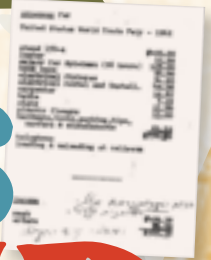


A Chassidisher
Derher

א חסידישער דערהער

LUBAVITCH AT THE WORLD'S FAIR



**HAFATZA
ON THE
BIG
STAGE**

Touching the Depth

A JOURNEY THROUGH PIRKEI AVOS

"Ich For Doch Mit Eich"

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH
RABBI SHOLOM BER LISPKAR



SIVAN 5780
ISSUE 94 (171)
AUGUST 2020



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A Chassidisher Derher Magazine is a publication geared toward bochurim, published and copyrighted by A Chassidisher Derher under the auspices of Vaad Hatmimim Haolami. All articles in this publication are original content.

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Special Thanks to

Rabbi Mendel Gourarie • Rabbi Yosef B. Friedman • Rabbi Sholom Ber Levin • Rabbi Shmuel Lubecki • Rabbi Michael Seligson • Rabbi Elkanah Shmotkin • Rabbi Avraham D. Vaisfiche

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A Chassidisher Derher (ISSN 26411059) (USPS 21880) is published monthly by A Chassidisher Derher Inc, 784 Eastern Pkwy, Brooklyn, NY 11213. Subscription price \$71 a year. Periodicals postage paid at Brooklyn, NY. POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to A Chassidisher Derher, 784 Eastern Pkwy, Brooklyn, NY 11213.

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

לזכות כל חברי מערכת א חסידישער דערהער,
שיצליחו בשליחותם הק' ובפרט בתקופה זו.
ושיראו הם ובני ביתם שיחיו הצלחה מרובה
בכל עניניהם בגו"ר לנח"ר כ"ק אדמו"ר

Derher **Editorial**

In between Pesach and Shavuos, the *minhag Yisroel* is to study a perek of Pirkei Avos every week. Based on a *p'sak* of the Alter Rebbe, the Rebbe instituted that we should continue learning Pirkei Avos all throughout the summer.

Along with that, the Rebbe began the practice of expounding on each week's *perek* during the Shabbos farbrengen. Thus was created one of the most beautiful and fascinating elements of the Rebbe's Torah, elucidating the Mishnayos and making their lessons relevant for our everyday lives.

An overview of the Rebbe's *sichos* on Pirkei Avos can be found in this magazine. As a prelude to this story, and in honor of the Yom Tov of Shavuos, celebrating *mattan Torah* through Moshe Rabbeinu on Har Sinai, we will begin with a beautiful vort from the Rebbe:

Before we begin Pirkei Avos, we recite the Mishnah of "כל ישראל יש להם חלק לעולם"—every Yid has a share in the world to come. Every Yid must be accounted for. It is our responsibility to bring the truths and beauty of Yiddishkeit to each and every one of them.

But lest we think that it is our own strengths and talents that allow us to influence another, the Mishnah immediately begins with "משה קבל תורה מסיני"—Moshe received the Torah from [Hashem at] Sinai [and passed it on to us]. All the work that we do in bringing others closer to Torah and the successes that we have are only because we stand on the shoulders of Moshe Rabbeinu—in our instance, on the Rebbe's shoulders.

Because Moshe Rabbeinu received the Torah and gave it to Yehoshua, who passed it on to the *zekeinim*, etc. until it was passed all the way to our Rabbeim, the "Moshe Rabbeinu" of each generation, who then taught the Torah to us. Everything that we accomplish is with the power that our "Moshe Rabbeinu" gives us.¹

In the merit of our *avoda* with the Rebbe's *kochos*, we will indeed bring about the *geula ha'amitis v'hashleima*, may it be *teikef umiyad mamash*.

With blessings for התורה בשמחה ובפנימיות

A Chassidisher Derher

מוצש"ק, י"ג אייר ה'תש"פ
שבעים שנה לנשיאות כ"ק אדמו"ר

1. Shabbos Parshas Shemini 5712.

WHAT DO WE REALLY SEE?

Many stories in Gemara, Midrash, and Zohar begin with an episode of great Tannaim walking or traveling on the road and witnessing something.

Then what often happens is that one Tanna explains that what they had just seen actually clarifies a certain possuk in Torah. The common expression in these anecdotes, "This is the meaning of the verse..."

At first glance, this transmits the beautiful message of how the great tzadikim would always connect things they saw to Torah. But on closer examination these stories can raise some difficult questions.

Are the concepts in Torah really so codependent on events in our lives, to the extent that even the great Tannaim needed them to understand what the Torah says?

The Rebbe asked this question, using the following story in Zohar as a target encounter to understand this point in the full spectrum of such episodes:

Rebbi Yosi was traveling when he met Rebbi Chiya, and they began discussing Torah.

Before Rebbi Yosi and Rebbi Chiya continued on their journey, they saw a man in a low-class neighborhood riding on a horse. The horseman rode into a private vineyard and broke off a branch of a tree.

Rebbi Yosi exclaimed, "This is the [meaning of the] verse, 'And you should make yourselves holy and become holy.' A man sanctifies himself from below and he is sanctified from above."

How did Rebbi Yosi arrive at his conclusion? He saw the non-Jewish rider do one transgression by taking the horse into a neighbor's vineyard. Once inside, he progressed to a second transgression and broke a branch off his neighbor's tree.

REACHING ABOVE AND STAYING BELOW

The Rebbe's father, Harav Reb Levi Yitzchok explained that the horseman was riding on "*malchus of klipa*," with the horse representing *malchus*. This



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

was his defiling himself on his own initiative.

The second transgression was the horseman being influenced by Heaven. In the terminology of Kabbalah, he grasped *yesod* of *kliya*, represented by the tree branch. That means that once he started to sin, he was pushed from above to continue. This is represented in the story by the branch being above his head.

Rebbi Yosi explained that if such a thing exists in *kliya* it must exist equally and even more powerfully in *kedusha*. When one does an act of *kedusha*, he is pushed from on high to do more. When he makes himself holy, “*vehiskadishtem*,” he is sanctified from above, “*v’hiyisem kedoshim*—you will become holy.”

Additionally, Rebbi Yosi and Rebbi Chiya saw in themselves similar components of the horse and the branch. Rebbi Yosi represented *malchus* and Rebbi Chiya *yesod*.

WHAT DIDN'T WE KNOW?

Didn't Rebbi Yosi know that one sin leads to another, and one mitzvah

leads to another? Why did he need the horseman to illustrate this idea?

Also not understood is how this is connected with the Zohar's introduction to the story. The Zohar tells us that when Rebbi Chiya and Rebbi Yosi met, they first began a Torah discussion. Rebbi Chiya explained to Rebbi Yosi what the *possuk* means, “And, therefore, I have sworn to the house of Eili, that the iniquity of the house of Eili shall not be purged by sacrifice or by offering forever.” Rebbi Chiya explained that *korbanos* cannot atone. Torah, however, does have the power to atone. Rebbi Chiya went on to express many other qualities of Torah, including *kedusha*, sanctity. Torah brings sanctity to man. At that moment, Rebbi Yosi saw the horseman and the rest of the story unfolded.

The Rebbe applied this perplexity to all stories of similar nature. Why can't the concepts of Torah be understood independently? Why the need for the stories—especially when contemplating the virtue of Torah, which surpasses all the sacrifices combined, as the Zohar points out?

AFFIRMATION VS. EXPRESSION

The answer is that Rebbi Yosi never saw a horseman. He didn't see a vineyard, nor the branch or the horse.

Rebbi Yosi exclaimed, “*This is the meaning of the verse.*” He saw only the *possuk*.

He saw only the concept of “You should become holy because I am holy,” unfolding in front of his eyes in real life.

The Rebbe explains that we have been reading the stories incorrectly all this time. The stories that we read are not telling us how the great *tzaddikim* understood Torah through life examples in the world. Rather, the opposite is true. The stories illustrate to us how they saw the world. The world around them was only an expression and a mirror of the verses in Torah. As the Alter Rebbe once put it, “I don't see the beam, I see the *koach hapoel b'nifal* [Hashem's word creating it].”¹ **T**

1 Adapted from sichas Shabbos Parshas Kedoshim 5744.



לע"נ
הרה"ח ר' יצחק נח ע"ה בן האדמו"ר
משה מנחם מענדל מסלאנים ע"ה
סילווער
גלב"ע ח"י סיון ה'תשמ"ב
הרה"ת ר' בנימין זאב ע"ה בן יבלחט"א
הרה"ת ר' אברהם יוסף שיחי' סילווער
גלב"ע כ"ב סיון ה'תשע"ג
תנ"צ'ה
נדפס ע"י הרה"ת ר' אברהם יוסף
וזוגתו מרת צבי' הינדא שיחי'
סילווער



לעבן מיטן רבין



CIRCA 5728, JEM 287129

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

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

"Only One Hundred Thousand?"

SHAVUOS 5727*



The following is some of what transpired in the Rebbe's presence during Shavuos 5727*, just a short while after the Six-Day War.

In the days leading up to the war, the Rebbe reassured the Jewish nation that there is nothing to worry about and instructed Chassidim not to flee from the war front. In an open display of *ruach hakodesh*, the Rebbe promised that there

will be peace and tranquility in Eretz Yisroel and it was then that the Rebbe launched the worldwide tefillin campaign, explaining that this will add in the protection of the soldiers defending the Holy Land. Sure enough, after just six days of fighting, the enemy was totally defeated with the Yidden in Eretz Yisroel regaining control over many strategic and sacred territories previously off limits to Yidden, including, of course, the Kosel.

FIRST NIGHT OF SHAVUOS

During the *seuda*, Reb Zalmon Jaffe shared the news that Yidden are now able to visit the Kosel, and many people will be traveling there from London.

