

Derher

A Chassidisher

א חסידישער דערהער

י"ט כסלו

THE ARREST
AND LIBERATION
OF THE ALTER REBBE

**Post Holocaust
Reflections**

IGROS KODESH

**Speaking
Flames**

CHANUKAH 5752
WITH THE REBBE

THE REBBE'S
GUIDANCE ON
**How to Plan
a Family**



KISLEV 5780
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**“Are You
a Tankist?”**

HOW THE MITZVAH TANKS
TOOK THE FRONT LINES



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

בקשר עם כינוס השלוחים העולמי, ויום הבהיר ר"ח כסלו

ולזכות מרת חוה בת אסתר לאה תחי' העכט לרפואה שלימה וקרובה

Derher **Editorial**

The concept of a "tank" usually implies something that was created solely for war and destruction. But how is this possible? How can there be something in Hashem's world that is only about destruction? There must be a way to transform this device into a power for good.

Indeed, nations of the world have learned to use military tanks for positive purposes too: Paving roads, clearing away areas that are needed for building, and so on.

But as Yidden we are obligated to take this one step further; we need to find a way to use the concept of "tanks" in our *avodas Hashem*. A tank that is all about "mitzvos."

In previous generations, when the destructive tank did not exist, it wasn't yet time for a tank of holiness either. But now, as we approach the times of Moshiach, the creation of a tank on the "other side" is a clear indication that the time is now right to use a tank for spreading Torah and mitzvos as well.

This is what the "mitzvah tank" is all about...

(Adapted from *Yud-Gimmel Nissan 5747*)

At the center of this month is **Yud-Tes Kislev**, Rosh Hashanah L'Chassidus.

The imprisonment and release of the Alter Rebbe marked a major milestone in the spreading of Chassidus. On Yud-Tes Kislev the initial *kitrug* against spreading Chassidus was removed, and it was time to spread the *maayanos* all the way to *chutza*, to the farthest reaches.

This has been the charge of Chabad Chassidus throughout all ensuing generations, especially today in *dor hashvi'i*. It is our task to complete the mission and finally bring Moshiach by transforming the very being of this world to *kedusha* and revealing *Elokus* in every corner. This is exactly the charge of the **Mitzvah Tanks**, the story of which is covered extensively in this issue.

Indeed, this is what Chassidus, especially the Rebbe's Torah, teaches and trains us to understand: That the entire world is only a manifestation of Hashem's presence, and it is up to us to reveal this fact. Our Rabbeim teach us to see reality as it truly is, without getting caught up in a worldly, *gashmiyus* perspective. One of the many fronts where the Rebbe really brings this concept to light and wants us to see the reality for what it truly is, is by recognizing the immense *zechus* of bringing more *neshamos* into this world and further preparing the world for the coming of Moshiach. All the trouble that parents may endure in the process pales compared to the great *brachos* of Hashem and the beautiful *zechus* of bringing a "חלק אלוהי ממעל ממש" into this world and into our families.

Chazal teach us that when all the *neshamos* in Heaven are finally brought down to this world, Moshiach is bound to come.

May it be *teikef umiyad Mammosh*.

The Editors

כ"ף מרחשון ה'תש"פ
שנת השבעים לנשיאות כ"ק אדמו"ר

THE DEER TRAPPING RABBI

The great Reish Lakish used to travel around Eretz Yisroel and mark the graves of the tana'im.

One time, on one of his grave marking expeditions, he was looking for the grave of Rabbi Chiya. Yet try as he might, he couldn't find it. Assuming he was unworthy of finding Rabbi Chiya's grave, he cried out, "Did I not learn Torah like him?!"

At that moment he heard a bas kol saying, "You learned like him, but you didn't spread Torah like him."

What was unique about Rabbi Chiya's method of spreading Torah?

There was once a scholarly disagreement between Rabbi Chiya and Rabbi Chananya. In the heat of the argument Rabbi Chananya said: "Do you know who you're arguing with? If the whole Torah was forgotten I can rewrite it with my intellectual prowess!"

Rabbi Chiya responded, "It is because of me that the Torah was not forgotten to begin with."

How so? Seeing that Torah study was waning, he went ahead and planted flax. After tending to and harvesting the flax, he spun it into thread and sewed nets.

With the nets he caught deer, which he shechted and used the skin to write sifrei Torah.

He would travel from village to village, and in each one would gather five children. To each child he taught one of the chamisha chumshei Torah, and instructed them that every one should teach their friends the sefer that they learned. Then he did the same with six children and the shisha sidrei Mishnah.

In this manner he ensured that the Torah would not be forgotten.

With this story in mind, we can approach the Zohar that Harav Levi Yitzchok explains on parshas Vayeshev.

ACTIVE TEACHING

The Zohar tells the story of Rabbi Chiya and his many students. As they would approach him, he would say, "This one learns *Torah lishma* and this one doesn't."

For each set of students he had a unique *tefilah*. For the ones that learned *lishma* he would daven that they should continue on this path forever. For the ones who didn't he would daven that they find the correct path.

Once there was a student who looked a bit green. Upon seeing him Rabbi Chiya said, "I can tell that he is having sinful thoughts right now."

He secluded himself with this student, and with the power of his Torah brought him back. From that day on Rabbi Chiya managed to influence him that he should no longer have sinful thoughts, and instead always learn *Torah lishma*.

In other words, he had three types of students: Some learned *lishma*, and some didn't learn *lishma*, but they also didn't learn specifically *shelo lishma*, they just learned Torah because that's what everyone else was doing. Then there was the one who learned *specifically shelo lishma*, for sinful purposes.

HOW TO TEACH

Rabbi Chiya is the "poster child" for how to teach Torah. As seen from the story of Reish Lakish, who was



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



told that “you didn’t spread Torah like him.”

To the extent that when Rebbi—the compiler of the Mishnah, the one who revolutionized Torah study by being the first to write down *Torah Shebichsav*—was extolling the virtues of Rebbi Chiya’s outreach efforts, he ended off with, “כמה גדולים מעשי חייא—how great are the deeds of Chiya.”

A student present there asked, “Even more than you?” To which Rebbi replied, “Yes!”

Thus, by looking into the life of Rebbi Chiya, we can learn many valuable lessons in how to approach education.

EVERYONE

Rebbi Chiya, being the world renowned scholar and compiler of *Braisos* that he was, could have easily been very selective with his students. Had he only selected the best and the brightest, he still would have had a full audience, and surely a much more enjoyable teaching experience.

Yet, although he was so spiritually refined that he could read his students’ innermost thoughts just by looking at them, he happily taught all sorts of students.

He didn’t try to force them into one mold either. He patiently dealt with each style student on his own level.

And when faced with a student who was seemingly so far gone, that in the very presence of Rebbi Chiya

he had only sin on his mind, he didn’t shout “*sheiget arois!*” Instead he welcomed him in, and gave him **even more** attention than his star pupils. He secluded himself with him, or in the words of the Zohar “אחיד ליה—he became one with him,” and with his great love brought him back into the fold.

DO IT YOURSELF

This brings us to Rebbi Chiya’s flax fields and deer catching.

One might have thought that a great rabbi like Rebbi Chiya had many people he could have delegated the flax planting to.

When it comes to the actual teaching, it can be argued that this is something only Rebbi Chiya could have done. But planting crops and making parchment? Anyone could do that.

Here again we see Rebbi Chiya’s commitment to spreading Torah. To make a statement and show everyone the importance of his mission, he went **himself** and cultivated the flax, sewed the nets, caught the deer, etc.

DOMINO TEACHING

Only once he had painstakingly created the *sifrei Torah* from scratch, did Rebbi Chiya set about teaching.

Here too we see how to properly teach. He took children who had until then been illiterate, and taught them

in such a way that they immediately became teachers themselves.

He didn’t just teach them to read, leaving a pile of books for them to educate themselves. His teaching was so powerful, that the students were right away able to teach others what they had learned.

WITH PLEASURE

“*Marbitz Torah*”—spreader of Torah—is what the Gemara calls Rebbi Chiya.

But *marbitz* has another meaning. As Rashi explains, it could also mean “garden.”

To Rebbi Chiya, teaching Torah was like strolling in a garden, an inherently pleasurable activity.

Even when faced with students who weren’t learning *lishma*, or worse—sinful students whose negative qualities were reflected on their face—he didn’t lose his temper.

He taught them not with anger and shouting, but rather with kindness and patience, with pleasure and compassion. Until he established a connection with each one on their level, “אחיד ליה”, as the Zohar says, even with the worst ones. That was how he managed to bring them back and they all learned *lishma*.

May we all be like Rebbi Chiya. **T**

Based on the *sicha* of
Shabbos Parshas Vayeshev 5743

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



לעבן מיטן רבי'ן



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

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

Speaking Flames

CHANUKAH 5752



Presented here is an account of Chanukah 5752* in the Rebbe's presence. The following is based on the Beis Chayenu newsletter of that week. A special highlight is, of course, the Chanukah Live program of which we'll bring some short excerpts. To properly experience this momentous and unique event, we encourage our readers to watch the full video.

SUNDAY, 24 KISLEV

Today, Shacharis was upstairs due to the preparations taking place in the big shul. After Shacharis, the *gabbai* announced that the Rebbe

is going to arrive to Mincha today at 2:50 for Chanukah Live.

Among other preparations, the Rebbe's platform was doubled in size for the event taking place tonight, and numerous screens were set up throughout the big shul in 770, in order for people inside to be able to follow the program. For the crowd standing outside (770 was reserved for children) a giant screen was set up on a special truck, so that they too could take part in this unique satellite hook-up.

Finally, the moment that everyone had been waiting for arrived. At 2:50 p.m., amidst the music and singing of "*Al nisecha*" the Rebbe walked in

to shul, encouraging the rejoicing while walking to his place. After the Rebbe ascended the stairs to the *bimah*, he turned around and continued encouraging the singing even further.

After Mincha ended, the Rebbe took his *siddur* and went to stand by the *shtender* that was set up facing the crowd. The Rebbe studied the room, looking around at the children seated, the women's section on top, and even at the camera men.

As part of the schedule, the Twelve Pesukim were recited with different children leading the recitation from around the world via satellite.

For the *possuk* of "Shema Yisroel," the screens shifted to Yerushalayim, where Rabbi Naftoli Roth called up a young boy who had recently emigrated from Chernobyl. The Rebbe concentrated intently on the video screen, which was arranged right in front of his *bimah*. In a moving display of gratitude, the boy, in a mixture of Hebrew and Russian, thanked the Rebbe for all the efforts made in order to save him and hundreds of other girls and boys from the terrible conditions in their region and bringing them to Eretz Yisroel. When the boy started to recite the *possuk*, the Rebbe answered along with everyone, word after word.

At the conclusion of the Twelve Pesukim, the assembled in 770 burst into a vibrant "We Want Moshiach Now" while the Rebbe turned in all directions to encourage the singing with both hands. The Rebbe even moved away from the *shtender* a bit to encourage the children who were situated right near the *bimah*. When the singing quieted down, the emcee, Rabbi Shimon Hecht, thanked all the children who recited the *pesukim* so beautifully, giving them a round of applause. The Rebbe joined in, clapping strongly for quite a while!

As part of the program, menorah lightings were shown on the screens from all over the world.

In Eretz Yisroel, the Sephardi chief rabbi, Rav Mordechai Eliyahu, was honored with lighting a menorah right next to the Kosel, after which a *chazzan*—along with the Tzivos Hashem choir—led the packed plaza in the singing of "*Sheyibaneh Beis Hamikdash*." With much intensity, the Rebbe encouraged the singing, swinging his hand in all directions, turning around to the Chassidim standing behind and even towards one of the camera men! These were truly special moments.

Afterwards, Rav Eliyahu was invited to deliver a few words and the Rebbe listened attentively as he spoke.



In France, an immense crowd of 20,000 people were gathered at the Eiffel Tower for the program. As the cameras turned to Paris, the chief rabbi had just finished addressing the crowd and Rabbi Shmuel Azimov took the microphone. The Rebbe had just dedicated a full *sicha* to France at the farbrengen last Shabbos, thereby creating an added interest as to what was happening there. After saying *l'chaim*, Rabbi Azimov started to sing the *niggun* "*Hoaderes v'haemuna*" to the tune of the French national anthem. The crowd at 770 joined in as well, when all of a sudden, the Rebbe started encouraging the singing, first banging on the *shtender* and then lifting his hands in the air, exhibiting tremendous *simcha*.

After the menorah was lit in 770, Eli Lipsker's orchestra started to play "*Haneiros Halalu*." As soon as he reached the first words of the song (which are usually sung slowly), the Rebbe began encouraging in a fast manner with brisk motions, looking in all directions.



The Rebbe said two *sichos*, with Rabbi Sholom Ber Hecht translating them into English, in between.

The *sichos* the Rebbe spoke tonight were truly wondrous. The Rebbe went into great detail about how one can use the satellite (a word the Rebbe repeated a number of times throughout the *sicha*) to spread Yiddishkeit. The Rebbe then went on to individually name each country that took part in this global hook-up.

In general, tonight one was able to see openly that the Rebbe had great satisfaction from the whole program. Despite all the technical complications that can crop up when directing such a production, the program was truly an astounding success.

After the Rebbe started to sing “*Nyet Nyet Nikavo*,” he turned and walked to his *shtender* for Maariv. The Rebbe washed his hands with a *kvort* and bowl that was prepared beforehand.

As the Rebbe was drying his hands, while still holding the towel in one hand, the Rebbe turned towards the Chassidim and with the other hand

encouraged the singing very strongly, again and again; quite a sight to behold.

Following Maariv, the Rebbe distributed a dollar and a dime as *Chanukah gelt* to the assembled.

MONDAY, 25 KISLEV, DAY 1 OF CHANUKAH

Today in the morning, a group from Tzfas and other places In Eretz Yisroel arrived in 770. The visit was arranged by Rabbi Aharon Leizer Ceitlin, shliach of the Rebbe in Tzfas.

Upon entering the shul for Shacharis, the Rebbe, as usual, encouraged the singing of “*Al Nisecha*” all the way up to his place. Once there, the Rebbe turned around and continued to encourage the Chassidim. A loud “*Shehecheyanu*” was made by the guests who had just seen the Rebbe for the first time.

TUESDAY, 26 KISLEV, DAY 2

Today, a Chanukah gathering for the members of “Kollel Tiferes Zekeinim Levi Yitzchak” took place in 770. Hundreds of elderly Yidden streamed into



THE REBBE'S HAGAOS ON THE SICHA SAID DURING THE CHANUKAH LIVE PROGRAM, 5752*.

the shul downstairs, seating themselves upon the benches that filled the shul.

At the set time, the Rebbe joined the *zekeinim* for Mincha, after which the menorah was lit. The Rebbe spoke a special *sicha* for this occasion.

When speaking about Moshiach, the Rebbe declared that “He is already on his way... and all of the sudden the door will open and Moshiach will enter!” The Rebbe also spoke about Eretz Yisroel, *bentching* the Yidden living there that they should have peace without any war, and that in general no unpleasant incidents should occur.

Regarding the recent developments in Eretz Yisroel (after a drought it had just started to rain again), the Rebbe bestowed his *brachos* upon the land saying that the rain should continue, eventually being able to grow all of the *shivas hamininim*.

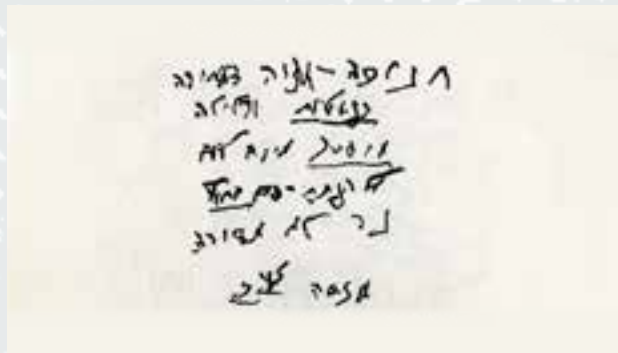
WEDNESDAY, 27 KISLEV, DAY 3

Today at about 3:50 p.m. the Rebbe came out to “*Gan Eden Hatachton*” where Rabbi Leibel Zajac and Rabbi Zalman Chanin presented him with 26 Tanyas that they had printed throughout Russia.

The Rebbe spoke with them for a few minutes. “The Rambam rules that on Chanukah one must be joyous,” the Rebbe said. “This is the greatest Chanukah gelt that one can receive.”

After this encounter, the Rebbe left to the Ohel holding in his hand one of the small blue Tanyas that he had just received. (Rumor has it that this Tanya was printed in the Beis Chabad in the city

...After a drought it had just started to rain again; the Rebbe bestowed his *brachos* upon the land.



NOTES IN THE REBBE'S HOLY HANDWRITING OF THE IDEAS TO BE SPOKEN AT THE CHANUKAH LIVE PROGRAM.

of Lubavitch, which is personally owned by the Rebbe.)

During the lighting of the menorah this evening, the Rebbe positioned himself to the side of the *shtender*. Throughout the singing of “*Haneiros Halalu*” the Rebbe shifted his gaze between his *siddur* and the Chassidim. The last part of the *niggun* with the words “*al nisecha*” was sung again and again, the Rebbe counting on his fingers. When it reached the seventh time, the Rebbe turned around to face the wall. When the singing quieted down, the Rebbe immediately began to encourage with his hand to continue singing, until the end of the eighth round.

It is a special sight to see the Rebbe's face during the lighting of the menorah and the singing of “*Haneiros Halalu*.” The Rebbe stares at the flickering flames with deep concentration, almost as though he is listening to “what the candles are telling...”

FRIDAY, 29 KISLEV, DAY 5

When the Rebbe came upstairs after Shacharis this morning, Rabbi Lazerson, deputy director of the Center for Independent Education (“*chinuch azma'i*”) in Eretz Yisroel, was standing next to *Gan Eden Hatachton*. Rabbi Groner introduced him to the Rebbe, after which the Rebbe shook his hand and wished him “*A freilichen Chanukah*.” The Rebbe added that he should have “good news in his communal affairs, as well as in his personal ones.” When Rabbi Lazerson asked for a *bracha*, the Rebbe responded, “Your name [Leizerson] has a connection with Eliezer, this is the simple meaning...”

Today was the *levaya* of the sister of Harav Boruch Shimon Schneerson, a distant relative of the Rebbe. The Rebbe went out on to the street to follow the car with the *aron*, and watched as all the cars

passed. The Rebbe also gazed at the family of the *nifters* as they passed by.

SHABBOS CHANUKAH, PARSHAS MIKEITZ, DAY 6

As the Rebbe was leaving the shul after Shacharis today, a little child stuck out his hand. At first the Rebbe waved to him, but then the Rebbe stuck out his hand in return to shake the little child's hand.

