

Derher

A Chassidisher

א חסידישער דעהער

”פיהודים היתה אורה...”



In the King's Court

PURIM WITH THE REBBE

Argentinian Pioneer

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH REB AHARON HAKOHEN TAWIL

The Great Debate

TEFILLIN OF RASHI AND RABBEINU TAM—AN OVERVIEW



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On the Cover:

Chassidim bring the Mitzvos and joy of Purim to soldiers on an army base in Eretz Yisroel, Purim 5740. This photo has been digitally colorized from the original black and white.

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WHEN GIVING IS NOT GETTING

There is a well known debate of what should take priority, one's own spirituality or the spirituality of others.

The conclusion often ends somewhere along the spectrum where both things are considered, and giving is really getting. The wealthy man who gives tzedakah is really doing more for himself than for the poor man, and the same thing applies to spiritual tzedakah—it causes one's mind and heart to become refined a thousand times over.

The Rebbe is not satisfied with that and teaches us, using a peculiar story in Zohar, that real giving means sacrifice, where there really is nothing to be gained, and only something to be lost:

It was in the week of Parshas Chukas, the *parsha* that introduces the mitzvah of *parah adumah*, at the home of the great *tanna*, Reb Pinchas ben Yair. Present at the gathering were four visitors, Reb Shimon bar Yochai, his son Reb Elazar, Reb Abba, and Reb Yitzchok.

Reb Pinchas turned to his guest Reb Shimon, and said, "Tell us a new *vort* on the *parsha*."

Reb Shimon instead turned to Reb Elazar, his son, and said, "Stand up and tell us a new insight on the *parsha*."

Reb Elazar then taught the assembled a lesson on *parah adumah*.

The Rebbe's father in his notes to the Zohar explains why Reb Pinchas wanted to hear a *vort* on *parah adumah*, why he chose Reb Shimon, and why Reb Elazar actually taught the lesson.

He explains that Reb Pinchas is like Avraham Avinu, and Avraham Avinu said to Hashem, "I am earth and ash." This complete submission to Hashem was rewarded with the mitzvah of



**A LOOK AT THE TORAH OF
HARAV LEVI YITZCHOK
THROUGH THE REBBE'S SICHOS**

ashes, the *parah adumah*. This is why Reb Pinchas wanted to discuss it.

He chose Reb Shimon because he is the spiritual embodiment of the *sefirah of daas*. *Daas* is the order of purity, purification is the idea of *parah adumah*.

Reb Elazar shares the name of Elazar the Kohen Gadol, who actually presided over the very first *parah adumah*. That is why he taught the assembled about this mitzvah.

The only thing that remains to be understood is why the delegation of honor. Why couldn't each of the assembled that represented, embodied, or had resemblance to the mitzvah of *parah adumah*, have taught the mitzvah on their own. Why did Reb Pinchas ask Reb Shimon, and Reb Shimon asked Reb Elazar?

The mitzvah of *parah adumah* has an anomaly that creates this need to share the spotlight.

The Kohen that would administer the mixture of ashes and water to the impure party would become impure in this process, and that was the only way to purify the other person.

This is the essence of the mitzvah, a kindness through personal spiritual sacrifice.

Reb Pinchas was like Avraham Avinu, because they both embodied this type of kindness.

Avraham was famous for hosting guests without any discrimination, no matter who they were. He treated them with the greatest kindness. Moreover, Avraham sacrificed his own spiritual development to help others. We find that he cut short a private audience with Hashem so that he could welcome guests, who in their appearance were Arabs worshipping the dirt of their feet.

Similarly, Reb Pinchas ben Yair devoted much of his time and effort to the great mitzvah of *pidyon shevuyim* (redeeming captives). This mitzvah often requires leaving one's comfort zone, going to dangerous places and dealing with dangerous people just for the sake of helping another.

They lived a life where their own good came second to that of others.

When it came to the Shabbos of Parshas Chukas, it was this Reb

Pinchas, who was himself a living mitzvah of *parah adumah*, that felt the need to discuss it and teach it.

For this very reason he could not do it himself. The mitzvah demanded sacrifice. He wanted to give someone else the spotlight to teach it. He didn't just want to discuss *parah adumah*, he wanted to demonstrate how it should be experienced.

He needed to choose someone who also had a connection to this mitzvah, so he chose the Rashbi.

For the very same reason, Reb Shimon didn't give any insight into the mitzvah. He chose to sacrifice his own desire to teach, to allow his son to do so.

This anecdote demonstrates the parameters of where real kindness must reach.

It can't be limited to the idea of "giving is getting," rather it has to incorporate a situation where giving remains giving. A person must give of himself for others, give of his status and spirituality for the spiritual development of others. 1

לזכות
החייל בצבאות ה'
דובער הלוי שיחי'
לרגל יום הולדתו כ"ב אדר שני
נדפס ע"י הוריו
הרה"ת ר' לוי יצחק הלוי
וזוגתו מרת חנה שיחיו
רייטשיק



לעבן מיט'ן רבי'ן



19 KISLEV 5745, YOSSIMELAMED VIA JEN 23983

טור 'לעבן מיט'ן רבי'ן הוקדש לזכרון ולעילוי נשמת ר' שמואל ב"ר יהושע אליהו ז"ל ואשתו מרת שרה ע"ה בת ר' יקותיאל ומרת לאה הי"ד ת'נ'צ'ב'ה

ע"י בנם ר' יקותיאל יהודה זוגתו מרת פעסל לאה ומשפחתם שיחיו רוהר

A Second Chance

SHABBOS PARSHAS KI SISA, 16 ADAR 5745*



“At the end of the Purim farbrengen, the Rebbe said that someone from among the crowd should say *l’chaim* “*Ad delo yada*” on behalf of everyone there. Great commotion ensued as everyone started saying *l’chaim*, and the Rebbe answered “*l’chaim v’livracha*” to everyone. The *niggun* with the Russian words “*Yee V’ vadye mee nye utoanim*” was started and the Rebbe continued responding to everyone’s *l’chaim* with a tremendous *simcha*... The room was on wheels as

the Rebbe encouraged the Chassidim, swinging both hands in the air in a great display of joy... In the end, nobody took upon themselves to say *l’chaim* “*Ad delo yada*.” The Rebbe started “*Ki Vesimcha*” and left the farbrengen...”