He added that if the Rebbe will visit the Kosel, “10,000 Yidden will come!” The Rebbe replied, “Why only 10,000? When Moshiach comes, many more will go...”

As is the *seder* on Shavuos night, the Rebbe entered the shul downstairs at 3:05 a.m. for the *maamar*. The Rebbe walked in with hurried steps, sat down, and (skipping the customary *hachana niggun*) said a *maamar* on the words *וצאינה וראינה*. The *maamar* lasted about 40 minutes, after which the Rebbe glanced at the clock, stood up and walked out in the same manner as he had come in.

(When the Rebbe walked into the shul, he noticed a tablecloth that was covering some *sefarim*. He turned around and removed the tablecloth from the *sefarim*.)

FIRST DAY OF SHAVUOS

Before “*Baruch She’amar*” during Shacharis this morning, the Rebbe learned the Chinuch Katan (introduction to Shaar Hayichud in Tanya) and *perakim alef* and *beis* of Shaar Hayichud v’Haemuna. (On the second day of Shavuos, the Rebbe learned *perakim gimmel* and *daled*.)

When it came to *krias haTorah*, the Rebbe said Akdamos during the *brachos* of Kohen, Levi and *shlishi*, continuing a bit during the beginning of the *aliyah*.

At today’s *seudah*, the Rebbe remarked that since today is Shavuos, it is a time to speak in *nigleh*.¹ “And since there is a rav present, maybe he will say something?”

Reb Elya Simpson (to whom the Rebbe was referring) excused himself, saying that he cannot speak in front of the Rebbe. To this the Rebbe responded, “You have spoken before greater than me; before my father-in-law, before the Rebbe Rashab...”

When Rabbi Simpson, still uncomfortable at the thought of opening his mouth in front of the Rebbe, said that in those cases it was Chassidus that was being discussed, the Rebbe responded, “At least a *kasheh* in *nigleh*?”

After *birchas hamazon*, the Rebbe instructed Reb Zalman Shimon Dvorkin to say *l’chaim* and



requested that he say something in *nigleh* as well. When Reb Zalman Shimon tried to get out of it by saying that he is a *poshute Yid*, the Rebbe urged him to at least say a story that contains in it something from *nigleh*.

SECOND NIGHT OF SHAVUOS

During the *seudah* this evening, the Rebbe spoke about the *minhag* of saying Tikkun on Shavuos night and related that the Frierdiker Rebbe and the Rebbe Rashab would say the whole Tikkun. The Rebbe added that the Alter Rebbe most probably did so as well, explaining that there are things the Alter Rebbe said that are applicable to everybody, and then there are things that were meant only for Chassidim. In addition to this, there were certain *hanhagos* that were not meant as a *hora'ah* for the public at all, but rather as a personal *minhag*.

Rashag brought up what the Rebbe once mentioned regarding his father’s *minhag* to say Akdamos on Shavuos, adding that there is a rumor that the Rebbe also says it. The Rebbe explained that although, in general, Chassidim did not say Akdamos, the *minhag* in Yekaterinoslav was otherwise. (Reading Megillas Rus, on the other hand, was *not* the custom in Harav Levi Yitzchak’s city: “It is well known how the Rogatchover would *shturem* against the custom of reading the Megillos...”)

When Rashag persisted and wanted to know what the Rebbe *himself* does, the Rebbe answered with a story:

Reb Elya Chaim once came to the Rogatchover and asked him a question: Because we are not sure whose opinion is correct—Rashi or Rabbeinu Tam—we put on two pairs of tefillin in order to rule out any doubt and fulfill the mitzvah according to both opinions.

“But you?” Elya Chaim asked. “You undoubtedly know which of the two opinions is correct. Which pair do *you* put on?” The Rogatchover answered him, “*Petach!* When you come to me with a *shaila* in *halacha*, I’m required to provide an answer. But as far as what *I* do? That I need not say.”

Rashag asked Reb Zalmon Jaffe if in his shul they say *Akdamos*. The Rebbe interjected, “*Vos epes? Es iz doch a chassidishe shul*—Why would they? It’s a Chassidishe shul.”

In connection with the earlier discussion, the Rebbe remarked that when HaYom Yom was printed, the Friediker Rebbe said that in Lubavitch, Megillas Rus was not read: “*Rus* is only [read in shul on Shavuos] by the *misnagdim*, not by Chassidim.” (This includes all groups of Chassidim, not exclusively Lubavitch.)

Reb Elya Gross noted that in some shuls, Megillas Rus is read from a scroll. Reb Itche Churgin added that in those shuls, a *bracha* is not recited on the reading. The Rebbe said that this can not be: “If they read from a megillah, it must be that they make a *bracha* as well.”

Reb Elya Simpson related that in Lubavitch, after the Rebbe Rashab would say a *maamar*, there would be *chazara*. Sometimes it would go on all night, and when it would start becoming light outside, the *bochurim* would stop to recite *birchos hashachar*. The Rebbe inquired if interrupting *chazara* to say *brachos* was a directive from the Rebbe Rashab. Reb Elya replied that it was not. When the Rebbe wanted to know when the *bochurim* had time to eat *seudas Yom Tov*, the answer was that they would not eat...

After the *bochurim* came back from the *tahalucha* to Borough Park, they waited near the Rebbe’s room for the Rebbe to come downstairs from the *seudah*. When the Rebbe came downstairs they began singing and the Rebbe waved his hand in encouragement and entered his room.

The Rebbe sent Rabbi Hodakov to give over a *bracha* and message to the *bochurim*:

Just as *yetzias Mitzrayim* was a preparation for *kabbalas haTorah*, with every single one of the 600,000 Yidden being a vital component in

“When you come to me with a shaila in halacha, I’m required to provide an answer. But as far as what I do? That I need not say.”

receiving the Torah, so may it be that *our* walking (referring to *tahalucha*) be a preparation for *kabbalas primiyus haTorah*, which will be revealed with the arrival of Moshiach Tzidkeinu.

SECOND DAY OF SHAVUOS

After *yizkor*, the Rebbe waited for the people holding the *sifrei Torah* to descend from the *bima*, following behind them until reaching his place.

During today’s *seudah*, Rashag mentioned a rumor he heard that 100,000 men have laid tefillin as part of the Rebbe’s tefillin campaign launched prior to the Six-Day War. The Rebbe asked, “Only 100,000?”

The Rebbe related that he recently received a sharp letter from an individual regarding Mivtza Tefillin. In it, this person writes how he is surprised the Rebbe could say that the reason to put on tefillin in our times is to bring long life and strike fear in the heart of the enemy, when there is a Rambam that says the opposite. The Rebbe said that he is going to speak about this at the *farbrengen* later today (and with that he would also be participating in the *Kinus Torah*).²

Reb Zalmon marveled aloud at the *chutzpah* the author of this letter had to write such a thing to the Rebbe. The Rebbe defended this individual, and said that on the contrary, he had actually written in a very *eidele* fashion, and even excused himself in the letter, saying that he had first asked someone else, and that that person advised him to ask the Rebbe directly.

In response to the question as to how the Rebbe could take such a tremendous responsibility on his shoulders and instruct people not to leave Eretz Yisroel despite the oncoming war, the Rebbe explained that it is a clear *lav d’oraisa* אל ירך לבבכם—do not let your heart be faint (from the enemy).

Reb Shlomo Aharon Kazarnovsky mentioned that all the newspapers were abuzz with praise of the Rebbe, how the Rebbe didn’t allow anyone to leave Eretz Yisroel before the war, etc. The Rebbe

responded, “They say that in this matter, *hub ich tzugetrofin* (I got it right)...”

When asked about the Sanz-Klausenberger Rebbe leaving Eretz Yisroel to America because of the war, the Rebbe responded with a smile that Chaim Boruch Halberstam [—a relative of the Sanz-Klausenberger Rebbe] can answer this question. The Rebbe added that he had lost 11 children in the Holocaust...

Reb Itche Churgin asked the Rebbe: Since the Yidden had already proclaimed *נעשה ונשמע*, what was the purpose of holding a mountain above their heads as a means of forcing them to accept the Torah, hadn't they already agreed to accept it? The Rebbe answered that this is precisely the question of Tosfos.

(When Reb Shlomo Aharon Kazarnovsky noted that the Shev Shmatesa also discusses this question, the Rebbe responded, “*Tosfos iz ober geven faren Shev Shmatesa* [But Tosfos lived before the Shev Shmatesa].”)

The Rebbe also added an explanation of his own: More than the child wants for his father to give, the father wants to give his son. In other words, the desire the child has to receive from his father is on a *completely* different level of desire than the father has to give to his son. In our terms: The fact that the Yidden were ready to accept the Torah was on *their* level; according to *their ratzon*. The purpose of the mountain was to arouse in them a desire to accept the Torah with the same level of *ratzon* with which

Hashem wanted to give the Torah, a much higher level of *kabbalas haTorah*.

The Rebbe entered the farbrengen at 8:30 p.m., washed his hands for *hamotzi*, and made a *bracha* on both challos. There was a bottle of soda on the table as well from which the Rebbe had a small amount at the end of the farbrengen.

A few highlights:

In the fifth *sicha*, the Rebbe discussed the significance of the lowest part of the body, the foot, and how it represents the elevation of the lowest elements to *kedusha*, and instructed that those who participated in the *tahalucha* should say *l'chaim*. The Rebbe then continued with the idea of *regel* in the general sense, explaining that it refers to those who have not yet fully matured in their understanding and intellect, primarily children. The Rebbe requested that all those present who are involved in *chinuch* should say *l'chaim*, blessing them with much livelihood in the physical sense of the word.

After the *maamar*, the Rebbe said a long *sicha* in which he touched upon the situation in Eretz Yisroel. When speaking about the Kosel and how despite its age and seeming lack of external beauty, the Yidden clung fast to it, refusing to separate themselves from the holy wall, the Rebbe held himself back from crying.