The time remaining till the Rebbe's farbrengen is used to quickly make *kiddush* and grab a seat for the farbrengen. Though the area reserved for guests is usually on the west side of shul, today, due to the relatively large groups that came for Shabbos, the guests took up quite a large portion of the room.

In the first *sicha*, the Rebbe drew a connection between Chanukah and Yud-Tes Kislev, and then went on to explain why the learning of Chassidus is so vital, being revealed to us mainly in recent generations.

Further in the *sicha* the Rebbe touched upon a peculiar thing: We find that Yaakov Avinu says about himself that his years were "short and unsatisfactory." How is this possible?

The Rebbe explained that according to Yaakov's expectations of himself, his years were not as rich as his forefather's years were. The lesson being that every day of our lives must be used out to the fullest.

After the first *sicha*, the Chassidim sang "*Al nisecha*," repeating it many times with the

strong and rapid encouragement of the Rebbe's hands.

Following the second *sicha*, in which the Rebbe touched upon the special *kvius* of this year, the niggun "*Shuva*" was sung with much *chayus* and with the Rebbe's encouragement. When it came to the last stanza of the *niggun*, the Rebbe signaled to repeat it over and over.

In the third *sicha* the Rebbe arrived at the general lesson to be learned from today's farbrengen: To add in every which way possible in the *peulos* of spreading the message of Chanukah. Through this we will merit to celebrate the dedication ("*chanukah*") of the third *Beis Hamikdash*, *teikef umiyad mammash!*

Since the Rebbe had mentioned the *possuk* "*Ach tzaddikim*" during the *sicha*, the Chassidim started singing the niggun "*Ki Elokim Yoshia Tzion*." In the middle of the singing, the Rebbe suddenly started waving both of his hands, encouraging the Chassidim faster and faster...



THE CHANUKAH GELT THE REBBE DISTRIBUTED ON SUNDAY, ROSH CHODESH TEVES 5752*, THE SEVENTH DAY OF CHANUKAH.



“Your name [Leizeron] has a connection with Eliezer, this is the simple meaning...”

One can imagine the tremendous excitement in the air as the Chassidim joyfully responded to the Rebbe’s show of *simcha*.

During the fourth *sicha*, the Rebbe spoke about increasing in all the above mentioned *inyanim*, and—particularly relevant to us in our time—to “make a special effort to transform the day of Asara B’Tevet into a great Yom Tov.”

All those who had given in bottles of *mashke* before Shabbos came up to the Rebbe’s *farbrengen bimah*, where one of the *mazkirim* had lined up 29 bottles of *mashke*. The Rebbe poured out from his *becher* into each bottle as usual, and then distributed the bottles to the people who were organizing *farbrengens* in the upcoming days.

After concluding the distribution, the Rebbe started to sing his father’s *hakafos niggun* and encouraged the *olam* with strong motions. The guests, to whom the Rebbe showed much attention throughout the *farbrengen*, and who had said *lchaim* to the Rebbe many times, were by now practically dancing in their seats!

Maariv tonight took place at 5:20 in the big shul downstairs¹, due to the lighting of the menorah.

There was an extra large crowd, as no one wanted to pass up a chance to be in the presence of the Rebbe while the menorah is lit.

Like every year, many “tanks” as well as cars with menorahs on top drove through Manhattan on a giant “*mivtza pirsumei nissa*.”

SUNDAY, 1 TEVES, DAY 7

Today the Rebbe gave out special bags with coins for Chanukah gelt instead of the usual Sunday dollars. The plan was that the Rebbe would take a break for Mincha and then come back up to continue the *chalukah*.

At 3:00, 10 minutes before Mincha, Chassidim were treated to an announcement of a pleasant surprise: The Rebbe would be saying a *sicha* after Mincha!

After the last *kaddish* of Mincha, the Rebbe spoke for approximately 25 minutes. Afterwards, the Rebbe notified Rabbi Leibel Groner that the distribution of Chanukah gelt—which had begun upstairs—will continue downstairs.

The Rebbe descended from the *bimah*, and upon reaching the *shtender* where he would distribute the coins, the Rebbe suddenly started to speak another

The gabbai announced that the Chanukah gelt is only for those who haven't received yet. The Rebbe interjected, saying, "For whoever wants..."

sicha, explaining why the distribution is taking place specifically here in shul.

After the Rebbe concluded speaking, the *gabbai* announced that the *Chanukah gelt* is only for those who haven't received yet. The Rebbe interjected, saying, "For whoever wants..."

Despite the pushing that went on at first, the Rebbe was in an especially exalted mood, displaying a joyous and shining countenance.

Toward the end of the *chalukah*, Rabbi Aharon Leizer Ceitlin presented before the Rebbe a group of women who had come from Eretz Yisroel to receive a *bracha* for having children. When he asked for a *bracha* on their behalf, the Rebbe responded, "Amen, [it should happen] soon." The Rebbe gave *Chanukah gelt* to each of the ladies, saying "Hatzlacha rabba" as they passed by. To many

of them, the Rebbe added the word "*b'karov*" [It should happen soon].

MONDAY, 2 TEVES, DAY 8

Upon his return from the Ohel this evening, the Rebbe came downstairs for Mincha and Maariv.

The good news had already spread that after Maariv the Rebbe would once again be handing out *Chanukah gelt*!

During the last *kadeishim* of Mincha, the Rebbe turned around to face the *olam*, staring at the menorah for a long time, perhaps as a way of parting with it... until the *chazzan* started "*Vehu rachum*" for Maariv.

After Maariv ended, the Rebbe gave one last look at the menorah before going down to distribute the *Chanukah gelt*. During this distribution, the Rebbe smiled to many of the people as they passed by, especially to the children.

This concluded a memorable Chanukah in the Rebbe's presence.

1. Usually Maariv on Motzei Shabbos took place in the small *zal* upstairs.





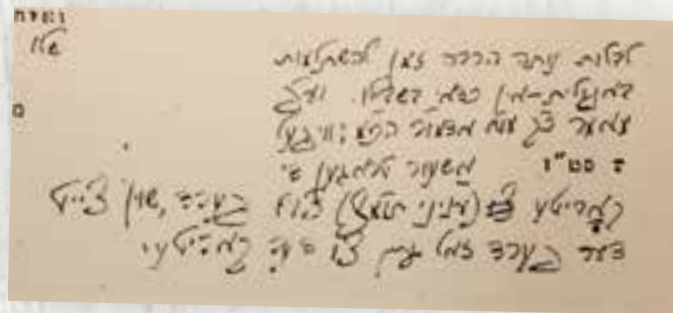
כתב יד קודש

לזכות
הרה"ת ר' נחום צבי
וזוגתו מרת דבורה לאה
ומשפחתם שיחיו
מאנגעל
לחיזוק התקשרותם
לכ"ק אדמו"ר



Force-Feeding the Horse

Postscript of a letter to Reb Yitzchok Dubov in which he asked the Rebbe about how to best approach his efforts in *hafatzas hamaayanos*:



To spend a lot of time now for advanced study of English—is not worthwhile for you. [This,] in accordance with the words of the Rebbe, my father-in-law: How long can we drag the trough (i.e. Torah and mitzvos) to the horse? It is time for the horse to go to the trough!¹

(Igros Kodesh vol. 3, p. 337)

לבלות עתה הרבה זמן להשתלמות באנגלית - אין כדאי בשבילו. וע"פ מאמר כ"ק מו"ח אדמו"ר הכ"מ: וויפעל א שיעור טראגען די קאריטע (עניני תומ"צ) צום פערד, שוין צייט דער פערד זאל גיין צו דער קאריטע.

1. I.e. although we do try as best we can to make Torah and mitzvos accessible for every Jew, at some point there needs to be effort made on the part of the student to learn and understand. As such, when the shliach speaks English with an accent he should not feel the need to spend time fixing it.

The Life of a Chossid

Reb Mordechai Horodoker

Chossid of: The Alter Rebbe, the
Mitteler Rebbe, the Tezmach Tzedek

Reb Mordechai Horodoker was born during the time of the Baal Shem Tov after his parents—who were married for a long time before having a child—were given a *bracha* by a *tzaddik nistar* named Reb Mordechai. The *tzaddik* instructed that their son be named after him—Mordechai—although he would still be alive when the child was born.

Much of Reb Mordechai's life story was written by the Frierdiker Rebbe in the *lange brief*, a lengthy letter to Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, dated 16 Shevat 5695*,¹ and published in English with the title *The Making of Chassidim*, excerpts of which appear here.

Reb Mordechai was a Chossid of the Alter Rebbe. Soon after his marriage, as a young man of 18 or 19 years old, he traveled from Horodok to the Alter Rebbe in Liozna; this was during the last years before the Alter Rebbe's move from Liozna to Liadi.

Reb Mordechai began studying Chassidus while still quite young, before his marriage. He had a good Chassidic education, and would always associate with Chassidim; however, he came from mixed Chassidic origins. His father, Reb Simcha Zissel, had lived in Kalisk, and had for many years been a follower of the famous *tzaddik* Rabbi Avrohom of Kalisk.²

Reb Mordechai originally came from Horodok, and had been sent to Chashniki, Belarus, by the Mitteler Rebbe, who instructed the Chassidim in Chashniki to appoint him as their dean. There, he became known as Reb Mordechai

Mashpia. One of his more famous students was Reb Shmuel Dov Borisover, known as Rashdam,³ who later related Reb Mordechai's life story.

Rashdam used to say that it was thanks to the Chossid Reb Mordechai Horodoker⁴ that he too became a Chossid. At 13, he was brought to Minsk to study. After four years in Minsk, on his way home, he followed his parents' instructions to stop over in Chashniki to visit his uncle.

"When I arrived in Chashniki," Reb Shmuel Dov related, "I discovered a large group of young men, as well as some elderly men, studying Chassidus with understanding and diligence. After I had come to the large *beis midrash* a few times to study Gemara in the Minsker style, some people approached me to discuss what I was studying. In those days my haughtiness was still quite evident whenever I discussed my Torah studies, and I was eager to demonstrate my prowess with *pilpulim*.

"But the young folk soon made me sweat! They called me appropriate names, and within a week's time they stripped off the gross hide that I had grown in the Minsker yeshiva. Some young men began to befriend me and to study Chassidus with me. A new world opened up for me and I began laboring with my greatest abilities; every word was precious to me. Eventually I was admitted to the circle of Reb Mordechai Mashpia."⁵

Reb Mottel of Chernobyl once visited Chashniki, and Reb Mordechai went out to greet him, explaining that he

לזכות
 ר' יצחק בנימין
 וזוגתו מרת חי' רחל שיחיו
 קאמען
 לאות הוקרה על ההכנסת אורחים
 וביתם הפתוח לרווחה
 נדפס ע"י
 הרה"ת ר' צבי הירש
 וזוגתו מרת חנה רחל שיחיו
 נאוואק
 Chabad on Campus - Rohr Center
 for Jewish Life
 at Washington University in S. Louis



was doing so because the Alter Rebbe had referred to Reb Mottel as “*an eideler yungerman*—a refined young man.”

Reb Mottel performed a miracle, to which Reb Mordechai responded, “It’s not a miracle if you do it to someone else; a miracle must be done on oneself, and this—he cannot do.”

A debate followed between the two of them: Reb Mottel held that certain *neshamos* do not need to be improved, while Reb Mordechai held otherwise, for even the greatness of the *Avos* and of Moshe Rabbeinu was achieved through *avoda*.⁶

While Rashdam was in Chashniki, a great desire arose among the young scholars to travel to Lubavitch. But Reb Mordechai Mashpia dissuaded them, saying that because the Mitteler Rebbe had recently been denounced to the government and had been in prison, it was not a good time to travel to Lubavitch. A few weeks later, the news spread that the Mitteler Rebbe would be travelling to the Alter Rebbe’s *tziyun* in Haditch. The group from Chashniki secretly traveled to Zhlobin, along the Mitteler Rebbe’s route. To their disappointment, they learned that the Rebbe was only to be in town for one day and would not receive visitors.

“I had the good fortune,” related Rashdam, “to find favor with Reb Meir Tzvi the butler. He permitted me to assist him in bringing water and other simple tasks.” During the night, the Rebbe passed through the room Rashdam

was in. The next morning, the Rebbe sent for him. With trepidation, he entered the Rebbe’s holy chamber. Being completely overcome emotionally, all he could manage to say were the few words, “Rebbe! I want to be a Chossid,” after which he began to weep.

The holy Rebbe replied, “Chabad demands intellectual activity, understanding, and concentration. If you work hard, you will become a Chossid. May *Hashem yisbarach* grant you long life.” Reb Meir Tzvi cautioned him not to reveal to anyone that he had had the great privilege of going in to see the holy Rebbe.

After Rashdam arrived home in Chashniki, during a moment when no one else was present in the *beis midrash*, Reb Mordechai Mashpia said that he detected an aura of spiritual purity about him. Reb Mordechai commanded Rashdam to tell him what had happened to him, and he told him everything.⁷ **T**

1. Igros Kodesh RaYYaTz vol. 3, p. 156.

2. *The Making of Chassidim*, prologue.

3. See ציור פון א חסיד, Derher Adar I 5774.

4. A prominent Chossid of the Mitteler Rebbe.

5. *Links in the Chassidic Legacy*, chapter titled “Rashdam,” translated from *Hatomim* no. 5 pp. 99-103.

6. *Reshimos* issue 179.

7. *Links in the Chassidic Legacy*, *ibid*.

לעילוי נשמת
מרת חנה לאה בת הרה"ת ר' שמעון ע"ה
ברוק
גלב"ע ז' טבת ה'תשע"א
'ת'נצ'ב'ה

נדפס על ידי ולזכות משפחתה שיחיו
משפחות ברוק, באנון, ודייטש.
ניו יארק. פלארידא.
מאנטאנא. מאנטרעאל.



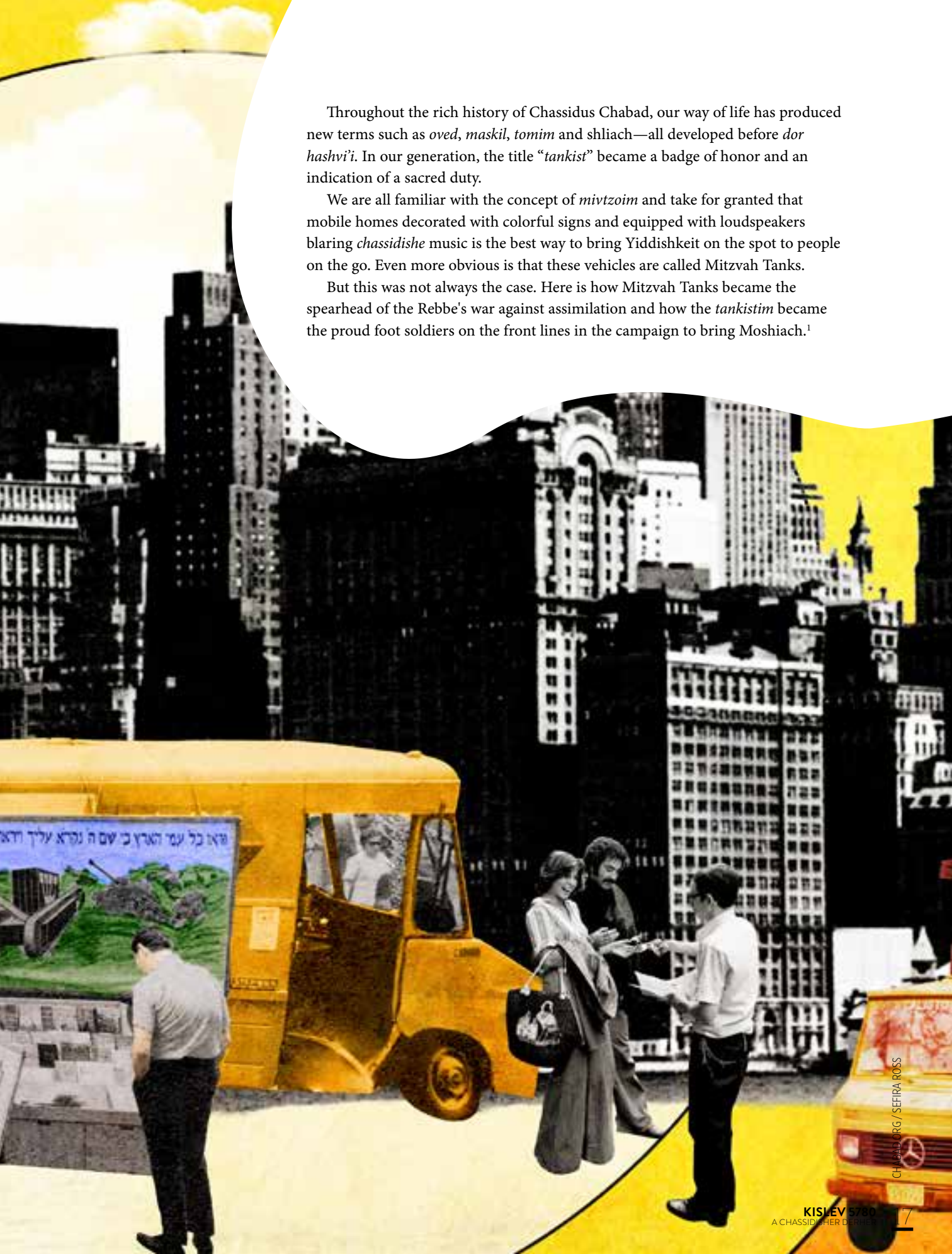
“Are You a Tankist?”



Throughout the rich history of Chassidus Chabad, our way of life has produced new terms such as *oved*, *maskil*, *tomim* and *shliach*—all developed before *dor hashvi'i*. In our generation, the title “*tankist*” became a badge of honor and an indication of a sacred duty.

We are all familiar with the concept of *mivtzoim* and take for granted that mobile homes decorated with colorful signs and equipped with loudspeakers blaring *chassidishe* music is the best way to bring Yiddishkeit on the spot to people on the go. Even more obvious is that these vehicles are called Mitzvah Tanks.

But this was not always the case. Here is how Mitzvah Tanks became the spearhead of the Rebbe's war against assimilation and how the *tankistim* became the proud foot soldiers on the front lines in the campaign to bring Moshiach.¹



Response to Inconceivable Tragedy

It was a tense time for the global Jewish community, months after the Yom Kippur War and days after the terrorist attack in a high school in Ma'alot, Eretz Yisrael, on 23 Iyar 5734* which left 22 teenagers dead *r"l*. The Jewish world was reeling in shock from the tragedy and during the farbrengen of Shabbos Parshas Bamidbar the Rebbe spoke a *sicha* about the need to strengthen the protection of Yidden throughout the world—especially in Eretz Yisroel—through five specific *mitvzoim*.

Tefillin: As the *navi* states, when the nations of the world will see that the name of Hashem is upon the Yidden (the *tefillin shel rosh*) they will fear you.

