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A Chassidisher

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"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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לזכות
הרה"ת ר' שלום וזוגתו מרת שרה
וילדיהם ישראל, ריסא, חי' מושקא,
אמונה מלכה, ויעקב יהודה שיחי
אייזיקוביץ

בקשר עם יום הבהיר כ"ה אדר, יום הולדת הרבנית הצדקנית נ"ע ז"ע

Derher **Editorial**

...It is clear that the revelation of *Toras haChassidus*... a major part of which entails descending down to the world to refine its physicality... All of the work of our Rabbeim in this regard was connected with (and brought about by) the Rebbetzins of each generation...

(Sicha Rosh Chodesh Kislev, 5749)

In honor of the Rebbetzin's yom huledes this month on Chof-Hei Adar, beginning her 120th year, we will reflect a bit on her life and times, and what they mean to us as Chassidim in dor hashvi'i:

Portrait of the Rebbetzin

Most Chassidim never met the Rebbetzin.

The privileged few who had the *zechus* to be part of her inner circle in various capacities tell of a spiritual giant of a woman. A woman of keen intelligence, deep sensitivity, and perhaps above all, someone who was completely and selflessly dedicated to the Rebbe and his work.

Those who had the opportunity to interact with the Rebbetzin also relate stories of the power of her *brachos* and how they impacted other people's lives, demonstrating her spiritual qualities as a true *tzaddeikes*. The Rebbetzin's greatness reflected the *kedusha* of the Rebbe; she lived a transcendent life, above and beyond the ordinary and mundane.

After her *histalkus*, the Rebbe explained that the Rebbetzin was totally and completely at the highest levels of *kedusha*, like the *tzaddikim* about whom it says "גופא דלהון קדישא"—their very bodies are holy.¹

This holiness and complete *bittul* to *Elokus* came out in the open at key moments in the Rebbe's *nesius*.

For instance, after the Rebbe had a heart attack, the Rebbetzin refused to allow the Rebbe to be brought to the hospital against his will. "In all the years that I have known my husband, I have never seen him not in total control of himself," she explained. Sticking with such a position defied any sense of logic. Yet the Rebbetzin remained true to the Rebbe's wish, clinging to the truth, and ultimately bringing about the Rebbe's miraculous recovery.

It was a clear demonstration of how the Rebbetzin was in complete sync with the Rebbe's *ratzon* and knew instinctively that the Rebbe's will is the only possible way to go.

Or like the time when the Rebbetzin upheld the integrity of the entire Chabad movement. At the moment when she was asked if, in her opinion, her father's library belonged to him personally, or to the Chassidim, she responded, "The [books] belonged to the Chassidim because my father belonged to the Chassidim..."

In these short words, the Rebbetzin was able to crystallize the deep concept of *bittul hayesh*, the trademark characteristic that defines a Rebbe (as the Rebbe explains at length in his notes written in preparation for the trial).

But she said it with a calm reassurance, with the most natural bearing. The deepest concepts of Chassidus can seem so perfect and “simple” in her words. With her response, the Rebbetzin herself personified this exact trait, this deep level of *bittul* to *Elokus*.

It is interesting, however, that the portrait we gather of the Rebbetzin may at times come across as “worldly,” as someone who was concerned more about the physical wellbeing of the people she came in contact with.

For example: Mrs. Bassi Azimov related that when she brought her daughter to New York to celebrate her bas mitzvah in the Rebbe’s presence, it was the Rebbetzin who told her that she should make sure to take her daughter to Manhattan to see the Javits Center as well. Similarly, Mrs. Devora Caytak relates that when she and two of her friends, recent *baalos-teshuva* who were studying at Machon Chana visited with the Rebbetzin in her home, she took an interest in their hobbies and even inquired about what type of music they listened to.

A fascinating story in this regard is also related by Rabbi Shlomo Bistrisky, whose father, Reb Leibel, would visit the Rebbetzin every Friday night for some time:

It was in 5748*, when the *sefarim* were finally brought back to 770 after the trial. Shlomo was learning in Eretz Yisroel for the year. Unable to contain the urge, he flew to New York to be with the Rebbe for this great celebration. As it turned out, the Rebbe was extremely displeased with the fact that the *bochurim* were standing about instead of using their time for learning. This caused Reb Leibel to be very disappointed in his son’s behavior and he mentioned this to the Rebbetzin during his visit the next Friday night. Without missing a beat, the Rebbetzin calmed him down. “Be happy that this is the great ‘trouble’ he’s involved with,” she said. “Coming here to celebrate in the Rebbe’s presence; nothing less...”

The Rebbetzin’s *Tzidkus*

Based on the Rebbe’s words in the *sicha* quoted at the beginning of this article, it would seem that her “worldliness” and interest in the physical wellbeing of others was not a hindrance to her *tzidkus* at all. On the contrary, it was the expression of her unique *avoda* and her role as a Rebbetzin.

The Rebbetzins (like the *imahos* of our nation) play an active role in the *nesius* of the Rabbeim by effecting spiritual change in the very physical world itself.

Additionally, the Rebbe explains in a fascinating *sicha* that similar roles were filled by Moshe and Aharon: Moshe Rabbeinu, as the devoted shepherd of the Jewish people, sought to bring the Yidden up to his level of *Elokus* and influence them in that way. Aharon, on the other hand, worked with the Yidden themselves, as they stood at their lowly level, and sought to elevate them from there. In the process, Aharon needed to be mindful of the “facts on the ground” and deal with the Yidden in a worldly manner (obviously, guided by the principles and *horaos* of Torah).²

Each role is important in the nurturing of *klal Yisroel*. As Rashi states: “יש מקומות שמקדים אהרן למשה”—Sometimes the Torah puts Moshe’s name before Aharon’s, and sometimes vice-versa.” To teach you that they are both equal.

Both the Rebbe and the Rebbetzin play an active role in leading our generation and prompting us all to do our *avoda* and pave the way for the *geula*.

May it be *teikef umiyad Mammosh!*

The Editors

יא שבט, ה'תש"פ

שבעים שנה לנשיאות כ"ק אדמו"ר

1. See *sichas* 29 Shevat 5748.

2. This is a simplified version of a deep vort in this *sicha*. It is advisable to learn the *sicha* in the original form: Sefer Hasichos 5748 pp. 369-381.

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 מיטן רבין

19 KISLEV 5745, YOSSIMELAMED VIA JEN 23983

טור 'לעבן מיטן רבין' 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
וזוגתו 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 ("ויעבור 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 *neshamah* 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 *neshamah*, 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 *mitvzoim* 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

the singing even stronger. After finishing the second cup, the Rebbe started clapping and then waving his hands in Reb Tzvi Meir's direction. Throughout all of this, the Rebbe was smiling broadly.

For the next 15 minutes the spirited singing continued. The Rebbe exhibited tremendous *simcha*, at one point even swinging both hands in the air for quite a while.

In the second *sicha*, the Rebbe said that since this Shabbos is the completion and climax of Purim, it is therefore the time to make up for anything that was lacking on Purim. Since “*ad delo yada*” is one of the requirements of Purim, therefore, whoever—for whatever reason—did not fulfill their obligation on Purim, now has the chance to make up for it.

The Rebbe applied this especially to those who do holy work (*melechtes Shamayim*). They have an excuse as to why on Purim they could not be in a state of *ad delo yada*: They always have to be in a clear state of mind and focus on their work. Take a *sofer* for example—he must always have intense concentration when writing, for even one tiny mistake has a huge impact.

The Rebbe ended off saying that hopefully the *sofer* to whom he is referring to will say *l'chaim* by himself, without needing to be called out with his name and mother's name...

Immediately following this *sicha*, the Rebbe turned to the *sofer*, Rabbi Zirkind, and motioned to him to say *l'chaim*. At first, he raised a small cup, but the Rebbe showed with his hands that he means a bigger one. Immediately after he finished the cup, the Rebbe turned to him again and lifted up two fingers, meaning, to say *l'chaim* on a second cup. Rabbi Zirkind took a second cup and said *l'chaim* to the Rebbe, to which the Rebbe responded, “*L'chaim v'livracha*.” The Rebbe smiled broadly throughout.

Meanwhile, the Russian *niggun* “*Yee V'vadye mee nye utoanim*” was sung and the Rebbe started to wave both of his hands in breathtaking fashion, raising the singing to a whole new level. In the middle, the Chassidim started to sing the *niggun* to the words “We want Moshiach now.” The Rebbe encouraged the singing in a manner that is indescribable.

The Rebbe then spoke about the *rabbonim*, who also excuse themselves from *ad delo yada*, due to the fact that they have to answer *sha'alos* and therefore must be in a clear state of mind. How can they fulfill the mitzvah of *ad delo yada* when someone might come to them any second with a *sha'ala* that they have to *pasken* on?! So instead they follow the *de'ah* that one can fulfill this obligation by going to sleep, and especially if he falls into a deep sleep, in which he can not tell the difference between “*arur Haman and baruch Mordechai!*”



12 TISHREI 5744, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 209527

The *baal habos* sees the *rav* in shul by davening and the reading of the Megillah. Afterward he comes to the *rav's* house to bring him *mishloach manos* and the whole time the *rav* was completely aware and alert, with no sign of inebriation, with “even his accent being perfect according to all the guidelines of *dikduk*”—so the *baal habos* has a question:

How is it that the *rav*, who is supposed to be the one who is extra careful in doing the mitzvos in the best way possible, is *not* careful when it comes to fulfilling the obligation of *ad delo yada*?

But now, when he is *not* answering *sha'alos*, the *rav* should make up the *ad delo yada* that he missed on Purim!

In the same *sicha*, the Rebbe spoke on the topic of “Mihu Yehudi.” The Rebbe concluded with an anecdote from a housewife who chases the mice out of the house. Now, the truth is that there is someone else who chases the mice, and that is the cat. The difference is that all the housewife wants is for the mice to leave the house, while the cat wants the mice so he can have something to eat...

There are certain people, the Rebbe said, who wait the whole farbrengen to hear something that they can then use to cause division amongst Yidden. Therefore, the Rebbe continued, we will not dwell on the subject more than necessary.

The Rebbe said that since recently there is some involvement on the part of the Sefardim in the whole matter of Mihu Yehudi, and since there is a *Sefardishe rav* here at the farbrengen—he should therefore say *l'chaim* in a way of *ad delo yada*, and he does not have to worry about what his *kehilla* will say for they are not present here anyway...

Obviously, the Rebbe continued, this *rav* that is being spoken about will not force me to mention him by name, rather he will himself say *l'chaim ad delo yada* and maybe even break out in a Chassidishe dance, or at least sing a *Purim'dike niggun* with much joy.

The Rebbe motioned to Rabbi Avrohom Hecht (who was a *rav* in a Sefardishe shul) to say *l'chaim* on a big cup. The Rebbe then showed him two fingers, telling him to say *l'chaim* on a second cup. After he finished, the Rebbe started to sing “*Ein Adir*,” and with immense joy he waved both of his hands vigorously, encouraging with motions of his head to all sides of the room.

After a *maamer ke'in sicha* on the *possuk* “כִּי תִשָּׂא אֶת־רֹאשׁ”, the Chassidim broke out into a *niggun*. During the singing, the Rebbe was looking inside the Chumash. All the while, the Rebbe nodded his head in encouragement, intensifying the singing of the Chassidim.

12 TISHREI 5745, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 213465



In the next *sicha*, the Rebbe commented on how nobody managed to give an answer to the 'klotz kasha' on Rashi that was asked last Shabbos!

"And from one 'klotz kasha' to the next: We spoke before that the *Sefardishe rav* should say *l'chaim ad delo yada*. But then one could ask the obvious question: Why only the *rav*? All the Sefardim present should take the opportunity to say *l'chaim*!"

"Especially the *zoche b'goral* from France, who is here at the farbrengen and is representing a whole group of Yidden. Since he is on their shlichus, all of his actions have an impact on them.

"I do not know if he knows Yiddish or not... in any case, what was said earlier should be translated for him into French or *Lashon Hakodesh*. The main thing is that he should say *l'chaim*, and together with him all the Sefardim here." The Rebbe called out, "Where are those who won the raffle? They should say *l'chaim*!"

An announcement was made in French that the *zoche b'goral* should say *l'chaim*. The Rebbe asked that they should also announce regarding all the Sefardim present, that they too should say *l'chaim*. The announcement was made, and everyone started to say *l'chaim* to the Rebbe. All this took some time and the Rebbe said in French that they should hurry up, adding 'a *yasher koach*' (also in French).

The Rebbe responded "*l'chaim v'livracha*" to everyone and then started the *niggun* of Ha'aderes V'Haemuna. All the Chassidim joined in and there was much excitement in the room.

In the next *sicha*, the Rebbe said that since the Megillah refers to the Yidden as an "*Am Echad*," therefore, not only the Sefardim should say *l'chaim*, but the Ashkenazim should also join in and say *l'chaim*, thereby creating unity amongst all Yidden.

"And from the declaration of '*l'chaim v'livracha*' it should be bestowed upon all the people here, amongst all Yidden: All good things and *brachos*, *bgashmius* and *b'ruchnius*, until very soon we will merit to live in an era when it will be '*kulo mashke*,' and like the famous words [of the Alter Rebbe], '*Yehi ratzon* that we should drink [in a time] when it will be '*kulo mashke*' and we will hear '*geshmake*' words of Chassidus from Moshiach Tzidkeinu, who will teach all the Yidden Torah, *ba'agala didan mamash*!"

Right away, pandemonium broke out, as everyone started to say *l'chaim*. A *niggun* was started and the Rebbe energetically encouraged it with both hands while responding "*l'chaim v'livracha*" to



THE REBBE SIGNALS FOR SOMEONE TO SAY L'CHAIM ON A FULL CUP.

JEM 103608

many more people. The Rebbe motioned to a few people to say *l'chaim* on a big cup, but by now all the wine had run out. Someone went to get more wine, and in the meantime, the Rebbe encouraged the singing with much intensity, and with a tremendous joyfulness.

When more wine finally arrived, commotion ensued as everybody tried to obtain a little bit in order to say *l'chaim* to the Rebbe. Reb Yehoshua Yuzevitz, Reb Binyomin Gorodetzky, his son and his son-in-law, all to whom the Rebbe had instructed to say *l'chaim* on a large cup, now did so.

During this whole time, the Rebbe displayed such a great happiness that is impossible to adequately put into words.

At this point, the elderly Russian Chossid, Reb Osher Sassonkin, stood up and banged on the table. He started to speak about his experiences in Russia; about the interrogations he went through and how they asked him about the Lubavitcher Tzaddik, etc.

The truth is that he had already said a lot of *l'chaim* and was by now oblivious to everything around him...

But the whole time the Rebbe looked at him and listened attentively to his story with all its details. After Reb Osher finished speaking, he said *l'chaim* to the Rebbe; to which the Rebbe responded "*l'chaim v'livracha*."