Rabbi Kovalski started making announcements about Eretz Yisroel, and the Rebbe declared that putting on tefillin with even one Yid will accomplish more than any announcement. When



TISHREI 5727, JEM 10.4975

“Despite its age and seeming lack of external beauty, the Yidden clung fast to it, refusing to separate themselves from the holy wall.”

Rabbi Kovalski began shouting about the situation in Russia, wishing the whole country a bitter end, etc., the Rebbe opposed this approach: “There are 3 million Yidden there...”

Throughout the *sichos*, the Rebbe spoke a lot about Moshiach. The Rebbe concluded one of the *sichos* with a *tefilla* that Moshiach should come “*b’karov mammosh, b’karov mammosh, b’karov mammosh*”—3 times!

The Rebbe instructed that an announcement should be made telling everyone the details of where and when the Kinus Torah will take place.

During the *farbrengen*, the Rebbe said to sing the *niggun* “*Ach Leilokim*.” At the end of the *farbrengen* the Rebbe said they should sing “*Mipi Keil*,” and after that the *niggunim* of the Rebbe Maharash, the Rebbe Rashab, the Alter Rebbe, “*Nye Zhuritzi*” and “*Avinu Malkeinu*.”

During *kos shel bracha*, the Rebbe encouraged a number of people to start growing their beards.

When Harav Grossbard passed by, the Rebbe conversed with him about the *sefer* that he had recently published. The Rebbe noted that there was a mistake in the *sefer* and that it should be fixed before the next printing. The Rebbe added that the reason he didn’t give a *yasher koach* for the *sefer* is because he didn’t receive it directly from him.

When someone asked the Rebbe for a *bracha* to be healthy, the Rebbe responded, “Who said you are not healthy? You *are* healthy! Why are you throwing yourself into a *marah shechorah*?”

The Rebbe encouraged the singing a lot throughout the distribution, many times putting down the *becher* and waving both of his hands. During one lively *niggun* the Rebbe started to dance in his place, and began turning in all directions, encouraging the *olam*.

When Rabbi Kovalski started to sing “*Nye Zhuritzi*” and no one sang along, the Rebbe motioned for the Chassidim to join him in the singing.

In the middle of the distribution, the Rebbe instructed Reb Bentzion Shemtov to sing “*Mi Armia Admura*,” correcting him on some of the words.

At the conclusion of *kos shel bracha*, the Rebbe began “*Ki B’simcha*” and left the shul. The Rebbe paused a few times on the way out, motioning to a *yungerman* standing on one of the benches to join in the singing. The Rebbe encouraged the rejoicing all the way to his room.

Later that night, the Rebbe asked someone who was in his room, “Nu? How well did you understand today’s *sichos*?”

The Rebbe went home by car at 4:00 a.m., encouraging the singing while walking to the car, and even once inside, he continued to encourage the Chassidim.

Thus ends another Shavuos in the Rebbe’s presence. **T**

1. The Rebbe related that the Tzemach Tzedek’s table on Shavuos was a “*nigleh-tish*,” containing in-depth discussions in *nigleh*, due to the many rabbonim who visited. See *sicha*, first day of Shavuos 5711; et. al.

2. See Likkutei Sichos vol. 6, p. 276; Ibid. vol. 19, p. 121.



CIRCA 5727, JEM 103755



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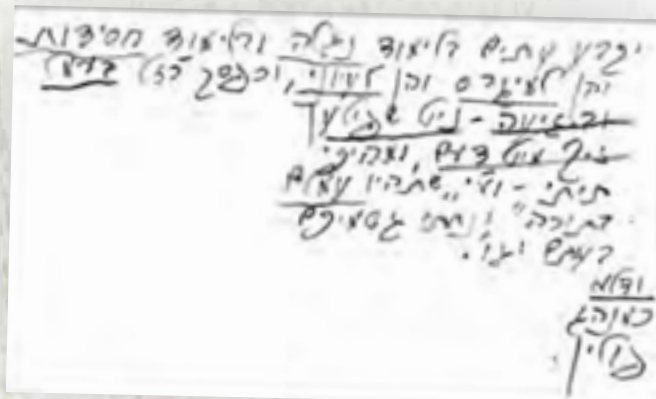


כתב יד קודש

לע"נ
הרה"ת ר' שלום דובער ע"ה
בן הרה"ת ר' יעקב יוסף ע"ה
גלב"ע ח"י חשון ה'תשע"ד
ראסקין
וזוגתו מרת רבקה ע"ה
בת הרה"ת ר' אברהם ישעי' ע"ה
גלב"ע י"א סיון ה'תשע"ד
ת"נצ"ב
נדבת משפחתם שיחיו

It's Up To You!

The Rebbe's advice to someone seeking blessings in his life. Presented
in honor of Shavuot, Z'man Matan Toraseinu:



Establish fixed times for the study of **nigleh** and **Chassidus**, on both **faster** and more **in-depth** study-tracks. As *Chazal* ruled: It should be done with diligence and toil—do not play around with this, wavering in your commitment. By [doing so and fulfilling the adage] “you will toil in Torah study,” [you will in turn merit to have] “I will give you your rain in its proper time”¹ [i.e. blessings for *parnasa* etc.]. **Not** like the common practice in Poland.²

יקבע עתים בלימוד נגלה ובלימוד חסידות והן למיגרס והן לעיוני, וכפסק רז"ל בעמל וביגיעה - ניט שפילען זיך מיט דעם, ומהיכי תיתי - וע"י שתהיו עמלים בתורה ונתתי גשמיכם בעתם וגו'. ודלא כמנהג פולין.

1. Bechukosai 26:3. Rashi ibid.

2. Though we don't know for certain, it seems that the Rebbe is referring to the prevailing attitude of Polish Chassidic circles, following the dictum of “*Tzaddik b'emunaso yechayeh*”—that by connecting with a *tzaddik* one can receive all the necessary blessings. Chabad, on the other hand, demands that each individual toil with his own *avoda*, not relying solely on the Rebbe's *brachos*.

פתיחת האכלת עושה

לע"נ
הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' שלום דובער ע"ה
בן הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' חיים משה ע"ה
נלב"ע ד' סיון ה'תשע"ה
אלפרוביץ

ולע"נ
הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' נחמן ע"ה
בן פנחס ע"ה
סודאק

נלב"ע י"ז סיון ה'תשע"ד
ת"נצ"ב'ה'

נדפס ע"י
הרה"ת ר' יוסף יצחק
וזוגתו מרת חנה שרה
ומשפחתם שיחיו
אלפרוביץ



Touching the Depth

*A Journey
Through
Pirkei Avos*



Throughout this article, we will explore the Rebbe's unique perspective through the lens of the first Mishnah of Perek Daled, *Ben Zoma Omer*; as we introduce various angles of the Rebbe's analysis, we will return to this Mishnah.



What is Pirkei Avos?

There are dozens of *mesechtos* that focus on *halacha*, on things that we are *obligated* to do; Pirkei Avos teaches how to have good *middos* and *yiras Shamayim*; it teaches us *mili d'chasisdusa*, things that are above and *beyond* the letter of the law. As the Gemara tells us, “He who wishes to be a Chossid should fulfill... the matters of Avos.”¹

Overall, the Rebbe focused on Pirkei Avos as teaching us behavior *beyond* the obligation of Torah, and when we find Mishnayos that seem to be encouraging us to fulfill *halachos*, the Rebbe always asks: What is the *mili dichasisdusa* message here? How does this qualify as *beyond* our obligation?²

The primary setting for the Rebbe's *sichos* on Pirkei Avos was during the summer Shabbos farbrengens, which generally followed this order: After the first couple of *sichos*—usually general *sichos* about the significance of the day and so on—came the *maamar*. Then came the second half of the farbrengen, which focused on specific Torah-subjects: The Rebbe would take a Chumash, read a Rashi, and ask questions on it. Then he would read a selection from Likkutei Levi Yitzchak and ask questions on it. And if it was the summertime, he would read a Mishnah in Pirkei Avos and do the same. After a *niggun*, the Rebbe would answer the questions one by one. (Obviously, the *sichos* often included other subjects as well and didn't always fit this exact set-up.)

When the Rebbe analyzes a Mishnah, he doesn't just read it dryly and make some observations; he gets *involved* in the Mishnah and asks questions with a *shturem*; “This Mishnah is *ingantzen nisht farshtandik*! It is entirely not understood!” “One question... and then a bigger question... and then the *kushya gedola* that no-one even mentions!”³

Then when it comes to the answer, the Mishnah becomes *alive* before our eyes—what the Mishnah means to *us* and how it must change *our* lives. The lesson could be about the importance of *hiskashrus* and learning from every word of the Rabbeim, or about simple matters such as davening before work and not listening to recordings of *kol isha*. It can be teaching us lofty levels in *Torah lishma*, or philosophical understandings in the nature of creation.

Unlike the explanations on Rashi which generally followed a specific guideline—finding the *peshuto shel mikra* (and, *additionally*, the Chassidus and sometimes *halacha* components)—in Pirkei Avos there is no such protocol. One week the Rebbe would resolve the questions with beautiful illuminations in the basic meaning of the Mishnah, focusing on the understanding of the “*ben esser l'Mishnah*,” the ten-year-old studying Mishnah, and the following week he would resolve them with profound explanations according to Chassidus and Kabbalah. (On more than one occasion, the Rebbe explained a Mishnah according to all levels of *pardes*—*pshat*, *remez*, *drush*, and *sod*.)⁴

Pirkei Avos talks about many themes that are understood in an entirely new manner once seen through the lens of Chassidus—e.g. *bittul* to Hashem, studying Torah *lishma*, *ahavas Yisroel*—so when the Rebbe discusses a Mishnah already explained by *mefarshim*, it isn't only that the Rebbe is looking for a *better* explanation in *pshat*—he is illuminating the Mishnah according to the *giluy* of Chassidus.⁵

Sometimes, the Rebbe's interpretation seems to contradict those of the earliest *mefarshim*. There have been hundreds of *sefarim* written on Pirkei Avos throughout the generations: the first *pirush*, *Avos D'Rebbi Nosson*, was compiled by a Tanna, and this was followed by *pirushim*

When do we say Pirkei Avos?