Torah: Encourage every Yid to learn Torah every day, as the Gemara states that Torah is a protection and salvation.

Mezuzah: Kosher mezuzos on the doorposts of the home serve as a protection for all of the inhabitants of the home wherever they may be.

Tzedakah: Encourage Yidden to give tzedakah every day and to have a tzedakah *pushka* at home. Chazal declare that when you take care of the poor, Hashem takes care of you.

Bayis Malei Sefarim: Having *sifrei kodesh* in the home strengthens the spiritual security of the home.

The next day, Erev Shavuos, the Rebbe unexpectedly went to the Ohel—something that had never happened before. This came as a surprise to everyone including the Rebbe's secretaries, especially since the Rebbe had been to the Ohel three days earlier.

On the way to the Ohel the Rebbe started editing the *sicha* about the five *mitvzoim* so that those going on *tahalucha* on Shavuos should speak in all the shuls about the *mitvzoim*. Upon reaching the Ohel the Rebbe asked Rabbi Krinsky to call the Vaad Lehafatzas Sichos from the public payphone to notify them of his edits.

While in the Ohel the Rebbe finished editing the *sicha* and gave Rabbi Krinsky the final draft with instructions to relay all the changes to the Vaad immediately. Thus, the *sicha* was edited by the Rebbe and then published less than a day after it was said, in time for Yom Tov.²

On the day after Shavuos, Rabbi Shneur Zalman Garelik (the rav of Kfar Chabad), Rabbi Yechiel Meir Yehuda Goldberg, Rabbi Yeshaya Weiss, and Ms. Nechama Rosenberg (Rabbi Garelik's great niece and a *kalla* at the time) were



4 TAMMUZ 5734

killed in a terrible car accident while traveling to Kfar Chabad from a wedding in Yerushalayim. News of the horrible tragedy reached 770 on Motzei Shavuot and everyone was terribly shaken.

During the farbrengen the next Shabbos the Rebbe cried bitterly about the recent tragedies and said there is no logical explanation for them.

“Since these episodes defy comprehension, we must respond by doing mitvzoim in a way that also transcends all logic. Although a Yid naturally wants to learn Torah and daven at great length, nevertheless he goes out into the street to encourage another Yid to place a tzedakah pushka and mezuzah in his home, and this will bring Moshiach quicker.”³

Lubavitch Hits the Streets

For many years, especially since the onset of Mivtza Tefillin before the Six Day War in 5727, it was routine for *bochurim* to venture out on *mitvzoim* when there was no *sefer hayeshiva*. These activities were coordinated and supported by Tzach, which was responsible for all outreach work in the New York area.⁴

After the tremendous *sichos* from the Rebbe during the recent farbrengens about *mitvzoim*, Reb Dovid Raskin—the *menahel* of Tzach as well as a member of the *hanhala* of the yeshiva

in 770—suggested that this was not enough. A rotation of groups of *bochurim* needed to be on the streets doing *mitvzoim* every day.

On Wednesday, 15 Sivan, the Rebbe returned from the Ohel and held a surprise farbrengen. The purpose of the farbrengen was so that the Rebbe can directly communicate the importance of strengthening the *mitvzoim* to those listening from afar via live hookup. Everyone that would get more involved in *mitvzoim*, wherever they were in the world, would receive one bill of the local currency from the Rebbe.

Many *anash* joined the *mitvzoim* activities and Tzach’s main office was busy 24 hours a day. Brochures were distributed about the importance of checking mezuzos and installing kosher ones. Dozens of people would call Tzach’s phone number (which was printed on the brochure) requesting home visits to check their mezuzos and a team of *bochurim* was tasked with doing the house calls.

Mitvzoim was reaching a fevered pitch, but there was much more to come.

One day that week, as the *bochurim* were out on the streets doing *mitvzoim*, their activities were interrupted by a heavy rain. Several *bochurim* came up with the idea to rent moving trucks and outfit them with a table and two benches. This way people can be invited onto



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the trucks to wrap tefillin, undisturbed by the elements.

On Erev Shabbos, 17 Sivan, two yellow trucks blaring *chassidische* music from loudspeakers left 770, manned by groups of *bochurim* to do *mitvzoim* in Manhattan and Queens. The trucks were such a success that by Sunday, 19 Sivan, four trucks were parked in front of 770. When the Rebbe arrived that morning, the loudspeakers started playing Harav Levi Yitzchok's *hakafos niggun* and rolled away. Reb Dovid Raskin

reported to the Rebbe that on that day, 10,000 brochures were distributed...

In response the Rebbe wrote:

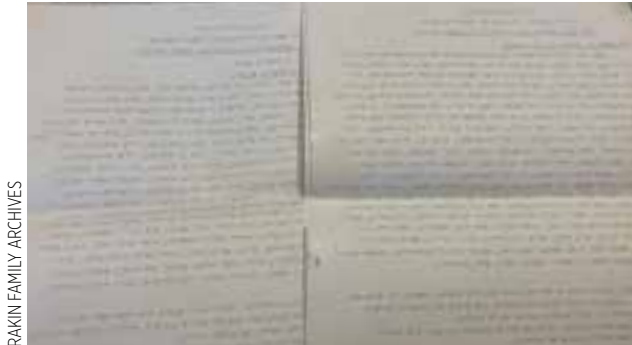
נת' ות"ת ח. ואשרי חלקם. ויה"ר שיקוים בכל המשתתפים במבצעים אלה - האנשים והנשים והטף - שליט"א: מי שיש לו מנה רוצה כו' ארבע מאות וכו'. אזכיר עה"צ.

I recieved [the report] and many thanks, many thanks. Fortunate is their lot. May it be Hashem's will that it be fulfilled by all those involved in these mitvzoim—men, women and children—shlita: He who has one hundred wants [two hundred] etc. four hundred etc. I will mention it at the tziyun.

In addition the Rebbe notified the relevant parties that 90% of the budget for the *mitvzoim* will be covered by the special *mitvzoim* account under the auspices of the *mazkirus*.

Tanks Against Assimilation

On Sunday evening, 26 Sivan, upon exiting 770 the Rebbe looked intently at the five yellow trucks parked outside in preparation for the next



ONE OF MANY REPORTS SENT TO THE REBBE RECOUNTING OF THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE MITZVAH TANKS.



Why “Tank”?

On numerous occasions the Rebbe explained the significance of the term “tank” in connection with *mitvzoim* mobiles.

> A tank is designed to protect its occupants from the enemy and also enables them to conquer the enemy. So too the Mitzvah Tank is meant to protect from assimilation as well as conquer assimilation; to reach those that have already assimilated and bring them back to Yiddishkeit.⁵

> The purpose of a tank is to enable soldiers to reach all types of frontiers. To conquer desert terrain one needs a tank with tracks because regular tires sink in the sand. If there is a ditch, the tank can ride over it. If there is a barrier of any type, the tank is heavy enough to destroy it.

So too the Mitzvah Tank is able to reach Yidden in all types of places and stages.⁶



day's *mitvzoim*, decorated with banners depicting tefillin and a mezuzah.

Minutes later, Rabbi Krinsky, who had just driven the Rebbe home, returned to 770 with the following instruction from the Rebbe:

In the Rebbe's library there was a painting by the artist Baruch Nachshon depicting an army tank with tefillin straps as tracks and the box of the *shel rosh* as the turret, followed by many more army tanks. Above it read, “וראו כל עמי הארץ כי שם” (see photo).

The Rebbe instructed that this painting be copied onto large banners and attached to the *mitvzoim* trucks. The *bochurim* leading the project were elated. The Rebbe had officially addressed this new endeavour and even given instructions for it!

A few days later, Rabbi Krinsky invited Mr. Irving Spiegel of the New York Times to 770 to witness the *mitvzoim* trucks parade away in the morning. The Rebbe told Rabbi Krinsky to tell Mr. Spiegel, “These are the tanks against assimilation.”

The *mitvzoim* trucks became “Mitzvah Tanks” and the *bochurim* working from them became “*tankistim*”—titles handpicked by the Rebbe.

Several days later there was a beautiful article in the New York Times about the Mitzvah Tanks and many other media outlets picked up the story. It was discussed on the radio and the new phenomenon was making a big splash in the entire city.

Conquer New York!

On Tuesday, 28 Sivan, Reb Dovid Raskin reported to the Rebbe that on Motzei Shabbos there will be a community meeting about *mitvzoim* to encourage *anash* to participate in *mitvzoim* and to donate money as well.

Almost immediately the Rebbe responded:

הרי עד אז יכולת ואפשר המבצעים שליט"א לכבוש נ"י.

וסביבותי' ובדרכי נועם ושלום.

Until then, those on mitvzoim can conquer New York and its surroundings, in a pleasant and peaceful manner.

The unique expression in this note infused the *bochurim* with unprecedented enthusiasm.

On Shabbos Parshas Korach, 2 Tammuz, the Rebbe gazed at the tanks parked outside 770 for a long while as he arrived that morning. Then there was a surprise *farbrengen* in the afternoon.⁸

“The reason for this *farbrengen* is in connection with the fact that there is a tremendous involvement and ‘*koch*’ in the *mitvzoim*, and the more I will speak about it, the more it will increase and strengthen this enthusiasm. It has already worked and there are those that have worked on *mitvzoim* with great energy and they merited to have an extra *farbrengen*. A *farbrengen* on such a Shabbos is uncommon, and it is, in addition to a thanks for

their work, an encouragement for the future that they should increase in *mitvzoim* more than has been done until now.

“Everyone must commit themselves to get more involved in *mitvzoim*, and if one has not made the commitment yet, do it now. If even one

Big City vs. Small City

There are *tankistim* that operate in big cities where there are many people and the *mitvzoim* cause a big *shturem*; and there are those that operate in faraway remote areas where there are fewer people to work with and even less people that appreciate what they are doing.

Notwithstanding the incredible merits of the big city *tankistim*, there are several advantages to the small city *tankistim*.

Firstly, the tremendous *shturem* of the big city allows the *yetzer hara* to entice the *tankist* to take personal pride in his work, be satisfied with his accomplishments thus far and fuel his *gaava*. This doesn’t happen in the small city.

In addition, since there are fewer people working with the remote Yidden, this type of work illustrates how every single Yid is an entire world. This needs to be the *זהיר טפי*—where we focus extra care and concern.

(*Sichos Kodesh* 5734 vol. 2, p. 280)

Out of the Ordinary

When *mitvzoim* is done from a “tank” it creates an unusual public scene and has greater impact. Similar to *לציאת מצרים*, at the Pesach *seder* we do unusual things to quip the interest of the children. So too when dealing with “spiritual children,” their protective shell can be so thick that the only way to reach them is by doing something unusual.

When he or she sees a vehicle, decorated in signs with Jewish themes and messages, with music blaring from loudspeakers and announcements inviting them to step up and do a mitzvah (itself a novelty to this Yid), they start to ask “*Ma nishtana?* What is this?” or at least they stand back in wonderment, but their facial expression indicates that they want to engage.

Sichos Kodesh 5736 vol. 2 page 533.

טנק - טהרות נזיקין קדשים

The English word “tank” when spelled in Hebrew letters is *tes, nun, kuf*. These are the acronym of the three *sedorim* in Shas: Taharos, Nezikin and Kadshim.

These represent an important lesson for those going on *mitvzoim*.

First, one must be “*tahor*”—have pure intentions when going on a mission to influence other Yidden. Then it is possible to influence a Yid in “*Nezikin*”—to avoid sins; and then to influence the Yid in “*Kadshim*”—to become more involved in *kedusha*—Torah and mitzvot.

However, one should not wait until their intentions are entirely pure before being involved in *mitvzoim*. Get involved right away and the purest of intentions will come eventually.⁷

“He is a Tankist!”

On Shiva Asar B'Tammuz, one of the *bochurim* that was supposed to go on a Mitzvah Tank was not feeling well and his father wrote to the Rebbe that he suggests his son should not go on the tank that day. The Rebbe responded, “He is a *tankist*!”

The *tankistim* worked long hours. The tanks would drive away from 770 at 10:00 a.m. and return only after *shkia*, which in the summer meant 9 to 10 hours on the streets. Aside for the tank leaders, the groups of *bochurim* manning the tanks were determined by a rotation.

“During that time period we barely slept,” recalls Rabbi Yosef Gopin. “Yossi and Eli Friedman were in charge of the banners. Some of the *bochurim* in charge of the tanks were Yosef Weingarten, Yosef Gurevitch, Yossi Hecht, Shmuel Greisman, Sholom Duchman and Shmuel Lipsker. Shmuel Greisman’s job was to determine where *bochurim* would go in the city. He knew the city very well. Some of the permanent tank leaders were Yossi Hecht and Yossi Gerlitzky.

“In the beginning it wasn’t easy to have all the arrangements in place. But all the *bochurim* were very inspired and wanted to go on the tanks. The *zal* was packed for *seder Chassidus* in the morning and then those manning the tanks that day davened *Shacharis* and left. *Seder Chassidus* at night was also a full house.

“Even *bochurim* who were challenged in certain areas of *yiras Shamayim* got a big boost from being *tankistim*.”

“Every day we submitted a detailed report of everything that happened on the tank,” says Rabbi Yosef Gerlitzky. “Reb Dovid would prepare a proper *duch* of all the tanks for the Rebbe.

“One day, our tank was stationed near Stony Brook University and a student who had previously been in yeshiva with us helped us with *mivtzoim*. Next to the report of our tank, which included this detail the Rebbe wrote ‘ראיתי ונת”ח. להחזיר - Return [the note to them]: I have seen it. Thanks.’ Reb Dovid was elated and farbrenged the entire night explaining that when the Rebbe writes ‘ראיתי’ it is something very special.”

more Yid will commit to doing *mivtzoim*, the entire farbrengen was worthwhile.”

The next day, seven tanks rolled away from 770 to go to battle.

The General and his Troops

Monday, 4 Tammuz, as the Rebbe’s car pulled up to 770, music started playing from the loudspeakers and groups of *bochurim* stood next to their respective tanks singing along. The Rebbe smiled broadly at the *bochurim* and waved his hand in encouragement. Reaching the doorway of 770 the Rebbe turned around and continued encouraging the singing, and waited as the tanks began driving down Eastern Parkway, gazing at them until they were several blocks away.

Seeing the Rebbe standing in front of 770 seeing off his troops as they rolled into battle in the tanks against assimilation was so special, that by Thursday a large crowd had gathered to witness it.

At the Yud-Beis Tammuz farbrengen the Rebbe announced that all those involved in *mivtzoim* will receive a five dollar bill in connection with the five *mivtzoim*, and at the farbrengen on Shabbos Parshas Balak the Rebbe instructed all the *tankistim* to say a special *l’chaim*.

“They should say *l’chaim* on behalf of the *tankistim* that are far away, their relatives and friends, and it should be *להחיות ולברכה ולהמשכה*”

Tankistim Even Off the Tanks

By summer 5734* it had become routine that, in addition to daily *mivtzoim*, the tanks would leave 770 in a parade every Monday and Thursday. This continued throughout the summer until Tishrei. At times tanks would travel to outlying towns and cities in lieu of *Merkos Shlichus*. In fact the Rebbe said that going on the tanks during the summer would be considered as *Merkos Shlichus*.

During the month of Elul the Rebbe continued emphasizing in *sichos* and letters the need

Riding Side by Side

Rabbi Yosef Shmuel Gerlitzky recalls a unique episode that occurred during the summer of 5734*:

Our tank had been stationed in the Bronx and we were driving back to 770 approaching Atlantic Avenue, with music blaring from the tank, when one *bochur* suddenly realized that the Rebbe's car was driving adjacent to the tank, and the Rebbe was inside returning from the Ohel!

"The Rebbe is right next to us," he exclaimed. We all clamored to the opening of the truck and the Rebbe looked at us with a broad smile and started waving his hands in encouragement to the music. We all started dancing and singing and the Rebbe continued waving his hand until Rabbi Krinsky turned onto Linden Boulevard and we continued on to Atlantic Avenue.

It was a really special moment.

I Am Going With You!

True to form, as the Mitzvah Tanks were taking the Jewish world by storm there were naysayers from various communities. Days before Yud Shevat 5735* an individual published a scathing article against Lubavitch and called the *tankistim* a "terror brigade."

During the Yud Shevat farbrengen the Rebbe spoke a very strong *sicha* of encouragement to the *tankistim* and declared, "I am going with every one of the *tankistim*! When people mock you, they are mocking me. Just as I am not intimidated by their mockery—though I can't say I enjoy it—you should not be intimidated by it!"

The following Shabbos the Rebbe addressed the issue in a much sharper tone and said, "I [the Rebbe said his own full name] am the one who instructed them to go on the tanks." The Rebbe said this twice and then continued. "I ask no one what to do, and if I need to ask someone I have whom to ask. *B'hashgacha pratis* I am the '*baal habayis*' of Lubavitch, and in Lubavitch there is no terror brigade!"



10 SHEVAT 5735, JEM 104347



THE REBBE ENCOURAGES THE FLEET OF MITZVAH TANKS AS THEY EMBARK ON MIVTZOIM TO THE STREETS OF NEW YORK, 7 TAMMUZ 5734*.

to increase in *mivtzoim*, and the tanks were operating to full capacity.

On Chai Elul, at the conclusion of the farbrengen the Rebbe announced that he would distribute dollars for *tzedakah* to all the participants... through the *tankistim*!

Lest one should think that the title *tankist* is reserved for one who is currently manning a tank, the Rebbe clarified that it was much more than that.

“Those fortunate to be *tankistim* and over the past few days were involved in influencing Yidden with regard to the five *mivtzoim*, should come up now and receive packs of dollars to distribute to everyone here... Where are the *tankistim*?”⁹

From then on, the *tankistim* (which came to include all those who were involved in *mivtzoim*

on a consistent basis) were regularly privileged to receive and distribute the Rebbe’s dollars during the weekday farbrengens. In the 5740s*, this became the custom at every single weekday farbrengen and at times after weekday *sichos*.

Frequently during the distribution, when an elderly Chossid or a child—who did not fit the profile of a typical tankist—would come by, the Rebbe would ask, “Are you a *tankist*?” These distributions were a consistent and public display of the Rebbe’s great affection for the *tankistim*.

During *hakafos* on Simchas Torah 5735*, the Rebbe dedicated a *hakafa* to the *tankistim*.

Throughout the year of 5735*, although *bochurim* and *anash* continued investing much energy in *mivtzoim*, the official Mitzvah Tank parades only occurred in the weeks leading up



RASKIN FAMILY ARCHIVES

THE REBBE DISTRIBUTES DOLLARS TO THE TANKISTIM FOR THE FIRST TIME, CHAI ELUL 5734.

Financial Support is not Enough

Although the Rebbe had informed Tzach that the Mivtzoim Fund under the auspices of *mazkirus* would provide 90% of the budget for the Mitzvah Tanks, Reb Dovid Raskin worked tirelessly to procure the necessary funding from donors.