These words poignantly describe some of what transpired at the Purim farbrengen in the year 5745*. At the next farbrengen, which was held the Shabbos after Purim, the Rebbe gave the Chassidim a second chance.

The Rebbe arrived at 770 from the library next door at around 9:30 this morning. On the way to his room, the Rebbe met Reb Yosef Waldman standing in *Gan Eden Hatachton*. As usual, the Rebbe informed him which Rashi he will talk about at the farbrengen later that day.¹

Interestingly, the Rashi that the Rebbe said he would speak about ("זיעבור ה' על פניו") was already expounded upon multiple times at farbrengens in previous years. When the Rebbe entered the shul for Shacharis, he notified the *mazkirus* that he would be speaking about a different Rashi.

During Shacharis, the Rebbe leafed through the Kovetz Ha'aros Ubiurim from Oholei Torah.

When the *baal koreh* came to the section in the *parsha* in which the *Yud-Gimmel Middos Harachamim* are read, the Rebbe stood up and remained standing until the end of *krias haTorah*.

The big surprise occurred at today's farbrengen, which was really a continuation of the Purim farbrengen. It was a unique one, abounding with joy and energy. There were *giluyim* at this farbrengen that have not been seen for years! Even the *sichos* were not regular.²

After the Rebbe made *kiddush*, Reb Yoel Kahn started this year's *Yud-Aleph Nissan niggun*, "*V'yedu Ki Atah*." Already at this point, one was able to see that this farbrengen will be different than usual. The Rebbe encouraged the singing of the *niggun* in the most lively fashion.

In the first *sicha*, the Rebbe noted that though on the surface there is nothing especially unique about this Shabbos, the truth is that this Shabbos is a very special one:

It is the culmination and climax of the entire past week, including Purim. Meaning, that on this day, all of the different qualities of Purim are brought to the fore in an even stronger way; especially that this year Purim fell out on Thursday, close to Shabbos.

Later on in the *sicha*, the Rebbe spoke about the *vort* that Reb Mordechai HaTzaddik heard from the Baal Shem Tov: A *neshama* comes down to the world and lives 70 or 80 years in order to do a favor for another Yid *b'gashmius*, and especially *b'ruchnius*. The Rebbe expounded on this story, and observed that if Reb Mordechai's *neshama*, which was quite a lofty one, had to come down just to do one favor for another Yid, how much more so ours. For however great one might think he is, he cannot compare himself to Reb Mordechai.

The Rebbe ended off with a practical lesson: After walking the streets tirelessly, speaking to Yidden and trying to convince them to do another mitzvah, one may feel disappointed or despondent when he does not see any immediate outcome from his efforts. Yet the Shabbos after Purim teaches us that one must do the *mitzvoim* with self-sacrifice. However, it is not enough that it remains in the realm of *mesiras nefesh*, rather, it needs to permeate your whole being. It must bring about a feeling of inner satisfaction, together with the certainty that the effect you had, both on the person with whom you spoke with *and* on yourself, will come to light in the end.

After this hour-long *sicha*, the assembled started singing "*Vayehi B'yemei Achashveirosh*." The Rebbe encouraged with both of his hands with strong movements, turning to all corners of the room; quite a sight to behold.

In the middle of all of this, the Rebbe motioned to Reb Tzvi Meir Steinmetz to say *l'chaim*. The latter picked up a small cup but the Rebbe motioned to him that he should say *l'chaim* on a large cup. After he finished the cup, which he drank slowly, the Rebbe motioned to him to have a second cup!

He took a second large cup, and drank it, though it was not easy. All the while, the Rebbe encouraged



28 ELUL 5745, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 266417



כתב יד קודש

What's In Your Heart?

This *ksav yad kodesh* from the Rebbe was written in reference to a Yid who was being persuaded by the Mormons to join their religion, *Rachmana litzlan*.



לע"נ
 הרה"ת ר' יהושע זעליג ע"ה
 בן הרה"ת ר' משה זלמן הכהן ע"ה
 כצמאן
 נלב"ע ח"י אדר ה'תשנ"ח
 ולע"נ
 הרה"ת ר' קהת ע"ה
 בן ר' יחזקיהו שמואל ע"ה
 ווייס
 נלב"ע כ"ב אדר ב' ה'תש"ס
 ת"נ צ"ב ה'
 נדפס ע"י משפחתם
 הרה"ת ר' יהודה בנימין
 וזוגתו מרת חנה ומשפחתם שיחיו
 ווייס



Hashem is found in the **heart** of every Yid from birth. As **He stated** at *matan Torah*: “**I am Hashem your G-d.**” This fact is manifest and **clearly** seen when acting in accordance with His will; not when you **close** the eyes of your *neshama* and begin fumbling around with closed eyes!

About which you write that the Mormons are giving him attention, etc. How is that relevant—to the extent that he would walk away, *Rachmana litzlan*—from Hashem, who is in his heart!