The Rebbe remarked, "If he remembers all the details from that story, a *rav* should be asked if he has properly fulfilled the obligation of *ad delo yada*..."

Afterwards, Reb Osher started to dance with another Chossid near the Rebbe's place. The Rebbe motioned to Reb Uziel Chazanov to join them in the dancing, and the Rebbe encouraged them strongly with his hands. It was very *lebedig*; the Rebbe turning his head in all directions and encouraging the singing with his hand.

When Reb Osher tried again to get everyone's attention by banging on the table, the Chassidim did not let him speak and started to sing louder in order to drown out his loud voice and to continue the farbrengen in an orderly fashion.

Rabbi Leibel Groner started to walk towards him, intending to calm him down and put a stop to the whole interference, but the Rebbe motioned with a smile that he should leave him be and just ignore the whole thing. As the crowd sang louder and louder, the Rebbe commented, "What will your singing help if he has things that he must say?"

The Rebbe remarked that if he behaves like this when he is still holding by 'yada,' one can only imagine what would happen if he would be holding by 'lo yada...'

"If we are going to listen to everything he has to say, we are not going to have any time to answer the [questions on] Rashi..."

The Rebbe said all this with a big smile.

After the next *sicha*, in which the Rebbe answered the questions on Rashi and the Rambam, the Rebbe handed out bottles of mashke to various people, as per the usual *seider* of a Shabbos farbrengen.

In the next *sicha* the Rebbe explained the Rashi from last week's farbrengen. Throughout, the Rebbe's hand was on top of the table and one was able to see how the Rebbe moves about his hand in accordance with the content being spoken; quite a rare occurrence.

The farbrengen concluded at 6:15 p.m., already past *shkiah*.

As the Rebbe passed by different Chassidim on the way to his usual place for Mincha, he motioned to them in wonderment, as if to say, "Why didn't you say *l'chaim*?"

Right after Maariv and *havdalah*, the Rebbe went up to his room amidst the singing of Reb Leivik's *hakafos niggun*.

Immediately after the Rebbe left the shul, the Chassidim, still on a high from today's spectacular farbrengen, broke out into spontaneous dancing.

Literally everywhere you turned, there were people just dancing...

After the Rebbe went to his room, Reb Binyomin Gorodetzki went in to speak to the Rebbe. After a little while, the Chassidim moved the dancing from the shul to right outside the Rebbe's room!

Mashke was brought and *l'chaim* was said. This continued for about an hour and a half, after which Reb Binyomin came out of the Rebbe's room with the Rebbe following soon after. The Chassidim sang the new Yud-Alef Nissan *niggun*.

There was great joy in the air and everyone sang with much enthusiasm, and when the Rebbe came out to go home he made a motion of encouragement with his hand.

The Rebbe left to go home at around 8:10 and the rejoicing continued. The Chassidim said *l'chaim ad delo yada* and the dancing continued into the night; quite a *lebedige* evening...

As the Rebbe was leaving 770 on Tuesday night, 19 Adar, an individual visiting from Eretz Yisroel asked the Rebbe if he could return to New York for Yud-Aleph Nissan. The Rebbe responded, "By then *Moshiach* will have come already, and we will all go to Eretz Yisroel."

אשרי עין ראתה כל אלה!

1. See *Revolution in Rashi—part I*, Derher Vov Tishrei 5775.
2. We encourage the readership to learn the farbrengen in its entirety in *Toras Menachem* 5745 vol. 3, pg. 1462. In this article, we have only included specific quotes which were highlighted in the *yomanim*.



8 CHESHVAN 5745, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 20927



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
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
שבבלבו (אפילו האומר ר"ל שאינו מאמין
בזה - ה"ז כהאומר 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. קִדְּשׁ לִי גו' וְהָיָה לְךָ לְאוֹת עַל יָדְךָ וּלְזִכְרוֹן בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ גו' (שמות יג)
2. וְהָיָה כִּי יִבְאֶף גו' וְהָיָה לְאוֹת עַל יָדְכָה וּלְטוֹטְפֹת בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ גו' (שמות יג)
3. שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל גו' וּקְשֶׁרְתֶּם לְאוֹת עַל יָדְךָ וְהָיוּ לְטוֹטְפֹת בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ (דברים ו)
4. וְהָיָה אִם שָׁמַע גו' וּקְשֶׁרְתֶּם אֹתָם לְאוֹת עַל יָדְכֶם וְהָיוּ לְטוֹטְפֹת בֵּין עֵינֵיכֶם (דברים יא)

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

RASHI

קִדְּשׁ | וְהָיָה | שְׁמַע | וְהָיָה

Also known as: כְּסֻדְרָן—in their order—
because they are placed in the order
that they are written in the Torah.

RABBEINU TAM

קִדְּשׁ | וְהָיָה | וְהָיָה | שְׁמַע

Also known as: הַוְיּוֹת בְּאֶמְצַע,
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.

וְהָיָה שְׁמַע וְהָיָה קִדְּשׁ

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:

שְׁמַע וְהָיָה קִדְּשׁ

[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*.



“This is something discussed by the Rishonim, the sages of the generations, the geonei olam. The pillars of heaven tremble: this one holds one opinion and this holds another.”

—Rashba”

So what should we do? Later Rishonim and poskim provide two mainstream opinions.

Rosh, Tur, many Geonim: It’s an open question.

We don’t know which one is correct, and if one has fear of Heaven he should put on both. *One should wear Rashi and Rabbeinu Tam’s purely from a halachic perspective.*

Maharil, Beis Yosef: Halacha is like Rashi.

The *halacha* follows Rashi, but one should still put on both if he has fear of Heaven. *Putting on Rabbeinu Tam’s is a hiddur.*

[*Yuhara*—In times when it was not common practice to wear Rabbeinu Tam’s tefillin, it could be considered a display of boastful piety to wear them⁴ in public.⁵ This is often quoted as a reason not to put on Rabbeinu Tam’s tefillin. However, today’s poskim conclude that due to the fact that it is so common to wear Rabbeinu Tam’s tefillin, this concern no longer applies.⁶]

**Then there’s another opinion, that of the Arizal:
We must follow both.**

As above, according to Kabbalah both opinions are correct.⁷ The Shaar Hakolel⁸ cites the Atzei Eden⁹ who says that ever since the Arizal revealed that both are true, causing Rabbeinu Tam’s to become a common custom, we can no longer depend on the opinion of the Beis Yosef that the *halacha* is like Rashi. Today, both opinions must be followed from a halachic standpoint.

In practice:

The Alter Rebbe writes that the *halacha* follows Rashi—but he writes strongly about the importance of Rabbeinu Tam’s: “Anyone who feels any fear of Heaven in his heart should put on Rabbeinu Tam’s Tefillin.”¹⁰

Many Yidden wore only Rashi’s tefillin. Chassidim would generally also wear Rabbeinu Tam’s tefillin, but they would usually begin only after marriage, since being married denotes a higher level of holiness. In a letter to the Rebbe shortly before his marriage, Harav Levi Yitzchak writes, “Begin putting on Rabbeinu Tam’s tefillin, for the rest of your life IY”H.”¹¹

Why is this the prevailing custom?!

From the very beginning of the Rebbe's *nesius*, one can find indications that things would be changing.

During the Frierdiker Rebbe's *shiva*, the Rebbe told various stories and anecdotes. One of them was about how the Frierdiker Rebbe instructed him to put on four pairs of tefillin—Rashi, Rabbeinu Tam, Shimusha Rabba, and Raavad.

The Rebbe explained¹² that he had always been afraid to put on four pairs of tefillin because Torah requires a person to have a *guf naki* (a clean body) while wearing tefillin. Now, Rashi and Rabbeinu Tam's are obligations, and the Torah does not expect us to be angels [i.e. we have no choice but to wear them, regardless of one's state of purity]. But Shimusha Rabba and Raavad are not obligations—and therefore a person must be fully confident that he is ready to truly have a pure mind and body. However, the Rebbe said, once he was instructed to put them on by the Frierdiker Rebbe, it was now his—the Frierdiker Rebbe's—responsibility.

Notice that the Rebbe refers to Rabbeinu Tam's tefillin as an *obligation*. In a long handwritten footnote, the Rebbe explains his stance on the issue. He writes that the Zohar seems to *pasken* quite clearly that Rabbeinu Tam is a *halachic* obligation (following the opinion of the

Rosh, see above), and quotes another source that says, "Anyone who doesn't wear tefillin of Rabbeinu Tam is a *karkafta delo manach Tefillin*," a person who never wore Tefillin (although, the Rebbe notes, it seems that the Alter Rebbe does not ascribe to this view).

"Be that as it may," the Rebbe writes, "it's a big question why the prevailing custom—even among *anash*—is to begin putting on Rabbeinu Tam's long after the bar mitzvah, usually after marriage."^{13 14}

With conditions

However, in the early years of the *nesius*, Rabbeinu Tam was still something only done from a certain age, and sometimes with conditions. Considering that it requires a higher standard of purity, people would ask the Rebbe whether they should begin wearing Rabbeinu Tam's tefillin.

If the questioners were already getting married, the Rebbe would answer in the affirmative, strongly encouraging them to start. But if they were asking as *bochurim*—usually at the age of eighteen—the Rebbe would sometimes give his immediate approval, but sometimes he would set conditions for doing so:

"...If you are careful in *tevilas ezra* and study Chassidus every day..."¹⁵

"...If you are careful in *tevilas ezra*, daven *nusach ari*, and the [Rabbeinu Tam's] tefillin are checked..."¹⁶

There were also times when the Rebbe withheld his approval: "Regarding your question about putting on Rabbeinu Tam—for now you should be careful to be mindful while wearing Rashi's tefillin."¹⁷

As time went on, it seems that the vast majority of people

Obligation

נבהלתי לכתבו ע"ד תפילין דר"ת - שהרי האידינא חסידי חב"ד לאחר החתונה קבעוה חובה.

I was shocked by what you wrote about Rabbeinu Tam's tefillin—because, today, Chassidei Chabad have accepted it upon themselves as an obligation after marriage.

(Letter dated 20 Sivan 5735, Igros Kodesh vol. 30, p. 229)

would receive approval at the age of eighteen.

For everyone

Then, in a landmark *sicha* in 5736* the Rebbe made an announcement: Everyone should now begin putting on Rabbeinu Tam's tefillin from bar mitzvah.

"It is now the place to answer the question of many... Since they know that *halevai* they should have a pure body for Rashi's tefillin, they ask whether they should put on Rabbeinu Tam's tefillin.

"It is my definitive opinion that it is now the time to put on two pairs of tefillin... This is the answer to those who have asked in the past and those who will ask in the future—everyone who wishes to do so should put on Rabbeinu Tam's tefillin.

"...The Arizal is a *posek* accepted by the Chassidim as well as by the so-called *misnagdim*. He writes that Rabbeinu Tam's is an *obligation*, although for several reasons this wasn't revealed and publicized... All the *sefarim* who studied both the *kisvei Arizal* and *nigleh* came to the final conclusion that one must put on both Rashi's and Rabbeinu Tam's tefillin.

"...This should be transmitted to everyone who is listening through the *machshirim* ["the machines," i.e. the hookup], and they will certainly pass it along to everyone else... One doesn't have to wait until he is eighteen or until his wedding."¹⁸

Can Rabbeinu Tam's have negative effects?

Someone asked the Rebbe whether there was a connection between his illness and the fact that he had recently purchased a set of Rabbeinu Tam's tefillin.²⁴

The Rebbe replied:

איני יודע אם ישנה שייכות-אבל באם ישנה ה"ה ברורה ע"פ תורת
הבעש"ט המפורסמת: היעמוד בנסיון מול דברי היצה"ר שהנחת תפלין
דר"ת... מזיקה לבריאות יהודי! בטח יודע שבקשתי וכו"כ פעמים - שעתה
בעקבתא דמשיחא כאו"א (מתחיל מבר מצוה) יניח גם תפלין דר"ת. (וזה
מכמה דורות שכו"כ מהספרדים נוהגים כן).

I don't know if there is a connection. But if there is one, it is unequivocal, based on the famous teaching of the Baal Shem Tov: Will you stand up to the test of the *yetzer hara*, who is saying that putting on Rabbeinu Tam's tefillin... damages the health of a Yid!

Certainly you are aware I have requested many times that now, in the times before Moshiach, every single person (from bar mitzvah on) should put on Rabbeinu Tam's tefillin. (Many Sefardim have been doing this for many generations.)

Years later, the Rebbe added that they should be put on from the *hanachas tefillin*.¹⁹

(The Rebbe said that one should own a pair of Rabbeinu Tam's tefillin before beginning to put them on every day, so that he wouldn't miss a day.)

What Changed?

But what's changed? Why is it that in previous generations people, even *rabbonim*, didn't put on Rabbeinu Tam's tefillin, and certainly not from bar mitzvah age. Why was the Rebbe suddenly saying that everyone should put them on from bar mitzvah?

In this and later farbrengens, the Rebbe gave a two pronged explanation for why specifically now every individual should and can put on Rabbeinu Tam's:

1. **Rabbeinu Tam's is connected to Moshiach**, and now it should be worn by everyone.
2. **The *galus* is now exceptionally dark**. The safety provided by tefillin is needed to combat the darkness in the world at large, and the purification of tefillin is needed for the individual.

The Rebbe explained:

Closer to Moshiach

As mentioned above, Rashi's tefillin draws down the (lower) level of *mochin d'eima*, *Bina*, whereas Rabbeinu Tam's tefillin draws down the (higher) level of *mochin d'abba*, or *chochma*—a level that is connected to Moshiach. For this reason, in previous generations only *mekubalim* would put on Rabbeinu Tam's tefillin, for through Kabbalah they dwelled higher than *galus*. The Alter Rebbe, however, popularized the practice for everyone, and

now every person should wear them.²⁰

The darkness of galus

The plans of Haman are now stronger than ever, the Rebbe said, and tefillin is what saves us from them. As the Torah tells us, "And all the nations of the earth shall see that the name of Hashem is proclaimed over you [=your tefillin] and they shall stand in fear of you."²¹ By wearing Rabbeinu Tam's tefillin—in addition to Rashi's tefillin—this protection is strengthened.²²

On an individual level, today's generation is steeped in *chachmos chitzoniyos*, secular studies and ideas, which block people's minds from serving Hashem. We therefore require more *avoda* with our intellect, and this is accomplished through tefillin, in which we have the intent to subjugate our hearts and minds to Hashem.²³

Don't be afraid

The Rebbe's campaign to wear Rabbeinu Tam's tefillin was not limited to Lubavitchers, and he would sometimes speak to *roshei yeshivos* and others

Rabbi Moshe Feinstein and Rabbeinu Tam's Tefillin

One of the perhaps lesser-known participants in the Rebbe's initiative to wear Rabbeinu Tam's was the famed posek Rabbi Moshe Feinstein.