“Reb Dovid was the life behind the entire project,” recalls Rabbi Sholom Duchman. “He was responsible for the finances of this epic *mivtzoim* campaign—renting the trucks and buying fuel and printing literature—and he never told us that there wasn’t enough money.

“I remember sitting in his office a few hours before the Yud-Beis Tammuz farbrengen and Reb Dovid was in such an uplifted mood as he continued calling one potential donor after another.”

A member of *anash* wrote a letter to the Rebbe requesting a *bracha* for *hatzlacha* in a new business venture, and he was instructed by the Rebbe to invest in purchasing a Mitzvah Tank. Likewise, the Rebbe told someone that if he has an opportunity to sponsor an entire tank he should not forgo the opportunity.

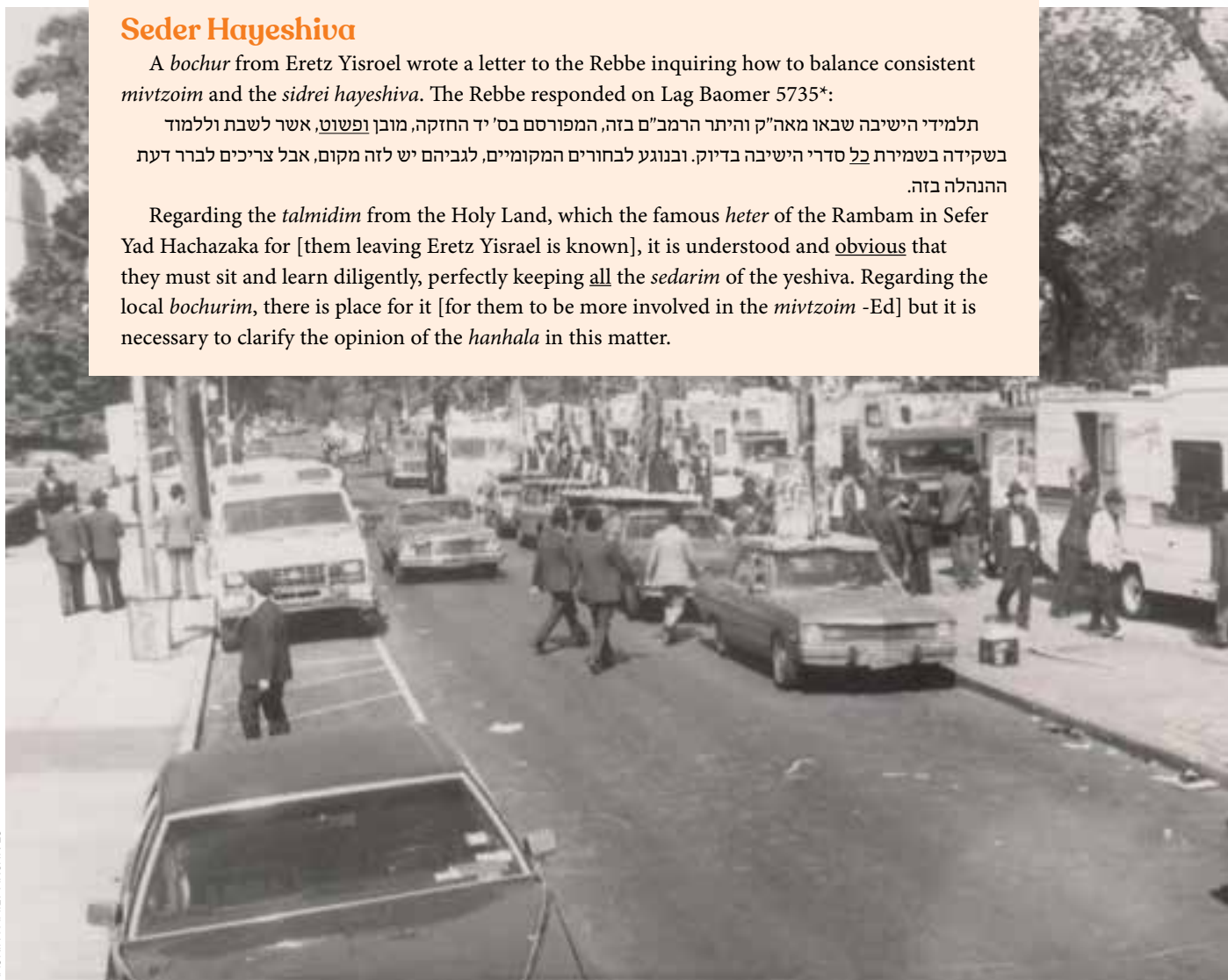
During that time period the Rebbe asked a certain Chossid if he was involved in *mivtzoim* and he responded that he donated money for it. The Rebbe said, “It’s not enough to be Zevulun (a supporter), you need to also be a Yissachar (active participant).”

Seder Hayeshiva

A *bochur* from Eretz Yisroel wrote a letter to the Rebbe inquiring how to balance consistent *mivtzoim* and the *sidrei hayeshiva*. The Rebbe responded on Lag Baomer 5735*:

תלמידי הישיבה שבאו מאה"ק והיתר הרמב"ם בזה, המפורסם בס' יד החזקה, מובן ופשוט, אשר לשבת וללמוד בשקידה בשמירת כל סדרי הישיבה בדיוק. ובנוגע לבחורים המקומיים, לגביהם יש לזה מקום, אבל צריכים לברר דעת ההנהלה בזה.

Regarding the *talmidim* from the Holy Land, which the famous *heter* of the Rambam in Sefer Yad Hachazaka for [them leaving Eretz Yisrael is known], it is understood and obvious that they must sit and learn diligently, perfectly keeping all the *sedarim* of the yeshiva. Regarding the local *bochurim*, there is place for it [for them to be more involved in the *mivtzoim* -Ed] but it is necessary to clarify the opinion of the *hanhala* in this matter.



A MITZVAH TANK PARADE PREPARES TO LEAVE FROM 770.

to special occasions such as Yud-Tes Kislev, Yud Shevat and Purim, and a grand parade of 18 Mitzvah Tanks rolled away from 770 on Lag Baomer.


It was during the winter that everyone realized it was impossible to convince Yidden to enter the freezing yellow trucks for anything, so it was decided to rent mobile homes with proper heating. And from then on the mobile home became the stereotypical vehicle associated with the Mitzvah Tanks against assimilation.

Transforming the Tumult of Rome

Many wonder why it is important to bring Yidden closer to Yiddishkeit through public and noisy methods. Granted, in our generation it is

not proper to isolate oneself in the comfort of the immediate atmosphere of Torah and one must reach out to Yidden and bring them closer. But why must we go out into the streets and make loud announcements about wrapping tefillin, mounting *mezuzos* or giving *tzedakah*?

The fact that there were bells on the bottom of the Kohen Gadol's *me'il* teaches us a powerful lesson pertinent to our generation. According to all indications we are in the times of עקבתא דמשיחא—at the very bottom of the “*me'il*.” When the Kohen Gadol entered the *Beis Hamikdash* to do the *avoda*, the bells at the bottom made a lot of noise, reminiscent of the style of *avodas hateshuva*. In order to bring the people closer to the *Shechina* it must be done in a noisy way.

Additionally, when the secular world around us is doing everything in a loud and tumultuous way, the way to neutralize it is by utilizing noise and tumult for *avodas Hashem*. When we ensure that Yiddishkeit is expressed loudly and proudly, in the very same place where the tumult of secularism thrives, we will merit to hear the loud shofar blast heralding in the *geula*.¹⁰ 



1. Much of the information in this article was gleaned from the panel discussion **The Mivtzioim Era (5733-5735)** organized by the Vaad Talmidei Hatmimim with Rabbis Yosef Gopin, Yosef Gerlizky, Sholom Duchman and Kasriel Kastel. Additional information comes from the **Reb Dovid Raskin Archives**, soon to be released in the forthcoming book, ועבודי דוד. Special thanks to Bentzion Pearson and the Raskin family.

2. Likutei Sichos vol. 13, p. 211.

3. Sichos Kodesh 5734 vol. 2, p. 182.

4. See Derher Menachem Av 5779 “Uforatzto!”

5. Ibid. 5734 p. 268.

6. Ibid. p. 279.

7. See fn. 2.

8. Ibid. p. 231.

9. Ibid. p. 424.

10. Likkutei Sichos vol. 16 page 341.



THE SUMMER OF 5734*, “NEWSWEEK,” “TIME” AND THREE ARTICLES IN “THE NEW YORK TIMES” COVERED THE TANKS, AS DID “THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE.”



The Spoken and the Unspoken

“THIS STORE IS CLOSED AND OUT OF BUSINESS”

With great despair, Yitzchok Ber¹ knocked in the last nail of the sign announcing the close of his pharmacy and a world of financial concern quickly engulfed him. Forced to give up his store and with no job openings available elsewhere, he was despairing quickly. To add to his sorrow, his son-in-law had run away and now his daughter was an *aguna*.

Yitzchok Ber was a relative of the Tzemach Tzedek but did not consider himself a Chossid at all, so much so, that he dismissed the advice to go to Lubavitch and ask for a *bracha*. “Miracles, *tzaddikim*

stories... those are not for me,” he would exclaim.

His wife, however, was more stubborn than he and insisted that he make the trip.

When he arrived in Lubavitch he was told that he was put on the roster and would have to wait his turn. That turn was in a long time and his original hesitation about the trip had now turned to regret that he had given in.

During a conversation with the *gabbai*, he mentioned in passing that he was the Rebbe’s relative and the difficulties he was facing.

When the attendant found out who he was, he exclaimed, “You have nothing to worry about, you will see the Rebbe this very

night!” He was well aware how adamant the Rebbetzin was that all family members be taken in right away.

When he went into *yechidus* and introduced himself, the Rebbe was very happy and began asking him about the welfare of different family members and concluded with an invitation to join the family for dinner. Yitzchok Ber readily accepted this honorable opportunity. At the table the conversation continued but he did not have a moment to share his personal sorrow.

He asked the attendant for another *yechidus*. This time around, he told the Tzemach Tzedek all about his business troubles but did not mention a word about his missing son-in-law.

The Rebbe listened to him and said, “I read in a newspaper that there is a German man who lives in the city of Kiev; he just opened a pharmacy and is looking to hire someone. I am sure he will be able to hire you and compensate you handsomely for your work.” He concluded by giving Yitzchok Ber the money he would need for his trip and bid him well.

Yitzchok Ber was plagued with doubts and questions about this strange advice. Was the German man really waiting for him? When did the Rebbe read the newspaper...?

So skeptical was he that he had no intention of carrying it out. Once again, however, it was his wife who had the final

In memory of our loving uncle
Stuart (Shmuel Yisroel)
Ben Hersh Leib a”h

Dedicated by
Shaya and Miriam Rochester



say. She pushed, prodded and nagged him until he reluctantly agreed to make the trip.

Sure enough the job was waiting for him and he was an instant success. The boss was so pleased with his new employee that he paid him very well.

As Pesach neared he asked for permission to go home and spend a few weeks with his family.

His vacation was cut short when a telegram arrived from Kiev requesting that he return immediately. Yitzchok Ber was placed in charge of a magnificent birthday celebration for his boss. The event would be attended by many important and illustrious guests; all the “who’s who” in town would

be there and everything had to be just perfect.

He got right to work arranging every detail; renting a hall, putting together the entertainment and preparing the invitations. His efforts were compensated very nicely by his appreciative boss. On the day of the big party he was charged with the job of welcoming and ushering in all the guests. Everything was spectacular and going right on schedule until a new wave of guests arrived. Yitzchok Ber gave one look at the oncoming crowd and collapsed almost in a dead faint.


The boss quickly had him taken into a private room where he could collect himself. As he sat there calming down he explained

to the concerned boss the situation with his daughter. “Amongst the guests that just walked in I noticed a man dressed like a priest and I am sure that he is my rogue son-in-law. All I want from him is to sign a *get* so my daughter can get married and move on with her life. “Don’t you worry,” declared the grateful boss. “By tonight the matter will be settled.”

At some point during the festivities the priest was invited to a side room to ‘talk.’ Hearing the accusation against him, the brazen priest unequivocally denied the whole story. The brandishing of a pistol quickly refreshed his memory and he confessed that he was indeed the missing son-in-law.

However, he refused to go to a rabbi with the concern that this would be a blemish on his priesthood.

Instead, that night a rabbi, kosher witnesses, and a parchment were brought into the room where the *get* was signed and given over.

At that point Yitzchok Ber understood the true intention behind the Rebbe sending him to Kiev and to this particular gentleman who helped him with his daughter, even though he had not mentioned it to the Rebbe at all.² 

1. The name does not appear in the original. It was added here for the sake of clarity.

2. Based on Shmuos V’sippurim vol. 3, p. 176.



The Arrest & Liberation of the *Alter Rebbe*

נדפס ע"י ולזכות
הרה"ת ר' שלום וזוגתו מרת רבקה
ומשפחתם שיחי
שריקי



Reb Nochum, the son of the Mittlerer Rebbe, had a Yud-Tes Kislev tradition. At the annual farbrengen, he would relate the entire series of events, beginning with the Alter Rebbe's studies in Mezeritch, all the way to the account of his liberation. If a notable individual would enter the room in the middle of his account, he would start again from the beginning.

For generations, the story of Yud-Tes Kislev has been a staple of Chassidic storytelling. From the youngest age, children are raised on the actions of the Alter Rebbe, the schemes of Avigdor, and the victory of the Chassidim.

For the first time, A Chassidisher Derher will retell the story for our readers. The full story cannot be contained in a single article; instead, we have attempted to shed light on some unknown elements of the story, based on *sichos* of the Rebbe and the Frieddiker Rebbe, and documents that were discovered in the archives of the Russian government. (Any details that are not footnoted are from "Chag Hageula - Yud Tes Kislev," by Rabbi Chanoch Glitzenshtein.)

"When I was a child," the Tzemach Tzedek told the Rebbe Maharash, "my grandfather would take me under his tallis during *tekios* and *birchas kohanim*. During *tekios* in the year 5559*, I saw that a great *tzarah* would befall him that year, and he didn't see any salvation..."

The Chassidim too, noticed a bitterness in the Alter Rebbe throughout Tishrei, but they had no plausible explanation for it. At the time, no significant news had reached the small town of Liozna. Little did

A CELL IN THE PETROPAVLOVSK
FORTRESS. THE ALTER REBBE WAS
IMPRISONED IN A ROOM SUCH AS THIS.

the flow of new and old Chassidim. Chassidic shuls flourished in cities and towns across Russia, and the Alter Rebbe established firm organizational principles to ensure Chassidim lived up to Chassidic ideals.

A landmark event had taken place two years earlier, with the printing of the *Sefer HaTanya*. Now, with the Alter Rebbe's teachings in a printed form, Chassidus was able to reach even further places.

The opposition to Chassidus took careful note of all these developments. Since the days of the Maggid, a severe *hisnagdus* had taken form among certain segments of Jewry, with their centers being primarily in Vilna and Shklov. Although there was an ebb and flow to their battles (the greatest flare-up had been during the Maggid's final days in 5532*) the underlying opposition remained strong throughout.

A turning point took place one year earlier, on Chol Hamoed Sukkos 5558*, with the passing of the Vilna Gaon. The presence of the Gaon had forced the opposition to suit their actions to befit a person of his stature. With him no longer present, they felt free to take their battle to places they had never dared.

A rumor spread in Vilna that the Chassidim had publicly celebrated the Gaon's illness and passing. (In truth, a *simchas beis hashoevah* had been held in Reb Meir Refael's sukkah a day before the Gaon's passing, where a public *Mi Sheberach* had been recited for his recovery.) The *misnagdim* were infuriated, and they swore to exact revenge.²

Over Elul of 5558*, communications were held between Czar Paul I and Russian Chief Prosecutor Lupochin about a "Zalman Baruchovitch and the Krolins" (a nickname for Chassidim which evolved from the Chassidic center of

**The misnagdim
were infuriated,
and they swore
to exact revenge.**

Karlin, home to two students of the Maggid, Reb Aharon and Reb Shlomo, and others). A letter had arrived accusing the Alter Rebbe of misdeeds, such as aiding the French revolution and allowing his students to waste their days in frivolous behavior with money stolen from their parents.

The Czar instructed that the Alter Rebbe be arrested (along with 30 Chassidim from Vilna) and sent to S. Petersburg. Later, the name signed on the letter turned out to be false, but the authorities felt that the Chassidic movement should be investigated anyway. New religious movements with anti-Czarist stances had been appearing in Russia, so the new Jewish group was viewed with suspicion as well.³

Soon enough, an ominous-looking black carriage rolled into Liozna accompanied by a group of soldiers, striking fear into the hearts of the Chassidim. Hearing about their arrival, the Alter Rebbe hid in the cemetery. Rebbetzin Sterna was asked about her husband's whereabouts, and when she responded that she didn't know, a soldier slapped her forcefully across the face and knocked out a tooth.

Not finding their man, the soldiers left, and the Alter Rebbe returned home. That night, Reb Shmuel Munkes came to the Alter Rebbe, and gave his opinion:

"What should I tell you? I think you need to go."

"But it's dangerous!" the Alter Rebbe replied.

they know that trouble was brewing in the capital city of S. Petersburg...

In the 25 years since the passing of the Maggid, Chassidus had grown by leaps and bounds.

In Liozna, the Alter Rebbe had founded three *chadarim* (organized yeshiva-like study systems)¹ which attracted brilliant Torah scholars to their ranks. The regular crowd of Chassidim visiting Liozna had grown to such proportions that Takkanos Liozna were established, regulating

“If you are a Rebbe,” said Reb Shmuel, “no bullet will hit you. But if you are not a Rebbe, you deserve it...” [According to a different version: How could you take the pleasures of *olam hazeh* from thousands of Jews?]

Resting his head on his hand, the Alter Rebbe thought about it for some time, and then said to Reb Shmuel, “Whether you are right, I don’t know, but go *gezunterheit*.”

The next morning, the Alter Rebbe went to *mikveh*. He called his brother Maharil and his sons the Mittler Rebbe and Reb Avraham⁴ and instructed them to fast, saying, “Today they will take me.” That evening, the soldiers returned. The Alter Rebbe davened Mincha, and went with them.⁵

The journey to S. Petersburg took several days. They left Liozna on Thursday night, Isru Chag Sukkos, and soon enough, Shabbos was approaching. The Alter Rebbe asked the officer to stop off at the side of the road, but his request was refused.

The wagon was beset by a series of strange events. First an axle broke, and then a horse died. The officer realized that he didn’t have a choice, and they spent Shabbos at the side of the road.⁶ In later generations, the Chassidim of nearby Nevel were able to point out the exact place the Alter Rebbe spent Shabbos, where a large beautiful tree stood out among the other broken and dead trees.