(Even if one says—**Rachmana litzlan**—that he does not believe in it [that Hashem is **in his heart**], that would be akin to one who says that he doesn't believe he has a heart at all, but [instead he has] a pumping device that the Mormons, or whoever, placed inside of him. **Either way**, saying it does not change the reality:

For some **100** generations, Yidden [stayed true to Yiddishkeit to the point that they were willing to] give up their lives *al kiddush Hashem*. Then along comes someone (even if he is an expert at research) and proclaims that in his understanding, all this doesn't make sense—and he therefore begins to carefully reexamine the whole philosophy [of Judaism] from its inception—but his vantage point only begins with a people who [themselves] **willfully admit** that they are a **derivative** from the Jewish people—[and they only came about] after 50 generations [i.e. Christianity].)

Be careful about keeping *kashrus*.

Day-to-day conduct [should be according to Shulchan Aruch].

השם נמצא ב**לבו** של כל יהודי **מתולדתו**,
וכאומרו בעת מתן תורה: אנכי ה"א
 ונתגלה **בהדגשה** ע"י הנהגה כרצונו

משא"כ - **כשסוגרים** עיני הנשמה
 ומתחילים למשש דוקא בעינים סגורות!

לכתבה שהמרמנים קרבוהו וכו'

מה זה שייך - שלכן לעזוב, ר"ל, השם
שבלבו (אפילו האומר ר"ל שאינו מאמין
 בזה - ה"ז כאומר שאינו מאמין שיש
 לו לב בכלל, כ"א זהו שעון שהמרמנים
 וכיו"ב הכניסו בו, **ובכל אופן** האמירה
 אינה משנה המציאות:

לערך **100** דורות דבנ"י מסנ"פ **בפועל**
 על קדוה"ש ולאח"ז - יבוא (אפילו גאון
 בחקירה) ויכריז שכ"ז אינו תופס מקום
 בשכלו, ויתחיל החקירה מתחלתה,
 ודוקא אצל אלה **המכריזים** שנולדו
 מבנ"י ולאחרי 50 דורות)

דיוק בכשרות האכו"ש

הנהגה יומית.

לזכות
הרה"ח הרה"ת בעל מידות תרומיות,
דוגמא למופת של שליח כ"ק אדמו"ר,
ומפורסם בשם טוב בכל הגליל
ר' יוסף שיח' וולבובסקי
שליח כ"ק אדמו"ר
לגלסטנברי קאנעטיקוט
שיצליח בשליחותו הק'
מתוך אושר ועושר
נדפס ע"י הרוצה בעילום שמו

The signature identifying mark of the tefillin bag of a Lubavitcher bochur is the two bags beside one-another: Rashi's tefillin and Rabbeinu Tam's. Today, it is a given that even before a boy becomes bar-mitzvah, he is already wearing two pairs of tefillin each day. But it wasn't always that way. Let's have a look at the history and reasoning behind this unique practice.

The Great Debate.

A brief history of the development of Rabbeinu Tam's Tefillin:

The Torah is full of arguments and disagreements. They range from fundamental disagreements with severe consequences—like forbidden marriages—to minute differences in the most common areas of practice—like how to tie tzitzis.

If we would follow the opinions that didn't make it to *halacha*, so much of Yiddishkeit would look different: In the world of Beis Shammai, we would be lighting eight candles on the first day of Chanukah, have no cholent on Shabbos, and stand up to say Shema in the morning.

But the Sanhedrin, and later the *poskim*, established the *halacha*, and that's the only one we follow. That's why we wear one pair of tzitzis, shake one lulav and esrog, and build one type of sukkah.

But there are a handful of exceptions to this rule—and one of them is the order of the parchments in the tefillin.



There are four *parshiyos* in the Torah that we are told to wear as tefillin:

1. קִדְשׁ לִי גו' וְהָיָה לָךְ לְאוֹת עַל יָדְךָ וּלְזִכְרוֹן בֵּין עֵינַיִךָ גו' (שמות יג)
2. וְהָיָה כִּי יִבְאֶרְךָ גו' וְהָיָה לְאוֹת עַל יָדְכָה וּלְטוֹטְפֹת בֵּין עֵינַיִךָ גו' (שמות יג)
3. שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל גו' וּקְשַׁרְתֶּם לְאוֹת עַל יָדְךָ וְהָיוּ לְטוֹטְפֹת בֵּין עֵינַיִךָ (דברים ו)
4. וְהָיָה אִם שָׁמַע גו' וּקְשַׁרְתֶּם אֹתָם לְאוֹת עַל יְדֵכֶם וְהָיוּ לְטוֹטְפֹת בֵּין עֵינַיִכֶם (דברים יא)

How should they be placed in the tefillin? There are two general opinions (based on a Beraisa):

RASHI

קדש | והי' | שמע | והי'
Also known as: כסדרן—in their order—because they are placed in the order that they are written in the Torah.

RABBEINU TAM

קדש | והי' | והי' | שמע
Also known as: הויות באמצע, vehayas in the middle.

This argument is especially significant because tefillin with parshiyos that are not placed correctly are possul. In other words, Rashi would hold that Rabbeinu Tam's tefillin are possul and vice versa.

Two Additional Opinions:

Rashi and Rabbeinu Tam both agree that the *parshiyos* are placed in the order according to the person *reading* the them, i.e. the person facing the one who is wearing the tefillin.

The Shimusha Rabba,

however, holds that the order is based on the person *wearing* the tefillin. He holds like Rashi, that the *parshiyos* should be placed in the order of the Torah, but the order is flipped.

והי' שמע והי' קדש

The Raavad

holds like the opinion of Rabbeinu Tam, that the *vehayas* are in the middle, but he accepts the opinion of the Shimusha Rabba, that it is based on the person wearing them.¹ Thus the order is:

שמע והי' והי' קדש

[Based on the Kabbalistic interpretation into the various opinions explained below, these two opinions reach much higher levels (which is why they are not worn at all, except by very select individuals).