The accepted practice is to study Pirkei Avos during the six weeks between Pesach and Shavuos. In addition, the Alter Rebbe writes in the Siddur, there are those who have the practice of doing it throughout the summer as well.

There are several reasons for it to be studied after Pesach:

1. That is when the world blooms following the winter, and people are involved with their physical health; to counteract the temptations that arise during this time, we learn Pirkei Avos.⁶
2. Since *derech eretz* comes before Torah, we study Avos as a preparation to receive the Torah on Shavuos, similar to what is accomplished through *sefiras ha'omer* to refine our *middos*. In addition, much of it is focused on Torah study, so it is an especially appropriate preparation for Shavuos.⁷
3. The Rebbe also explained that *kedusha* is more revealed in the world during the summer, because the *shemesh Havaya*—Hashem's "sun"—is burning more brightly, and it is therefore appropriate to study *mili dichasidusa* during that time⁸.

Based on this, the Rebbe explains that the custom of reciting Pirkei Avos throughout the entire summer until Rosh Hashanah follows the same reasoning.

1. It is a preparation for the giving of the second *luchos* on Yom Kippur. (Alternatively: because the Torah is always being given anew.)⁹
2. For some people it is enough to study Pirkei Avos one time around, at the beginning of the summer. But those that are *mehader*—or need to be extra careful—continue throughout the summer.¹⁰
3. The summer cycles of Pirkei Avos start on the *parshios* of Nasso, Pinchas, and Shoftim—corresponding to the word *nefesh*—because the purpose of Pirkei Avos is to purify even the lowest level of the *neshama*, the level of *nefesh*.¹¹

What is the Lubavitcher custom? It is unclear whether the Rabbeim recited Pirkei Avos throughout the summer (the Rebbe Rashab, for example, would study a few Mishnayos a week during the summer)¹². Until our generation, the common practice was to recite it only once. However, the Rebbe established the *minhag* of continuing throughout the summer, pointing to the fact that the Rabbeim said *maamarim* in the summer based on the *perek* of that week.¹³

The Rebbe said that each cycle of Avos builds on the previous one, each time proclaiming "Moshe received the Torah from Sinai" anew.¹⁴

by some of the greatest Rishonim (Rambam, Rashi) and early Acharonim (Tosfos Yom Tov, Bartenura, Maharal, etc). Every Mishnah has been discussed and explained multiple times. The Rebbe sometimes mentions that other *mefarshim* discussed the Mishnah—or that they missed out some essential questions—but many times he focuses only on the Mishnah itself.

On many occasions the Rebbe discussed, that in areas of *halacha*, the interpretation of the Tannaim—and later the Rishonim—is binding to all future generations. But Avos is coming to teach us *yiras Shamayim* and *middos tovos*, and everyone has the ability to learn their own interpretation in it—as long as it follows the *klolim* of Torah, and as long as one is careful not to distort the meaning. Therefore we find

that Rashi and Rambam (Rishonim) contradict the *Avos D'Rebbi Nosson*; the Bartenura and Tosfos Yom Tov (early Acharonim) contradict the Rishonim; and the same is true of the later Achronim like the Maharal¹⁵ and so on.¹⁶

(Furthermore, the Rebbe added: We have an *obligation* to innovate in Torah, so when one finds difficulties with an earlier explanation—no matter the author—he must toil to find an alternative one. As an example, the Rebbe notes¹⁷ that Rashi occasionally writes "*Lo yadaati*"—I don't know [the *pshat* meaning] of this passage in Chumash. He doesn't write "*Lo yadua*—it is *not known*," because every person who reads the Rashi has the ability and responsibility to find the explanation, as we stand on the shoulders of giants.)



There are many Mishnayos that the Rebbe illuminates the basic meaning of the words, giving us appreciation for the small details while providing an entirely new level depth of its message. Throughout this article, we will explore the Rebbe's unique perspective through the lens of the first Mishnah of Perek Daled, *Ben Zoma Oimer*; as we introduce various angles of the Rebbe's analysis, we will return to this Mishnah.

We will begin with the Rebbe's beautiful illumination of this famous Mishnah in its simple meaning, in the *pshat*:

בן זומא אומר, איזהו חכם, הלומד מכל אדם, שנאמר (תהלים קיט) מכל מלמדי השכלתי כי עדותיך שיחה לי. איזהו גבור, הכובש את יצרו, שנאמר (משלי טז) טוב ארך אפים מגבור ומשל ברוחו מלכד עיר. איזהו עשיר, השמח בחלקו, שנאמר (תהלים קכח) יגיע כפיך כי תאכל אשריך וטוב לך. אשריך, בעולם הזה. וטוב לך, לעולם הבא. איזהו מכבד, המכבד את הבריות, שנאמר (שמואל א ב) כי מכבדי אכבד ובני יקליו:

Ben Zoma would say: Who is wise? One who learns from every man. As is stated (Tehillim 119:99): "From all my teachers I have grown wise, for Your testimonials are my meditation."

Who is strong? One who overpowers his inclinations. As is stated (Mishlei 16:32), "Better one who is slow to anger than one with might, one who rules his spirit than the captor of a city."

Who is rich? One who is satisfied with his lot. As is stated (Tehillim 128:2): "If you eat the toil of your hands, fortunate are you, and good is to you;" "fortunate are you" in this world, "and good is to you" in the World to Come.

Who is honorable? One who honors his fellows. As is stated (Shmuel I 2:30): "For to those who honor me, I accord honor; those who scorn me shall be demeaned."

In a beautiful *sicha*, the Rebbe explains that Ben Zoma transforms our perspective on each of these qualities¹⁸:

Wise: Our intuitive sense of a *chacham*, a wise person, is of someone who fully grasps and comprehends things; he is not naive, and he sees everyone's positive *and* negative qualities. So it would seem that *by definition* a wise person would learn from people who have something to offer, and *not learn* from someone who doesn't.

Ben Zoma transforms our perspective: A wise person is someone who learns from everyone.

Strong: Who do we consider strong? Someone who is physically powerful, with energy and the ability to lift heavy objects.

Ben Zoma transforms our perspective: A strong person is someone who knows how to *rein* in his energy, someone who can *overpower* his inclinations (which isn't referring to the *yetzer hara* specifically, but in general to a person's natural inclinations). For the power of control is more potent than strength itself.

Rich: A rich person isn't only someone who has money—it's a mindset, someone who is ambitious and constantly striving for more.

Ben Zoma transforms our perspective: True wealth is when one is content, for then he experiences heaven on earth.

Honorable: When we think of an honorable person, we imagine someone who knows how to receive respect and appreciates his own qualities. Honoring and associating with *briyos*, lowly people, is the exact opposite of honorable!

Ben Zoma transforms our perspective: True honor comes from honoring others.

The lesson from this Mishna, the Rebbe says, is that we cannot limit ourselves to serving Hashem with one approach, one *kav*; we must serve Hashem in all of these four general approaches.¹⁹

The Significance of the Author

Most of the *mesechtos* in Shas are arranged (roughly) by subject. If you want to learn about the *halachos* of marriage, you would look in Mesechta Kiddushin; for the laws of Shabbos, Mesechta Shabbos, etc.; and the Tannaim are quoted based on the subject matter.

But Pirkei Avos, the single *mesechta* of *mili d'chasidusa*, is organized very differently. It starts with a history of the oral tradition of Torah from Moshe through the generations, and as it introduces us to each person—in lieu of a biography—it quotes one (or more) of his teachings in *mili d'chasidusa*.

These aren't simply teachings that they *once* said—it is their message that they each embodied throughout their lives:

The *mefarshim*²⁰ explain that when Pirkei Avos uses the term that the Tanna says—*omer*—it's different than anywhere else in Shas. There are two terms the Mishnah uses when a Tanna says his opinion: *Amar* (said), and *omer* (says). *Amar* is used when someone is simply stating an opinion; but *omer* implies an argument (e.g. Rabbi Yehuda *omer* this-and-this, but Rabbi Meir *omer* this-and-this).

Pirkei Avos *always* uses the term *omer*—yet there are almost never any arguments. Why does it use this term? Because these quotes aren't simply things that the Tannaim *once* said—*amar*; in the past-tense—these are teachings that the Tannaim were *constantly*

saying—*omer*, presently. These statements reflect *who* each of these Tannaim were, how they served Hashem, and what they expected from us.

Now, in all areas of Torah the Rebbe searched for a connection between the author and the teaching (an approach emphasized by the Rebbe's father, Harav Levi Yitzchak). In Pirkei Avos, this approach is widely taken by the *mefarshim*, and the Rebbe develops it still further, unearthing connections even when they don't seem apparent. Sometimes it's about finding the *connection* between the Tanna and his message—a connection with his personality, an event that happened in his life, or another teaching of his—and sometimes *we can only understand the Mishnah* by knowing who said it.²⁴ Sometimes the connection is a positive one—where they are encouraging us to follow in their ways, or expressing their personality—and other times they are cautioning us *against* doing what they did.

Some interesting examples:

- **Yehoshua Ben Perachia** pushed *oso ha'ish* away “with two hands.” As the Gemara tells us, *oso ha'ish* once made an inappropriate comment, and Rabbi Yehoshua Ben Prachya excommunicated him and didn't accept his attempts to return. That eventually led to a major spreading of *avoda zara*. *Therefore, Rabbi*



Why is it called Avos?