“With this pipe, I could have burned the entire Petersburg!”

The fear and distress among the Chassidim was unimaginable. The Czar was a ruthless person, and the investigations would be held in complete secrecy. Nobody had any idea how things would turn out.

The night the Alter Rebbe was arrested, the senior Chassidim held an emergency meeting. Within a short time a list of instructions was sent out for the Chassidim, both in spiritual and material matters.

All Chassidim were to fast each Monday and Thursday, and even Shabbos meals were to be kept to a bare minimum. *Cheder* children were to recite Tehillim. In the event that a Chossid would pass away, his entire community was to fast, and after the *tahara*, they were to exhort the individual to go before the Maggid and Baal Shem Tov in heaven and beseech their help.

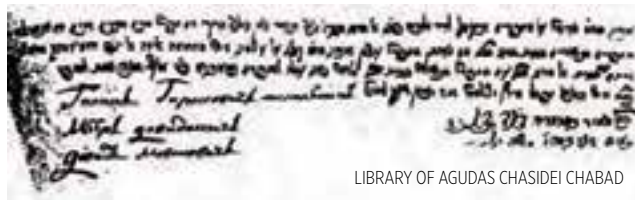
On a material level, every Chossid was asked to make a list of all the valuables he owned, and in the case of a lengthy arrest, they would be pawned and the money used for the redemption efforts.

Chassidim were dispatched to spread these instructions far and wide. Others were sent to S. Petersburg to look for clues about the Alter Rebbe’s situation, and yet others traveled to Vilna and Shklov to spy on the *misnagdim*, who were assumed to be behind the *mesirah*.



Before his departure, the Alter Rebbe dispatched the Chossid Reb Yaakov Smilianer with a *pidyon nefesh* to Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev.

When Reb Yaakov arrived in Berdichev, it was morning. He immediately came to see Reb Levi



RECORD OF HOW MANY SEFARIM WERE CONFISCATED DURING THE ALTER REBBE’S IMPRISONMENT.

Yitzchak, who lit his pipe. “With this pipe, I could have burned the entire Petersburg!”

The Alter Rebbe had discussed his *derech* of Chabad Chassidus with Reb Levi Yitzchak a year or two prior, and Reb Levi Yitzchak had scolded the Alter Rebbe for taking so much responsibility instead of making use of miraculous means, which was more common among Chagas Rebbes.

The Alter Rebbe had replied, “Hashem wants a *dirah batachtonim*, that *Atzmus* should be in *tachtonim*. That is accomplished through *pnimi’im*, not through *makifim* (miracles).

Now, Reb Levi Yitzchak repeated his argument. “With this pipe, I could have burned the entire Petersburg!”

“Berdichever Rav,” Reb Yaakov replied, “the Rebbe is a *Reisisher* (a Russian). The Rebbe is *Chochmah*, *Binah*, *Daas*!” (Implying that Chabad doesn’t work through miracles).

Reb Levi Yitzchak gave him a piercing look.

“What’s a *Reisisher Chossid*. He’s fine with a Rebbe without a mother...”

This comment pertained to the *pan*. Arriving in Berdichev, Reb Yaakov had discovered that he had lost the *pan* of the Alter Rebbe, and although he remembered its contents, he didn’t know the Alter Rebbe’s mother’s name.

Reb Levi Yitzchak went to the *mikveh*, and upon emerging, he said, “*Yesh shever b’Mitzrayim*” (“*Shever*” being *roshei teivos* Shneur ben Rivkah). After davening Shacharis, he said resolutely, “*Yesh shever*, there is hope!”⁷





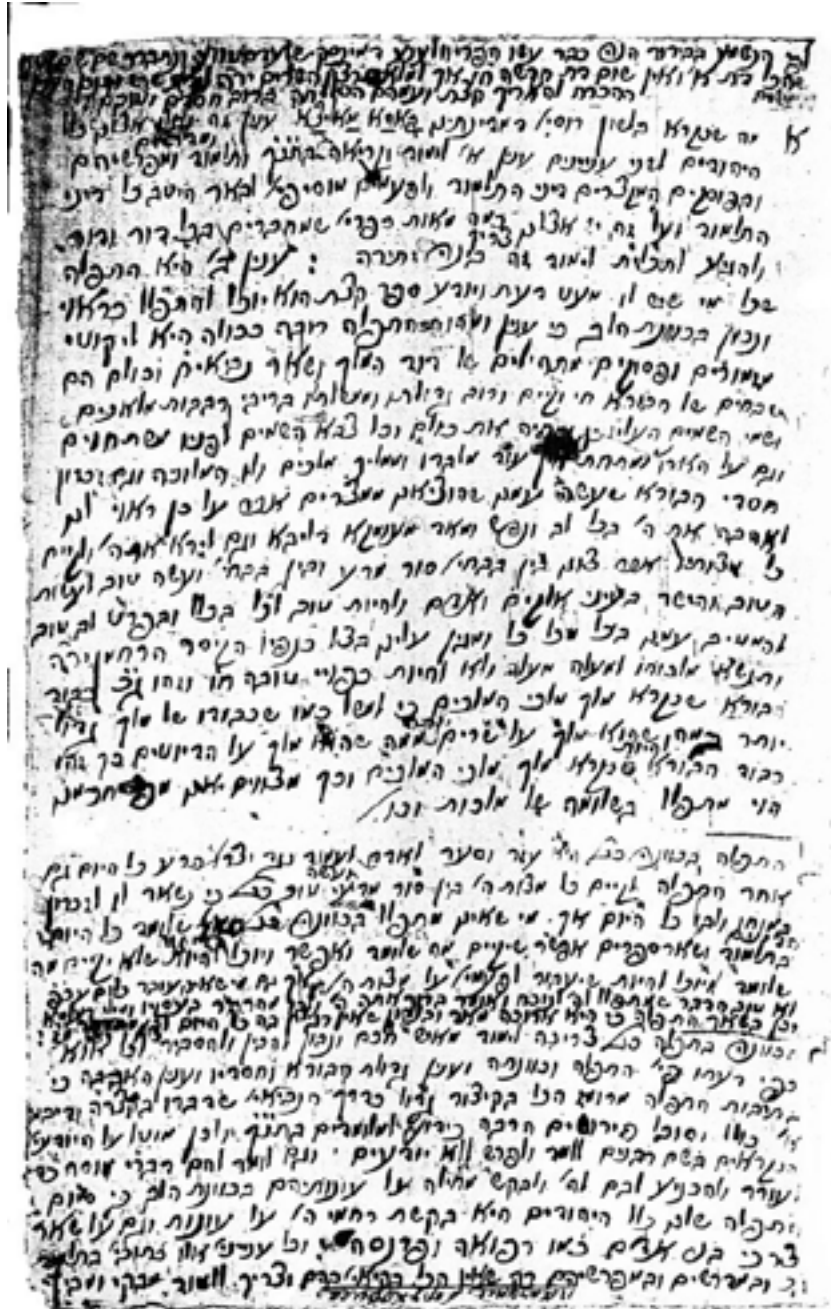
SECOND PRINTING OF TANYA IN SLAVITA.

After several days of travel, the Alter Rebbe arrived in S. Petersburg and was imprisoned in the Petropavlovsk fortress, the most infamous and secure prison in the country, situated on an isolated island in S. Petersburg.

“When the Alter Rebbe entered the prison,” the Frieddiker Rebbe related,⁸ there were secretaries sitting there. He came in with his tallis and tefillin under his arm. They had heard that a revolutionary was being brought in, but they were very surprised that such a person could be a traitor.

“The Alter Rebbe faced east, put his tallis over his shoulder, inspected his tzitzis and began putting on the tallis and Rabbeinu Tam’s tefillin. When he donned the *shel rosh*, he used both hands to ensure it was in place, while facing the people that were sitting there.

“[At that moment,] whoever was sitting couldn’t stand up, and whoever was standing couldn’t sit down. As Chazal said on the *possuk* וראו כל עמי הארץ כי שם ה' נקרא עליך וירא ממך - אלו



A PAGE OF A WRITTEN AFFIDAVIT IN THE ALTER REBBE'S HANDWRITING RESPONDING TO THE INTERROGATORS QUESTIONS.

שאת תומך את עצמך, אתה משלם מס, וכו'). The conversation was held in Russian, and when they began to ask more sophisticated questions about Chassidus (What is the movement called? Kroliners or Sochods [=Chassidim]? Why is it successful?) the Alter Rebbe replied that he would need a translator for proper accuracy.

In the file of the Alter Rebbe's imprisonment, which was preserved in the archives of the Chief-Prosecutor, one document describes the Alter Rebbe's initial interrogations, where they began asking basic personal questions (what is your name, how do

you support yourself, do you pay taxes, etc.). The conversation was held in Russian, and when they began to ask more sophisticated questions about Chassidus (What is the movement called? Kroliners or Sochods [=Chassidim]? Why is it successful?) the Alter Rebbe replied that he would need a translator for proper accuracy.

“Because they are too lazy to properly engage in the pursuit of prayer.”

The request was presented to the Czar. With his approval, the Alter Rebbe wrote a significant part of his testimony in *lashon hakodesh*, and it has been preserved in his holy handwriting in that same file. No translators were available in S. Petersburg, and the document was sent to Vilna, creating a significant delay in the investigations.

In the written document, the Alter Rebbe explains the basics of *avodas Hashem* in very simple terms, pointing out the different pursuits of learning versus davening.

He explains that the Chassidic focus on davening isn't because it is a new religion. In fact, they had both been considered important, until recent generations when a corrupt rabbinical system had allowed rabbis to acquire their position by bribing a local *poritz*, a situation that lasted until the abolishment of the Vaad Arba

Ha'aratzos⁹ between the years 5524* and 5532*.

Those rabbis, obviously lacking in fear of Heaven, didn't find davening to be an important pursuit, and downgraded its importance in the eyes of their students. The Chassidic emphasis on davening was a response to this situation.

The Alter Rebbe also explains how his opponents, out of senseless hatred and jealousy—“because they are too lazy to properly engage in the pursuit of prayer”—named them Karlinim and so on, and spread utter lies and slander about them.

Another topic is the money sent to Eretz Yisroel, which was ruled by Russia's arch-enemy, the Ottoman Empire. The Alter Rebbe describes the Jewish community of Eretz Yisrael, and explains that it is the Jewish tradition “to support the poor of the Land of Israel, so that they pray there for the entire Jewish nation.”¹⁰

Chassidim had no information about the Alter Rebbe's whereabouts or his condition. Then, one sign of life managed to make it out of the prison.

The story has various versions. This is how the Rebbe transcribed it, after hearing it from the Frierdiker Rebbe at a Yud-Tes Kislev farbrengen:¹²

“The minister of the prison in Petropavlovsk would come from time to time to see how the Alter Rebbe was doing. He asked what he could bring for him to eat, and the Alter Rebbe replied, ‘*Eingemachtz*’ [a sort of fruit stew]. When he brought it, he said that he wanted it to come from a Jew. When he returned the *eingemachtz* to the minister, he also gave him a note that said ‘*Shema Yisrael Havaye Elokeinu vigomer*.’ (My father-in-law the [Frierdiker] Rebbe *shlita* was *medayek* with those words twice. M. M.)

“When the note came before the censor, he permitted it to be delivered, and so it arrived into the hands of Reb Mordechai Liepler [who had provided the food]. For a long time, they didn't understand its meaning, but later, Reb Mordechai said that he finally

Where Are You?

The Frierdiker Rebbe recounted:¹¹

My father related that when the [Alter] Rebbe was brought to Petersburg, the interrogator was a deputy-minister fluent in Tanach.

He asked the Rebbe, “Why does G-d ask Adam ‘*Ayeka*, where are you?’ after the *cheit eitz hada'as*? G-d surely knew where Adam was!”

The Rebbe responded with Rashi's answer, but the minister said that he was already aware of it.

That is when the Alter Rebbe answered with his famous statement [that Hashem says to every individual: “*Ayeka*, where are you? What are you up to? What were you supposed to accomplish, and what *have* you accomplished in the world?”]

My father [the Rebbe Rashab] said that explaining this to the minister held the Alter Rebbe back from *klos hanefesh*:

When the Alter Rebbe was brought to the Petropavlovsk fortress and imprisoned in a cell, he remembered that he was sacrificing his life for the sake of the Baal Shem Tov and Maggid's Torah, and he experienced such great pleasure that it could have ended in *klos hanefesh*. This teaching held him back, because it reminded him of what he had yet to accomplish in the world.



THE PETROPAVLOVSK FORTRESS IN S. PETERSBURG WHERE THE ALTER REBBE WAS IMPRISONED.

understood the Alter Rebbe's message. (To my query what the meaning was, he didn't answer. M. M.)

"Chassidim related that a *kvort* was brought into his room; he always had water and bread, and that is what he ate. On Shabbos, they would bring him beer or mead for *kiddush*."



In Kislev, the Alter Rebbe's interrogations finally came to a close, and the prosecutor prepared a report to the Czar with his findings.

In the report, he sums up the investigation and presents the Czar with his opinion:

"...Baruchovitch is very famous, and people travel from over 100 milyas¹⁴ away to visit him. His authority is so powerful that if he would command a child to steal or kill his parents, the child would obey. This blind obedience could be a method for him to carry out his secret intentions to make contact abroad. There is a basis to believe he has significant connections with Jerusalem, Egypt and other Ottoman areas. He doesn't send his letters by post; he

uses personal couriers, often with unwritten messages.

"Governor Zhegulin of Belarus says that Rabbi Baruchovitch's personal conduct is impeccable, but is inherently damaging because of his status as one of the extremist leaders of the Krolins, who pose certain dangers . . . this is despite the fact that nothing reproachable or criminal was found in his behavior. From a young age he studied ancient Jewish books and became fluent in Kabbalah, and because his lifestyle was so impeccable, Jews from all over began to turn to him for judgement and were satisfied with his just rulings..."

Although the prosecutor couldn't deny the Alter Rebbe's integrity, he still maintained that the new movement was a dangerous one, and needed to come to an end (which, he surprisingly maintained could be accomplished by exiling a mere 30 Chassidic leaders).

"Thus," he concludes, "terminating this sect will be advantageous for all Jewish people..."

The Russian Psychiatrist

"One of the accusations against the Alter Rebbe," the Rebbe related,¹³ "was that he wanted to overthrow the Czar. He was accused of planning to appoint himself as the king of the Jews, and that he planned to overthrow the Czar of his day. The Alter Rebbe brought proofs against these accusations, just as he defended himself from all the others..."

"However, as the Frieddiker Rebbe explained, the Alter Rebbe indeed had such a yearning. He yearned in his heart to act as a *melech b'Yisroel*. The yearning came from his deep soul-connection to *sefiras hamalchus*.

"This was apparent to the extent that when the government doctor [psychiatrist] interviewed him, the doctor said that he sees a yearning in the Alter Rebbe's heart, a thirst to be a king. He didn't understand what being a *melech* meant for the Alter Rebbe, and therefore the Alter Rebbe categorically denied the accusations.

"But on a deeper level, there was a basis for the accusation, because his *avoda* was '*asher kidishanu bemitzvosav vetzivanu*,' [bringing Hashem's presence into this world through Torah and mitzvos] and *sefiras hamalchus* is the *sefira* of '*malchuscha malchus kol olamim* [that rules over the world]. Thus, his *avoda* was in complete and total unification ("*yichud nifla*") with *sefiras hamalchus*."

Notwithstanding the prosecutor's opinion, which was also supported by the various other government officials, the Czar's ruling inscribed at the bottom of the report was unequivocal:

"The king found no issue in the conduct of the Jews who founded the sect of the Krolins, not corruption nor anything that disturbs the public peace. He commands that they all be released, if nothing is found in their actions or intentions to be against national interests. However, impose strict surveillance, especially over their correspondence..."

"16 November 1798 [=19 Kislev 5559]."¹⁵



"When the Alter Rebbe was told that he was free to go," the Frierdiker Rebbe explained, "he didn't want to leave!"

After his release from prison on the afternoon of Yud-Tes Kislev, the Alter Rebbe asked to be taken to the home of Reb Mordechai Liepler, but he was instead mistakenly brought to the home of a *misnaged* named Notkin, who berated him for close to three hours.

"The Alter Rebbe suffered more during the three hours at Notkin's home," the Rebbe quotes the Frierdiker Rebbe in Reshimos, "than the entire time he was imprisoned. In fact, when the Alter Rebbe was told that he was free to go, he didn't want to leave, because all three *tefillos* of Yud-Tes Kislev he had davened with the Maggid and Baal Shem Tov.

"The king found no issue in the conduct of the Jews..."

I Finally Understood

When the Frierdiker Rebbe arrived home from his imprisonment on 3 Tammuz 5687*, before his banishment to Kostrama, he noted how his experience had given him a new understanding into the stories about the Alter Rebbe's imprisonment.

"All the stories that are told about the Alter Rebbe—I experienced. There wasn't a quarter-of-an-hour [period] when I didn't see my father..."

"...Being with the Maggid and listening to the Baal Shem Tov . . . and to go from there to the home of a *misnaged*!?"

As the hours passed and the Alter Rebbe failed to show up at Reb Mordechai's home, some Chassidim decided to ask the downstairs neighbor, Notkin, if he had heard any information. To their shock, they overheard him yelling at the Alter Rebbe, and they began banging on the door.

Fearful of their response, Notkin opened the door and ushered them in. The Alter Rebbe motioned them to control themselves, and after drinking a cup of tea to honor his host, he quickly left the *misnaged's* home.



On the cold winter day following his release, many Chassidim crowded the Alter Rebbe's lodgings, hoping he would say Chassidus, but the Alter Rebbe refused.

Two simple Jews broke out of the crowd, and said to the Alter Rebbe:

"We are very distant [from a Jewish community] in Russia¹⁶ but Hashem is our witness that we serve Him and fulfill everything we know from the Torah. Rebbe, say Torah and strengthen our hearts to serve Him..."

The Alter Rebbe agreed, and some time later, he entered the courtyard and said a *maamar*. It was extremely cold outside, but their hearts felt warm inside...

The Alter Rebbe also penned three letters; to Reb Levi Yitzchak of

Berdichev, Reb Baruch of Mezhibuzh, and to the Chassidim, thanking Hashem for His kindness and exhorting Chassidim to control their impulses and not seek any retribution for his suffering.

"Hashem did wonders *in the world*," writes the Alter Rebbe to Reb Levi Yitzchak, in a line that was quoted by the Rebbe countless times. "His name was glorified and sanctified *in public*, especially in the eyes of the ministers and the all nations in the land . . . they all said, 'It was from Hashem...'"

"When I read the *possuk Padah Beshalom Nafshi*, before I began the following *possuk* afterwards, I came out in peace..."