Shimusha Rabba tefillin draws down from *arich*, the lower level of *Kesser*.

Raavad's tefillin draws down from *atik*, the higher level of *Kesser*.^{2]}

We refer to the tefillin by the names of these famous proponents, but this argument began long before and continued beyond their times as well. Some of the greatest Geonim and Rishonim—the leaders of the Jewish people upon whose teachings **halacha** is built—came down on all sides of the argument.

RASHI'S TEFILLIN

RAMBAM
RAMBAN
RASHBA

RABBEINU TAM'S TEFILLIN

RAV SHERIRA GAON
RABBEINU CHANANEL
RIF

Going back even further—how did this argument begin?

How did this issue even arise? Yidden have been putting on tefillin since the mitzvah was given. If anyone was unsure of how to make their Tefillin, they could have simply checked their parents' or grandparents' tefillin—and if *their* grandparents had a question, they could have checked the tefillin of their *own* grandparents, all the way back to Moshe Rabbeinu.

Tefillin is a mitzvah fulfilled by every Jewish male on a daily basis—how can there be an argument as to how to make it?

The truth is that this was always a question, from the very beginning. Hashem gave it in a manner that was open to interpretation, and there was always an argument which opinion to follow, with many Yidden putting on Rashi and many Yidden putting on Rabbeinu Tam—but it was never settled one way or the other. Different communities followed their respective *rabbonim*, and different generations followed the *rabbonim* of their time.

This ancient argument was discussed again by the Geonim and Rishonim but, unlike most other areas of *halacha*, it was never fully settled and different communities simply followed their set customs. There are many other arguments related to tefillin: how to make the parchment, how to write the words, and so on. But unlike those arguments, this one was never settled.

On a deeper level: both are true.

Rabbi Yaakov Mimiorish, one of the authors of *Tosfos*, asked Hashem Himself which tefillin are correct. “This is what I asked, ‘Great, mighty, awesome King... please command your holy malachim to resolve our question in the order of the tefillin. Some chachamim say that the havayos must be in the middle [=Rabbeinu Tam], while other chachamim say that the havayos must be in order [=Rashi]. Please, King of Kings, command your holy angel to tell me the halacha, and whose words do you favor?’”

“The answer came: ‘Eilu va’eilu divrei Elokim chayim, both are the words of the Living G-d. Just as there is an argument below, there is an argument above. Hashem says that the havayos must be in middle [=Rabbeinu Tam], and all of the heavenly court say that the havayos must be in order [=Rashi].’”

This is why Hashem gave the mitzvah in a manner that was open to both interpretations—because both are, in fact, true.³

According to Kabbalah:

Tefillin draws *mochin* [intellect] into *middos* [emotion].

Rashi’s tefillin draws down the lower level of *mochin d’eima*, also known as *Bina*.

Rabbeinu Tam’s tefillin draws down the higher level of *mochin d’aba*, or *Chochma*.



Practical *Pointers*

Who is it for?

Every single Jew. (It is especially incumbent upon *rabbonim*, *mashgichim*, and the like.)

When should they be put on?

Theoretically, it would be best to put them on together with Rashi's. (This was the practice of the Rebbe Maharash for a time, and he used very small pairs of Tefillin.³⁰) However, since it is difficult to wear them together in the correct spot, the common practice is to put Rabbeinu Tam's on after davening.

Preferably—they should be put on immediately after davening, because according to some opinions the *bracha* on the Rashi's tefillin can still apply. If not, then it can be put on throughout the day (without a *bracha*).³¹

What is recited in Rabbeinu Tam's Tefillin?

- The three *parshiyos* of Shema, so that we don't bear false witness

upon ourselves when we read about tefillin in Shema.

- Kadesh and Vehaya. Others do this in Rashi's tefillin, but our custom is to do this in Rabbeinu Tam's.
- Sheish Zechiros, as instructed in Kabbalah.

What happens if someone forgets to put them on chas veshalom?

The Rebbe provided various *tikkunim*:

- To become proficient in the practical laws of tefillin in the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch and also in two or three *maamarim* about tefillin.³²
- To know several chapters of Tanya by heart, and to make sure that not a day goes by without reciting one of them by mouth or by thought.³³

The segulos of Rabbeinu Tam

- It is a *segula* for long life.³⁴



IN THE KING'S COURT

Parim With The Rebbe

The Purim farbrengen.

Moments in time when Chassidim in 770 rose “*a tefach hecher*,” uplifted by the Rebbe’s presence and words. The noise and chaos of New York City seemed to fade away as the crowd united as one, basking in the Rebbe’s presence; drinking in hours of *sichos*, following the Rebbe’s lead during the *freileche niggunim*, and listening intently to the *maamar Chassidus*.

It was always a transformative experience to be in the Rebbe’s presence, but Purim was undoubtedly special. Even today, watching a video of the Rebbe’s Purim farbrengen brings one into the special atmosphere of the Rebbe’s Purim celebration. The stories of Achashverosh, Mordechai and Esther come alive and timely, real and relevant; the atmosphere electric; the *simcha*, pure, unifying and uplifting.

“There was something very unique about the Purim farbrengens, setting them apart from the rest of the year,” explains Rabbi Simon Jacobson. “Although it was one of the largest farbrengens of the year, the Rebbe didn’t want it to be televised, explaining that Purim is a time of *‘mishpacha umishpacha*,’ as if to say that this farbrengen was more of an intimate and personal experience.

“Chabad demands *pnimius*. It goes without saying that Purim by the Rebbe was not a day of frivolous fun; there was no *leitzanus* or Purim shpiels. Rather, it was a soulful and transcendent celebration of the highest level of the *neshama—ad d’lo yada*. The Rebbe often explained the words of the Tikkunei Zohar that Purim is just as holy as Yom HaKippurim (Yom Ki-purim = like Purim), with the distinction that on Purim we elevate the physical world as well. In truth, this was personified and palpably

expressed in every one of the Rebbe’s Purim farbrengens.