1. Some *mefarshim* explain that it means “fathers” as in “teachers,” as in the common translation, Ethics of our Fathers.²¹
The Rebbe, however, rejects this explanation²² and explains:
2. *Avos* means causes or primaries; the teachings of Pirkei Avos come before anything else in the Torah, since *yiras Shamayim* is the necessary prelude to Torah.
3. On a deeper level, the Rebbe says that the teachings of the Tannaim express their approach to *avodas Hashem*, so the Tannaim are the *avos*—primaries—for their *toldos*—their teachings. Furthermore: The Tannaim's approach to *avodas Hashem*—as expressed in Pirkei Avos—guides their teachings throughout the rest of Shas, so the teachings of Pirkei Avos are the *avos* for the rest of Shas.²³

Yehoshua warns us: Judge every person favorably, even when they don't deserve it.²⁵

- **Rabban Yochanan Ben Zakkai's** entire being was invested in Torah; he was the first one in the *beis midrash* in the morning, and he didn't walk four cubits without Torah. For 40 years he taught Torah to the entire nation. *Therefore, he is the one who can make the statement, "If you have learned **much** Torah, do not take credit for yourself—it is for this that you have been formed."*²⁶
- **Rebbi Elazar ben Arach** excelled in the innovation and creativity of Torah, unlike his colleague Rebbi Eliezer who excelled in retaining the Torah of his

teachers. At one point in life Rebbi Elazar was separated from the other Chachamim and forgot his learning. *Therefore, as someone who primarily focused on creativity, he still warns us: Be diligent in the study of Torah, so that your innovations are based on your teachers and that you always retain your learning.*²⁷

- **Rebbi Shimon ben Yochai** was so invested in Torah that he was able to change the world with it, even bringing rain with his Torah study. *Therefore, he speaks about the importance of "Three who eat at one table and speak words of Torah," that Torah must permeate a person's physical world.*²⁸



In our Mishnah: Why is Ben Zoma the one who teaches this message to us?

The Rebbe explains that these four types—wise, strong, rich, and honored—are the descriptions of the four types of Yidden; only someone who truly knows and comprehends all the different types of Yidden can teach them all.

This is something that we find by Ben Zoma:

If someone sees 600,000 Yidden at one time, he says the *bracha* of "*Baruch Chacham Harazim—Blessed... who knows all secrets.*" This is because 600,000 Yidden includes all the different types of Yidden possible²⁹, and we therefore bless Hashem that "He knows their secrets"—although they are all so different, He knows the secrets in each of their hearts.³⁰

Obviously, seeing 600,000 Yidden in a single place is an extremely rare occurrence experienced by few—and the Gemara tells us that Ben Zoma was one of them. "Ben Zoma saw a multitude of Yidden (600,000) from a step on Har Habayis, and he said, *Baruch Chacham Harazim...*"³¹

The fact that Ben Zoma saw all the Yidden means that he saw and *recognized* all the different types of Yidden. Therefore it was he—and only he—who was able to give directives to all the four types of Yidden in our Mishnah.

Furthermore: we find that Ben Zoma *himself* possessed all these four qualities:

Wise: The Gemara tells us that someone who sees Ben Zoma in his dream should expect wisdom. He was also one of the four who entered the *pardes*.

Strong: "When Ben Zoma died, there were no more *darshanim*," the Gemara says. Kabbalistically *derush* is in Bina, which is connected to Gevura and strength.

Rich: Ben Zoma declared, "All nations come to my doorstep." He was wealthy and people came to him for merchandise.

Honored: Being a person with all of the above qualities, he was honored as well.

Therefore, it is he who teaches us the true meaning of all these qualities.

What's in a name?

The Frierdiker Rebbe once told³² the fascinating story of Reb Baruch Mordechai, rav of Babroisk, a Chossid of the Alter Rebbe who was a tremendous *gaon* and learned with the greatest scholars of his day.

In one episode, the Frierdiker Rebbe relates how Reb Baruch Mordechai's brother-in-law, the *rosh yeshiva* and *gaon* Reb Avigdor, came to visit him in Babroisk. A gathering was arranged in the big shul, where Reb Avigdor was to deliver a *pilpul*. As Reb Avigdor was waiting in the side room, the *chabadnitze*, he heard the sweet sounds of someone davening with heart-rending sincerity. He asked whose voice he was hearing, and he was told that it was Zalman Leib the *shmaiser*, a wagon driver.

Reb Avigdor mockingly said, "Zalmen Leib the *shmaiser* is *oich mir a davener*... He's no more than the heel of a *davener*!" Reb Baruch Mordechai didn't say anything. But afterwards Reb Avigdor repeated this comment publicly, and Reb Baruch Mordechai felt that he had to reply. "The heel of a *davener* is a great thing according to Torah," he said, "and brings benefits in three matters." Knowing the wisdom of Reb Baruch Mordechai, everyone waited to hear what he meant.

When he saw that they were unable to understand what he meant, he explained that this was a clear Mishna in Pirkei Avos: עקביא בן מהללאל אומר, הסתכל בשלשה דברים (*akavya=eikev=heel*) of a davener who praises Hashem (*mehalalel=hallel=praising*) says three things.

The Frierdiker Rebbe went on to say that although this was only a *tzachus*, it reflects the fact that Chassidus uplifts everyone, so that even the heel of a *Chassidisher davener* can give these three fundamental messages for a person's life.

In the *Teshuvos U'Biurom* column in *Kovetz Lubavitch*, a periodical published before the

nesius,³³ the Rebbe wrote³⁴ that there had been a strong response to this interpretation. It seemed that everyone agreed that it was no more than an allegorical interpretation that made no sense and had no basis in Chazal—how does *Akavya* son of *Mehalalel* become a *heel* who is davening and *praises* Hashem?! The difference was only this: Detractors found an opportunity to denigrate Chassidim, while people with a better attitude argued that there's nothing wrong with a cute vort. But Chassidim were upset that it had been so widely published.

Therefore, the Rebbe said, this would be a perfect example to show how everything in the *sichos* has a clear basis in Torah. The Rebbe went on to give a fascinating overview of the significance of names in the Torah—that the name *reveals* the character of a person, it even *affects* him, and that even a *parent's* name can affect their offspring.

Then the Rebbe adds an unbelievable thing: This specific interpretation of *Akavya ben Mehalalel* is actually written *explicitly*:

Mehalalel: The Midrash says that Mehalalel did *teshuva* and began *praising* Hashem.

Akavya: It is written in the Kisvei Ha'Arizal that the *neshama* of Akavya comes from the *heel* of Adam Harishon.

"This explanation of this 'odd' *tzachus* can serve as a good example for us," the Rebbe concludes, "that certainly all the sayings in the holy *sichos*, even those that seem surprising to us, have a good explanation. On such matters Chazal say, 'If you find it empty, it is from you, for you have not toiled in Torah.'"

Although, as mentioned above, many *mefarshim* search for connections with the personality or life-story of the Tanna, the idea of analyzing someone's name is uncommon. We find this approach very often in Harav Levi Yitzchak's writings, and in Pirkei Avos the Rebbe sometimes does it as well.



In the Mishnah of Ben Zoma, too, the Rebbe explains that there's not only a message in Ben Zoma's *life story and personality*, as explained above, but also in his very name, Ben Zoma:

The first two Tannaim of the *perek* are called by their father's names—Ben Zoma and Ben Azai—but their real names were both Shimon. Now, when someone is called by

the name of his father, it has a non-honorable connotation (as we find when some Yidden referred to Moshe as “Ben Amram”). The *mefarshim* explain that they never received *semicha*³⁵ (at least at the point of them making these statements³⁶), and they are therefore given the lower befitting a student. Yet, the Rebbe says there’s a deeper significance:

This shows that Ben Zoma was a *mekabel*, a recipient: He remained a student, without the prominence of *semicha*—to the extent that he wasn’t even called by his own name!—notwithstanding the fact that he was on a very lofty level, as one of the four that entered the *pardes*. That’s why it is he who teaches us: *Who is wise? One who learns from every man*—something that requires *bittul* and humility.

This isn’t only expressed in the way we refer to him—but in his actual name too: Shimon. Chassidus explains that *Reuven*—seeing, *re’u*—symbolizes someone who *sees Elokus* and experiences it directly. *Shimon*—hearing, *shema*—is someone who doesn’t have a firsthand experience in *Elokus*, he only “hears” about *Elokus*, and serves Hashem with *bittul* and self-nullification.

Thus, “Shimon Ben Zoma” is the one who teaches us to have the *bittul* to learn from every man.

“Someone can argue: ‘I’m a great *rosh yeshiva*. How is it possible for me to learn from every person!?’ We tell him, ‘Remember the time that you were young, before you received *semicha*—when you weren’t even called by your own name!’ Later in life, too, every person has areas that they are on that level, and therefore we must learn from every person.”³⁷

The Alter Rebbe’s version

The Alter Rebbe printed the entire Pirkei Avos in his *siddur*. This would seem to be out of character: Printing was very expensive in those days, and the Alter Rebbe even omitted *tefillos* in order to save on printing.³⁸ For example, if you would be davening Shabbos Musaf from his original *siddur*, you would have to flip back to Shachris in order to find *Retzei* and *Modim*. Pirkei Avos is a part of Mishnayos which happens to be studied on Shabbos afternoon; so the Alter Rebbe could have simply written to read it from a *mishnayos*. Why the need to print it in the *siddur*?

The Rebbe explains (based on the Shaar Hakolel), that this is because there are variations in the wording and vowelization of the Mishnayos, and also in how exactly it is divided. In order to establish the correct version, the Alter Rebbe published Pirkei Avos in the *siddur*.