The news spread about the Alter Rebbe's release, and celebrations broke out in all the Chassidic centers. Many non-Chassidim participated as well, rejoicing in the Alter Rebbe's exoneration. In the city of Yas (Jassy) in Romania, there was only a bare *minyan* of Chassidim, but when the news arrived on the second night of Chanukah, the joy spread throughout the entire city.



The next year, the Alter Rebbe feared that celebrations might get a bit out of control, and he penned another letter, the one famously known as *Katonti*, ensuring the Chassidim live up to the standards he set for them.

Chassidim wondered whether the Alter Rebbe himself would celebrate. They had already decided that *tachanun* would not be recited, but

they were unsure if the Alter Rebbe would sanction anything else. Many wanted to come to Liozna, but a strict notice had been sent out by the Maharil that nobody was allowed to come.

The above mentioned Reb Yaakov Smilianer served as the *shadar* for Colel Chabad. He suggested to the Chassidim that they collect the money for Eretz Yisroel earlier, allowing him to arrive back in Liozna before Yud-Tes Kislev, and he would attempt to nullify the decree.

Ultimately, he was successful, and the Chassidim were notified that they were welcome. Many people traveled to Liozna where a great celebration was held, and the Alter Rebbe delivered a *maamar* (*Dibbur Hamaschil "Lshana acheres kva'um—They established it the next year"*).¹⁷



The visit the Alter Rebbe received from the Maggid and Baal Shem Tov while in prison was a defining moment in the history of Chassidus Chabad.

"They explained to the Alter Rebbe," the Rebbe related in a *sicha*,¹⁸ "that there was a *kitrug* in Heaven for him disseminating Chassidus.

"The Alter Rebbe asked, if there was a *kitrug*, what should he do afterwards—they had informed him that the *kitrug* was nullified, and he would be freed—so what should he do then?

"They replied that to the contrary, not only should he not cease spreading Chassidus, but he should do so even more than before."

In the following years, the Alter Rebbe's Chassidus changed drastically, from short, concise Torahs to long, elaborate *drushim* the likes of which we know of from Likutei Torah and so on. Of the *sefarim* printed with the Alter Rebbe's *maamarim*, almost all are from the years following Yud-Tes Kislev until his passing 14 years later.

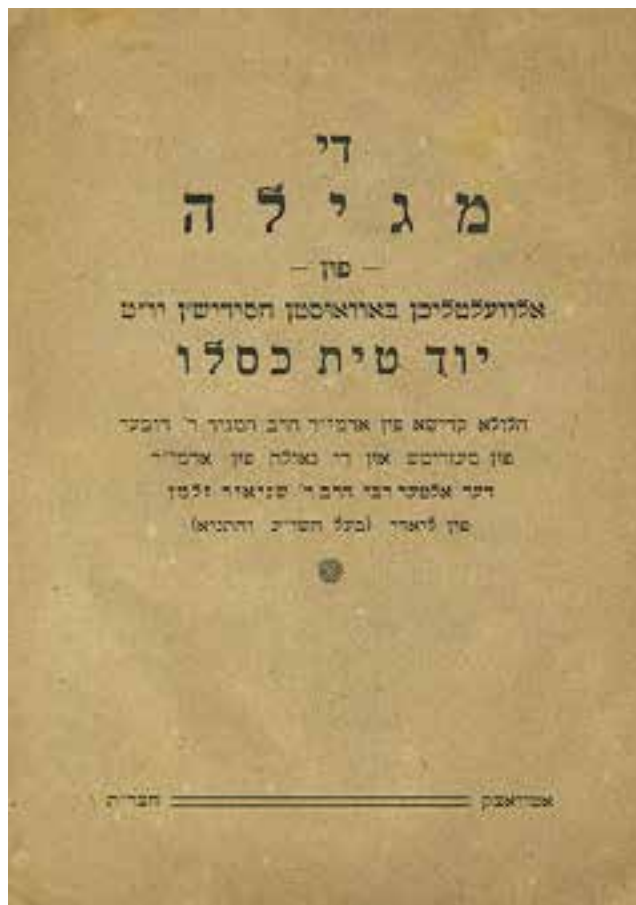
For the Rabbeim, the term "*noch Peterburg*" was a code-word referring to the vast expansion of Chassidus that took place after the Alter Rebbe's liberation, both conceptually and geographically.

The initial *kitrug* had been removed, and it was time to spread the *maayanos* all the way to *chutza*, to the farthest reaches, and usher in the coming of Moshiach. May it be *b'meheira b'yameinu mamash!* **T**



Lshana tova, bidarkei hachassidus ubilimud hachassidus, tikaseivu viseichaseimu!

1. For more about the Alter Rebbe's *chadarim*, see the column "Avos Hachassidus" in Hatomim; translated in English in Branches of the Chassidic Menorah, vol. 1: Third Generation.
2. Sefer Hasichos 5684 pg. 54.
3. Hamaasar Harishon pg. 1-2, 13.
4. This refers to Reb Chaim Avraham. In the Rebbe's *reshima*, he is referred to plainly as Reb Avraham.
5. Reshimas Hayoman pg. 151.
6. Reshimas Hayoman pg. 315, 321. The Alter Rebbe described the event by saying, "*Tzvachin af aksin*, the oxen cried out." Meaning, the miraculous events weren't due to his own intervention, rather they occurred on their own.
7. Reshimas Hayoman pg. 302-3, 308-9.
8. Sefer Hasichos 5686 pg. 95.
9. The Vaad Arba Aratzos was a central



"THE MEGILLAH OF YUD TES KISLEV", PRINTED IN OTVOTZK, 5698*.

Rabbinic establishment for the Jews of Poland (consisting of the four provinces of Greater Poland, Little Poland, Galicia-Podolia and Volhynia) that existed for about 150 years. What began as a noble organization eventually weakened and degenerated, until it was finally abolished by the Russian government when Poland ceased to be an independent country.

10. See Hamaasar Harishon.
11. Sefer Hasichos 5698 pg. 276.
12. Reshimos Hayoman pg. 316.
13. Eve of Zos Chanukah 5746, *sicha* 3, transcribed from Ashreinu Audio with minor edits. See *Toras Menachem - Hisvaaduyos* 5746 vol. 2 pg. 190.
14. Equivalent of around 450 miles.
15. Hamaasar Harishon pg. 102-4.
16. Jews weren't allowed to live in S. Petersburg without a special permit, being outside of the Pale of Settlement, so there was no established Jewish community there.
17. Sefer Hasichos 5697 pg. 226.
18. Eve of Zos Chanukah 5746, *sicha* 3, transcribed from Ashreinu Audio with minor edits. See *Toras Menachem - Hisvaaduyos* 5746 vol. 2 pg. 199-200.



לע"נ
ר' יהודה ע"ה
בן ר' משה יעקב ע"ה
גלב"ע ר"ח כסלו התשנ"ט
תנ"צ'ב'ה'
נדפס ע"י בנו
הרה"ת השליח ר' יוסף יצחק
וזוגתו מרת ביילא רחל ומשפחתם שיחיו
ביסטאן



Rage about the Holocaust

In the following letter, the Rebbe offers fascinating insight into the proper understanding (or lack thereof) of the Holocaust and the conclusions we must draw today from this horrific occurrence.

By the grace of God
5733
Dr. ...
Cambridge, Mass.

Greetings and blessings.

I duly received your letter of ... in which you write that you feel rage, etc. as a result of the Holocaust.

There is a prevalent misconception about the Holocaust that it was something new and unprecedented, and therefore requires an explanation which has never before been thought of. In truth, however, the only thing that is new about it is that it happened in the 20th Century, in a country which was one of the foremost in philosophy and science, with the rest of the world looking on with complete indifference. It only points out the glaring bankruptcy of the world's so-called "civilization."

The fact is—and in view of your academic background (Ph.D.) you must surely know—that the Jewish people had suffered Holocausts before, and—relatively speaking—even worse [than the Nazi Holocaust]. There was the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash at the hands of the Babylonians, and the destruction of the second Beis Hamikdash by the Romans. In both cases more than one third of our people—men, women and children—were brutally slain, and most of the remainder uprooted and exiled, or sold into slavery. This in addition to the loss of the spiritual center in Jerusalem, loss of the country, and independence, etc. There were the Crusades in the Middle Ages, with the loss of countless Jewish communities and Jewish lives, and more. So why single out the recent—and let us hope last—Holocaust?

Furthermore, from the viewpoint of the question, "Shall the judge of all the earth not do justice?" (a question, incidentally, asked by our patriarch Abraham); in other words, from the viewpoint of Divine justice, which is clearly the basis of your rage, etc., as you state in your letter, surely there is no difference in principle between the Holocaust and seeing a child afflicted with disease (as you also mention), for the child's suffering cannot be justified as punishment.

A further point: has it not occurred to you that throughout the ages there were faithful and God-fearing Jews, among them profound thinkers, who contemplated these and other problems, dedicating a lifetime to study and research, and whose works have become the Guide for the Perplexed (the actual title of the celebrated classic by the Rambam)? Do you think that all these great minds simply ignored a problem such as the Holocaust?



Finally—and this is perhaps the most essential point—what would you say of a person, even a superhuman being, who declared that were it not for the Holocaust he would walk humbly before God and obey all His mitzvos, yet because of the Holocaust he is impelled to conclude that God is limited in his intellect, like me and you— and indeed more so, for you and I would not tolerate such a thing?

In summary, the question about the Holocaust is as old as the age-old question: Why do the wicked prosper? It has been dealt with at great length and with profundity by great minds and in great books throughout the ages. We have not only learned to live with it, but it has not shaken the belief of the believer, for the simple reason that the human mind, even the greatest, is woefully limited and inadequate to question the Divine intellect.

The main point I wish to bring out here is that those who say that they cannot obey and fulfill the Divine mitzvos because of the Holocaust are only looking for an excuse, and it is a feeble attempt at self-justification in the face of a troubling conscience.

Moreover, to evoke the memory of the sacred martyrs—who lost their lives in the Holocaust for no other reason but that they are Jews—does not reflect, in my opinion, an honest concern for them, if their sacred memory is used as an excuse to lessen one's commitment to our people and our sacred heritage.

I trust you will forgive me if I feel impelled because of what is at stake to add that the last remark is an understatement.

I noted that you wanted to see me personally in regard to the subject matter of your letter, but there is really no need for it, since there is surely no need to add more to what has been said above. Besides, the schedule of appointments is fully booked for a long time ahead. So why wait?

With blessing,



How To Plan A Family

In the preparation of this article
we were greatly assisted by Rabbi
Shmuli Avtzon and **Sichos in English**.

This article has been reviewed
by **Rabbi Pesach Schmerling**.

לע"נ
האשה החשובה והצנועה הרבנית
מרת מינדל בת מו"ה ר' דוד ויענטא ע"ה
ז"ל פעלער
זכתה להיות שלוחה של
כ"ק אדמו"ר זצוקללה"ה נבג"מ זי"ע
למעלה מיובל שנים וקירבה רבים
מאחב"י לתורה ומצוות ולחסידות
נלב"ע ערב ר"ה לחסידות
ח"י כסלו ה'תשע"ח
ת"נ צ"ב'ה'
נדבת בנה
הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל ומשפחתו שיחיו
פעלער



The first mitzvah

Bearing children is the single most important thing that a person can do.¹ The very first mitzvah of the 613 mitzvos is—פרו ורבו—be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it. The fact that it's the first mitzvah in the Torah—even before “I am Hashem your G-d”—shows just how important it is.² The Midrash tells us that “the concept of Torah” came before the creation of the world, but “the concept of Yidden” came before everything, including Torah. The birth of another Jewish child comes before everything, even “the concept of Torah!”³

The mitzvah from the Torah is to have two children: a boy and a girl, but the mitzvah of *chachamim* is that one should continue having children as long as possible, “for anyone who adds a soul to the Jewish people is considered as if he built an entire world.”⁴

It is the first mitzvah in the Torah—and it's also the first *bracha* in the Torah, for it is the greatest *bracha* that one can be blessed with.⁵

Every individual is an *olam malei*, an entire world. When you bring a child into the world, you are bringing an entire world, and you are creating an infinite lineage of people that will come from that child. When you choose *not* to have another child, that is spiritually eliminating an entire lineage of people that could have resulted from this child.⁶

Yidden throughout all the generations—in Eretz Yisroel, as well as during all times of *galus*—always considered it to be the greatest *bracha* to have many children.⁷ This goes back to the earliest history of the Jewish people. The *Imhahos* were very different from one another: Sara performed outreach to women, which we don't find by the other *Imahos*; Rivka had unique qualities that the other *Imahos* didn't have, and so on—and we derive a lesson from each of their individual qualities. There is only one thing that we find by every single one of the *Imahos*—Sara, Rivka, Rochel, and Leah—a yearning and striving to have children. “*Sara hut avekgelait a velt!*” (loosely: “She gave it her all”). She came with complaints to Avraham Avinu, and she didn't allow him to rest: she needed to have children! The same was true

with Rivka and Rochel. Even Leah, who merited to have children immediately after her marriage, did everything in her power to have more.⁸

Nachas

We see clearly that the greatest *nachas* that a person can have is from raising a family. By no means is it easy but when, after all the hardships, doubts and questions, you come out successfully on the other side with children and grandchildren who follow the ways of Torah and mitzvos, there is no greater feeling! *Lefum tzaara agra* (according to the pain is the gain).⁹ You can't receive this same *nachas* from a single child, for with every additional child comes a new world of *nachas*, each in their own unique way: One child gives *nachas* in the arena of Torah, another in *avoda*, and a third in *gemmilus chassadim*.¹⁰

When a person doesn't have as many children as they can, they are denying themselves the greatest *bracha*, light, and warmth that Hashem can give a person. It is only in the darkness of today's *galus* that people tragically consider children a burden.¹¹ It is not hard to find older people who regret the fact that they didn't raise large families—“They grab their heads that they let slip such a lofty and precious opportunity to have more children”—but it's too late...¹²

(This can be felt on a practical level: “When children grow up and move away to build their own families,” the Rebbe said, “the parents want to visit their children and grandchildren, and even great-grandchildren. But if they have only one or two children, they can only visit every half a year or so... The parents can't sit in their children's homes all the time. Between trips, they are forced to be alone, without having someone to open themselves up to. Whereas parents who have many children can visit one child, stay for a while—and then move on to the next child. Similarly, the children and grandchildren come to visit their parents and grandparents from time to time, and everyone sits together—a *minyán* at the table—ושמחת לפני ה' אלוֹקֶיךָ אֹתָהּ וּבְנֶיךָ וּבְנוֹתֶיךָ—and the grandfathers and grandmothers

receive much *nachas* from their children and grandchildren.”¹³)

The model family?

The mitzvah of having children was entrusted to every single couple—whether or not their home environment is ideal; whether or not they are confident in their ability to raise good children; and whether or not they believe that they have the financial resources to continue having children.¹⁴

It applies whether they already have two children (a boy and a girl), or they’ve already caught up with Yaakov Avinu, with twelve boys and a girl—they are still enjoined to have more.¹⁵

There are three partners in the creation of every child: the father, the mother, and Hashem. The father and mother can only control that they definitely *won’t* have children, but anything past that, in fact everything else—that the mother will become pregnant, that the child will be healthy, and how the child’s life will turn out—is controlled completely by the third partner, Hashem. And Hashem gave his opinion as to whether or not a person should try having children; He said *pru u’rvu*, be fruitful and multiply—without exceptions or quotas.¹⁶

The mitzvah applies until you’ve fulfilled the second part of the *possuk*, that you’ve *filled the world and conquered it*. If in fact there’s a situation when one is not meant to have children at that time, for whatever reason, then Hashem will ensure that you won’t.¹⁷

Population control

“One cannot argue that it suffices to have two children, a boy and a girl, for they are leaving a replacement for themselves and not reducing the amount of people in the world—because you weren’t created only *not to cause damage*, you were created to *build worlds* through having children and grandchildren, thereby becoming a partner with Hashem in creation.”

(Tzav, Shabbos Zachor, 5744)

How to bring Moshiach

10 Shevat 5730 marked a special time by the Rebbe: the completion of Moshiach’s *sefer Torah*. The initiative had begun decades earlier by the Frieddiker Rebbe, but although the *sefer Torah* had nearly been completed at the time, for reasons unknown it was never brought to fruition. Finally, as the twentieth anniversary of the Rebbe’s *nesius* was approaching, the Rebbe announced that “all obstacles have been removed” and it was time to finish it. Chassidim from around the world flew in to celebrate this momentous occasion with the Rebbe, and the atmosphere of Moshiach was felt vividly in the air.

The Torah was completed on Friday, Erev Yud Shevat. At the farbrengen on Motzei Shabbos, with feelings of anticipation for Moshiach running high, the Rebbe spoke about a powerful way to bring him closer:

It says in the Gemara that “Ben Dovid [Moshiach] will not come until all souls in [the treasury of souls called] ‘guf’ will be finished...”

...There are those who are mistaken and want to debate about birth control and so on—but they are misinterpreting the Torah. Having children is not only a personal obligation to fulfill the first mitzvah of the Torah to “fill the world and conquer it,” but it is a matter that affects everyone—the geula of the entire Jewish nation depends on it.

This is a special shlichus that depends especially on women and girls, wherever they may be; how much more so regarding those who are already aware of the teachings, directives, and guidance of the [Frieddiker] Rebbe...

This would become a common theme in the *sichos* throughout the years, that especially now, in the final days of *galus*, it is vital to have children and thereby bring the *geula*.

Family planning: An imposter hiding in a kapote

The Rebbe truly felt that family planning was actively hurting families, and his language in the sichos on the topic were often quite sharp. Below, we bring the Rebbe's words as they were said, but we encourage our readers to watch and listen to the original sichos, where one can hear the compassion and care with which the Rebbe was speaking.

On the surface, the Rebbe said, “family planning” may sound like a sensible idea: If you plan everything else in your life, how much more so should you be organized in an endeavor as significant as child-bearing, to ensure that the children should come at the appropriate time and ideal circumstance.

In reality, however, it is a dangerous “plan,” concealed in a “silk *kapote*,” in holy clothing; it might have a fancy, politically correct name—*family planning*—but really it's a deceptive term for disrupting Hashem's natural order, the natural functions of our bodies.¹⁸ “One must know that when you disrupt Hashem's ways and prevent birth, you are damaging yourself and everyone around you.”¹⁹ And it has terrible effects on family life as well:

“...It causes tensions in the relationship between husband and wife, which, in turn, leads to spoiling, *r'l*, their life together—here there are precautions, here there are limitations, here comes a fight, and here there is a strain. When you disrupt the normal way that Hashem set up life in His Torah, and you start introducing changes, it hurts the relationship and *shalom bayis* between husband and wife, and it even hurts their health—both the wife's and the husband's.”²⁰ (See more on this below.)

What about getting a heter for health?