“These farbrengens were truly remarkable, and the Rebbe was always very *besimcha*. It’s difficult to describe the *simcha* of the Rebbe: His face radiated with a special inner glow. His presence gave off an elevated sense of joy and happiness—not an external one, but one coming from a deep place within. The Rebbe’s *nichnas yayin yatza sod* was extraordinary: Deep concepts of Torah flowed from the Rebbe, like an ‘ever-increasing spring.’ The Rebbe was far more ‘open’ and accessible than usual. The entire environment was different, empowering everyone who attended with a new sense of urgency, confidence and focus.

“There were also many historic Purim farbrengens. Specifically, Purim 5716*, 5718*, 5726* and 5747* come to mind. There were wondrous things that happened at these farbrengens, such as in 5713*, when the Rebbe said a second *maamar*, and declared three times ‘*hoo-rah*,’ that was connected to the death of Stalin that same night.

“In my memory, one of the most *Purim’dik* farbrengens was actually Shabbos Ki Sisa 5745*, two days after Purim.¹ It was a most extraordinary farbrengen, with abounding *simcha* and amazing *sichos* and interactions; I don’t think I remember any other similar farbrengen.

“Every year, a central theme of the farbrengen was the relevance of the Megillah to our lives today. The word ‘Torah’ stems from the word *hora’ah*, as the Rebbe explained countless times, and therefore every detail in it serves as a lesson. It may be that the section of Torah with the greatest amount of the Rebbe’s explanations and lessons is actually the Megillah. Every detail—from the length of Achashverosh’s feast to the heroic actions of Mordechai and

Esther—has an eternal lesson relevant to the present-day state of affairs.”

THE PURIM THEMES

We asked Rabbi Jacobson to point out several examples:

“Certain concepts were recurring themes in the Purim *sichos*. For example, the Rebbe often spoke about *hashgacha pratit* in our lives, which we learn from the Purim story, how seemingly ‘random’ events were actually part of a greater divine plan. This teaches us how to connect the dots in our own lives and recognize the patterns of a deeper narrative.

“This idea is associated with the way Chassidus explains the hidden



name of Hashem in the Megillah, and the apparent natural cycle of events we see in the story. The Rebbe would draw a lesson from this to our own lives: That we also need to recognize that Hashem is present in our own lives, even if it isn't immediately apparent.

“Another central theme was Chassidus’s interpretation of *ad delo yada*—that Purim is a Yom Tov more sublime than any other, even Yom Kippur. It is associated with the idea of a *goral* because it stems from the highest levels of *Elokus*, from *Atzmus* itself, which is beyond the rational structure of things. (Actualizing this theme, the Rebbe encouraged

many people to say *l’chaim* at these farbrengens, and would often ask for a volunteer to fulfill *ad delo yada* in an actual way.)

“Current affairs were always a present topic. The Jews’ participation in Achashverosh’s feast, as well as the term ‘*Yehudim*’ first seen in the Megillah, were often starting points for *sichos* about *Mihu Yehudi* and assimilation. The stories about Mordechai and the children he gathered served as lessons regarding *chinuch*. Mordechai’s proud Judaism in the court of the king was a lesson for Jewish America—and contemporary Jewish life in general—to always stand proud and celebrate our Yiddishkeit.

“At several farbrengens, the Rebbe spoke about Mordechai’s status as *ratzui lerov echav*, not being accepted by parts of the Sanhedrin because he became involved in public affairs, and drew practical modern-day lessons from the story regarding *shlichus* and *hafatzas hamaayanos*.

“One very important theme at practically every Purim farbrengen was *Neshei U’bnos Yisrael*. The Rebbe would dedicate at least one *sicha*, and sometimes more, to the pivotal role of Jewish women, often dwelling on the lessons of Esther and on the fact that the Megillah is called exclusively in her name, without mentioning Mordechai.”



PINNY LEW



LEVI FREDIN VIA JEM 243618

A MISHLOACH MANOS KIT PREPARED BY TZACH IN ERETZ YISRAEL, PURIM 5733.

THE REBBE'S KUPAH

One of the staples of the Purim farbrengens was the *magbis* the Rebbe would announce towards the end of the farbrengen. Participants would write their pledges on one card, and their name and mother's name on a separate card for the Rebbe to take to the Ohel.

This tradition began in 5713*, when the Rebbe said that he was attempting to reinstate *minhagim* that had been stopped for various reasons over the years. The *magbis* was a custom of the Rebbe Rashab, who would collect tzedakah money "for his own *inyanim*." Because it was a donation for the Rebbe's own cause, it was known as Kupas Rabbeinu. (In 5745*, the Rebbe said the money supports people who learn Torah *lishmah*.)

The early source of this custom also served as a reason for the two separate cards, one for the pledge and one for the name of the donor. The Rebbe explained that this tradition preceded the era of *mitzvah lifarsem oseh mitzvah*, when charitable deeds are promoted and celebrated, and therefore it was done then *betzina*, in a more private way. (On some occasions, however, the Rebbe asked that both details be included on a single card.)

Although the *magbis* was only held during the Purim farbrengen, the *kupah* always existed, and the Rebbe encouraged donations even on years when no Purim farbrengen was held, saying that Chassidim needed to know to donate to the *kupah* even when no official 'appeal' was held.

The Rebbe often encouraged that large sums be donated, "in a way of *ad delo yada*." On one occasion, the Rebbe instructed right after the *magbis* that everyone give double the amount of their pledge!