Reb Hirshel Shpritzer, a Chossid from Crown Heights, was very active in Mivtza Tefillin and Mivtza Mezuzah. One time, on the plane home from Eretz Yisrael, he offered the Yid sitting next to him to study together. Turns out that it was Rabbi Moshe Tendler, son-in-law of Rabbi Feinstein, and he began telling him about the Rebbe's *mivtzoim*. He didn't hesitate, and offered to check the mezuzos on the doors of Rabbi Feinstein's home. Rabbi Tendler was quite surprised by the request, but as a result Reb Hirshel indeed went to Rabbi Feinstein's home and took his mezuzos to be checked.

He reported all of this to the Rebbe.

Later on, when the Rebbe came out with his campaign for Rabbeinu Tam's tefillin, Reb Hirshel immediately began persuading friends and acquaintances to wear them. Then he decided to speak to Rabbi Feinstein about it too, and set up a meeting with him.

Rabbi Feinstein was very interested in all the details of what the Rebbe had said at the farbrengen, and listened to every word. He said that at one point he had put on Rabbeinu Tam's as well. He was open and happy to begin putting them on again, but he wanted everything to go through the Rebbe, and that the Rebbe himself should choose the *sofer* to write the new tefillin. He also asked to hear the Rebbe's opinion on the other details. (He wanted the tefillin to be written in the *ksav* of the Beis Yosef.)

Reb Hirshel contacted the *sofer* Rabbi Eliezer Zirkind, and then proceeded to write a full report to the Rebbe about it.

At about twelve o'clock that night, the phone rang in the home of Rabbi Zirkind. He was sleeping, so his wife answered the phone. Rabbi Hodakov was on the line, and he wanted to know if Rabbi Zirkind was awake. Rabbi Zirkind took the phone, and Rabbi Hodakov asked if he could meet him at the *mazkirus* office.

Not long after, Rabbi Zirkind was knocking on Rabbi Hodakov's door. The Rebbe had explicitly instructed that Rabbi Zirkind should meet with Rabbi Feinstein so that he could write the tefillin according to his exact instructions. The meeting was, in fact, already arranged. "Tomorrow, Thursday, at exactly 9:00 in the morning, he will be waiting for you in his home."

that they should encourage it among their followers. On a few occasions, the Rebbe addressed some of the arguments against it.

Some people argued that מנשה אבותינו בידינו, that they would follow the custom of their parents who didn't wear Rabbeinu Tam's.

"Then they come with the famous argument, מנהג אבותינו בידינו: He didn't see *avoseinu* putting on Rabbeinu Tam's tefillin: He didn't see his father wearing Rabbeinu Tam's, nor his grandfather, and not even his great-grandfather!

"But *avoseinu* didn't own a car! *Avoseinu* didn't read the paper! *Avoseinu* didn't run around taking pictures and putting those pictures into multiple newspapers!

"When it comes to things of the world, and even things of frivolity, he puts all his energy into acquiring a new custom that *avoseinu* did not have. But when it comes to putting on Rabbeinu Tam's tefillin, he suddenly screams *minhag avoseinu biyadeinu!*²⁵

"Your grandfather had a full beard; your grandfather had steady times for learning;

and he didn't even imagine to look at non-*tzniusdike* things... but suddenly here you scream *minhag avoseinu biyadeinu!*²⁶"

But the main thing, the Rebbe said, is not to be afraid to encourage it:

"I once asked a *rosh yeshiva* why he doesn't encourage his students to put on Rabbeinu Tam's.

"He told me, 'If I do so, the students will respond: Torah was given three and a half thousand years ago. Rabbeinu Tam lived hundreds of years ago, and the Beis Yosef also lived a long time

When they met, Rabbi Feinstein gave him certain instructions on how to make the tefillin, and he began writing them the following day, with Rabbi Feinstein checking every *parsha* as it was completed.

Following this incident, Rabbi Feinstein sent the Rebbe a fascinating letter, describing his personal history with wearing Rabbeinu Tam's tefillin, as well as his insights and opinions on the matter.²⁸

"To *Hod Cha*"k Hagaon Hatzadik Muharamam Shlit"a Schneerson, the Lubavitcher Rebbe. *Shalom U'bracha Leolam.*

"When I was notified that the great *gaon* is promoting the fulfilment of tefillin according to Rabbeinu Tam, I found it important to write my thanks, and also my reasoning.

"When I lived in Luban, I had a *mehudar'dike* set of Rabbeinu Tam's tefillin which I would put on after davening... Also when I came to America (with Heavens' mercies) I put them on for many years, when I found a good pair..."

In the next part of the letter, Rabbi Feinstein writes at length his insights into Rabbeinu Tam's tefillin and why we put them on, and also why he hadn't gotten another pair of Rabbeinu Tam's after his previous ones had gotten old. At the end of the letter, he concludes:

"Now, when I was notified in the name of the Rebbe that he has an expert *sofer* who can write the *parshiyos* as I wish—it is a very great thing, and thus I can fulfill the mitzvah of putting on Rabbeinu Tam's, as was my custom..."

The Rebbe responded:²⁹

"...I just received your two letters... and I would like to thank you and *bentch* you for all your *brachos* and good wishes... especially since you included your *shu"t* in several areas of tefillin, and your conclusion regarding tefillin of Rabbeinu Tam.

"Hashem repays in the manner of the person (but several times over). Accordingly, someone who (adds) in wearing tefillin (adds in the reward, that) he has lengthy years, as it says, ותחלימיני (בבריאות) ותחיני, ה' עליהם יחיו ג' ותחלימיני (מנחות מד, סע"א).

"This applies especially to (the arm corresponding to) the heart and to (the head corresponding to) the mind—*Chabad* in the holy Torah, לאסוקי שמעתתא אליבא דהלכתא, .."

ago. The *rosh yeshiva* himself has already lived for this-and-this amount of years, and he's been teaching his students for quite a while... What happened all of a sudden that you're saying that we should put on Rabbeinu Tam's?


"And the main thing is—the smirk that they'll say it with... He's afraid to tell them to put on Rabbeinu Tam's because of the crinkle they'll make with their nose!"

You must be a yarei Shamayim!

The Rebbe later added that Rabbeinu Tam's tefillin is

even more crucial for people whose job requires them to have fear of Heaven: a *rav*, *mashgiach*, *mashpia*, and so on. Shulchan Aruch says that a *yarei Shamayim* should put on Rabbeinu Tam's tefillin. Now, some people might be humble and claim that they don't have the necessary *yiras Shamayim*—but if your vocation necessitates *yiras Shamayim*, how can you not put on Rabbeinu Tam's?! This applies equally to Chassidim and non-Chassidim.²⁷

So why didn't past generations of *rabbonim* wear Rabbeinu Tam's? In the olden

days, the Rebbe explained, tefillin were very expensive. *Rabbonim* couldn't afford to purchase a second pair of tefillin, and they therefore toiled to find a *heter* to absolve themselves. These days, on the other hand, people have the money for whatever they want, and there's no excuse for someone not to buy Rabbeinu Tam's tefillin. "Instead of buying a modern car, a car from last year made with expensive metals—buy a mid-range nice car, and with the hundred dollars you saved buy a pair of Rabbeinu Tam's *lehavdil*!" 

1. See Taamei Haminhagim, which says that the Rebbe told the author of the annotations that the reason the *beis harav* referred to both Shimusha Rabba tefillin and Raavad tefillin as "Shimusha Rabba" is because Shimusha Rabba is the one who holds that it must be worn according to the wearer; the Raavad simply connected that opinion with Rabbeinu Tam to create his own opinion.

2. Likutei Sichos vol. 2 p. 508.

3. Hisvaaduyos 5742 vol. 4 p. 1931.

4. Maharil, quoted by Beis Yosef.

5. According to the explanation of the Alter Rebbe in Shulchan Aruch.

6. See Piskei Teshuvos.

7. Likutei Sichos vol. 2, p. 508.

8. P. 45.

9. Perek 4.

10. In Shaar Hakolel it says that the Alter Rebbe in the *siddur* follows Rashi. But from Likutei Sichos vol. 2 p. 507 it seems that the Rebbe doesn't accept this viewpoint, although he later does quote the Shaar Hakolel in the farbrengen announcing Rabbeinu Tam for all.

11. Letter dated Kislev 5689.

12. Likutei Sichos vol. 2, p. 507.

13. It should be noted that in the following piece, the Rebbe quotes the *Os Chayim* who explains (מיישב) the practice of those who put it on after marriage. In the original, the Rebbe wrote that he is מיישב that custom, but then he changed it to חותר ליישב.

14. A similar theme can be found in a letter from that year, printed in Igros Kodesh vol. 3, p. 326, where the Rebbe encourages a *bochur* to put on Rabbeinu Tam's before marriage, and cites several sources that encourage Rabbeinu Tam's strongly, including Reb Chaim Noeh who writes that he hasn't heard a reason why most *bochurim* wait until after the wedding.

15. Igros Kodesh vol. 8 p. 36.

16. Igros Kodesh vol. 7 p. 310.

17. Igros Kodesh vol. 7 p. 31.

18. Sichos Kodesh 5736 p. 629.

19. Sefer Hasichos 5749 vol. 2 p. 632 footnote 114.

20. Sichos Kodesh 5739 vol. 1 p. 710. See also Sefer Hasichos 5749 vol. 2 p.

632 footnote 114.

21. Devarim 28, 10.

22. Sichos Kodesh 5736 ibid.

23. Sichos Kodesh 5736 ibid.

24. Sichos Kodesh 5736 ibid.

25. Sichos Kodesh 5741 vol. 2 p. 583.

26. Toras Menachem 5742 vol. 2 p. 615.

27. Sichos Kodesh 5741 vol. 2 p. 583.

28. Igros Moshe vol. 6 p. 11.

29. Shemen Sason Meichaverecha vol. 4.

30. Reshimos Hayoman p. 192.

31. Heichal Menachem p. 28.

32. Letter from 14 Elul 5722; *maane*, see document. In a letter from 29 Tishrei 5724 the Rebbe writes to study the laws of tefillin and *because he forgot it twice* to study also the mitzva of tefillin in Derech Mitzvosecha or Shaar Hatefilaa in the *siddur*.

33. Igros Kodesh vol. 10 p. 96

34. Igros Kodesh vol 17 p. 80; letter to Rabbi Moshe Feinstein quoted above.



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

The Life of a Chossid

Reb Yitzchok Chaim Ber Vilensky

Born: Circa 5596*-8* in Kremenchug, Ukraine.
Passed Away: 26 Kislev 5653* in Kremenchug.

Reb Yitzchok Chaim Ber Vilensky was born to Reb Meir and Bracha, poor shopkeepers in Kremenchug. Despite their poverty, they sent him to learn in the best *chadarim* and yeshivos in the city, and his talents stood out even at a young age. As a boy, he once fell seriously ill, and that was when one of his names was added (either Yitzchok or Chaim).

Reb Chaim Ber, as he was known, married at the age of 18 or 19, but his wife tragically passed away while giving birth. He then remarried and had three children with his second wife.¹

He sold *sefarim* for some time and then went into the wine business.

Reb Chaim Ber was well-known as a tremendous *maskil* in Chassidus. When he hosted a *seudah* for a *bris*, it was well-attended by *anash*, who flocked to hear his words. The farbrengen went on until the wee hours of the morning, fueled by Reb Chaim Ber's ample stock of wine. When the last bottles on the table were finally emptied, Reb Chaim Ber asked his brother-in-law Reb Noach Sheine's to bring up a few more bottles from the wine cellar. Reb Noach

agreed on condition that he would be promised a son. They shook hands on it with the agreement of all those present. The farbrengen continued, reinvigorated, until the morning.

Reb Noach and his wife had been childless for 18 years, but not long after this farbrengen, she became pregnant. Reb Noach immediately travelled to the Rebbe Maharash and told the Rebbe the whole story. The Rebbe's holy face turned red and said, "Since this was during a *seudas mitzvah* and more than a *minyan* of Chassidim were present, I concur that you should have a living child." The son was Reb Binyomin Sheine's, who studied in Tomchei Temimim.²

The Frieddiker Rebbe related:

Reb Chaim Ber once travelled to Kishinev³ to buy wine for his business. He went to the wineseller's house, but he wasn't home. Reb Chaim Ber sat down to wait and became lost in deep contemplation.

The wineseller soon arrived, and greeted Reb Chaim Ber, but received no response. This puzzled the wineseller, who was unfamiliar with the concept of such deep contemplation. The wineseller waited an hour, then two, three, four hours passed and Reb Chaim Ber was still lost in thought. When evening approached, the wineseller again greeted Reb Chaim Ber, and this time he responded. With a surprised look on his face, he asked the wineseller, "When did you come to Kremenchug? What's going on in Kishinev?" Then he asked the wineseller where he could find a drink of water, and the wineseller showed him. Reb Chaim Ber asked in surprise, "Why was it moved from its

usual place?" [Lost in thought, he had forgotten that he wasn't at home...]⁴

Reb Chaim Ber's davening was legendary. His *tefillos* on the *yamim noraim* left a deep impression on anyone that heard them.

Once, when he was in Lubavitch for Yom Kippur, he had to daven sitting down, as his legs weren't well at the time. The Rebbe Rashab said about his *tefillos* then,

"דער טעם פון זיין דאווענען ליגט מיר נאך עד היום אין מאגען. ער
האט רייך גידאווענט, רייך גידאווענט"

"The savor of his davening is with me until today. He davened richly; davened richly."

When Reb Chaim Ber came to Lubavitch in 5649* he davened in a small room. The Rebbe Rashab walked past the room in the hallway and stopped to watch him daven.

On the nights of Shemini Atzeres and Simchas Torah, he would become an entirely different person. Once, a guest from Minsk watched as Reb Chaim Ber danced in the street with great enthusiasm on the way from his home to shul for *hakafos*. The guest was quite taken aback and asked the people walking with Reb Chaim Ber to please stop him, as he was afraid he would be hurt.

Another time on Shemini Atzeres or Simchas Torah, he left the crowd of guests and went into a different room in the house, where he danced alone.⁵

The Frierdiker Rebbe related:

In Kremenchug there were several well known Chabad Chassidim known as the "Berelach," meaning that it happened that they were all named Dov or Ber: Reb Dov ben Reb Moshe—"Berel Moshe's," Reb Dov Masayov, Reb Chaim Ber Vilensky, and another three or four Doves.