There is a scenario when it is permitted to hold off on having children—when it is dangerous for the mother.²¹ It is impossible for the parents to have unbiased judgement in

this matter, and a rav must be consulted. If, in fact, the situation calls for a *heter*, then it is *the Torah itself* that is directing the person to push off having children.²²

However, if a *heter* is not really necessary, and parents made the decision that they shouldn't be having children for other reasons, then even if they *do* manage to get a *heter* from a rav, they should know that the *yetzer hara* is behind it, he is concealed in holy clothing.²³ When one finds *heterim* for things that the *yetzer hara* wants, they are a *naval birshus haTorah*, a disgrace with the Torah's permission.²⁴

The plea of a child

A child comes home and tells his parents with excitement that he learned in Chumash that the Yidden in Mitzrayim “were fruitful and multiplied... very very much,” and, as children are wont to do, he asks his parents for more brothers and sisters. That causes the parents to do everything in their power to fulfill the mitzvah of bearing children without any calculations, so they shouldn't regret the fact that they missed this valuable opportunity.²⁵

Unstable home

In addition to teaching the general authentic Torah perspective on this topic, namely, that having children is *the* single most important goal and it overrides all other considerations, the Rebbe also expounded upon certain specific scenarios which are commonly brought up regarding this outlook:

Should a couple be encouraged to have more children if the *shalom bayis* is lacking, or when the level of *frumkeit* leaves ample room for improvement?

We have a lesson for this in Torah: in certain situations that a woman acts very inappropriately, she gains the status of a *sota*. She is brought to the *Beis Hamikdash* and tested with the *sota* water to determine as to whether she was indeed faithful to her husband. If she fails the test, she dies. But if she passes, the Torah promises her that, as repayment for all

the embarrassment and suffering she endured, she will be blessed in the realm of childbirth: if she was barren, she will have children; if she already has children, she will have more children, and more beautiful ones.

Think about it: Whether or not the woman actually sinned, this couple's *shalom bayis* is clearly not doing well, and this woman is obviously not *tzniusdik*. Yet the Torah says that the greatest *bracha* that can be given to this family is to have *more* children!

So in fact, the opposite is true. When you start disrupting the natural order that Hashem set up—by doing family planning—that *itself* causes tension and fights between the husband and wife.²⁶

Am I ready to be a parent?

Some people think that because raising children is such a serious responsibility, they will wait until they feel certain that they can be good parents and positively influence their children. Otherwise, it's too much of a risk that the children won't be brought up well.

Here, too, we have a lesson from the Torah. King Chizkiyahu saw with *ruach hakodesh* that he would have evil progeny, and he made the decision not to have children. Yet Hashem punished him for this. The *navi* told him: “בהדי כבשי דרחמנא למה לך מאי דמפקדת איבעי לך למעבד ומה דניחא קמיה קודשא בריך הוא לעבד—Why do you mix into Hashem's ways? That which you have been commanded [the mitzvah of procreation] you are required to perform, and that which is acceptable in the eyes of Hashem, blessed be He, let Him perform.”

Chizkiyahu was not simply *concerned* that his children would turn out bad—he knew it! In fact, he went on to have Menashe, one of the most evil kings in the history of the Jewish people. Yet—that wasn't his calculation to make: he needed to fulfill his obligation to have children, and the rest was up to Hashem. (Many of the later descendants of Chizkiyahu, it turns out, were in fact great tzadikim.)

How much more so is this true if you're only “worried” that your children *might* not come out right. You must nevertheless fulfill

your mitzvah of having children, with joy and *bitachon*, and Hashem will grant you success in educating them.²⁷

Financial Considerations

Beyond the considerations above, which seem to be of the more moral variety, there seem to be practical considerations.

The current mindset in America is that a responsible person only has children when he knows how he will cover the significant expenses involved. As much as it costs to raise children in the secular world, it costs even more to raise a Jewish family, especially with the high cost of tuition (for which we pay double: taxes for the public schools, and tuition for schooling).²⁸

The Rebbe spoke strongly about never allowing such considerations to get in the way of having children. How can you make such calculations when you're dealing with the greatest *bracha* that you can be blessed with?²⁹

Such a mindset means that you are a “weak believer.” It is a fundamental part of our faith that Hashem is the one who provides our *parnasa*, as we say in *benching*: הזן את העולם כולו... בחן ובחסד וברחמים—Hashem is the one who sustains the entire world! Hashem has the responsibility to sustain all of the billions of humans in the world, and also the animals, insects, and even vegetation—and he always comes through for each one of them.³⁰

When you bring a child into the world, Hashem is the one who has the responsibility of sustaining him, and a new channel of *parnasa* is created for each child. Later on, this channel will go directly to him, but for the first part of his life, the parents have the merit to serve as Hashem's messengers to bring the *parnasa*—Hashem's money—to the child.³¹ True, the parents need to create a vessel to receive Hashem's *parnasa*—but that's all it is, a vessel. If you choose not to have children—and, consequently, the new channels of *parnasa* they come with—you're harming your own *parnasa*!

“This person has been working hard to make a living, and he only made this-and-this

amount of money, which wouldn't be enough to support more children. So—he says—this proves that he was right [not to have more children]!

*“He was wrong! The Gemara says that ‘a child is born together with his loaf of bread.’ When Hashem partners with parents and gives them a child—Hashem’s child—then He provides *parnasa* because of the child. If a person stops this process, he is hurting his own *parnasa*!”*³² “The *bracha* of Hashem brings riches, not only bare necessities. So if you want riches—both physically and spiritually—you need to provide the vessels [through having children]. If there are no vessels, ‘the oil will stop flowing.’”³³

The Elephant in the Room: Peer Pressure

The most difficult challenge of all—the challenge that often lurks behind all the other excuses and considerations—is peer pressure, the fact that having a large family runs contrary to today’s culture, and can cause someone to feel ridiculed by their friends and neighbors.³⁴ This is especially true in today’s day and age, when women are out and about and meet other women with a non-Torah outlook on family building; some of those

secular views on families may rub off on them as well.

We must always remember, the Rebbe said, that it might not be considered “cultured” and “modern” and “in style” to have a large family—but the same “modernity” and “culture” that brought Hitler and the Nazis *yemach shemam* is what’s creating the atmosphere that it’s not cultural to have children—thus fulfilling Hitler’s goal.³⁵

When one takes an objective view and compares the family life of these “peers” to that of those who lead a family in accordance with Torah—that itself should be enough to put this issue to rest.³⁶ [More on this in the following article “The Rebbe’s View On Spacing”]

One More Child

When Pharaoh decreed that every newborn boy should be drowned in the Nile, Amram, the leader of the generation, said: *Should we toil in vain?* Why should we continue having children when they will be immediately thrown into the river? He proceeded to divorce his wife Yocheved, and he was followed by the rest of the Jewish people.

His young daughter told him that he was making a mistake. Hashem told us to have children, so how can you consider what Pharaoh says?! He immediately listened to his daughter and reunited with his wife.

Now, his calculation seems to have made eminent sense: As soon as a boy is born, he would be murdered in accordance Pharaoh’s decree, so what’s the point of having children? The world isn’t being filled by these children anyway! Why shouldn’t we wait until the decree passes?

What happened as a result of the fact that Amram ignored the odds and reunited with his wife? Moshe, the savior of the entire Jewish nation, was born. Not only was he not drowned, but his birth brought about a swift end to the decree against baby boys, and ultimately he was the one who brought the redemption for the entire nation!

Today, the considerations are much less substantial than they were then. And when someone considers pushing off children for considerations of *parnasa* and so forth, they must know that they are holding up the *geula*! אין בן דוד בא עד שיכלו כל הנשמות שבגוף—Moshiach will come when all the *neshamos* that were destined to be born in *galus* are born.

(Shabbos Parshas Bamidbar, 25 Iyar 5743)

A new flow of kindness

The birth of a new child brings a new flow of Hashem’s kindness. It was Hashem’s great kindness to bring this new life into being and Hashem’s kindness continues to sustain it. This new flow of kindness is not limited to the new child; once Hashem is in the spirit of flowing kindness—once Hashem is in a “good mood,” so to speak—it spreads to the entire family and truly to the entire world.

(Shabbos Parshas Yisro 5744)



The Rebbe's View on Spacing

In the early days of the Rebbe's campaign against family planning, Rabbi Nachman Bernhard, a *rav* in Johannesburg, South Africa, was asked to address a group of women who were on the *taharas hamishpacha* committee, a group especially devoted to the Rebbe's *mitzvot* for women, on the subject of "How to Present Taharat Hamishpacha to the Uncommitted." Before his scheduled talk, he wrote to the Rebbe for guidance:

"...One of the young women active in this field told me that she, as well as all of her colleagues (both contemporaries and older), are having great difficulty in presenting convincingly one particular aspect of... family planning. Many people are willing to accept all the points about the ongoing obligation of פריה ורבייה, as well as the observance of טהרת המשפחה, but nevertheless they (and this includes very many frum couples) tend to indulge in a limited degree and kind of 'family planning' by 'spacing' or spreading out their children over several years, instead of having one right after the other without a break.

"It is very hard to persuade them that this is wrong. They are able to cite numerous seemingly reasonable and impressive arguments in favor of this practice. These are based on personal, psychological, physiological, and (to a much lesser extent) financial considerations. They

revolve around the physical and mental health of the mother, claiming that the average woman simply needs a rest of a year or 2 or 3 between pregnancies, especially after she has already been through a few.

"...If, in fact, the position of the Rebbe שליט"א is being correctly interpreted as being opposed to even this above-mentioned kind of limited "family planning," then we are in need of, and respectfully request, his guidance and help in how to convey this successfully to frum and non-frum alike... Since it is considered likely that this subject will be raised at this session on Sunday morning, it would be very helpful if it were possible to have the views of the Rebbe שליט"א by then."

The Rebbe responded:

ע"ד "ספייסינג וכו" –

שייך בדבר התלוי בבחירת האדם, ונמצא ברשות האדם רק בנוגע למניעת הריון – אבל ההריון ושיהי' הולד בתכלית השלימות – תלוי רק בהשם. ואפשר שאם לא עכשיו אימתי. ולד"ה [ולדברי הכל] (ע"פ טבע) כל שהאשה צעירה יותר הולד מושלם יותר.

– נידס רעסט וכו" –

קשה להאמין שאשה שכבר טעמה וקיבלה בפועל התענוג ונח"ר [ונחת רוח] בהולדת ילד ובגידולו לנגד עיני' והתקדמותו ע"י חינוכה ומסנ"פ [ומסירות נפש] שלה וכו' – תסכים (ועאכו"כ – שתראה) לשלול מעצמה כ"ז מטעמים הנ"ל. ובפרט בהתבוננות ב(1) והטעם הפנימי (סוב-קאנשים) "ראת" צער העיבור והלידה

וטורח הגידול, אי אפשריות להשתתף בכמה אירועים במשך זמן זה וטעמים כיו"ב, והעיקר—ע"פ יסוד והתחלת כל השו"ע—מה תאמרה המלעיגות! וכשיבארו שזוהי המניעה האמיתית—הרי בשמחה ימסרו להשם ההחלטה ע"ד זמן הטוב להתברך בעוד זחור"ק. יש להאריך בכה"ל וגם להוסיף עוד—ולדכותי בודאי יספיק ועפמש"נ: תן לחכם ויחכם עוד. והקב"ה יהי עם פיהו וכו'.

“Regarding “Spacing etc.”—

[Such logic] can only be applied to something that is a person's choice. But a person can only choose not to get pregnant—it is up to only Hashem as to whether a person will actually get pregnant and whether the infant will be completely healthy. It's possible that “if not now, then when?”

According to everyone (in the natural order), the younger a woman is, the healthier the baby will be.

“Needs rest etc.”—

It is difficult to believe that a woman who has already tasted and actually received the enjoyment and *nachas* from giving birth to a child and seeing him grow up before her eyes, and [seeing] his progress through her educating him and her *mesiras nefesh* [for him] and so on

—[it is difficult to believe] that she would agree to deny herself this enjoyment for reasons mentioned above [in Rabbi Bernhard's letter] (and she certainly wouldn't want to deny this enjoyment from herself). Especially after contemplating the first point mentioned above.

The inner (subconscious) reason for this [—their interest in spacing—] is their “fear” of: the pains of pregnancy and childbirth, the burdens of child-rearing, the fact that they won't be able to participate in events during this time period, and other such reasons.

The main [subconscious] reason—based on the founding principle and beginning of the entire Shulchan Aruch—is that people will scoff at them!

When you explain to them that this is the true obstacle—then they will joyfully hand over the decision of the best time to have more children to Hashem.

Much more can be elaborated on this, and additional points can be made—for you this

will surely suffice, following the dictum: give to the wise and he will increase wisdom.

May Hashem be with your tongue etc.”

At the meeting, Rabbi Bernhard presented the Rebbe's response, and the Rebbe also spoke about the subject in the following farbrengen, on 24 Teves 5741*. But still there were questions. In a report to the Rebbe following the meeting, he writes:

...The vast majority, however, felt that a big problem remained unresolved... namely, the sheer unrelieved physical and emotional strain of attending to the endless and urgent needs and demands of a number of small children simultaneously. This, they claim, can be so exhausting and nerve wracking that it takes much of the joy, תענוג ונחת out of motherhood. These women are committed to תורה ומצוות and the Rebbe שליט"א... but they do feel that the genuine טורח הגידול of numerous small children at the same time, as well as the wearying and weakening effects of continuous pregnancies, is being underestimated.

It is, of course, well known to them that in extreme cases, where the mother's physical or psychological health are being seriously jeopardized, the Rebbe agrees that some permissible form of contraception may be legitimately resorted to. But these women are not talking in cases of literal or very likely סכנת נפשות. Nevertheless, in their desperation they can often become absolutely frantic, highly irritable, with a general constant tiredness, loss of vitality, and even severe depression. Naturally, all this usually has very undesirable effects upon the husband and children, and may even undermine the entire marriage.

Another factor is that these women are caught up in the הפצה work. This is for them a vital expression of their loyal support of the Rebbe שליט"א. Although they are quite prepared to miss out on many things for the sake of family building, much of their sense of joy and verve and self-image, as well as their whole status as Lubavitchers, are impaired by their having to drop out of הפצה work for lack of time and/or energy, perhaps for quite a few years.

They further contend that it can make a significant difference for the development and raising of each child if some “time off” between babies were to allow the mother to concentrate

better—both in terms of actual time available, as well as in terms of her calmer nerves and mental composure—on the new baby. This would also enable her, for the same reasons, to relate better to her own children.

At the farbrengen of Rosh Chodesh Shevat 5741*, the Rebbe addressed the issue at length, going through each question point by point.

The Rebbe began by saying that some general societal norms have unfortunately rubbed off on many Jewish homes. Just a few generations ago, parents would never have considered interfering with Hashem's business, especially when it comes to something as important as having children. Now, because parents do have a small say in the matter, this was misinterpreted (in recent times) as an invitation to mix into Hashem's affairs. It was forgotten that Hashem gives the parents the choice only to prevent themselves from becoming pregnant—but to become pregnant, and to have healthy children, depends only on Hashem, and He will surely choose the best time for the mother and father.

Then the Rebbe added something else:

The best time

The Chumash tells us that when Moshe Rabeinu was on the mountain, he asked Hashem to “show me Your face.” Hashem responded that “you will see My back, but My face must not be seen.” The Gemara explains that Hashem was telling him the following: **When I wanted** [to show you My glory at the burning bush], **you did not want** [to see it, as it is stated: “And Moshe concealed his face, fearing to gaze upon Hashem”]. **But now that you want, I do not want** [to show it to you].”

This teaches us a lesson. Obviously, Hashem wasn't getting “even” with Moshe Rabeinu. But when Hashem gives us a *bracha*, He doesn't want it to be free and underserved; He wants us to be *partners* with Him.

How can we be good partners with Hashem? By letting Him call the shots—by depending on Him fully as a partner and letting Him make the decision as to when the best time to have a child is. When the decision is left up to Hashem, it happens at the best time for all parties involved.

But as soon as the person gets involved, and he *doesn't* allow Hashem to make the decision—he doesn't allow it when *Hashem wanted it*—then even when the person decides that, according to his calculations, he *is* ready—you *want*—he lacks the vessel that brings Hashem's *brachos*.

(The Rebbe said that certainly Hashem is *maarich af* [slow to anger], especially since these people have good intentions, and added that, “I don't want to scare people, but simply to give over what it says in the Torah.”)

Furthermore: the timing when a child is conceived, born, and grows up is pivotal, and it will impact his entire lifetime. Not only does it affect the child himself, but all the future generations that will come from him. When a parent considers the best time for the child to be born, the calculation is bound to be limited to the foresight they have. Whereas the parents are thinking a few months ahead, Hashem is planning decades and generations ahead. Only He knows the future generations and the unlimited factors that must go into such a decision—so such a decision must be left up to Him, and He will decide when it is best.³⁷

What about Mivtzoim?

Regarding the argument that having children would affect the *mivtzoim* work, the Rebbe said that if Hashem chooses to bless you with a child, then he obviously believes that this is more important—much more important—than *mivtzoim*. As discussed above, having children is the single most important thing that a person can do—“the concept of the Yidden preceded the Torah!”

In the long run, the *mivtzoim* work itself will likely benefit. When you have a child, that child can go on to accomplish tremendous things in *mivtzoim*, possibly even more than you. So, in effect, having another child is better for the *mivtzoim* work, too. Furthermore: Hashem gives the mother success in the free time that she does have, so that in the time she does do *mivtzoim*, her work is successful.

[The Rebbe also addressed concerns that constant child bearing would take its toll on

the mothers physical appearance (see the farbrengen at length).^{38]}

What is the reality?

But what about the argument that having many consecutive children hurts one's ability to raise them? Can you focus on each child when there are so many one after the other?

First of all, the Rebbe said, Hashem is the one who has the responsibility to take care of the children—in all areas. Even if one believes that their ability to raise children may be

hampered by the difficulties of continuous pregnancy and childbirth, and the difficulties of raising children—the reality is that Hashem is well aware of all this, and if He chooses to give the parents another child, He will certainly provide the children with healthy parents and a healthy home.

Beyond that, all these arguments might *sound* nice, but reality tells a different story.

Theories can always be argued, the Rebbe said. You can argue and argue and argue, but if someone perceives the issue differently, they will act based on their perception. But when

Billions More

Several times during this campaign, the Rebbe made clear that the mitzvah of having children is as relevant to non-Jews as it is to Yidden. In one farbrengen, the Rebbe said: “This *bracha* was given to Adam Harishon and Chava and to all succeeding generations, that they should have children and grandchildren, to the point that they will ‘fill the entire world and subdue it.’ Mankind will take over the **entire** world, fill it and take it over, so that the world will be a refined world—not a world of anarchy or lack of morality. For this, the world must be filled with people; people educated in a way that they can be recognized as creations of Hashem.”⁴²

In a fascinating *yechidus*⁴³ with the Sadigerer Rebbe which took place during the first few weeks of the Rebbe's campaign against family planning, we can see just how unrelenting the Rebbe was on this point.

