim?

Dear Editors,

Thank you so much for the wonderful magazines.

In the Shevat issue, in the article about Reb Yitzchak Dubov [“The Lamplighter from Lubavitch”, Issue 77 (152)], it states that Reb Yitzchak was *zoche* to help with the Frierdiker Rebbe’s *tahara*, “in which only *temimim* from Lubavitch were permitted to participate.”

In fact, even *temimim* who did not learn in Lubavitch were *zoche* to participate.

My *zeide*’s grandfather, Reb Mordechai Avraham Yeshaya Groner, grew up as a Karliner Chossid. The day after his wedding, he began to keep Lubavitcher *minhagim*. In honor of this, his father-in-law presented him with a Tanya and a Siddur Torah Ohr.

Reb Mordche decided to learn in Toras Emes, but was turned down by the *rosh yeshiva*, Reb Zalman Havlin, who said he only accepted *bochurim*, not *yungeleit*.

Reb Mordche turned to his father-in-law, Reb Avrohom Zalman Kazarnovsky/Schneersohn, who sent a letter to the Rebbe Rashab on his behalf. The Rebbe Rashab sent Reb Zalman Havlin a letter saying that he ought not push away someone who is trying to come close. Indeed, Reb Mordche was immediately accepted into the yeshiva.

Years later, after Zeide Mordche had been living in New York for more than 10 years, he was *zoche* to be at the Frierdiker Rebbe’s first Simchas Torah in America. At the *seudah*, the

Frierdiker Rebbe purchased four *rikuddim*. (The proceeds of Simchas Torah pledges would go to Tomchei Temimim.)

The Frierdiker Rebbe pointed to different corners of the room, and showed each of the four circles where to dance. The first circle was for those learning in Tomchei Temimim, the second for Tomchei Temimim alumni, the third for *baalei batim*, and the fourth for children under bar mitzvah.

The Frierdiker Rebbe noticed that Zeide Mordche stayed rooted in his spot, and asked why he was not dancing. Zeide Mordche asked, “Where?” (Being that he had learnt in Toras Emes, he was not sure if that was enough to make him a *tomim*.) The Frierdiker Rebbe responded, “My father said that Toras Emes is just like Tomchei Temimim; go dance with the *temimim*!”

Fast forward to Yud Shvat 5710. Zeide Mordche arrived in 770 and was informed that he would not be able to assist with the *tahara* as he had not learnt in Tomchei Temimim.

Zeide Mordche went to the Rebbe to discuss the matter. After hearing Zeide Mordche out, the Rebbe went to those in charge of the *tahara* and told them, “If my father-in-law said that his father called Toras Emes Tomchei Temimim, then...”

Thus Zeide Mordche was *zoche* to play a primary role in the *tahara*.

Levi Baumgarten  
Westchester, NY





## Picture from Pocking

Dear Editors,

I very much enjoy looking back at your vast archive of Derher magazines from the past 7 years. There is a wealth of information there.

I noticed in the Adar I magazine from 5774 [Issue 16 (93)] that the editors mistakenly captioned this photo “Lubavitch children study Gemara under Communist rule.” I must point out that the picture was published along with many others in the archives from the Pocking, Germany DP camps following World War II. The photo was not taken in Russia.



A couple of interesting details about the picture that are testimony to this is the way the children are dressed. This is very typical of the clothes that the children were given in the DP camps. Additionally, they surely did not have so many Gemaras in Russia.

Thank you for all the hard work that goes into making a magnificent magazine with so much info and great pictures each month.

Wishing you ongoing *hatzlacha*,

**Baruch Amsel**  
Kew Gardens Hills, NY

”

## Origin in Idol Worship

Dear Editors,

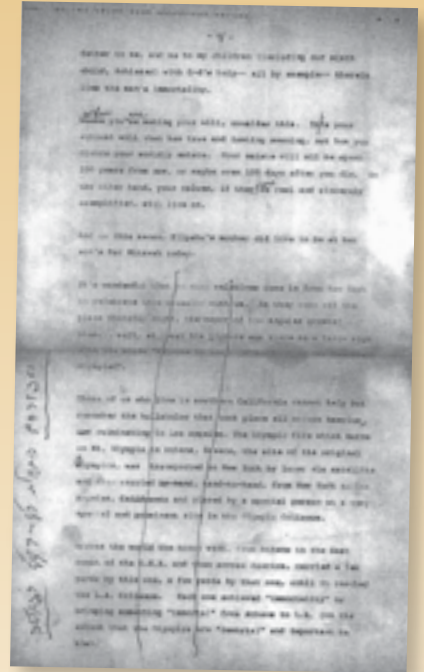
1) In the introduction to the article about the Kabbalas Hanesius [“Memaleh Mekomo”, Issue 77 (152)], it states: “Witnessing the passing of the torch from one generation to the next was always an extraordinary and intense experience for everyone who witnessed it.”

In an article by my great uncle, Rabbi Gershon Schusterman from California, in *Di Yiddishe Heim* (at the beginning of 5747), he wrote about

“the passing of the Torch” at the Olympics (which were in California that year) and the lesson that can be learned in *avodas Hashem*.

When the article was submitted to the Rebbe, the Rebbe crossed out that whole section and wrote כמפורסם התחלת כ”ז - בע”ז כפשוטה (see picture below).

“As is well known, the origin for all this (i.e. passing of the torch) - is clearly idol worship.” It is evident how careful the Rebbe was even about the smallest details when writing something that will be published.



2) In the timeline about the Maggid of Mezritch [Issue 62 (139)], there is a footnote regarding the dates: “The Rebbe writes that it is possible that the dates found in the Geniza Chersonis, where much of this information originates, are not necessarily accurate.”

While this is true for many of the dates, with regard to the year that the Maggid first came to the Baal Shem Tov we do have another source to verify that it was (as stated in the timeline) during תקי”ב:

In a *sicha* of the Frierdiker Rebbe from (שבועות) (תש”ד, סעיף יא) it says that “eight years before the Mezritcher Maggid’s *histalkus* the Alter Rebbe came to Mezritch, and the Mezritcher Maggid came to the Baal Shem Tov eight years before the *histalkus* of the Baal Shem Tov.”

**Menachem Schmerling**  
Lubavitch Mesivta, Chicago, IL