They were called the "*Kremenchuker Berelach*." They were great intellectuals and had deep powerful emotions as well. They would daven at length with heart and sweet song, and they would all *chazer* Chassidus. All of the Chassidim in Kremenchug—even the Polish non-Chabad ones—were in awe of them and admired them.⁶

Kremenchug was known for its Chassidisher farbrengens and Reb Chaim Ber's home was always open to the Chassidim. They would gather there every Motzei Shabbos and every *yoma depagra*, as well as when a Chassid would travel through Kremenchug on the way to Lubavitch (and would usually be hosted by Reb Chaim Ber), and on the

way back, when he would *chazer Chassidus* that he had heard in Lubavitch. Of course, they would also gather there on Yom Tov. Reb Chaim Ber himself rarely spoke, but he was nonetheless the source of the lively spirit in his home, because everyone who spoke at the farbrengens would speak facing him. There was never a formal program at these farbrengens—doing so ran contrary to Reb Chaim Ber's mindset. They would discuss all sorts of topics, sing many *niggunim*, and debate concepts in Chassidus. Reb Chaim Ber wouldn't join these debates, even when they were arguing over the meaning of words Reb Chaim Ber himself had said earlier. He would just listen.

The goal of these farbrengens was to create camaraderie among the Chassidim.

When the Mittlerer Rebbe was in Kremenchug, at the time of the Alter Rebbe's passing, he said,

"מאלאראסיער בלאטע איז קלעפיק"

"The mud in Little Russia⁷ is sticky." (This was understood as a reference to the closeness of the Chassidim in Kremenchug.)

The extent to which the Kremenchugers valued these farbrengens can be understood from the story of Reb Nochum Noach the *shochet*. He was one of a few people with whom Reb Chaim Ber would discuss Chassidus on the way to shul on Shabbos morning. Reb Nochum Noach was busy in the butcher shop every Motzei Shabbos until midnight and would return home exhausted from his strenuous labor. But he would only stay at home long enough to change out of his dirty clothes, and then he would head straight to Reb Chaim Ber's house to join the farbrengens, which would still be underway, sometimes lasting until three in the morning.⁸ ①

1. *Pardes Chabad* vol. 5 p. 66 and 76. Printed in *Chassidim Harishonim* vol. 2 p. 66.

2. *Migdal Oz, Maasei Avosai* section 157. Printed in *Chassidim Harishonim* vol. 2 p. 66.

3. Chisinau, Moldova.

4. *Sefer Hasichos* 5680-5687 p. 81. Printed in *Chassidim Harishonim* vol. 2 p. 69. *Pardes Chabad* vol. 5 p. 67.

5. *Pardes Chabad* vol. 5 p. 68.

6. *Igros Kodesh Admur Rayatz* vol. 2 p. 365.

7. A historical term for modern-day Belarus and Ukraine, including Kremenchug.

8. *Pardes Chabad* no. 5 p. 70.

IN THE KING'S COURT

Parim With The Rebbe

לע"נ
הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' אברהם יעקב
ב"ר חיים מרדכי ע"ה
נלב"ע כ"ה תשרי ה'תשנ"ו
ולע"נ זוגתו האשה החשובה
מרת פריידא ראצא
בת הרב יחיאל אפרים פישל ע"ה
נלב"ע ט"ז אדר-שני ה'תשע"ו
תנ"צ'בה'
נדפס ע"י בנם
הרה"ת ר' משה מאיר שמואל
וזוגתו מרת רבקה לאה
ומשפחתם שיחיו
גלוכאווסקי



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 u’mishpacha*,’ 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 pratis* 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 lero v'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

A MUCH LONGER CELEBRATION

The Purim festivities, it could be said, would often begin much before Purim. From the beginning of Adar, and even from Shabbos Mevorchim, Purim was high on the agenda in the Rebbe's *sichos*, often with reminders about Mivtza Purim, the importance of taking care of the needy, and additional *simcha*.

Following the establishment of Tzivos Hashem,²¹ rallies were often held in the days around Purim, where the Rebbe would speak about the lessons of the Megillah in the clear and simple style he used during those rallies. From 5740*, Purim was also preceded by a *sicha* on Taanis Esther.

On Purim evening and morning, the Rebbe would join the main *minyán* for davening and Megillah reading, even in the years that he would normally daven Shacharis alone. This was one of the few occasions a year (until 5748*) that Chassidim saw the Rebbe wearing tefillin. Notably, the Rebbe would always recite the *brachos* and Megillah quietly along with the *baal koreh* (Reb Yochanan Gordon in the early years, and Reb Mottel Shusterman later on).

"In the early years," recalls Rabbi Meir Harlig, "the Rebbe used an old, frayed Megillah which he kept in a cardboard container. It had the names of Haman's sons written in a single column, unlike the Megillah of the Rebbe Maharash. Apparently, it had been a gift from the Frierdiker Rebbe. In later years, Reb Getzel Rubashkin bought the Rebbe a new beautiful Megillah in a silver case."²²

"As far as I remember, the Rebbe would lightly tap his foot at every mention of Haman, but would do so more significantly when Haman is mentioned with a title. I also remember several instances where the

Rebbe smiled broadly at the noise-making of the children."

(Editor's note: At the farbrengen on Shabbos Shushan Purim 5741, the Rebbe addressed it directly: "The *gabbaim* walk around with serious faces, attempting to shorten the noise-making... but the children know that there is still a Haman!"²³)

"An interesting fact: In the early years, the Rebbe would personally read Megillah for the Rebbetzin at home, but there were also instances where she would open the window and listen to the reading in the shul of the Bostoner Rebbe next door to her home.

"Every year," Rabbi Harlig continues, "the Rebbe would give *mishloach manos*, delivered by Rabbi Groner, to a Kohen, Levi and Yisrael. In the early years, the *mazkir* Reb Eliyahu Kwint was the Kohen, Reb Shmuel Levitin was the Levi, and Rabbi Hodakov was the Yisrael. When Rabbi Kwint passed away, the *sofer* Reb Shaya Matlin replaced him, and when Reb Shmuel passed away he was replaced by Reb Shmuel Dovid Raichik.

"After Shacharis, I would prepare the packages, which contained a bottle of Smirnoff vodka and a fruit. One year, the Rebbe spoke at a farbrengen about adding to the *mishloach manos*, so I added a hamantash. The Rebbe didn't get involved in the contents.

"The Rebbe would also send to the *Poilisher* Rebbes who received *mishloach manos* from the Frierdiker Rebbe: The Kopishnitzer Rebbe, the Boyaner Rebbe and the Amshinover Rebbe. These may have been delivered by Reb Berel Yunik.

"There were several individuals who would bring *mishloach manos* to the Rebbe: Reb Sholom (Sydney) Hecht would bring to the Rebbe's room, and Reb Leibel Bistritzky would bring to the Rebbetzin, at home. Normally, the Rebbe would then send

all *mishloach manos* he received to the *bochurim* and to Beis Rivkah.

"For *matanos levyonim*, a number of people would enter the Rebbe's room on Purim morning. Rabbi Mentlick and Rabbi Chaim Meir Bukiet would both receive money from the Rebbe for Kupas Bachurim, which supported the *bochurim* in the yeshiva, and Reb Moshe Groner would receive money—a different amount each year—for poor families in the Lower East Side of Manhattan. Reb Moshe Pinchas Katz and his son Reb Zev would receive money from the Rebbe as well."

Rabbi Michoel Seligson shares an interesting anecdote that he heard from Reb Moshe Groner:

"When Reb Moshe entered the Rebbe's room to receive *matanos levyonim* in 5751*, he noticed several differences in the Rebbe's *hanhagah*; for example, the Rebbe gave him a much larger sum than usual and the Rebbe insisted that he take it from his hands, not from the table as he usually did. It turned out to be the last Purim when the Rebbe was in good health."

The Purim farbrengen would usually be held at 9:30 p.m. on Motzei Purim, after families held their *seudah* at home. Whenever Purim fell out on Friday, the Rebbe would hold the farbrengen on Shabbos Shushan Purim instead, dwelling on many of the same themes, albeit in the style of a Shabbos farbrengen.

The Purim farbrengens would often end with a call for *maos chittim* and Mivtza Matzah, even though Purim wasn't over yet. Shushan Purim was always a joyous day in the Rebbe's presence, and the following Shabbos farbrengen often continued with the same Purim themes. Beginning in 5742*, the Rebbe would also hold a *yechidus klalis* in the days after Purim, to see off the guests who had arrived to spend the day in the Rebbe's presence.



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 *l’chaim*; 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 “נכוח 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, JEW 103376

5720*

The Purim farbrengen that year was in a very serious mode. Some people associated this with the recent devastating earthquake in

Morocco where many Jews were killed, among them many students in the local Chabad institutions. The *maamar* was a very serious one, but afterwards, the Rebbe instructed everyone to say *l'chaim*.

"During that farbrengen," relates Rabbi Seligson, "the Rebbe said a powerful *maamar* ('*Balaylah Hahu*'), where he quoted the *possuk* in Shir Hashirim, '*Ani yesheinah v'libi er, kol dodi dofek*,' explaining that there is always a *pintele Yid* awake within the heart of every Jew. The Rebbe was very emotional and cried repeatedly. It seemed to be associated with the state of American youth, who were rebelling against their parents and searching for meaning in their lives."

Zalman Shazar was present throughout the farbrengen, and many of the *sichos* seemed directed to him. The Rebbe alluded—and responded—to a speech Prime Minister Ben Gurion had made in Boston, where he equated the Jewish people with all other nations. The Rebbe expounded on the meaning of '*Atah bechartanu*,' and also spoke at length about Kfar Chabad, which Shazar had been very instrumental in since its founding.

The Rebbe also spoke about the merit Shazar had in printing the *maamarim* of the Alter Rebbe, and spoke about those *maamarim* at length. At this farbrengen, the Rebbe also instructed Shazar not to run for President of Israel. (Later, the Rebbe instructed him otherwise.)



PURIM 5729

5721*

"Give up on your fresh milk, radio and television, and reach out to the Jew in a *medinah chareivah!*" A lesson about going on shlichus from President Kennedy's newly announced Peace Corp.⁹

That year also marked the Rebbe's first call for Mivtza Purim (in educational institutions), something that would later grow to much greater proportions.

5722*

"In America, as soon as a baby begins to speak, he gives an opinion. So, let him demand of his parents: 'Educate me in the ways of our forefathers!'" Several powerful *sichos* on Chinuch.

5723*

Shazar again participated in the Rebbe's farbrengen, along with Dr. Yosef Kelerman, another prominent Israeli official. The Rebbe said a *maamar* beginning with the words "*Reishis Goyim Amalek*," based on a *maamar* of the Alter Rebbe that had been discovered in a newly arrived manuscript. Two years later, Shazar arranged for a grant to sponsor the publishing of the manuscript in its entirety.

5724*

That year, the Rebbe suspended the *takana* limiting Mashke just for Purim. "Nobody said *l'chaim* at the farbrengen, but afterwards, it was very *freilach* and the dancing went until very late." – A *yoman*.



PURIM 5723, JEM 287078

5723-1963, 5724-1964



PURIM 5725

5725*

Due to it being the year of *aveilus* after Rebbetzin Chana's passing, the Rebbe opened the farbrengen with a *siyum* on Maseches Megillah.

5726*

Towards the end of a particularly *lebedike* farbrengen, the Rebbe asked for a volunteer to fulfill *ad delo yada*, and began distributing *l'chaim* to many individuals, usually in full cups: Reb Zalman Duchman; Reb Chaim Asher Kahanov; the grandson of Rabbi Zevin; and many others.

At one point, the Rebbe instructed that all bottles be emptied and the contents be used to say *l'chaim*. The crowd began to say *l'chaim* and the noise level in 770 rose, while the Rebbe continued to distribute *mashke* for half an hour, pouring over the *siddur* he had opened in preparation for *bracha acharona*.

Suddenly, the Rebbe announced "*Kol haposhet yad, nosnim lo!*" A rush for the Rebbe's place ensued, and the Rebbe distributed *l'chaim* to everyone present. Upon leaving 770, more distributing took place, and the pushing to be near the Rebbe was so strong that the roof on the Rebbe's car caved. The Rebbe went home in a different car and more people gathered at the Rebbe's home where he gave *l'chaim* again. One individual even received *mashke* from the Rebbe on the morning of Shushan Purim.¹⁰

FOLLOWING THE FARBRENGEN OF PURIM 5726, THE REBBE CONTINUES DISTRIBUTING MASHKE OUTSIDE 770.

5725-1965, 5726-1966, 5727-1967

5727*

That year, the Rebbe addressed the latest fad: Interfaith dialogues. The Rebbe pointed out that it was clearly against *halacha*, and bemoaned the state of those rabbis whose greatest wish was to be legitimized by members of another faith.

It was a very *lebedike* farbrengen, beginning with the singing of *Vayehi B'yemei Achashveirosh* with the Rebbe's strong encouragement. The Rebbe expressed himself to one of the participants, "If you do everything you can, Hashem will do everything He can, as well." To another individual who didn't want to say *l'chaim*, the Rebbe said, "Today, everything needs to be done in cash. Pledges are not enough."

The Rebbe also spoke at length about the new *talmidim hashluchim* to Australia, and asked their relatives and other shluchim to say *l'chaim*. "It's no *kuntz* to open a yeshiva where another 10 exist. It's a *kuntz* to open one in *'iyei hayam...*'"



PURIM 5729

5728*

“The Rebbe’s Purim farbrengens were unlike any other Purim celebrations,” explains Rabbi Seligson. “The *simcha* was an uplifting, spiritual one, and it came directly from the Rebbe. For example, at this farbrengen in 5728*, the Rebbe asked for a *Purim’diker niggun*, and instead of waiting, he began to sing ‘*Vesamachta*.’”

Rabbi Meir Harlig has another example: “During one of the early years, a group of costumed clowns from a non-Lubavitch community came into the farbrengen and began doing *shtick* during one of the *niggunim*. When they were done with their ‘show,’ the Rebbe said, ‘Now lets see what we could do...’ and began a *shturemdiker niggun*.”

This farbrengen was also less than a year after the Six Day War, and the Rebbe said a long *sicha* about the significance of tefillin. “I was asked, since I *koch* in Mivtza Tefillin, how will I connect it to Purim? I answered that no Purim Torah is necessary, since the Gemara says clearly, ‘*V’yikar—eilu tefillin!*’”¹¹

5729*

This *geshmake* farbrengen is the longest recorded on tape: seven hours and forty-one minutes.¹²

5730*

In an hour-and-a-half long *sicha*, the Rebbe said that he was forced to address the issue of the new law in the Israeli Knesset regarding ‘Mihu Yehudi.’ In clear and no-nonsense terms, the Rebbe laid out the story and the profound tragedy that it would bring upon the country. The *sicha* was widely publicized, and ‘Mihu Yehudi’ became a topic at each farbrengen for the next several years.