The Rebbe would often explain why the Alter Rebbe chose one version over the other; why

he chose the version that puts two seemingly unrelated Mishnayos together, why he chose the version quoting one Tanna and not another, and so on.³⁹ (The Rebbe also sometimes used the alternate version to understand the meaning of a Mishnah.⁴⁰)

[The division of the Mishnayos would seem to be a minor issue, almost an afterthought, but, as the Rebbe often pointed out, it can actually have a serious halachic ramifications:

If someone gets married on the condition that he is able to “*lishanos*”—that he knows Mishnayos—he is only halachically married if he knows three Mishnayos. Now, since the Mishnayos are not divided based on the quantity of teachings—i.e. some Mishnayos are long and contain several teachings from several people, while others are very short. Depending on the exact version of how the Mishnayos are divided, this person would be considered able *lishanos* or not—and married or not.⁴¹]



Back to the Ben Zoma Mishnah: In the first passage, “Who is wise? One who learns from every man”—Ben Zoma cites a proof from the *possuk*, “From all my teachers I have grown wise, for Your testimonials are my meditation.”

The second half of the *possuk*—“for your testimonials are my meditation”—seems to have no connection to the notion that one must learn from every person. Why is it included?

We find that some versions of Mishnayos⁴² indeed do not include the second half of the *possuk*—so why did the Alter Rebbe choose the version that does?⁴³

The Rebbe explains that this comes to resolve a fundamental question: As above, a wise person is someone who is far from naive. He truly understands things from all its angles, and he comprehends the positive and negative qualities of every person and thing (otherwise he would be a *shoteh*, a fool).

How can you expect him to learn from *everyone*, even someone with no positive qualities at all? He can be *nice* to them, he can have *ahavas Yisrael* to them as fellow Yidden, but how can he be expected to *learn* from them?

Therefore the Tanna tells us: Your *testimonials are my meditation*—everything in the world is a testimonial on Hashem. He is the only one who can create something out of nothing, and in every object and person, one can see how it is “testifying” on Hashem. That’s why he can learn from everyone—even someone with no qualities—for they, too, are a testimony on Hashem.

The Chassidus-In depth

As mentioned above, the Rebbe would often explain the Mishnayos according to Chassidus, revealing tremendous depth and exploring profound concepts of Chassidus and Kabbalah. Many Mishnayos have been explained by the previous Rabbeim, and they form the basis for fundamental teachings of Chassidus.



In our Mishnah:

The Arizal explains that these four attributes corresponds to the four letters of Hashem’s name:

Wise—*yud*, Chochmah.

Strong—*hei*, Bina.

Rich—*vov*, Tiferes.

Honored—*hei*, Malchus.

He concludes, “A person reading this Mishnah should have this intent.”

This means, the Rebbe explains, that it’s not enough to learn from this Mishnah how to reach *your own* completion—rather, *you should have this intent*. By studying this Mishnah you should come to the understanding that your four attributes come from Hashem’s four attributes (which then go on to create the four worlds and the four basic dimensions of each world).

So the Mishnah is both teaching us a lesson and telling us about the *sefiros* on high, as the Rebbe goes on to explain:

A person’s matters are divided into four categories: 1) As he is for himself; 2) When he elaborates on his ideas and brings them into words; 3) When he connects with other people, through his emotions; 4) When he *receives* from others.

The Mishnah is teaching us a lesson about these four categories of life, and also in the *sefiros* above:

1) Wise-Chochmah

In a person: Chochmah refers to him as he is for himself—when he has an abstract idea that cannot be explained and cannot be related to emotion, and certainly not to another person.

In sefiros: The *sefira* of Chochmah is far beyond the rest of the *sefiros*. This is alluded to in the *yud*, a point—the essential point that is beyond anything else.

The lesson: Who is wise? One who learns from every man.

In a person: True wisdom means that even when a person is on his own, before he talks to anyone, he learns from the essential fact that he met them.

In sefiros: The *sefira* of Chochmah is complete when it is revealed and descends to the lower levels.

2) Strong-Bina

In a person: Bina refers to the elaboration of an idea into an explanation; as Kabbalah explains, this is connected to strength.

In sefiros: This is how the “point” of Chochmah is revealed and elaborated into the long strokes of the *Hei*.

The lesson: Who is strong? One who overpowers his inclinations.

In a person: When do you see that a person is truly strong? When do you see that he truly comprehends? When his ideas are strong enough to affect his emotions, overpowering his inclinations.

In sefiros: The true completeness of the *sefira* of Bina is when it overpowers and guides the *middos*.

3) Rich-Tiferes/Middos

In a person: This refers to one’s relationship with other people; just as a rich person gives to others, through our emotions we give to other people.

In sefiros: This is how *Eloku*s is drawn down into the world, symbolized by the long line of the *Vov*.

The lesson: Who is rich? One who is satisfied with his lot.

In a person: When can you truly influence others? When you are happy with your lot.

In sefiros: The same is true on high.

4) Honored-Malchus

In a person: The final level is how a person receives from others; honor is something that you cannot give yourself, you can only receive it from others.

In sefiros: This refers to the *sefira* of Malchus, symbolized in the final *Hei* of Hashem’s name, which has the shape of a recipient.

The lesson: Who is honorable? One who honors his fellows.

In a person: When you honor others, they will reciprocate and honor you back.

In sefiros: The true honor of the *sefira* of Malchus is when it gives to the world, to the lowliest creations.⁴⁴ 

General sketches ON EACH PEREK OF AVOS



Below we will see how each of the *perakim* corresponds to the six *sefiros* of Chesed-Yesod, which is followed by *matan Torah* on Shavuot—Malchus. It is fascinating that this explanation has no source other than the Rebbe's *sichos*, as the Rebbe himself said at the time, "I haven't found this yet in the *maamarim*, but it seems that it has been brought in Chassidus, and it will be found with the proper study."⁴⁵

א | Perek Alef

Sefira: Corresponds to Chesed. It begins with receiving the Torah from Hashem, the greatest kindness possible, and concludes with *shalom*.

Set-up: It sketches out the *kabbalah* of Torah, beginning from Har Sinai all the way to the final generations of Tannaim (which is completed in the beginning of *perek beis*). It quotes one or more teachings from each respective person as they are mentioned. (It should be noted that Pirkei Avos traces the oral tradition exclusively through the family of *nesi'im*, Hillel and his descendants, unlike the Rambam, who cites the other great Tannaim of each generation).

Interesting pointers: The Rebbe explains that because each Tanna received from the Tanna before him, their teachings must be connected to each other. The Rebbe occasionally explained the connection of various Mishnayos in this manner: Shimon Hatzadik with Antigonus Ish Socho; Shmaya and Avtalyon with Hillel; and so on.

Furthermore: There were times when the Rebbe would explain entire strings of Mishnayos as building upon each other and sharing a theme, for example the entirety of the first and second perek⁴⁶. On the other hand, on one occasion the Rebbe said that even different parts of the same teaching can be explained on their own.⁴⁷

Mishnayos often discussed: Why does it say that Moshe received the Torah from *Sinai*, and not from Hashem? The Rebbe spoke about this many times, and once explained it according to *pshat*, *remez*, *drush*, and *sod*.

ב | Perek Beis

Sefira: Gevura. It begins with a reminder to calculate the value of *mitzvos* vs. *aveiros*, and to recognize that Hashem is always watching—themes of *din* and *gevura*. It concludes with Rabbi Tarfon's message that *the day is short, the work is much, the workers are lazy*.

Set-up: After completing the order of *kabbalah* with Rabbi Yehuda Hannasi (compiler of the Mishnah) and his son, Rabban Gamliel, the Mishnah goes back several generations and shares several more messages from Hillel. It then moves on to Hillel's student, Rabban Yochanan Ben Zakkai, describing the qualities and messages of each of his five students.

Interesting pointers: Some of the teachings of this *perek* and even more so of *perek alef* (and, to a lesser extent, throughout Avos) seem to be directed exclusively towards *dayanim* and leaders. The Rambam explains that this is the reason why Avos—a *mesechta* dealing with *midas Chassidus*—is curiously included in the Seder Nezikin, the order of damages; because these morals are especially directed towards leaders and *dayanim*.⁴⁸ In the *sichos*, the Rebbe often explains how these Mishnayos have messages for regular people as well.⁴⁹

Mishnayos often discussed: "Rebbi says, what is the straight path that person should choose? That which brings beauty to the doer and beauty from people." The Rebbe discussed this cryptic Mishnah on many occasions.



ג | Perek Gimmel

Sefira: Tiferes. The *perek* begins with, “Look at three things,” and the number three corresponds to Tiferes which unites the first two *sefiros* of Chesed and Gevura to become “three.”

Setup: Having concluded the order of tradition through the family of *nesi'im*, the Mishnah now brings various Tannaim and their teachings with no apparent order. Each Tanna is quoted once—some with a single teaching, some with more—with the exception of Rabbi Shimon Ben Yochai (quoted twice) and Rabbi Meir (quoted twice on his own and once by someone else).

Interesting pointers: Many times, a Tanna will have several teachings in the same Mishnah that seem to share no apparent connection, but here we find an example of two teachings from *two different* Tannaim in a single Mishnah that have no apparent connection to each other: Rabbi Channina Segan Hakohanim says that one should pray for the welfare of the government for without them people would swallow each other alive, and then Rabbi Chanina ben Tradyon says that two people sitting together should study Torah and the Shechina will rest with them, if not it is considered a session of scoffers. Why aren't these simply divided into two Mishnayos?

The Rebbe gave various explanations throughout the years: That they are both a study in extremes (government versus people eating each other, Shechina versus a session of scoffers); or that a functional government is a necessary prerequisite to studying Torah in depth.