PURIM HIGHLIGHTS

To give our readers a feel of Purim with the Rebbe, we have collected snippets of varying lengths from every Purim over the years, culled from *sichos*, *yomanim*, and memories of Chassidim. We were greatly assisted in this endeavor by Rabbi Michael Seligson.

5710* “*Vilde menschen*, wild people say that *histalkus* means to completely go away, but they don’t know what they’re talking about!” the Rebbe said at the Shabbos Shushan Purim farbrengen, barely a month after the *histalkus* of the Frieddiker Rebbe. Really, the Rebbe explained, it means the Rebbe is more present than before, as in, “*Istalek yekara d’Kudsha Brich Hu.*”²

5711* This was the first Purim after the Rebbe accepted the *nesius*. It was a very long farbrengen, and the Rebbe was very emotional, saying that he was unworthy of the *nesius* and only a conduit for the Frieddiker Rebbe in this world.³

5712* “This was the only Purim farbrengen where the Rebbe washed for *Hamotzi*,” relates Rabbi Seligson. “In a powerful *sicha*, the Rebbe cried profusely when speaking of the lesson from Mordechai, who despite his prominent position personally gathered Jewish children to teach them Torah. Among other things, the Rebbe also said that whoever is close to the Rebbe, and even those who only hold on to the Rebbe’s *kliamke*, will merit to receive the *giluyim* of Moshiach. The Rebbe instructed many people to say *lchaim*; some individuals began to be *mehader* in the Rebbe’s instructions, until the Rebbe told them to stop...”

5713* Late in the farbrengen, the Rebbe’s face became very serious, and he seemed to be preparing to recite a *maamar*. But instead, the Rebbe related a story of a Russian Chossid who participated in elections, and, following the cue of the other voters, declared loudly, “*hoo-rah.*” Seeing the Rebbe’s grave expression, everyone repeated after the Rebbe, “*hoo-rah, hoo-rah, hoo-rah!*” The Rebbe then proceeded with a (second) *maamar*. News of Stalin’s death arrived a few days later.⁴

5714* The farbrengen was held on Shabbos Shushan Purim until late in the evening (followed by *kos shel bracha*), thereby allowing people from other areas to participate.

5715* The Rebbe spoke a long *sicha* about the *nisayon* of wealth. Right afterwards, the Rebbe announced that whoever desired to be tested by the *nisayon* of wealth, should raise their hand and will be blessed with it. Most people were under the impression of the *sicha*, and didn’t raise their hand; only three individuals did so. However, it seemed that the Rebbe was disappointed that only a few people took advantage of this opportunity.





PURIM 5713

5716*

An extraordinary *lebedike* farbrengen, where the Rebbe instructed people to say *l'chaim* again and again.

During one *sicha* on the topic of when to roll up the Megillah, a commotion broke out among the Chasidim when the Rebbe favored an opinion that is refuted by the Vilna Gaon (explaining that we don't have clarity from the Alter Rebbe on this matter).

In response, the Rebbe related that he received protests about a statement of the Chossid Reb Folle Kahn, that a certain *gadol* in heaven is jealous of a child who learns Tanya. The Rebbe actually defended his words, saying that it was, in fact, based on a Gemara⁵, that the righteous people are "נכרה מחופתו של חברו, burned (by embarrassment) from the *chupah* of their fellow [i.e. the reward from Hashem]."

5717*

The Rebbe related a powerful story involving several Rabbeim, dating back to the Mittlerer Rebbe's bar mitzvah year, about the power of a *tzaddik*.⁶

5718*

One of the Rebbe's longest and most famous farbrengens, complete with *giluyim* from beginning to end. The Rebbe said numerous *l'chaims* and spoke to many people individually.⁷ Listen to the audio and see for yourself.



PURIM 5722: RABBI AHARON GOLDSTEIN

5716-1956, 5717-1957, 5718-1958, 5719-1959



PURIM 5713

5719*

The Rebbe's Purim Torah: "The only argument between Haman and Mordechai was whether '*lehashmid* . . . *Hayehudim*' or '*Layehudim haysa orah*...' But *Mihu Yehudi*? There was no argument about that!"⁸ Just a month earlier, the Rebbe had responded at length to Prime Minister Ben Gurion's question of "Who is a Jew?" which had been sent to a number of leading Jewish personalities. This farbrengen, which deals with the distinction between the Jew and non-Jew at length, seems to be in direct relation to that discussion.



PURIM 5713, JEM 103376



לזכות
הרה"ת ר' חיים וזוגתו מרת ביילא
בניהם ובנותיהם
מנחם מענדל, חי' מושקא, לוי יצחק,
חנה דינה, משה אליהו שיחיו
גרייזמאן



How to Adopt

The foundation for
a healthy relationship



Argentinian Pioneer

The first Argentinian bochur to learn in 770, and then return as the Rebbe's shliach and become a pillar of the Lubavitch community in Buenos Aires.

The story of **Rabbi Aharon Hakohen Tawil**.

Special thanks to Rabbi Aharon Tawil, Mrs. Sara Tawil, Rabbi Shlomo Tawil and Rabbi Mendy Reicher for their assistance in preparing this article.

I was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina in 5698*. My parents both hailed from prominent families of the Chaleb Syrian community and immigrated to Argentina from Eretz Yisrael during World War I. We are a family of Kohanim and have a tradition that we are direct descendants of Eili Hakohen.

When I was a young *bochur*, there were no yeshivos in Argentina and after concluding my studies in the local Sefardi *cheder* I continued learning Torah on my own in various shuls. There were several other *bochurim* that did the same but there was nothing organized for us. At one point I started giving *shiurim* in a shul in the Flores neighborhood and was quite active in such programs.