5731*

By this time, Shazar was president of Israel, and he was pressured by some members of Israeli government to cancel his planned visit to 770, since they viewed it as a disrespect to the office of the president. Nonetheless, Shazar insisted on visiting the Rebbe.

This visit took place on the eve of Purim. Shazar arrived half an hour before Maariv, and the Rebbe welcomed him publicly and brought him into his room for a short *yechidus* until davening.

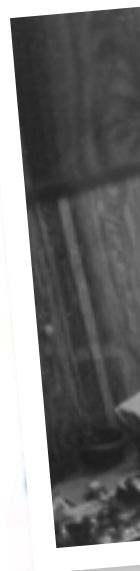
The Rebbe entered the shul for Maariv alongside Shazar, leading him by the arm in a very *malchusdiker* sight. A special Megillah encased in silver was prepared for Shazar as a gift from the Rebbe, along with a special edition of the *siddur* embossed with the words “Purim 5731.”

After the Megillah reading, Shazar returned to the Rebbe’s room where he had a four-hour long *yechidus*. Refreshments were placed on the Rebbe’s table, but the Rebbe didn’t touch them, fasting until late into the night.¹³

This year also marked the expansion of Mivtza Purim to members of the IDF. The Rebbe entered the farbrengen late, noting (somewhat emotionally) that he had just received word that all those who participated in the *mivtza* and traveled to the soldiers in the Sinai Desert had returned home safely.

5732*

The first Purim farbrengen recording on videotape.¹⁴ טעמו וראו כי טוב הוי’.



**5735**

Taking a lesson from Mordechai, the Rebbe said that we need to leave our own Torah learning and go be *mekarev* another Jew.

The Rebbe held a special farbrengen in the beginning of Adar to encourage Mivtza Purim, which started taking place on a much larger scale.

5736*

Mivtza Purim was expanded to prisons and hospitals. When a group of *bochurim* in Eretz Yisrael traveled to an army base near Shechem, they encountered a dangerous hoard of Arabs blocking the road. Confident with the Rebbe's *koach*, they insisted that the driver force his way through and Mivtza Purim was conducted in the base with great success. At the farbrengen, the Rebbe spoke about the story and the lesson that each person can learn from it.¹⁷

After a picture of the Rebbe instructing Chassidim to whistle was published in the *Algemeiner Journal*, a controversy arose, with letters to the editor upset about the 'unbecoming' photo, in their opinion. On Purim, the Rebbe addressed the issue, expressing his surprise that no Chossid had cited the story of Dovid Hamelech, where, to the chagrin of Michal bas Shaul, he danced publicly as the *aron* was brought to Yerushalayim.

During this same farbrengen, the Rebbe instituted that bar mitzvah *bochurim* begin donning Rabeinu Tam's tefillin, instead of waiting for the Rebbe's personal approval at age eighteen.¹⁸

**5733***

For the first time, the farbrengen was broadcast on radio, and the *sichos* of this very *lebedike* farbrengen were simple and easy to follow (available on video). The farbrengen was also attended by author Chaim Potok, and the Rebbe spoke about the responsibilities of those given special talents and special influence.¹⁵

5734

The Rebbe distributed a silver dollar to whoever participated in Mivtza Purim.

As Purim occurred on a Friday, the farbrengen was held on Shabbos Shushan Purim. In one of the sharpest *sichos* at the time, the Rebbe excoriated the religious Mafdal party for joining the coalition without correcting MiHu Yehudi. "*Hashamayim?* Should I care about Hashem?" the Rebbe portrayed the Mafdal leader's indifferent attitude, "*Kis'i!* I care about my seat! *Ha'aretz?* Should I care about the *shtachim?* *Hadom raglay!* My position is more important!"¹⁶



5737*

Purim was on Friday, and no farbrengen was held. When the Rebbe arrived for Mincha, he saw a large group of *anash* and *bochurim* participating in a farbrengen, and the Rebbe encouraged the singing.

On Shabbos, the farbrengen opened with singing “*Shoshanas Yaakov*,” and the Rebbe instructed many people to say *l’chaim* on full cups, and also asked for one individual to “do *mesiras nefesh*” and fulfill *ad delo yada* in the name of all the participants. Due to the recent passing of the Beis Yisrael of Ger, the Rebbe spoke a rare *sicha* about the Chabad-Ger connection on Shabbos Shushan Purim, and wished the new Gerrer Rebbe much success.

5738*

The Rebbe addressed Mivtza Litani, the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, praising the soldiers’ fearlessness and expressing his hope that it will continue in the same vein. The Rebbe connected it with the spiritual significance of Tzfas, in northern Israel, and the giants of *pnimius haTorah* who lived there, and who started the revelation of Moshiach.

5739*

With extraordinary *lebedikeit*, the Rebbe opened the farbrengen with *niggunim* and three rounds of *l’chaim*. “A large contingency of Iranian children were present at that farbrengen,” relates Rabbi Seligson. “The Rebbe asked them to sing a *niggun* of their own, and they began to sing ‘*Yigdal Elokim Chai*.’ Most of the audience weren’t familiar with the song, so the Rebbe turned to Reb Yoel and commented, “They say that you catch a *niggun* quickly; learn this *niggun* too.”

5740*

The Rebbe addressed the issue of *shtachim* at length (available on video).

PURIM 5731, JEM 103400



PURIM 5747



PURIM 5738, YOSSEI MELAMED VIA JEM 129223

5741*

Purim on Erev Shabbos was usually uneventful, but 10 minutes after Mincha, the Rebbe suddenly returned to the small *zal* and recited a *maamar*. Before he began, he asked that the doors be locked (so as not to disturb the rest of the city) but by the *maamar*'s conclusion, the *zal* had somehow become full of people.¹⁹

5742*

The Rebbe asked for a candidate to observe *ad delo yada* and also make *kuleh*. An extraordinary *simcha* ensued, and the entire 770 danced to "We Want Moshiach Now" at great length (available on video).

5743*

The Rebbe spoke at length about the two "Iron Curtains," one physical and one spiritual, and our responsibility to combat them: The Jews stranded in the Soviet Union, and the Jewish children stranded in the public school system (available on video).

5744*

Being the same *kvius* as the year of the Friediker Rebbe's arrival in America, the Rebbe asked that his *maamar* of that Purim, "*Balayla Hahu Tof-Shin*," be republished. The booklets were ready the next morning.

The next Shabbos, the Rebbe spoke the famous *sicha* about "*Kam Rabbah v'shachtai l'Rav Zeira*." The Rebbe explained that he didn't want the *sicha* to be translated immediately during the broadcast on Purim, for fear of misunderstandings, so he chose to deliver the *sicha* on Shabbos. The Rebbe also instructed that the *hanacha*—in all languages—be responsibly and properly edited. Upon receiving the Hebrew *hanacha* by Rabbi Dovid Feldman, the Rebbe responded, "*Tach tach al hasidur hana'eh*—thank you for the pleasant format."

5745*

The real surprise came on Shabbos, 16 Adar, when the Rebbe led an extraordinary farbrengen where many memorable events took place. "They say that such a *lebedike* farbrengen hasn't occurred since 5726" - A *yoman* (Purim farbrengen available on video).



PURIM 5740

5746*

In an unprecedented *sicha*, the Rebbe cryptically addressed a certain issue of modern times, in response to a vote of the New York Senate (available on video).

5747*

A historic farbrengen. In unprecedented terms, the Rebbe demanded that Chassidim do everything they can to hasten Moshiach's arrival, for the first time using the terms that would become famous again on 28 Nissan 5751*, that the Rabbeim had done everything in this regard and now the task was given over from the *nossi* to every Yid. This turned out to be the last Purim farbrengen to-date (also available on video).



PURIM 5749, CB HALBERSTAM VIA JEW 303177

5748*

Following the Rebbetzin's passing, the Rebbe remained at home throughout the *sheloshim*, and—to the Chassidim's deep disappointment—no farbrengen was held. However, the Rebbe surprised everyone with an hour-long *sicha* after Mincha in his home, which included a *maamar K'ein- icha*.

5749*

The Rebbe said a *sicha* after Mincha with a compelling question on the custom of Parshas Zachor. After Maariv, the Rebbe delivered another *sicha*, praising those who fulfilled the custom of *ad delo yada*, and encouraged everyone to increase their *simcha*. During the dollars distribution and the entire ensuing evening in 770, the atmosphere became very *lebedik*.²⁰

5750*

During the *sicha* following Maariv, the Rebbe instructed that everyone wash again and continue the *seudah*. A lively farbrengen ensued in 770.

5751*

Dollars were distributed. That Purim marked the end of the Gulf War, and on Shabbos, 16 Adar, the farbrengen was unusually *Purim'dik* and the Rebbe concluded the farbrengen by standing up and dancing.



PURIM 5750



BRING IT TO THE WORLD

No description of Purim with the Rebbe would be complete without a few words about Mivtza Purim.

Today, every Lubavitcher Chossid spends his Purim bringing the joy and mitzvos of the Yom Tov to other Jews in his vicinity. The origins of this *mivtza* in its broadest scale were actually focused on Eretz Yisrael, when, in 5731*, the Rebbe called for a wide-spread effort to bring *simchas Purim* to the soldiers of the IDF and the bereaved families of the fallen. The Chassidim, who mostly lived in the center of Eretz Yisrael, equipped themselves with Megillos and supplies for the other mitzvos of Purim, and visited the IDF bases throughout the country and in the Sinai Desert.

In the United States, Mivtza Purim became more widespread in the mid-5730s*, at the height of the *mivtzoim* era. In 5734*, the Rebbe informed Reb Dovid Raskin that each participant would receive a silver dollar. In following years—5735* and 5736*—the Rebbe held special farbrengens before Purim to promote the *mivtza*, encouraging the participation of women as well and expanding the reach to Jews in prisons and hospitals.

The earliest form of the *mivtza* actually began much earlier, in the early 5720s*. In 5721*, the Rebbe sent a letter to educators encouraging them to teach their students about *mishloach manos* and *matanos levyonim*, something that their parents may have overlooked. The next year the Rebbe spoke about it publicly, encouraging everyone to get involved, and the content of the Rebbe's talk was also published in newspapers. In Eretz Yisrael, the Rebbe encouraged Chassidim to work through the education system to bring the mitzvos to their furthest reach, and indeed, in 5723*, the Ministry of Education under Abba Eban published special instructions for schools to teach their students about *mishloach manos*.

On Purim 5733*, the Rebbe made a special mention of all those who took part in the *mivtzoim*, specifically noting those in other countries, such as Eretz Yisrael, who had made long trips to bring the joy of Purim to others, and asked them to say *l'chaim*.

“They are physically distant, yet spiritually they are close and united with us. So everyone here should say *l'chaim* for yourselves and for them. With this, גדולה לגימה שמקרבת, the physical distance will be nullified. And we will become a unified nation, even though in the current situation we are scattered among other nations.”

For the full account of Mivtza Purim, see A Chassidisher Derher, Adar 5775.



MIVTZA PURIM ON AN ISRAELI ARMY BASE.

UNITED STATES FOUNDATION OF MICHIGAN

1. See *Leben Mitten Rebbe'n* in this issue.

2. Toras Menachem vol. 1 pg. 18.

3. Toras Menachem vol. 2 pg. 326. For more about this Purim, see *Derher* Tetzaveh 5773 and Adar 5775.

4. See a full description of this farbrengen in *Derher* Adar 5777, “Leben Mit’n Rebbe’n.”

5. Bava Basra 75a.

6. Toras Menachem 5717 vol. 19 pg. 177.

7. For the full account of this Purim, see *Derher* Adar 5776, pg. 6.

8. Ashreinu Audio, Sichas 4 min. 21:38

9. See pictures of this Purim in *Derher* Adar 5779 pg. 61.

10. For the full account of this Purim, see *Derher* Adar 5778 pg. 6.

11. Toras Menachem pg. 135

12. See pictures of this Purim in *Derher* Adar 5777 pg. 60.

13. See pictures of this Purim in *Derher* Adar 5774 pg. 42.

14. For more about this farbrengen, see *Derher* Adar 5774 pg. 22.

15. For the full account of this Purim, see *Derher* Vayikra 5771.

16. Sichos Kodesh 5734 vol. 1 pg. 417-8.

17. See *Derher* Adar 5775 pg. 26.

18. See *The Great Debate* in this magazine for a lengthy overview of this issue.

19. For the full account of this Purim, see *Derher* Adar 5775 pg. 7.

20. See pictures of this Purim in *Derher* Adar 5778 pg. 60.

21. See *Derher*, Adar 5777.

22. See *Derher* Adar 5775 pg. 58.

23. Sichos Kodesh 5741 vol. 2 pg. 735.



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



This letter is addressed to Professor Ze'ev Falk, a prominent professor at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, who was very involved in Jewish family law from a halachic perspective. The Rebbe addresses the question of whether adopted children should be told that they're adopted, demonstrating that from both a halachic and humanitarian standpoint, deceiving children in this way is extremely detrimental.

It is interesting to note that the Rebbe's opinion, which at the time was contrary to accepted practice (as the Rebbe details in the letter), has since become much more accepted in the scientific community. Studies have demonstrated that late discovery of adoption is highly detrimental to a child, and adoptive parents are routinely advised to tell their children that they are adopted at a young age—as soon as they're old enough to understand.

It should be noted that this letter concerns the Rebbe's opinion on whether children who have been adopted should be told that they're adopted. When it comes to questions regarding adopting in general, a Chassidische rav should be consulted. There are many other letters where the Rebbe addresses that topic.

22 Sivan 5725*

Mr. Ze'ev Falk,

Greetings and blessings!

In reply to your letter: It is needless for me to emphasize that the Shulchan Aruch has the final say in everything related to a Yid. The same applies to counsel and guidance; as long as one relies on Shulchan Aruch, one can give counsel and guidance for a Yid's life. If someone gives guidance that is not in keeping with Shulchan Aruch, it is not simply bad guidance—the person has disqualified himself from being a guide.

In other words, when someone asks me for guidance and I want to give honest advice, I must see what Shulchan Aruch says and follow that. For if I knew that Shulchan Aruch said something and yet I were to deviate from it, this would be the greatest form of deceit—for the person asking me advice is asking in the assumption that I am a Yid whose path is illuminated by Torah.

Therefore, when it comes to the question of contemporary adoption, in which the children are not told

that they are adopted—so that even if they wish to follow the Shulchan Aruch [with regards to the prohibitions of *yichud* and physical contact that apply to anyone who isn't a blood relative] they cannot do so under these circumstances—clearly, such adoption is forbidden by Torah. Since—as our *chachamim* tell us—“the Torah was given to benefit humankind,” it is clear that this approach is not good for the children or for the adoptive parents, not just in *Olam Haba*, but in this world as well.