Mishnayos often spoken about: The first Mishnah seems to have a *musar* perspective: *Akavya ben Mehalalel would say... From where do you come? From a putrid drop. Where are you going? To a place of dust, of worm and of maggot. Before whom are you destined to give an account and reckoning? Before the King of the kings of kings.*” The Rebbe explained how each line of the Mishnah targets a different type of person and a different level in *avodas Hashem*.

ד | Perek Daled

Sefira: Netzach, which receives from Chochmah but isn't Chochmah itself. Therefore it begins, *Who is a wise man?* It is discussing Chochmah, but outside of it (Chochmah itself would have no such question).

Setup: As in *perek gimmel*, *perek daled* quotes various Tannaim and their sayings with no apparent order.

Interesting pointers: There are many Mishnayos in Pirkei Avos that seem to be stating an obvious *halacha*, and they must be analyzed in order to reveal the deeper meaning. But in this *perek*, there is a Mishnah that seems downright odd. The Mishnah says, “Shmuel Hakatan would say, *בנפול אויבך אל תשמח ובכשלו אל יגל*, פן יראה ה' ורע בעיניו והשיב מעליו אפו” —a *possuk* from Mishlei, with nothing added whatsoever! How can this be quoted as Shmuel Hakatan's teaching?

The Bartenura explains simply that this was a *possuk* he would quote often. But the Rebbe says that if Pirkei Avos were to quote every Tanna's favorite *possuk*—the ones they repeated often—then Pirkei Avos would certainly have many more of these.

The Rebbe explained (as do other *mefarshim*) that by the very fact that he's quoting the *possuk* out of its original context, Shmuel Hakatan is changing the entire meaning.

Mishnayos often discussed: Unquestionably, the Mishnah most often discussed at farbrengens (and in Chassidus in general) is the cryptic Mishnah 13: *Rebbi Shimon would say: There are three crowns—the crown of Torah, the crown of priesthood and the crown of sovereignty, but the crown of good name surmounts them all.* (In fact, in one farbrengen the Rebbe said that he would speak about another Mishnah on the *perek* only because he had already discussed this one that year⁵⁰.)

ה | Perek Hei

General theme: Hod.⁵¹

Setup: *Perek Hei* is very different than the previous *perakim*. The majority of Mishnayos are quoted without an author, and much of it is lists of things with specific numbers: Ten (1-6), seven (7-8), and four (9-15). Whereas the previous *perakim* were mostly *prescriptive*, explicitly teaching us what to do, *perek hei* is mostly *descriptive*, describing and explaining a slew of fascinating concepts and paradigms, but leaving it to us to figure out the message contained therein on our own. The Rebbe (and other *mefarshim*) often focus on finding the messages of these *mishnayos*.

Interesting pointers: Considering that the Rebbe explained Pirkei Avos over the years and that we go through it four times every summer, it is no surprise that he discussed the same Mishnah multiple times. Sometimes he said that he would be discussing a different part of it, but other times he would ask the same question and give a completely new explanation.

One interesting example in our *perek*: *There are four types among those who sit before the sages: the sponge, the funnel, the strainer and the sieve.* The Rebbe once explained⁵² it in a manner that roughly corresponds to the explanation of the early *mefarshim* (including the Avos D'Rabbi Nosson), saying that it refers to four different types of students. The Rebbe learns beautiful *horaos* for every person in their study of Torah, and also how it corresponds to four stages in a student's learning career. But then, a few years later⁵³, the Rebbe spoke about the Mishnah again, and based on a few major questions, took it from an entirely different perspective.

Mishnayos often spoken about: The first Mishnah discusses why Hashem created the world with 10 sayings instead of one, "It could have been created with one." Chassidus explains this Mishnah at length, about the difference between a world created by a single *maamar* vs. a world created by 10, and there are many *sichos* on it as well.

ו | Perek Vov

Sefira: *Yesod*. Just as *Yesod* is a *sefira* that is set apart from the first five—it is "outside the body"—the sixth *perek* is a *Beraisa* that was added to Pirkei Avos.

Setup: The original Mesechta Avos is only five *perakim*; the sixth is a *Beraisa* called *Kinyan Torah*—the acquiring of Torah. It was added to Avos in order to be recited on the sixth week between Pesach and Shavuot (and the Rebbe brings proof that it becomes part of Avos to an extent). As a *Beraisa*, the style of this *perek* is very different than the previous ones: it is much longer and more elaborative. Whereas the previous *perakim* include many short teachings, in this *perek* most of the Mishnayos/Beraisos bring out one, single point at length.

Interesting pointers: In this *perek* we find one of the only stories in Pirkei Avos, of Rabbi Yosei Ben Kisma telling of how he turned down an offer of a million golden coins and gems so as not to move away from the center of Torah. Rabbi Yosei tells his story at great length, with seemingly non-essential details ("he greeted me and I returned his greetings"), and flowery language ("Indeed, so is written in the book of Tehillim by Dovid the king of Israel"). The Rebbe explains how this and other details are essential to understanding the magnitude of what Rabbi Yosei was sacrificing and the lesson for us.⁵⁴

In a similar vein, the Rebbe explains how the wording of the other Mishnayos in this *perek*, as well, are exact—even when it seems long or when the wording seems odd.

Where to find THE REBBE'S BIURIM ON PIRKEI AVOS

There are many explanations throughout the Rebbe's Torah;
below are the primary collections and series.

Likkutei Sichos

In addition to *sichos* scattered throughout, there is a series of *sichos* on each perek in **volume 4** and **volume 17**.

Toras Menachem/ Sichos Kodesh/ Sefer Hasichos

The Rebbe began speaking about Pirkei Avos during the summer farbrengens early in the *nesius*, but these were a few *sichos* here and there, usually delivered between Pesach and Shavuos. In 5728*, the Rebbe explained Pirkei Avos every week throughout the summer, but the following year it was again only between Pesach and Shavuos.

From 5736* the Rebbe explained Pirkei Avos every week throughout the summer, (although the *sichos* vary significantly in length). One can usually find the questions on the Mishnah following the questions on Rashi and Zohar, and the answers in the *sichos* that followed. In 5748* the Rebbe explained the first Mishnah of each *perek* (as he did with the Rashis).

Audio

The *sichos* on Pirkei Avos were delivered during the Shabbos farbrengens, but in 5738* and 5739*, following the heart attack, the Rebbe farbrenged on Motzei Shabbos instead of Shabbos afternoon, and those farbrengens were recorded. Listening to these *sichos*, one can fully experience

the unbelievable *geshmak* of the Rebbe taking apart and farbrenging about the message of each Mishnah. *These farbrengens can be listened to on the Ashreinu.app.*

Biurim L'Pirkei Avos

Biurim L'pirkei Avos is a two-volume collection of the Rebbe's *sichos* and letters on each passage in Avos. The Rebbe's explanations are scattered throughout Sichos Kodesh, Toras Menachem and Likkutei Sichos—so this collection serves a tremendous resource, although the original *sichos* should be consulted for the full length and depth. The first edition was published in the 5740s* with the Rebbe's oversight, compiled by **Rabbi Eliyahu Friedman**, who shared a couple of interesting nuggets about the printing:

- When the *Biurim L'pirush Rashi* was compiled, the Rebbe did not allow them to use *sichos* that were not *mugah*, edited by the Rebbe. When they asked if they could use non-edited *sichos* for the Pirkei Avos, the Rebbe agreed.
- In the introduction by Rabbi Tuvia Bloy, it was written that they had not brought the part of the *sichos* that dealt with the explanation of the other *mefarshim*—whether the Rebbe was rebutting their explanation or strengthening it—דחייתם או חיזוקם. When the Rebbe edited the introduction, he switched the order of these words, so it read חיזוקם או דחייתם, with the positive element first.

In the sefer *Pirkei Avot* published by Kehos in English, many of the Rebbe's explanations have been adapted and included.