Around Tisrei 5717* Rabbi Berel Baumgarten visited Buenos Aires as the Rebbe's shliach¹ and I met him in the Shuva Yisrael shul. Rabbi Baumgarten sensed my desire to learn Torah in a more proper setting and offered me to join him on his trip back to New York to learn in Tomchei Temimim. Although I knew nothing about the Rebbe and Lubavitch (except for the few things I had heard from Rabbi Baumgarten over those few weeks) I was very excited about the idea and after discussing it with my parents we started making arrangements for my trip. I was 18-years-old.

The Rebbe was involved in all the details of the trip and even sent a check to cover my travel expenses.

We did not take a direct route to New York. The Rebbe instructed Rabbi Baumgarten to visit the Jewish community in Belem, Brazil, where we spent several days including Shabbos. During our stay Rabbi Baumgarten spoke to the members of the *kehila* and inspired them to greater *shemiras hamitzvos* and I arranged some gatherings for the youth. It was a very uplifting visit and Rabbi Baumgarten



REB AARON (TOP RIGHT) AS A BOCHUR LOOKS ON AS THE REBBE IS MESADER KIDUSHIN AT A WEDDING, 10 ADAR I 5719.

told me to give my tefillin to one of the locals. The Rebbe was very satisfied upon learning of the details of the trip.

We arrived in New York on 6 Cheshvan, which is the day before my birthday, so I merited to enter *yechidus* by the Rebbe the very next night on 7 Cheshvan.

When I entered the Rebbe's room, he greeted me with a radiant smile, expressing a unique affection. I was immediately at ease and felt enveloped in the Rebbe's fatherly warmth and love.

I presented the Rebbe a gift on behalf of the Shuva Yisrael community—the *sefer* Ben Ish Chai.

“This is a very important *sefer*,” the Rebbe said while skimming through the pages. It is an anthology of practical *halacha* organized by the weekly *parshiyos*. The Rebbe instructed me to learn the *sefer* on a weekly basis, to learn Kitzur Shulchan Aruch as well, and to thank the Shuva Yisrael community for the thoughtful gift on his behalf. (Igros Kodesh vol 14 page 282)

It was a short *yechidus*.

Settling down in the yeshiva in 770 was an experience. It was my first time

learning in a yeshiva setting and I was unable to speak Yiddish or English.

This was in addition to the fact that I came from a Sefardi home whereas all the other *bochurim* were Ashkenazim.

At first there was no room for me in the dormitory so I stayed at the home of the *mazkir* Rabbi Leibel Groner. He would often inquire how I was settling in yeshiva and other personal questions, and at times clearly said that these questions were coming from the Rebbe. I was humbled to know that the Rebbe was keeping close tabs on me throughout.

The *hanhala* and the *bochurim* were very welcoming and did everything they could to help me adjust to my new setting. Rabbi Mentlik, the *rosh yeshiva*, arranged *chavrusos* for me at all hours of the day. There was even a time that Reb Yoel Kahn learned *nigleh* with me for a half hour every day. Rabbi Yisroel Jacobson learned Chassidus with me in the mornings and Leibel Raskin, who was one of the older *bochurim* in 770 at the time, learned Chassidus with me in the evenings. He made a point to learn *maamarim* in Yiddish and patiently translated each word so that I would

Suddenly the Rebbe turned to me and requested that I sing a “Sefardishe niggun.”

have an easier time learning to speak in Yiddish.

I immediately threw myself into learning with much *geshmak*.

A year later, two more *bochurim* from Argentina joined me in 770, Chaim Sued and Yosef Srugo. Now that we were a group of three, Rabbi Mentlik arranged that Sholom Feldman should learn *nigleh* with us every day as a paid job. He enjoyed learning with us so much that a week later he approached Rabbi Mentlik and declined any payment.

“Sing a Sefardishe Niggun”

The first *farbrengen* I merited to be present at was Shabbos Mevarchim Kislev. Although I was unable to follow the *sichos*, I was captivated by the entire experience. Suddenly the Rebbe turned to me and requested that I sing a “Sefardishe niggun.” I wasn’t sure which song to sing and the Rebbe mentioned the melody “*Ozreini Keil Chai*.” Thankfully I knew the *niggun* and as I started singing solo in front of the hushed room the Rebbe sang along with me softly.

From then on, for the next five years that I was in 770 there were many occasions that the Rebbe requested I sing this *niggun* and every time the Rebbe joined with a special *dveikus*. The Rebbe looked like he was in a different world when singing this *niggun*. It is difficult to describe how special these moments were.²

Why Rashbi Made Lag B’Omer

Six months after my arrival I felt the need to go into *yechidus* another time. During these six months I had grown tremendously in so many areas,

especially in my understanding of the Rebbe and Chassidus and I felt the need to have another *yechidus* in order to ask the Rebbe some important questions regarding my conduct and learning in yeshiva. Despite all the headway I was making, I was still having a difficult time in my new environment.

Rabbi Hodakov allowed it despite the fact that it was not my birthday and I was scheduled to go into *yechidus* several days before Lag B’Omer.

This *yechidus* lasted close to half an hour and it changed my life. The Rebbe was very warm and welcoming and answered all of my questions patiently and gave me many *horaos* with regard to learning and proper behavior. It was from that day onward that I felt I was a full fledged Lubavitcher.

Growing up in Buenos Aires in the Sefardi community almost no one had a beard and when I arrived in 770 I

did not start growing my beard right away. However over the last few weeks from Pesach, my beard was growing because of *sefira* and by the time of this *yechidus*, right before Lag B’Omer, my new beard was quite noticeable.