The question of whether or not we logically understand how it is negative is secondary, for one cannot bring a logical argument when there is a clear directive from Shulchan Aruch. Since you're a doctor, I don't need to cite to you tens of proofs from the field of medicine, where treatments and medications are used based upon experience [that they work] rather than understanding [why they work]. The understanding follows afterwards, and there are things whose effectiveness we still don't understand, and yet they are nevertheless used—based upon trial and experience—with much success. This is on the positive side. The same applies to the negative: There are tens of examples from treatments for sick people, and even from the lifestyle choices of healthy people, that



when experience shows a certain action or a certain thing to be harmful, the doctors immediately announce that these lifestyle choices are detrimental, without waiting to understand at all; and certainly without waiting to fully understand what is the harmful component and how it is harmful.

Additionally, it is true about many aspects of Torah and mitzvos, that, as time goes on, the benefits of acting in accordance with the Torah are made clear from a worldly perspective, and the detriments of not following the prohibitions of the Torah are observed as well. This was after they had been considered for a long time to be non-understandable decrees.

In many cases of adoption that have come to my attention in which the adoptive parents withheld the knowledge from their children that they weren't their real parents, later on when they finally did reveal that they had deceived their children, my experience has shown that this led to tragedy and hostile relationships, sometimes even hatred on the part of the adopted children. The pain that the adoptive parents went through is undeniable.

If you think about it a bit, it's not surprising that adoption in this manner leads to such results, since it is impossible that a life built upon falsehood—falsehood that affects the very soul of a boy or girl—will not lead to the shattering of the relationships the child has with those close to them. If people say about any falsehood that the truth will come out eventually, it is all the more so when it comes to a lie like this one, which goes on for years and effects day-to-day life. It is impossible for the secret not to come out, whether through neighbors or friends, intentionally or unintentionally.

It should be noted that adoption in this way is relatively new—only several decades old—and even so, the instances

ALTHOUGH THIS IS NOT MY PROFESSION, BASED UPON THE CASES THAT I AM AWARE OF, I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT THIS APPROACH MUST BE CHANGED ENTIRELY

of complications and tragedies are many. And all the more so today, when such adoptions are increasingly common, because doctors and social workers put pressure and make the adoption conditional on the relationship between the adoptive parents and the adopted children being built on a lie. The natural results of this are easy to understand.

Another point: In typical cases, the adoptive parents are advised to tell the children the truth once they grow up. Even in such cases [when the children did not find out by accident, but from their parents], the children come with a heartfelt complaint: “Why did you deceive me?”

What’s more—and this, too, is essential—in many cases, the adoptive parents don’t find the fortitude to tell their adopted children that they were deceiving them each day for many years, and in the end, the adopted children find out the truth from strangers.

In summary: The overall ultimate good for a Yid depends upon the instructions of our Torah; in following the core principle from the time of receiving the Torah—*na’aseh venishma*, doing before understanding. This ultimate good is not only in the next world but in this world as well.

Even if we’re not talking about Yidden, the approach of deceiving the adopted children will end in tragedy; after a short time or a long while—the truth will come out.

Although this is not my profession, based upon the cases that I am aware of (and it follows that those involved in the field are aware of many more such cases), I have no doubt that this approach must be changed entirely, and the relationship between the adoptive parents and the adopted children must be established upon truth from the very beginning. This is the natural relationship they should have. It is hard to believe that in most cases the adoptive parents can hope for a natural relationship between them and their adoptive children just like that of biological parents and

their children [even if they were not to tell them the truth. And even if it would work in rare instances,] there is no reason to establish a normative way of acting based upon instances that are the exception to the rule.

I will not conceal the fact that the length in which I wrote the second part of this letter isn’t just in the hope that you will agree with me that according to Shulchan Aruch, the practice of adopting children and not telling them the truth must be discontinued. [It is also in hope] that you will use your influence to persuade the psychologists that they should discontinue this practice from a psychological standpoint at least, for it is near-certain that the results will be the opposite of what is optimal—a broken heart on the part of the adopted child, and disappointment on the part of the adoptive parents. Instead of [authorities] pressuring [adoptive parents] and making it a condition that they must lie to the adopted child, they should establish the relationship on the truth from the very beginning, with a true and natural relationship. This will turn out to be for the benefit of the adoptive parents and the adopted children, as discussed above.

With esteem and blessing.

Obviously, it will interest me to know your response to all I’ve written above, and [I hope] it is unnecessary for me to emphasize that it should be an open, frank response.²

1 See, for example, this 2019 study: journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0192513X19829503

2. This letter was printed in the weekly *Toras Menachem* booklet by Vaad Hanachos B’Lahak, for Shabbos Parshas Va’eschanan 5779.

מוקדש
לחיזוק ההתקשרות
לכ"ק אדמו"ר
נדפס ע"י
הרה"ת ר' יצחק מאיר וזוגתו מרת לאה
ומשפחתם שיחיו
שפאלטר



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 Tishrei 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.

LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASIDEI CHABAD

When some time would pass without any correspondence from Argentina, the Rebbe would ask, “Why are you not writing me anything?”

approved of the idea and gave me a pocket-size siddur Tehillas Hashem with Tehillim. On the other hand when I asked the Rebbe about the fact that I wear a *tallis gadol* during Shacharis before my marriage—in accordance with the Sefardic tradition—the Rebbe indicated that I should continue doing so. The Rebbe once gave me a pocket-size Tanya as well.

During those years the Rebbe instructed me to learn Ein Yaakov and the Alter Rebbe’s Shulchan Aruch, but all of this needed to be done outside of the *sedarim*.

During one Tishrei, many of the *bochurim* in the dormitory were very ill and bedridden with high fevers. I was one of the last ones to get over the illness and on Simchas Torah I was still in bed running a high fever.

At the farbrengen before *hakafos* the Rebbe asked “Where is Aharon Hakohen Tawil?” Rabbi Mentlik sent a *bochur* to bring me from the dorm. When I heard the Rebbe was looking for me, I made the effort to get out of bed, come directly to the farbrengen and say *l’chaim* to the Rebbe. As *hakafos* began I was standing a little bit away from the crowd, but then the Rebbe scanned the crowd and said, “Where is Aharon Hakohen Tawil?” and called me closer to him, away from the crush of the crowd, so I was able to experience *hakafos* literally

within a few feet from the Rebbe. After *hakafos* I went back to bed, and the next morning I woke up feeling completely better...

Spanish Correspondence

Since I was the only Argentinian in 770 for a while, I served as a delivery boy or interpreter for many Argentinian Jews with their correspondence with the Rebbe. They would send me letters with messages for the Rebbe in Spanish and I would translate these letters into Hebrew and give them to *mazkirus*. The Rebbe usually responded immediately to the letters. I would write the responses

in Spanish and send them back to Argentina. There were times that the answers needed to reach them urgently, and I would send a telegram.

All this I would do in between the *sedarim*, and it kept me extremely busy. When some time would pass without any correspondence from Argentina, the Rebbe would ask, “Why are you not writing me anything?”

On the subject of interpreting, many years later, during one of my visits to the Rebbe, I was in *yechidus* three times in one night. The first two times I accompanied Spanish speaking Jews into *yechidus* to translate the Rebbe’s words for them and at the end

SHE WILL BE HEALTHY

I had an uncle who lived in Flatbush at the time. His name was Rabbi Yosef Tawil and he had previously been a *maggid shiur* in the Yeshivat Porat Yosef in Yerushalayim. I would visit him from time to time and he would always greet me with an open Zohar and we would discuss different *inyanim* in learning. The Rebbe once answered a question in learning that he asked me.³

Several weeks before Rosh Hashanah he told me that his twelve-year-old daughter Flora was in the hospital gravely ill and he asked me to write to the Rebbe asking for a *refuah shleimah*. I wrote the *pan* and the Rebbe responded אזכיר על הציון.

Her situation did not improve and as it became progressively worse my uncle asked me to write again several times.

On Erev Yom Kippur, as I approached the Rebbe to receive *lekach*, the Rebbe handed me a piece for myself, two pieces for my parents, two pieces for my uncle Yosef and his wife, and then handed another piece for Flora, mentioning her name and mother’s name and instructing me to make sure she eats this specific piece of *lekach* before Yom Kippur, “and she will be healthy.”

I rushed to my room to drop off the other pieces of *lekach* and immediately took the bus and subway to the hospital on Avenue T. When I arrived my uncle was not there, so I gave the three pieces of *lekach* to my aunt and told her to be sure that Flora eats this specific piece before Yom Kippur. My aunt was shocked, because Flora was unable to eat anything at the time, but I told her that this must happen and the Rebbe had given clear assurance that she will be healthy. Having accomplished my mission I rushed back to 770 in time for Yom Tov.

A few days later I called my uncle and he joyously shared the news with me that Flora had eaten the *lekach* before Yom Kippur and was making a miraculously rapid recovery.

of the night I went in for my personal *yechidus*.

"I am in the Mesader Kiddushin"

Rabbi Yehoshua Avrohom Sapir was a Gerrer Chossid living in Uruguay who served as a *shochet* for the local community. His daughters wanted to marry yeshiva *bochurim* but there were none in Uruguay and very few in all of South America at the time. Chaya Rochel Sapir came to New York in 5719* to find a *shidduch* and ended up marrying a Lubavitcher *bochur* from Cuba, Yona Slapochnik, who was learning in 770 at the time. They had the great *zechus* that the Rebbe was *mesader kiddushin* at their wedding.⁴

When Rabbi Sapir was in New York for his daughter's wedding he went into *yechidus* by the Rebbe

and mentioned that the *kalla* has a twin sister Sara Rivka who is still in Uruguay, and although she very much wants to marry a yeshiva *bochur* as well, she has a hard time traveling so far away from home. He asked the Rebbe for advice in how to go about finding her a *shidduch*.

The Rebbe said that Sara should come to New York as there were quite a few South American *bochurim* here at the time and this would be the best way for her to find a *shidduch*. A short time later she was in New York and her new brother-in-law Yona Slapochnik suggested to Reb Dovid Raskin that I would be a good *shidduch* for his sister-in-law.

A short while after we met, we received the Rebbe's *bracha* to marry and became engaged. The wedding date was set for Rosh Chodesh Adar 5721*.

Some time before the wedding we decided to personally deliver an invitation to the Rebbe's mother, Rebbetzin Chana. She welcomed us graciously into her apartment and when she opened the envelope and read our names on the invitation she said with a big smile, "Ah, the Rebbe is very satisfied with this *shidduch*."

Although the Rebbe had recently stopped being *mesader kiddushin*, we decided to ask the Rebbe to be *mesader kiddushin* at our wedding, since he was *mesader kiddushin* for my wife's twin sister some time earlier. When we mentioned this in *yechidus*, the Rebbe declined and said, "I will always be with you. The distance and the walls do not separate us. I will be in the *rav* that is *mesader kiddushin* during your Chupah."

I repeated this to Rabbi Dvorkin who was our *mesader kiddushin* and



REB AARON RECEIVING DOLLARS AS A "TANKIST", EREV ROSH HASHANAH 5735.

YOSSI FREIDIN VIA JEM 140539

*📅 5719-1959, 5721-1961



THE REBBE GIVES REB AARON A BOTTLE OF MASHKE DURING KOS SHEL BROCHO, MOTZOEI SIMCHAS TORAH 5740.

...A short time later Rabbi Hodakov called me into his office and in a stern tone said, "The Rebbe wants to know how much money you need!"

although he was known not to be an emotional person, he was trembling throughout the duration of our *chupah*.

Shlichus

During the *yechidus* before our wedding we told the Rebbe that we are ready to go on shlichus wherever the Rebbe would send us, and after our wedding several offers started coming our way. We notified the Rebbe of everything and at one point the Rebbe sent back the following response:

לדעתי, מקומו ויצליח בבואנוס-אייריס
ובזמן הקרוב נכון לנסוע עם זוגתו תל' לב. א.
להחזיר המצורף

In my opinion, your place is, and you will be successful, in Buenos Aires, and it would be appropriate to travel soon with your wife to Buenos Aires.

We started looking into different opportunities to work with the Buenos Aires community and I was in *yechidus*

several times in connection with these discussions. The Rebbe was involved in every detail. For example, the Rebbe was very adamant that I not travel there until the community would pay for our travel expenses. When things started to seem doubtful, the Rebbe assured me that I would have a position "near me [the Rebbe]."

During this time period my wife was working as a kindergarten teacher in Oholei Torah and I continued learning in 770 like a regular *bochur*. We did not have much money but we were happy.

Once, in *yechidus*, the Rebbe asked me what I was doing about *parnasa*. I said we had what we needed between my wife's salary and the wedding gifts, and either way we were preparing to move on shlichus imminently.

Afterwards, Rabbi Hodakov called me and said that he was instructed by the Rebbe to give me money for

living expenses. I adamantly refused to accept any money, reiterating that we had what we needed.

Apparently the Rebbe was upset that I had not received money because a short time later Rabbi Hodakov called me into his office and in a stern tone said, "The Rebbe wants to know how much money you need!" I was unsure of what to do, and finally out of pity for Rabbi Hodakov, I said an amount, which I received promptly.

My parents invited us to visit them for Pesach in Argentina (I had not been home since Tishrei 5717*). We asked the Rebbe about this and the Rebbe said that if we can find a family to stay with over Pesach in Crown Heights—so that my wife would not need to work hard to prepare for Yom Tov—we should remain in Crown Heights for Pesach. We spent Yom Tov that year at the home of Rabbi Mendel Baumgarten, Rabbi Berel Baumgarten's brother.

After going through various options for how to develop our shlichus in Buenos Aires, the Rebbe told me to open a new *minyan* and gave me certain guidelines how to do this without causing any *machlokes* in the community.

On Isru Chag Shavuot we departed 770 as the Rebbe's shluchim to Buenos Aires. As we prepared to leave 770 to the airport, the *bochurim* started dancing outside and we all noticed the blinds of the Rebbe's room going up. We were shocked when minutes later the Rebbe himself came to the front door of 770 to see us off! We immediately entered the taxi and the Rebbe stayed at the doorway until we were out of sight.

Upon our arrival we started a *minyan* with young students which we eventually named, "Rabbi Yisrael Baal Shem Tov." The *nusach hatefila* and the *minhagim* were Sefardi but it was all in the spirit of Chabad. There were *shiurim* in Chassidus and

every Shabbos we had a *chassidisher farbrengen* and many of these students became Lubavitchers. Eventually I worked together with the local *baalei batim* to bring Rabbi Baumgarten to Buenos Aires on a permanent basis and I was involved in the development of Chabad activities throughout the years.

Since I am a trained *shochet*, being that the Rebbe had instructed me to learn *shechita*, I eventually started working in the local *shechita* one day a week. After I was in Buenos Aires for several years I also became a *mohel* and served in this capacity for many years as well.