The Sadigerer Rebbe raised the issue that doctors in Israel were disparaging towards the idea of having large families.

The Rebbe responded that, indeed, we must especially try to influence the doctors in this area, since they lead the opposition to having large families; all who oppose having large families use the doctors as their justification.

The Rebbe then spoke of the irony of the situation. “The government spends \$30,000 dollars to bring a new family to Israel, while spending—I have no idea how much—to encourage small families and decrease the birth rate.”

The first solution, the Rebbe said, was to increase the stipends to large families. The Sadigerer Rebbe, however, raised concerns that stipends for large families in Israel go to large Arab families as well. The Rebbe responded that discriminating solutions are simply untenable and would be interpreted as racism.

But would it be better not to provide family stipends at all? The Rebbe continued:

“All children of Noach are instructed to inhabit the world by having children. They, too, are instructed not to murder [through abortion]; it is one of the *sheva mitzvos bnei Noach*. Consequently, it is also incumbent upon the Yid to encourage the non-Jew to fulfill those mitzvahs in which they are obligated. I don't believe in an attitude of ‘Let me die with the *Pelishtim*’—to withhold support from Jewish families just so that Arabs will also not receive it.”

The Sadigerer Rebbe then asked, “If so, what will be with demographics?”

The Rebbe replied:

“...Since this is an approach based on Shulchan Aruch, we need to rely on Hashem; we can trust that things will work out. If we were deciding this on our own, in contradiction to the *sheva mitzvos bnei Noach*, or if we were doing something irrelevant to those laws—then matters would be different.

“However, by Torah law a Jew has an obligation (when he has the capacity) not to permit a non-Jew's transgression of his *mitzvos*.”

something has already been tried in the past, there is no room for argument: we need only to look at the results and follow them.

We have 3,000 years of Jewish history since *matan Torah*; we've seen people who kept the Torah to the fullest extent, and those who went other ways. The same is true in this area—people have been engaging in family planning for decades, and we can see the results of their behavior.

When comparing the families who didn't engage in any form of planning—relying completely on Hashem's judgment—with those who chose to interfere with Hashem's plans—you'll see that, percentage-wise:


The *shalom bayis* in these families is better and the children grow up in healthy, calm settings, instead of homes with marital fights and tensions and unharmonious relationships, which inevitably affect the children;

The parents are more healthy;

The *parnasa* is better, and, more importantly, the money is spent on positive things, not psychiatrists.³⁹

On the other hand, as the Rebbe put it in another farbrengen, those who engage in family planning, “are busy with psychotherapy, they are busy running to doctors to heal their nerves; running to doctors who will advise them on how the husband should get along with his wife and how the wife should get along with the husband; running to doctors who give them all kinds of hormones and pills that will change the normal order of things in the Jewish Family life.”⁴⁰

Olam Haba in your lifetime

“Ultimately, after a number of years have passed, and the children grow up, Hashem sends success and we get to see the fruits. ‘Your *olam haba* you will see during your lifetime,’ you literally see the world-to-come in this world—through true everlasting *nachas* from children and grandchildren. The *nachas* is so clear and indisputable, that even the neighbor and ‘peer’ must admit that she followed in the path of true *bracha begashmius uveruchnius*, physically and spiritually.”⁴¹ 

1. See farbrengen 6 Tishrei 5745.
2. Behar-Bechukosai 5731; *sicha* to N'shei Ubnos Chabad 17 Sivan 5740. 6 Tishrei 5741; *sicha* to N'shei Ubnos Chabad 27 Elul 5744.
3. Rosh Chodesh Shevat 5740.
4. Rambam Hilchos Ishus 15:16.
5. *Sicha* to N'shei Ubnos Chabad, 17 Sivan 5740.
6. Ibid. See Yevamos 63b כפי שאין עוסק בפריה ורביה כל מי שאין עוסק בפריה ורביה כאלו שופך דמים.
7. Shabbos Naso 5740.
8. 1 Shevat 5741.
9. 24 Teves 5741.
10. Shabbos Naso 5740.
11. Shabbos Naso 5740.
12. Shabbos Shemos 5749. See also Shabbos Nasso 5740.
13. Shabbos Naso 5740.
14. *Sicha* to N'shei Chabad 17 Sivan 5740.
15. Farbrengen 13 Tishrei 5744.
16. Farbrengen 6 Tishrei 5741.
17. Farbrengen 13 Tishrei 5744.
18. *Sicha* to N'shei Chabad 17 Sivan 5740; 1 Shevat 5741.
19. Shabbos Korach 5740.
20. *Sicha* to N'shei Chabad 25 Sivan 5740.
21. Understandably every such case must be dealt with individually, and is beyond the scope of this article. A practicing rabbi must be consulted.
22. 24 Teves 5741.
23. *Sicha* to N'shei U'bnos Chabad 17 Sivan 5740.
24. Shabbos Shelach 5740.
25. Shabbos Shemos 5749.
26. Shabbos Shelach 5740.
27. Likkutei Sichos vol. 25 p. 34.
28. 24 Teves 5741.
29. N'shei Ubnos Chabad 17 Sivan 5740.
30. Likkutei Sichos vol. 25 p. 34.
31. *Sicha* to N'shei Ubnos Chabad 25 Iyar 5743.
32. 10 Shevat 5741.
33. 24 Teves 5741.
34. *Sicha* 1 Shevat 5741; See below, *maane* to Rabbi Bernhard.
35. N'shei U'bnos Chabad 5740.
36. 1 Shevat 5741.
37. 1 Shevat 5741.
38. See *ibid*.
39. 1 Shevat 5741.
40. *Sicha* to N'shei Chabad 17 Sivan 5740.
41. 1 Shvat 5741.
42. *Sicha* to N'shei Chabad 17 Sivan 5740.
43. Printed in Sichos Kodesh vol. 3 5740 p. 1152.



דער רבי וועט געפינען א וועג...

לזכות החייל בצבאות ה'
מנחם מענדל שיח'י
לרגל הולדתו י"ד מנחם אב ה'תשע"ט
נדפס ע"י הוריו
הרה"ת ר' דוד
וזוגתו מרת פערל גאלדא
ומשפחתם שיחיו
טייכטל

Don't Delay Good News

AS TOLD BY RABBI SHMUEL CHAIM SCHARF (CHICAGO, IL)

In the summer of 5766, my friend Pinni Weinman and I were assigned to do Merkos Shlichus in the state of Mississippi. Baruch Hashem we encountered great success during the few weeks we were there so the next year we requested to be sent to Mississippi again and had big plans for bigger and greater *peulos*.

We got the assignment and wasted no time in preparing for our shlichus.

In addition to the logistical planning and making appointments with our contacts, we made two strong

hachlatos. Every morning we would wake up very early, go to the *mikveh*, learn Chassidus and daven unhurriedly before meeting Yidden. This also meant that we would only check into motels that had a swimming pool we could use before other guests were awake.

Our second *hachlata* was that we would write and send a detailed *duch* to the Rebbe of everything we accomplished during the day. We didn't realize how expensive sending a fax to the Ohel from a motel could be (it once cost us \$5 per page!), but we managed to keep to this *hachlata* on a



daily basis and experienced various *brachos* in connection with the shlichus while we were there. The only night we did not send a fax to the Ohel was on Motzei Shabbos, because in addition to the fact that we were not able to go to the *mikveh* in the morning, we had nothing to report on, having spent the day in our motel room.

One of our dreams for the summer of 5767 in Mississippi was to arrange a festive Shabbos dinner for the local Yidden. It was a wild idea but we started exploring our options as soon as we arrived.

A family we visited early on had a large and spacious home which we determined would be the perfect setting, and they enthusiastically agreed to host the event when we pitched it to them. We planned for our second Shabbos in Jackson, Mississippi and they started inviting their Jewish friends and we invited every Yid we encountered throughout the week to join us.

By Wednesday we had an impressive RSVP list and we started strategizing how we would pull it all off. A friend overnighted a bunch of challahs from New York and we found kosher smoked salmon in the local grocery. With some coaching, we compiled a nice salad list with several

dressings and stayed up late Thursday night putting everything together.

Friday was very busy and there was a lot of hard work to put everything in place, but by the time our “guests” arrived there was a beautifully set Shabbos table and a crowd of two dozen Jews assembled. We were ecstatic!

Although there was no *minyán*, we led a Kabbalas Shabbos service with a *mechitza* and *siddur*-copies, and it really warmed up the crowd.

Seudas Shabbos was delicious and the atmosphere was very pleasant. We shared *divrei Torah* and stories and taught them various Jewish songs. Everyone who participated was quite impressed with everything and we all left on a high note.

It took us over an hour and a half to walk back to our motel and we went to sleep very late that night. On Motzei Shabbos, Pinni suggested that we report to the Rebbe the amazing news about our Shabbos dinner but I argued that we had not been to the *mikveh* that morning and besides, we were bone tired and barely able to focus on writing a proper *duch*.

“We’ll write about it tomorrow night,” I said.

TRAFFIC ACCIDENT



RYAN MOORE | Hattiesburg American

MISSISSIPPI HIGHWAY PATROL officers and Lamar County emergency personnel work the scene of a two-car wreck involving a Mercury Cougar and a Chevrolet Suburban that occurred shortly after 9 p.m. Monday on U.S. 98 West in front of the Canebreak subdivision. Multiple people were transported by ambulance to hospitals.

On Sunday we met with several Yidden and our itinerary called for us to drive to Hattiesburg since we had appointments set up for the morning. We drove for several hours and by the time we found a motel with a pool it was extremely late.

In my exhaustion I delayed writing a *duch* about Shabbos and our Sunday meetings to the next night. By now we were two nights behind in our reporting.

Our first day in Hattiesburg was very busy but due to our exhaustion we decided to end the day early. "Let's visit one more Yid," said Pinni, and we headed over to another Jewish home.

Our meeting was very warm and pleasant and the man was happy to wrap tefillin minutes before the *shkia*.

As the sun was setting on the eve of **Chof-Daled Tammuz** we started backing out of the driveway when all of a sudden I heard the largest boom and crash I could ever recall experiencing.

A car that was speeding down the country highway had smashed into our SUV and we flipped over right in the middle of a high speed highway.

Upon seeing the wreckage, the first responders who arrived at the scene were convinced that there were

fatalities *r"l*, but miraculously both of us crawled out of the destroyed vehicle; Pinni was unscathed and I only suffered a dislocated shoulder.

In the hospital, while waiting for the results of several tests, we faxed a letter to the Ohel notifying the Rebbe about the accident and requesting a *bracha* that everything turn out for the best. Upon reaching our motel room at 4:00 a.m. we immediately sat down to write our overdue *duch* about the Shabbos dinner and our *peulos* from Sunday and Monday and immediately faxed it in.

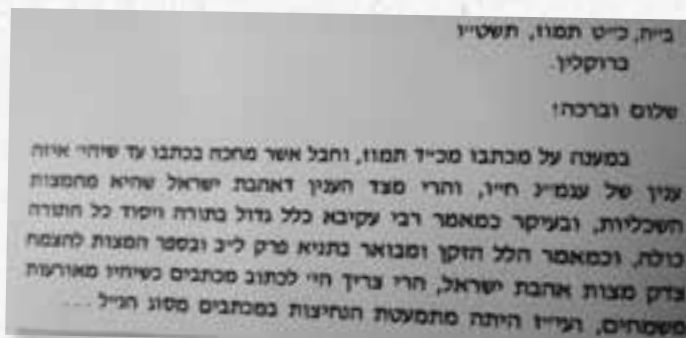
Despite our harrowing experience, we were healthy and safe and remained on shlichus until the following Sunday, **Chof-Tes Tammuz** as planned.

Straight from the airport we went to the Ohel and I opened a Dvar Malchus to learn something. As I was skimming through the pages a short letter from the Rebbe, dated **Chof-Tes Tammuz**, caught my eye.

In response to your letter from Chof-Daled Tammuz: it is a shame you waited to write to me until there was a painful reason to do so, Chas Veshalom. If only just for the purpose of ahavas Yisroel, which is a logical mitzvah and a foundation of Torah as explained by Rabi Akiva, Hillel Hazaken, the Alter Rebbe in Perek 32 of Tanya and the Tzemach Tzedek in Mitzvas Ahavas Yisroel (Derech Mitzvosecha)—you should have written letters when there were happy occurrences, and that would have minimized the need for the above type of letters...

Pinni and I were overcome with deep emotion. The dates were exact. On Chof-Tes Tammuz the Rebbe was referring to a letter written on Chof-Daled Tammuz containing painful news which should have been happier news.

We had experienced so many miracles and felt the Rebbe's special *bracha* throughout the entire ordeal and now we merited to feel how deeply the Rebbe cares to hear from us good and happy news all the time. **1**



YOUR STORY

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



לזכות
החיילת בצבאות ה'
שיינא ברכה תחי'
לרגל הולדתה
כ"ד אלול ה'תשע"ט
נדפס ע"י הוריה
הרה"ת ר' שרגא פייוול
וזוגתו מרת דבורה לאה
ומשפחתם שיחיו
מאן



FARBRENGEN IN THE FRIERDIKER REBBE'S APARTMENT

*Yud-Tes Kislev 5724**

A few times a year, on Yud-Tes Kislev, Purim, and Yud-Beis Tammuz (and occasionally on Yud Shevat), a small farbrengen was held in the Frierdiker Rebbe's apartment on the second floor of 770. These farbrengens would last for approximately 20 minutes, and would be held right before the official farbrengen downstairs in 770.

The Rebbe would always act in a very reserved manner, hardly speaking, as was the Rebbe's practice when in the Frierdiker Rebbe's apartment. Only a small crowd would be present, mostly consisting of *eltere Chassidim*.

These farbrengens (as well as the *seudos*) continued until the year 5731*.

These are the only photos known to us of these farbrengens. They were captured on Yud-Tes Kislev 5724* by Reb Sholom Yisroel Hodakov. A special thank you to Rabbi Yirmi Berkowitz for sharing these photos with us.



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.



A Great Read

Dear Editors,

The Derher gets more readable and engaging with every edition.

The article on Mivtza Torah [“Our Very Life”, Issue 85 (162), Elul 5779] was an excellent way to deliver the Rebbe’s *horaos*, sticking to the *tochen* of the *sichos* without getting bogged down in the standard, heavy *leshonos*. It reads as though the words were originally spoken in English—which is just the sort of presentation the Rebbe asked for on many occasions.

After reading it, it was *mamesh* like I had just come out of a *chassidishe* farbrengen with the *chevra*. And yes, I made a new *kevius*.

Tzvi Freeman

Los Angeles, California



Reb Avraham Sofer

Dear Editors,

Thank you for a very interesting interview with Rabbi Shabsi Alpern, shliach in Brazil [“Building a Country”, Issue 85 (162), Elul 5779].

In a sidebar at the beginning of the article, Rabbi Alpern shares how he would rummage through old *sefarim* from *sheimos* in his father’s shul. He tells the story of how he found the Haggadah “Tzof Amarim” with a *haskama* from the Rebbe’s father, Harav Levi Yitzchak, and that he had the merit to bring the Rebbe great *nachas ruach*.

Let me share another interesting anecdote that I heard from Rabbi Alpern from his years as a *bochur*.

Reb Avraham Sofer, grandson of the Chasam Sofer, was a distinguished *talmid chacham* who had a close relationship with the Rebbe. He lived on President Street in Crown Heights. When the *matzav* started to become dangerous in the neighborhood and many *frumme* Yidden began moving out, Reb Avraham also wanted to leave Crown Heights and move to a safer area. He was an elderly man living alone and he was scared to remain.

As is known, the Rebbe held very strongly that people must stay and that that is the only way to ensure safety for the neighborhood as a whole. Long before the Rebbe came out publicly about this at the farbrengen of Acharon Shel Pesach 5729*, the Rebbe worked behind the scenes and encouraged countless people to remain. One of these people was Reb Avraham Sofer. Being that he was scared, the Rebbe asked that two *bochurim*, my father-in-law Reb Aharon Chitrik a”h and יב”ח”ט, Reb Shabsi Alpern move in to Reb Avraham’s home for a period of time.

During their time in his home, they helped Reb Avraham go through countless *kesavim* which he owned and make a proper *seder* with them. My father-in-law even printed some *sefarim*, including two volumes of Tosfos Rid (one on Shabbos and one on Kiddushin) from these *kesavim*.

It seems that the reason the Rebbe chose these two *bochurim* to move into Reb Avraham’s home for that period, was because of their special experience with *kesavim* and old *sefarim*.

With much appreciation for great magazines each month.

Noochie Gross

Brooklyn, NY

לע"נ
ר' זיסא בן ציון
בן לוי ע"ה
ליבערמאן
נלב"ע ח"י כסלו ה'תשע"ג
ת"נ צ'ב'ה'
נדפס ע"י משפחתו שיחיו
ולחיזוק ההתקשרות
לכ"ק אדמו"ר נשיא דורנו

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טייכטל

DEDICATED IN HONOR OF
THE BAR MITZVAH OF OUR DEAR SON

שיחי דני

14 KISLEV 5780

MAY YOU CONTINUE TO
BRING US MUCH NACHAS!

BY HIS PARENTS
SHUEY AND FAIGY SCHEINER

נדפס ע"י ולזכות
הרה"ת ר' יהושע דוד
וזוגתו מרת איידל חנה
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בוימאארטן



מוקדש לחיזוק ההתקשרות לנשיא דורנו כ"ק אדמו"ר צוקללה"ה נבג"מ זי"ע בקשר עם יום הבהיר ר"ח כסלו



לע"נ

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נלב"ע יו"ד כסלו תשע"ג

ת'נ'צ'ב'ה'

נדפס ע"י בנה

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קרינסקי



לע"נ

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ר' ישעי' ארי' ב"ר מנשה ע"ה

טרייטעל

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נלב"ע ו' כסלו ה'תשע"ו
ת'נ'צ'ב'ה'

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ראזענפעלד

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כ"ו כסלו, ב' דחנוכה ה'תש"פ

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אלשיין

מוקדש לחיזוק ההתקשרות
לכ"ק אדמו"ר נשיא דורנו

נדפס ע"י ולזכות

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ילדיהם קיילא באשא, בנציון דוד,
אליהו איסר, רבקה שיינדל אלטא שיחיו
גולדהירש

לזכות בנינו שלוחי כ"ק אדמו"ר ברחבי תבל

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הרה"ת ר' יהודה וזוגתו מרת רבקה
הרה"ת ר' מאיר יצחק וזוגתו מרת חוה
הרה"ת ר' רפאל וזוגתו מרת מושקא
שיחיו שטיינער

נדפס ע"י הוריהם שיחיו



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