Although I had not mentioned anything about my beard in my note, during the *yechidus* the Rebbe suddenly said, “Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai did not make Lag B’Omer so that Yidden should shave their beards.” Quoting several sources on the great spiritual value of having a beard and the greatness of the Yom Tov Shavuos, the Rebbe instructed me to keep my beard until Shavuos. “If you have any questions about your beard after Shavuos, you will ask me then.”

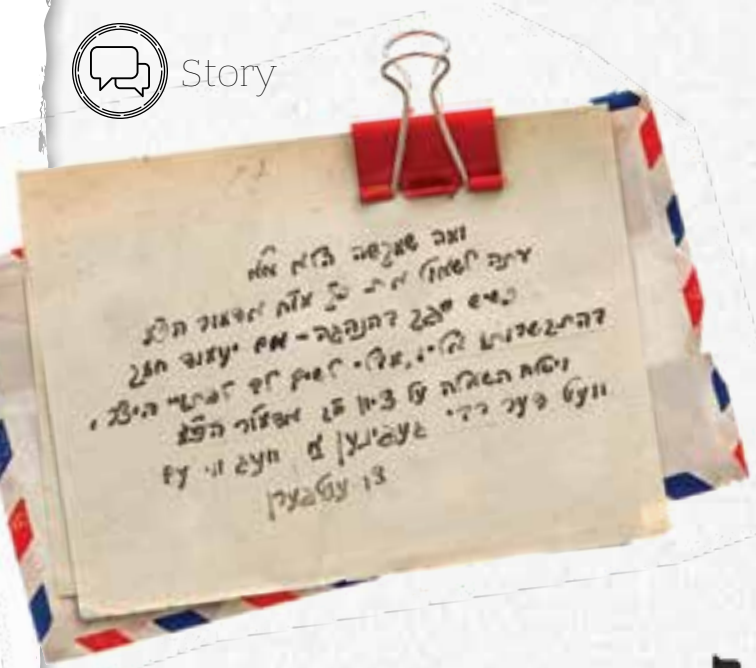
Needless to say, I never had any more questions about my beard and kept my *tzelem Elokim* from then on.

No one ever told me to change my *minhagim* or *nusach hatefila*, but over time I began adopting Lubavitch *minhagim* and when I mentioned these changes to the Rebbe, the Rebbe was always very sensitive about it.

Once, in *yechidus*, I mentioned that I would like to change my *nusach hatefila* to Nusach Ari. The Rebbe



REB AARON (L) AND ARYEH PRAGER ON THE STEPS OF 770 BEFORE LEAVING FOR MERKOS SHLICHUS, SUMMER 5720.



דער רבי וועט געפינען א וועג...

לע"נ
מרת חנה רבקה
בת הרב ר' מנחם מענדל ע"ה
נלב"ע י"ב אדר ה'תשס"ב
ת' נ' צ' ב' ה'
נדפס ע"י
משפחת לענט שיחיו

“He can see light!”

AS TOLD BY RABBI SCHNEOR OIRCHMAN (TALLAHASSEE, FL)

Thursday, Lag B'Omer 5778*, was a very busy morning for us in the Chabad House of Tallahassee. In addition to preparing for the Lag B'Omer event we were hosting later in the afternoon, we were preparing for our newly born son's *bris* which was scheduled for Shabbos morning.

My children were playing in the yard when suddenly I heard a terrifying shriek from my four-year-old son Shmuly. We rushed to him and saw a terrifying scene—an arrow in his eye. The night before, an attendee to our

weekly JLI class had brought a hunting bow and arrow in connection with Lag B'Omer, and it was now tragically in my son's eye.

Frightened by the scene, my wife, Chanie, immediately called 911 while I called someone at the Ohel to notify the Rebbe immediately of the situation and to ask for a *bracha*.

When we arrived at the emergency room, Shmuly was wheeled into an examination room and over a dozen doctors and nurses continuously came in and out of the



לזכות
 הילד חיים לוי יצחק
 בן אסתר חנה מושקא שיחי'
 לרגל יום הולדתו ט"ז אדר
 יה"ר שיגדל לתורה לחופה
 ולמעשים טובים מתוך בריאות
 נכונה ושפע בגו"ר
 לנח"ר כ"ק אדמו"ר והוריו הי"ו

FARBRENGEN VENUES

For the first few years of the Rebbe's *nesius*, the small upstairs shul in 770 (barely) sufficed for the farbrengen. As Lubavitch grew and the Rebbe's farbrengens became increasingly more attended by people from circles far beyond the Chassidic world, it became impossible to fit everyone into the room. From 5714* and on, the major farbrengens that were held during the winter—such as Yud-Tes Kislev, Yud Shevat, and Purim—were held in various rented halls in the Crown Heights area, while in the summer they took place in the courtyard adjacent to 770, known as the *shalash*.

CIRCA 5714, PINNY LEW

There were a number of halls in and around Crown Heights that were used for farbrengens.

The first farbrengen held in a hall was Yud-Tes Kislev 5714* in the Franklin Manor, located on Franklin Avenue between Union and President streets. This hall was used for two farbrengens.



19 KISLEV 5714, JEM 105076

19 KISLEV 5714, JEM 103322

The Gayheart Hall was the closest to 770, located at the corner of Nostrand Avenue and Eastern Parkway. The owner of this hall was a Yid, and he was present at the lively farbrengen of Purim 5716*. During the farbrengen, the Rebbe asked one of the farbrengen's organizers, Rabbi Shmuel Zalmanov, to give the owner *l'chaim* in a large cup, and then added with a smile, "Tell him it's a cocktail, and he will accept it lovingly!" Despite the damages often caused by the lively dancing, this hall was used the most, for a total of eight farbrengens. Below are photos from the farbrengen of Yud Shevat 5716*, which was held there on the second floor.



19 KISLEV 5715-16, JEM 3054

10 SHEVAT 5716, JEM 103336