There were many areas of shlichus that developed over time as the Lubavitch community in Buenos Aires started to grow. Groups would gather together to listen to the farbrengens via hookup and we were very active in all the *mitvzoim*. One of my greatest pleasures was helping many *bochurim* from Argentina travel to learn in the yeshivos near the Rebbe. Many of them later returned as shluchim to South America.

Our first three children were born through a cesarean section and the doctor said my wife can no longer have any children. The next time we were in *yechidus* we mentioned this to the Rebbe. The Rebbe smiled slightly, said, “I see no problem,” and instructed us to consult with a *rav*. Rabbi Dvorkin assured us that it was common for women to have multiple births via cesarean section and *baruch Hashem* we merited to have another child.

Pillar of the community

When we moved to Buenos Aires on shlichus, most of my wife's family was nearby in Uruguay and she was able to see her parents often. Over time, both of our families all moved away, and most of them settled in



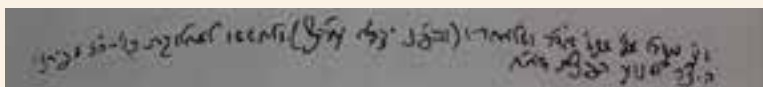
THE REBBE ADDS [שווארט ובודק] IN HIS HOLY HANDWRITING IN A LETTER ADDRESSED TO REB AARON, DATED 21 SIVAN 5735.



BOCHURIM AND CHASSIDIM DANCE JOYOUSLY AT THE AIRPORT WITH REB AARON AS HE EMBARKS ON HIS SHLICHUS, 5721.

CAUTION WITH BALANCE

In *yeichidus* and in letters⁵ the Rebbe often cautioned me to ensure that my activities should be done in a pleasant and peaceful manner and to avoid any *machlokes*. However, once when I wrote to the Rebbe that I was not doing a certain activity in *hafatzas hamaayanos* since I feared it would cause *machlokes*, the Rebbe responded:



וחששו למחלוקת כו' - ה"ז מפיתויי היצר למנוע הפצת דא"ח.

With regard to your fear of *machlokes* etc. This is one of the temptations of the *yetzer [hara]* to prevent *hafatzas haChassidus*.



THE BAR MITZVAH OF REB AARON'S SON SHLOMO, 5736.

Eretz Yisrael. At one point we started asking the Rebbe on several occasions if we should move to Eretz Yisroel as well, but the Rebbe always encouraged us to remain in Argentina where we were involved in the community.

In 5738*, the Chadera Religious Council offered me the position of *mohel* in the Chadera hospital and other educational responsibilities. When I traveled to the Rebbe that year I met Rabbi Yitzchok Lifshitz in 770. He was the *shochet* for *gasos* in Chadera and also served in other communal positions. Rabbi Lifshitz wanted to move to Yerushalayim and offered me to take over his position as

well. Accepting all these offers would mean an enormous amount of work but the salary would make it worth it.

Rabbi Lifshitz and I went into *yeichidus* on the same night and we both separately asked the Rebbe about our respective plans—I would move to Chadera from Buenos Aires and he would move to Yerushalayim. The Rebbe was opposed to the idea and said that each one must remain at their post—me in Buenos Aires and Rabbi Lifshitz in Chadera.

Unbeknown to me, the *rav* of Chadera, Rabbi Dovid Verner, also wrote to the Rebbe about the idea of me moving to Chadera to assume

the positions of *shochet*, *mohel* and educator, and before Shavuot he received a letter from the Rebbe with the following response.

והנה, הרה"ח הו"ח אי"א נר"מ וכו', הר"א ש', הכהן טאויל הוא מעמודי התווך בצ"צ בעירו (כולל בחינוך עטה"ק) ואיך זה יעתיק משם!?

Rabbi Aharon Hakohen Tawil is one of the foundational pillars of communal work in his city (including chinuch al taharas hakodesh). How can he move away from there?!

We have been here ever since and are blessed that our children and many of our grandchildren serve as the Rebbe's *shluchim* in South America.

The Rebbe's love and care for me throughout my life is tremendous. As a young *bochur* the Rebbe guided me into becoming a proper Chossid and was intimately involved in every aspect of my life throughout all the years. I am mostly grateful for the *zechus* to be the Rebbe's *shliach* in the final battle to bring Moshiach.

Although I experienced this in a revealed and practical way, I am certain that this is the case with everyone. The Rebbe's words to me before my wedding, "I will always be with you," resonate with me today more than ever and are relevant to every Chossid. May we merit very soon to be reunited with the Rebbe *b'gashmiyus* with the coming of Moshiach. **1**

1. See A Chassidisher Derher Magazine #13.
2. During the Simchas Beis Hashoeva farbrengen on Sukkos 5723 (after I had already been on shlichus in Argentina for over a year) the Rebbe called upon the *talmidim* from Argentina, and specifically called my name, to sing "their *niggun*." In the recording you can hear the Rebbe singing along. Listen to the recording on Ashreinu.app: ashreinu.page.link/XSWg
3. The letter is printed in Igros Kodesh vol. 15 page 220.
4. See Mekadesh Yisroel page 255.
5. See for example Igros Kodesh vol. 22, p. 283.

THE "EXTRA" LETTER ARRIVED 32 YEARS LATER

Rabbi Avrohom Yosef Polichenko was a Chossid who lived in Buenos Aires with whom I was friendly for many years. At one point his family moved to Canada, and in 5760, some time after he passed away, his family was preparing to move homes and they discovered two letters stashed away in a folder. Both letters were *michtavim klali'im-proti'im* dated "Yemei Hageulah 12-13 Tammuz 5728." One was addressed to Rabbi Polichenko and one was addressed to me.

This discovery was very strange for me because I had received this specific *michtav kloli proti* back in 5728 and it turns out it was sent twice, but with several changes. The letter I received in 5728 was signed by the Rebbe himself and this recently discovered letter was signed by the *mazkir*.

Most astonishing about this newly discovered letter was a postscript on the bottom which read as follows:

הפ"נ (הכתוב) עבוד אחיו שי יקרא עה"צ. ויש להתייעץ עם רופא מומחה איך להתנהג אתו וכו'.

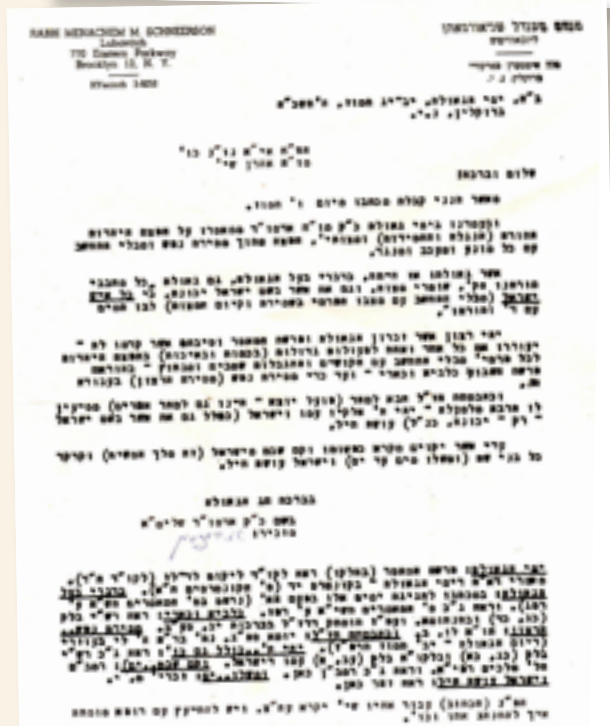
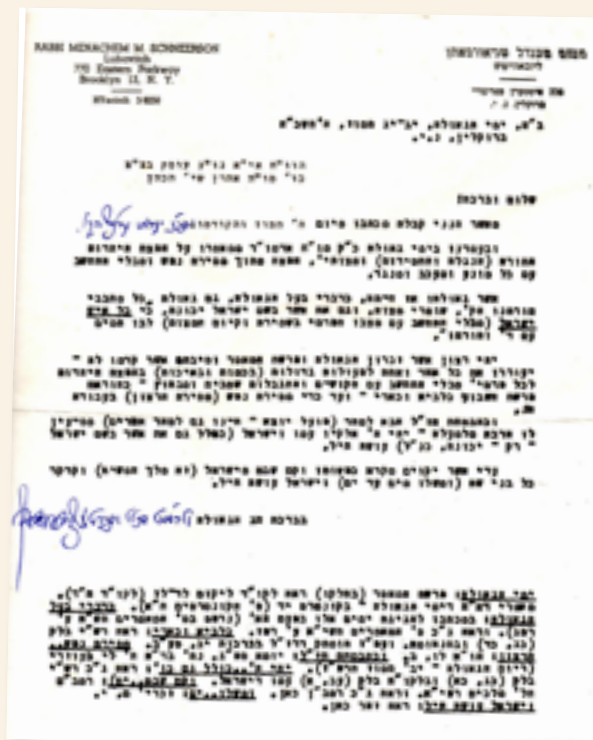
The pan (which you wrote) on behalf of your brother was received and will be read at the Tziyun. Consult with a competent doctor how to deal with him etc.

This postscript was astonishing because in 5728 my brother was in good health and I had not written to the Rebbe about him. But in the summer of 5760, when this letter was discovered, my brother Refoel was going through a medical crisis! This postscript was written 32 years earlier with such revealed *ruach hakodesh* and it was delivered to me at the perfect time in such a bizarre and mysterious way!

Another interesting point is that my brother was distrustful of doctors in general, and I saw this message from the Rebbe of specific importance for him.

When Mrs. Polichenko called my wife with the news of the discovery and the contents of the letter I asked her to fax the letter to me immediately. Rushing to his home with the faxed letter I was delighted to hear that he had just left the house to go on a walk, which indicated that he was already feeling better.

I was also going through a certain challenging issue at the time and after receiving the newly discovered letter I merited much *hatzlacha* in that area as well.



THE TWO VERSIONS OF THE MICH Tav KLOLI-PROTI SENT FOR REB AARON.



The Right Man For The Job

The individual who owned the land upon which the famed city of Lubavitch was built also owned other vast estates nearby.

On one of these properties he had a successful dairy farm which was rented to a Yid named Shimon¹, who became very wealthy running this operation.

The landlord called Shimon in one day and declared, "You have stolen all my wealth and I am therefore commanding you to leave at once and find a new place to live. Within the month I want not a trace of you to be found here!"

At first Shimon thought it was just a joke but as time moved on he realized it was

anything but. He pleaded, begged and cajoled but to no avail. The landlord angrily told him that he had seven days left, after that "I will chase you out and keep all your possessions for myself."

Shimon ran directly to the landlord's accountant, who was also a Jewish employee, and asked him to intercede with his boss on his behalf. "I am sorry," he said to a distraught Shimon, "I can't get involved lest he turn his anger on me."

Feeling lost and hopeless he made his way to Lubavitch to ask the Tzemach Tzedek to write a letter to the accountant with the request that he do what he can to help a fellow Yid in trouble.

The Tzemach Tzedek handed a letter to his attendant, Reb Chaim Ber, who in turn gave it to a delighted Shimon.

His joy soon turned to worry when he realized the letter had not been addressed to the accountant but rather to Pinchas², a distinguished and wealthy individual from Chernigov.

Shimon raced back to Reb Chaim Ber and asked him to please go back to the Rebbe and ask him to correct the mistake.

"A Rebbe makes no mistake!" he declared, and no matter what Shimon said, Reb Chaim Ber did not budge.

Filled with concern, he made his way home and poured his heart out to his

wife. She, however, agreed with the Rebbe's attendant and encouraged her husband to take the letter to Chernigov.

With no choice he made the trip and hesitantly knocked on the door.

"Here is a letter from Lubavitch," he stammered.

"From Lubavitch?" exclaimed Pinchas, completely taken aback. "But I am a *misnaged*!"

As he read the letter, in which the Tzemach Tzedek vouched for Shimon's integrity and good character, concluding with a request to step in and help, Pinchas said:

"I respect your Rebbe because I have heard that he is a great *lamdan*. But I don't understand why he

לזכות
הרה"ת ר' שניאור זלמן שיחי'
ליפסקער
בקשר עם יום הולדתו
ח"י אדר שני
נדפס ע"י משפחתו שיחיו



asked me to help you... I don't know your landlord and have never done business with him. It seems that you have come to me for nothing."

When Shimon heard this, his body began to shake and he was at the brink of fainting. Bitter cries emanated from deep within him as all hope seemed to slip away.

Pinchas's wife witnessed all this and turned to her husband, "I will not allow you to abandon this man in his time of trouble. Perhaps his salvation will indeed come through you." Turning to Shimon she said, "Stop crying. My husband will travel with you and try to talk to the landlord. Hashem should have mercy on you..."

Shimon and Pinchas made the journey to the landlord's mansion. Shimon was terrified of what would transpire so he cowered behind some objects to make sure he would not be seen. Pinchas, on the other hand, strode over to the gate and peered inside. What he saw was a great hustle and bustle, with servants scurrying to and fro. Guests and visitors were passing through the gate when the landlord called out loudly

in Polish to Pinchas that he should enter.

Pinchas was unaware that he was being invited in so he remained in his place. After a few more futile attempts, the landlord ran over to Pinchas and said, "I am calling you. Why are you just standing there? Come inside the ballroom." And with that he led him by the hand all the way in.

Still in complete shock as to what was going on, Pinchas listened as the man summoned his wife and family. "Come see who has come to visit us," he announced. "Wow," he continued, "you came to wish me well on my birthday. That is so amazing!"

Pinchas stood with a blank stare on his face, completely confused about what was going on.

"I see you don't remember me. Let me tell you a story and hopefully refresh your memory.

"It was a freezing cold, snowy night seven years ago. I was completely lost and didn't know where to turn for help. As I assessed my dire situation I noticed a light on in the distance and knocked on your door. You and your wife took great care of me and even insisted that I stay for the week until

the terrible winter storm had passed. When I was finally ready to take leave, you refused to accept any money for your hospitality."

After hearing the story, all the memories flooded back to Pinchas and they chatted like long lost friends.

"Now it's my turn to tell you why I came here," said Pinchas.

Pinchas shared with the landlord the pain and stress his planned eviction was causing for Shimon, and begged him to change his mind. The landlord asked Pinchas, "Can you assure me that Shimon is truly an honest man?" Pinchas answered in the affirmative. After hearing that, the landlord called for Shimon and claimed that in fact it had all been a "joke," and he willingly agreed to let him stay and keep his dairy business. Shimon blessed the landlord and went on his way with a happy and light heart.

Pinchas (the *misnaged*), after seeing the wondrous success of his mission, decided he must immediately travel to Lubavitch and relay the entire incident to the Rebbe.

When he entered the Rebbe's room, the Tzemach Tzedek thanked him for

agreeing to follow the request in the letter. Pinchas replied, "All my life I have been a *misnaged*. From a young age I didn't believe in miracle stories that are told about *tzaddikim*; but now I have witnessed an open miracle from the Rebbe."

"Heaven forbid!" exclaimed the Tzemach Tzedek. "By us there are no miracles. Hashem has blessed me with a good memory. Whatever I hear or see, I know is not in vain so I merely put two and two together. When Shimon came here with his problem I recalled that seven years ago I remember hearing the story of you and the landlord and how you saved them from certain death. I concluded that you would be the best person to step in and help him out, so I sent the letter to you."

Pinchas was awed by what he had heard, especially the humility of the Tzemach Tzedek and how he described this open miracle as a natural event. **1**

*Adapted from
Otzar Sippurei Chabad
vol. 17, p. 20*

1. Name does not appear in the original, it was added here for clarity.

2. Name does not appear in the original, it was added here for clarity.



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



room shocked at what they saw. From the outset I was told that it was a miracle the arrow did not do any damage to the brain, but the damage to the eye was very serious.

Word of the accident had spread like wildfire and I was receiving dozens of messages from fellow shluchim in Florida and around the world offering help and referrals to prominent eye specialists, but before we could contemplate the next move it was critical to close up the wound. While we waited for the surgeon to arrive I sat down with a pen and paper and wrote a detailed letter to the Rebbe about what was going on. I also made sure to put on tefillin with the paramedic who took us to the hospital who we had found out was Jewish.

The first surgery took over three hours, much longer than expected. Afterwards the surgeon explained that when she saw the extent of the damage that had been caused to the eye she figured it would be impossible to save the eye and contemplated removing the eye on the spot. However, she has a four-year-old child at home too and she knew that if it was her child on the operating table and there was even a slight chance that the eye could be saved, she wouldn't remove it. This was the second clear and open miracle we experienced with Shmuly's injury and treatment.

On Friday, Shmuly came home with lots of pain medicines, and as we celebrated the *bris* of our son we knew that after the weekend we would have to make a decision where to continue Shmuly's treatment.

The doctors in Tallahassee saw no hope for the eye to recover. The retina was damaged, his lense was dislocated and permanently missing. He could see nothing with that eye, not even light. They told us that we would likely need to have the eye removed.

Hoping for a better diagnosis, we went to see a world renowned retina specialist in Baskin Palmer Eye Institute in Miami. I flew there with Shmuly on Monday, just four days after the injury but very quickly heard that he had the same diagnosis as the other doctors and we had to make a decision about removing the eye.

Leaving the damaged eye can present a risk to his healthy eye and the surgery to save the eye was complicated with very little chance of success and a difficult recovery process. He would need to lay face down for two whole weeks after the surgery, which makes it almost impossible for a four-year-old to endure. On the other hand if the surgery is successful, there is a slight chance to repair the eye. We had two weeks from the day of the injury to make that decision and thus far all the doctors who saw the injury told us we should probably get the eye removed.

Seeing how dire the situation really was, I decided to fly with Shmuly to New York right away so that we can go to the Ohel and ask the Rebbe for a *bracha*. When our local doctor heard we were traveling to New York she arranged an appointment for Shmuly to be checked by a top specialist at the Wills Eye Center in Philadelphia.

Writing my pan at the Ohel the next day, with Shmuly seated next to me, I poured out my heart to the Rebbe, begging for a clear directive as to how to proceed.

We drove to Philadelphia for our appointment, but the doctor said the same thing. No light means no hope for the eye to recover. However, he suggested that if we wanted another opinion, we could go see Dr. Steve Schwartz in Los Angeles, who he did his residency with. I asked him to arrange the appointment for us and then we drove back to New York to the Ohel.

While driving to the Ohel from Philadelphia, my wife who was at home following through the process from far away, was also asking the Rebbe for clear guidance. Should we remove the eye or not...? At the exact same time she was thinking about it, she received a message on her phone from a person named Asher.

Over 30 years ago, when Asher was a four year old boy, between Lag B'Omer and Shavuot, he had been injured in his eye which was severely damaged. His parents took him to doctors and the Rebbe held the dollar close to his eye and made him follow it. The Rebbe also advised his parents not to remove the eye.



Asher offered to loan us the dollar he had received over 30 years ago so that we should have it during this difficult period.

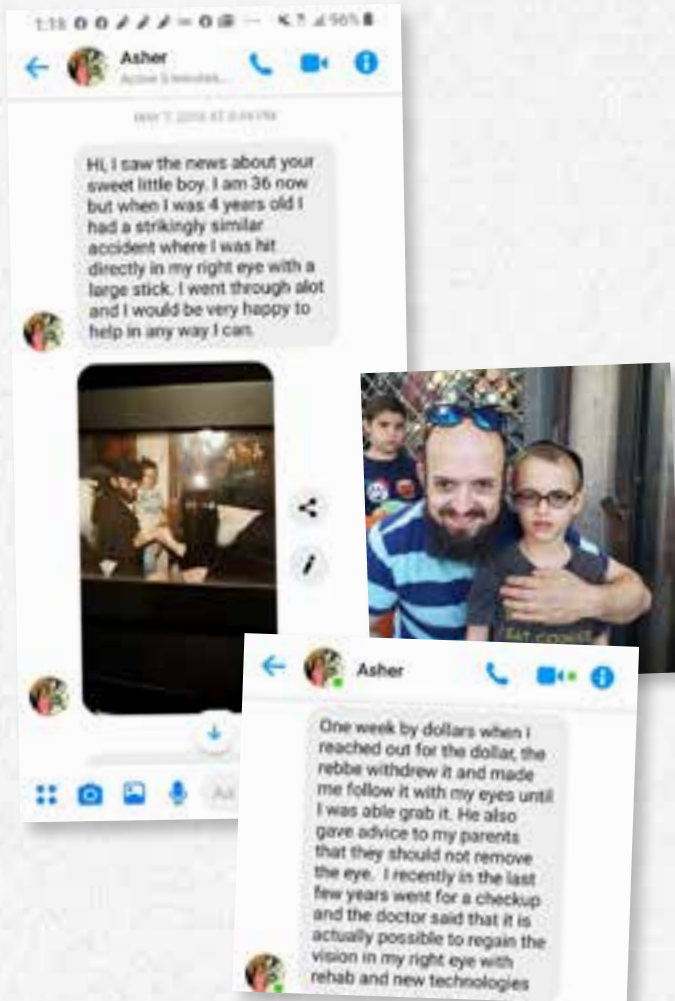
That was all we needed. Here we are, devastated, trying to make a crucial, painful decision for our four-year-old son, and the Rebbe found a way to answer us!

We were stunned and overwhelmed by this timely and pertinent message. Asher was the exact age our Shmuly was and his ordeal had taken place during the same time period. We felt the Rebbe was telling us not to remove the eye and everything will turn out all right. The special dollar provided us with much confidence and relief.

We went to the Ohel to thank the Rebbe for the clear guidance and *brachos* we had experienced and then flew out to Los Angeles. When Dr. Schwartz checked Shmuly he excitedly reported that he was seeing light! After a full week of not seeing light, there was now a change against all the odds.

Now, there was no doubt that we were going to proceed with the surgery, and with Hashem's help and the Rebbe's *brachos* it would be successful.

The surgery was scheduled for Rosh Chodesh Sivan. Before Dr. Schwartz went into the operating room, I asked him if he would put on tefillin in honor of Shmuly



and that he should please hold the Rebbe's dollar in his pocket during the surgery. Dr. Schwartz happily agreed to both requests and after putting on tefillin walked into the operating room to perform the highly complicated surgery to save Shmuly's eye.

A week later at the follow-up visit, the doctor was amazed by the miraculous progress Shmuly's eye was making. Over the next year we continued visiting doctors for various checkups and went to Los Angeles several times as well.

Before Pesach 5779*, Dr. Schwartz performed one final surgery on the eye and told me that the recovery of this eye from such a wound was a great enough miracle to make him *frum*. **T**

YOUR STORY

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



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



19 KISLEV 5719, JEM 103331

Before every farbrengen, there would be a notice published in the Jewish newspapers announcing where it will be held.

The Rebbe was driven to the farbrengen in a private car or taxi, and the Chassidim would come with buses from 770.

At the entrance there was a table with the latest *sefarim* printed by Kehos, for the large crowds of people from different communities that came to attend the farbrengen to be able to purchase. As the Rebbe entered the building, Rabbi Eliyahu Simpson would make an announcement in the main hall. Below the Rebbe can be seen arriving at the farbrengen of Yud-Tes Kislev 5719.

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



PURIM 5719, JUNK FAMILY

The Biltmore Hall was the furthest from 770, located on Church Avenue near Flatbush and Bedford Avenues, and was used for five farbrengens. When announcing the location of the farbrengens held in this hall in newspapers, care was taken not to write the street name, rather reference was made to a nearby high school building that was around the corner. Below are photos from the farbrengen of Purim 5719* that was held there.



PURIM 5719, PINNY LEW

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

The last farbrengen held in a hall was on Purim 5720* in the Albany Manor, located on the corner of Albany Avenue near Rutland Road. This hall was used for five farbrengens. Below are photos from the farbrengen of Yud-Tes Kislev 5719* which was held there.



19 KISLEV 5719, JEM 103347

The Rebbe would sit on an elevated platform on the hall's stage, while tables and benches were brought from 770's *shalash* and set up on the sides of the room for *bochurim* and *anash* to stand on.



CIRCA 5714, PINNY LEW



CIRCA 5714

PURIM 5717

Many special farbrengens throughout the years took place in these halls, including the famous farbrengen of Purim 5718*. Chassidim recall that it was sometimes difficult to book the same hall twice in a row, because the management wasn't accustomed to this type of singing and dancing in the spirit of a Chassidisher farbrengen.



19 KISLEV 5714, JEM 2807



PURIM 5717, JEM 103065

These farbrengens would go on well into the early hours of the morning, sometimes past the time the hall had been rented.



PURIM 5720, JEM 103424



PURIM 5720, JEM 103423



Following a farbrengen, the Rebbe exits through the hall's lobby.



JEM103199

The Rebbe heads home from the Gayheart Hall.

Derher**Letters**

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

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



In the US Senate

Dear Editor,

Thank you for your informative and inspirational publication! Recently you featured the Rebbe's *shita* and view on "family planning," thoroughly researched and presented ["How to Plan a Family," Issue 88 (165), Kislev 5780]. Thank you for the *zechus* of the *hakdasha le'iluy nishmas* my mother *a"h z"l*, who promoted these *horaos* together with *taharas hamishpacha*.

Please allow me to share that at the time that these *sichos* were published, my father שיחי was instructed by the Rebbe to request that Senator Rudy Boschwitz promote the idea of "*lasheves yetzara*," (to populate the world with more people) etc. in the US Senate, thereby including it in the Congressional Record. The senator fulfilled the *hora'ah*, and the *sicha*, as it appeared in essay form in English, was published in the Congregational Record.

Menachem Mendel Feller
S. Paul, Minnesota



A Gift from Hashem

Dear Editors,

In connection with your recent article with the Rebbe's *sichos* in regards to having many children ["How to Plan a Family," Issue 88 (165), Kislev 5780], there's a *yechidus* that Mrs. Chana Gurary of Montreal had with the Rebbe with very

practical advice. It has been publicized several times over the years.

The Rebbe said:

"Your occupation—עסק—is children. You have to see to make things easier for yourself... you should hire cleaning help, then you will have *menucha* to fulfill what you were created for. So, if you currently have hired help once a week, now you should have it twice a week, and if you have it twice a week, now you should take it three times. And you shouldn't check up in the corners after her to see if she cleaned well enough."

At a previous *yechidus* the Rebbe told her husband not to worry about money for cleaning help (at that point he had suggested twice a week instead of once). Hashem provides for all necessities—הכרחיות—and this help is necessary.

I also recently came across an interesting *ma'ane* on this topic which was not included in the article.

A woman had written to the Rebbe that someone she knew was avoiding becoming pregnant until she found the right place to live. The Rebbe responded (Igros Kodesh vol 31, p. 144):

תמוה כתבה אשר יש צדק בדברי אשה נשואה מכמה שנים
- שנמנעת מהריון כי מצבה הכספי אינו משיבוע רצונה
וחיכתה עד שישודר וכו' - שהרי ילדים הם ברכת השם יקרה
וגדולה,

ואפילו במתנה שמצפים לקבל מבשר ודם להבדיל "אין מקום" לומר לו: עתה איני רוצה במתנה שלך וכשיעלה ברצוני לשנות את דעתי - אודיעך.

“It is surprising that you write that a woman who is already married for a few years, is refraining from becoming pregnant because her financial state does not satisfy her and she is waiting for it to be worked out, etc. because children are Hashem’s special and great blessing. Even if the one from whom you were expecting a gift was merely a human being, *lehavdil*, there is no place to say: ‘Now I don’t want your gift, but when I wish to change my mind, I will let you know.’”

Shimon Roth
Brooklyn, NY

”

Kollelim in Chabad

Dear Editors,

In connection with your article about *kollelim* in Chabad [“*Kolel, the Rebbe’s Initiative*,” Issue 87 (164), Kislev 5780], I heard from Rabbi Avraham Shemtov that he once asked the Rebbe about opening a *kollel* in Philadelphia. The Rebbe answered, “*Dos iz nisht unzere inyan. Ay s’faran duh? Dos is an andere zach*—This is not our *inyan* [i.e. our job or mission]. The fact that there is one here [in Crown Heights] that is a different story.”

Thanks for all you do!

Mendel Leverton
Tomchei Tmimim, Morristown NJ

”

Nissim Davis

Dear Editors,

I read the article about the Mitzvah Tanks and how they started [“*Are you a Tankist*,” Issue 88

(165), Kislev 5780]. I would like to add one small correction:

You write how on 26 Sivan 5734*, on his way out of 770, the Rebbe looked intently at the trucks parked outside that were decorated with banners depicting tefillin and a mezuzah. Minutes later, Rabbi Krinsky gave over an instruction from the Rebbe that a certain painting from the library (see photo) should be copied onto large banners and attached to the *mitvzoim* trucks.



This painting is by an artist called Nissim Davis (not Reb Boruch Nachshon as you wrote). Nissim studied in Achei Tmimim in Connecticut when he was a *bochur*. He was also the designer of Lubavitch’s exhibit at the World’s Fair in 5724*.

Thank you for the wonderful magazines each month!

Yosef S.
Chicago, IL

Correction:

It was brought to our attention that one of the photographs featured in this year’s Shevat magazine (p. 66), was erroneously captioned. In the photo, Reb Chaim Boruch Halbershtam is seen directing a hookup of the tefillos from the Rebbe’s house. The caption read that the makeshift control center was in the kitchen, while the picture was actually taken in the living room of the house.

Please accept our apologies.



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גולדהירש

A Chassidisher Derher
Vaad Talmidei Hatmimim



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