1. Likkutei Sichos vol. 17.
2. See for example Sichos Kodesh 5741 vol. 4 p. 127 that the Mishnayos are sometimes encouraging us to fulfill normal obligations in a *manner* that is beyond the letter of the law.
3. Sichos Kodesh 5733 vol. 2 p. 161 (Parshas Bamidbar).
4. See the explanation of Mishnah 1:1, *Moshe received the Torah from Sinai*, Shabbos Shemini 5731 (Biurim L'Pirkei Avos p. 28); see the explanations on Mishnah 1:14 *Im ein ani li, mi li*, Biruim L'Pirkei Avos p. 72-74.
5. Emor 5738 - Sichos Kodesh p. 268. Toras Menachem 5743 vol. 4 p. 1991. 5747 vol. 4 p. 358.
6. Midrash Shmuel in his introduction; Shabbos Nasso 5737 (Biurim L'Pirkei Avos p.1.)
7. Ibid.
8. Toras Menachem 5747 vol. 4 p. 358.
9. Biurim L'Pirkei Avos ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid. p. 7
12. Reshimas Hayoman p. 187.
13. Toras Menachem vol. 5 p. 175.
14. Biurim L'Pirkei Avos p. 7
15. See the introduction to Derech Chayim.
16. Toras Menachem vol. 3 p. 1471, Likkutei Sichos vol. 17 p. 349.
17. Toras Menachem 5744 vol. 4 p. 2553.
18. See also Midrash Shmuel for a similar approach
19. Shabbos Korach, Balak 5740.
20. See Bartneura.
21. Tosfos Yom Tov.
22. See the *sicha* below as to why the literal translation cannot be accepted.
23. Toras Menachem Hisvaaduyos 5743 vol. 3 p. 1399; 1512 (Biurim L'Pirkei Avos p. 17).
24. See e.g. Mishnah 2-3 *Rabbi Shimon would say be careful in krias shma and tefillah*, Likkutei Sichos vol. 17 p. 356 (Biurim L'Pirkei Avos p. 122); also the explanation below about Rebbe Elazar Ben Arach.
25. Shabbos Pinchas 5728 (Biurim L'Pirkei Avos p. 55). For an alternative explanation, that this expresses the fact that Yehoshua Ben Perachia *did* try to bring him closer at a later stage, see Shabbos Behaaloscha 5741 (Biurim L'Pirkei Avos p. 53).
26. Shabbos Matos Masei 5737 (Biurim L'Pirkei Avos p. 104).
27. Shabbos Kedoshim 5746 (Biurim L'Pirkei Avos p. 125).
28. Shabbos Shelach 5728; Devarim 5740 (Biurim L'Pirkei Avos p. 141.
29. There are 600,000 general *neshamos* that are then divided into smaller parts, see Tanya perek 37.
30. Berachos 58a.
31. Ibid.
32. Kovetz Bikkur Chicago p. 18
33. See Kovetz Lubavitch, *Rebirth in a New World*, Derher, Elul 5775.
34. Teshuvos U'Biurim 1. Later printed in Igros Kodesh vol. 1 p. 287.
35. Bartenura.
36. See Toras Menachem 5748 vol. 3 p. 552; Sichos Kodesh 5748 Parshas Korach p. 19.
37. Sichos Kodesh Ibid.
38. Although, as the Rebbe quotes from the Rebbe Rashab, there is certainly a deeper reason as well.
39. For the above see Toras Menachem 5748 vol. 3 p. 553; Ibid. 5745 vol. 5 p. 2696; Igros Kodesh vol. 27 p. 326 in the bottom footnote.
40. See Motzei Shabbos Emor 5738, about the Rambam's version: הכל לפי רוב המעשה ולא לפי המעשה.
41. Likkutei Sichos vol. 4 p. 1175; vol. 17, p. 366; from *Chelkas Mechokek Even Ho'ezzer siman 36 s"v 40*. See also Sichos Kodesh 5736 vol. 2, p. 370.
42. See the language of the Bartenura here.
43. The Rebbe asked this general question several times, but this formulation is from Toras Menachem 5748 vol. 3 p. 553. At that farbrengen the Rebbe gave a different answer, see there; the answer below comes from the farbengens of Shabbos Korach and Balak 5740.
44. Sefer Hasichos 5748 vol. 2 p. 446.
45. Sichos Kodesh 5741 vol. 4 p. 616
46. Toras Menachem 5742 vol. 3, p. 1386.
47. See Shabbos Tavo 5743 on Mishnah 4:20 *do not look at the kan-kan*.
48. Introduction to Pirush Hamishnayos. See Shabbos Kedoshim 5744 (Biurim L'Pirkei Avos p. 32) that this is one of the reasons why the Mishnah says that Moshe received Torah from Sinai, for leaders need an emphasis on *bittul*.
49. Toras Menachem 5747 vol. 3, p. 474.
50. 5748.
51. The Rebbe didn't elaborate on the connection to the *perek*.
52. Biurim, p. 285.
53. Ibid. p. 286.
54. Chukas 5741



הצליח ונשא חן בעיניהם



Rabbi Mendel Raskin

Cote S. Luc, Canada

”נשיא דורנו האט
אויפגעטאן און
אנגעזאגט צו כל
אנשי ונשי הדור
אז מצוות הדור
איז אין דעם ענין
השליחות...”

“The Rebbe nesi doreinu established and mandated each and every man and woman in this generation that the ‘mitzvah of our generation’ is *shlichus*...”
(ש”פ וישלח תשמ”ז)

I was *zocheh* to grow up on shlichus in Morocco where my father Reb Leibel, and my mother Mrs. Hoda Reizel Raskin, were sent by the Rebbe in 5720*.

After my wife and I got married in Kislev 5745*, I joined the kollel in Crown Heights. It was clear to us that we would go on shlichus when the time came. A year later, on 12 Cheshvan 5746*, we wrote a letter to the Rebbe with four offers of places for shlichus, asking if we should consider any of the options. In our letter, we wrote that we are soldiers and are ready to go wherever the Rebbe would send us even if it meant learning a language that we were not familiar with.

Weeks went by and we received no response from the Rebbe. We wrote a second time but again we didn’t receive an answer. I was broken. I felt that maybe the Rebbe didn’t want us to move on shlichus.

I asked the Rebbe’s *mazkir* Reb Binyomin Klein if I should write a third time but he said I shouldn’t; my letter is on the Rebbe’s table!

A few more weeks passed and we got another offer for shlichus in Montreal.

I wrote the fifth option in to the Rebbe and within no time, I received the Rebbe’s answer:

כמפורסם בכי”ב כעצת ידידים מבינים. אזכיר עה”צ

As is well-known in such matters, follow the advice of knowledgeable friends. I will mention this at the Tziyun.

After following the Rebbe’s directive, I wrote again to the Rebbe. The Rebbe answered by circling the words I wrote asking for the Rebbe’s *וברכה*.

It seems that the Rebbe wanted me to continue the same *avoda* as my father, working with French speaking, *Sefardishe Yidden*.

On 9 Iyar, I wrote to the Rebbe with the date that we were scheduled to move on shlichus. The Rebbe answered *אזכיר עה”צ* and sent out a Canadian dollar bill for us to give to *tzedakah* in Montreal.

On 12 Iyar, a few hours before we left to Montreal, I stood in the hallway of 770 after Mincha. As the Rebbe was returning to his room, Rabbi Groner mentioned that I was leaving on shlichus that day. The Rebbe looked straight at me and said:

פארט געזונטערהייט און ס’וועט זיין בשורות טובות.

Travel safely and there will be good news.

As a young child, I had always received *chinuch* from my father that the primary focus of shlichus is to bring Yidden to the Rebbe. Baruch Hashem we merited to bring many groups to the Rebbe, something that we continue to do to this day. We brought full buses of Yidden for Shabbos on many occasions, including the last Shabbos that the world was *zocheh* to a farbrengen from the Rebbe, 25 Adar I 5752*. We would be at the Rebbe’s davening and farbrengen, and then we would receive dollars on Sunday morning.

The Rebbe had tremendous *nachas ruach* from these groups and it was clearly seen in the way the Rebbe would say *lchaim* to them, encourage the singing and even say special *sichos* in their honor. There are many stories about these trips which are beyond the scope of this article. We were also *zocheh* to receive a number of answers from the Rebbe in regards to the groups that came.

Additionally, over the years, we were *zocheh* to receive the Rebbe’s answers on various issues. Here are a few:

For Shabbos Parshas Shoftim 5748*, I came with my wife and two children to spend Shabbos with the Rebbe. At the end of that Shabbos farbrengen, the Rebbe spoke strongly about the coming year as a time for building and

that new Chabad Houses should be built (the Rebbe later gave it a name: (שנת הבנין). I took a *hachlata* that I would build a new Beis Chabad during the year.

In order to build you need money, so I decided I would travel to Australia to visit a certain *gevir* and ask him to donate a large sum. I booked a ticket for Sunday, 22 Elul (the day after Shabbos Selichos), and went to the Australian embassy to get a visa (at that time one needed a visa to travel to Australia). Of course, I wrote my plan to the Rebbe and asked for a *bracha*.

Motzei Shabbos Selichos came but I had still not received any answer from the Rebbe. Ten minutes before the Rebbe came down for *selichos*, at 12:50 a.m., the Rebbe gave an answer:

הרי הוא במונטריאל והמדובר באוסטרלי!?
אין ענין לסדר הרגיל לבזבז כמה אלפים ממון
ישראל לנסיעות מעבר לים לבקש נדבות כה"ל
ולפלא גדול על הקס"ד אף שכוונתו רצוי, אזכיר
עה"צ.

You are in Montreal, and this individual is in Australia?! It does not make sense, under normal

circumstances, to squander a few thousand [dollars] of Jewish money to travel overseas and request a donation in this manner. It is shocking that this was even considered, although your intention was well-meaning. I will mention this at the Tziyun.

After the *histalkus* of the Rebbetzin, the Rebbe spoke about opening new *mosdos* in the Rebbetzin's memory. On the day of the *shloshim*, 21 Adar 5748*, we signed a lease to rent a new Beis Chabad. A year later, on 21 Adar 5749*, we made a special celebration marking one year in the new Chabad House. In response to my letter about this, the Rebbe answered:

נת' ות"ח אזכיר עה"צ, לבשו"ט והזמן גרמא
והענין.

It was received, thanks. I will mention this at the Tziyun for good news. The timing and the concept are [both] appropriate.

Two years later in 5751*, the time had come to expand and I wanted very much to build a Beis Chabad House in honor of Yud-Aleph Nissan. I brought Reb Yoel Kahn to farbreng

לזכות
הרה"ת ר' יוסף יצחק אהרן שיחי'
לרגל יום הולדתו י"ז סיון
ולזכות בנו מנחם מענדל שיחי'
לרגל יום הולדתו כ' סיון
לשנת הצלחה בגור'
ולזכות כל משפחת
בראקמאן שיחי'

with the Yidden in Cote S. Luc and I wrote a letter to the Rebbe about the farbrengen. In my letter I wrote that this farbrengen would also be a special *seudas hodaah* for the great *nissim* that took place in Eretz Yisroel during the Golf War. I ended by asking for a *bracha* that a large crowd should attend and that "we should be able to inform the Rebbe about a new *matana* for Yud-Aleph Nissan from all the participants." I didn't write what the *matana* was going to be. The Rebbe's answer was:

אזכיר עה"צ לתוכן הבקשה.

I will mention at the Tziyun on the content of the request.

I understood this as clear *ruach hakodesh* from the Rebbe. The Rebbe was giving his *bracha* for the *tochen* of what I was actually asking for. Indeed, we put up a new Beis Chabad as a result of that farbrengen.

Another interesting answer I received from the Rebbe was in Shevat 5752*. I wrote that members of the *kehillah* were worried about a sickness that was affecting children and youngsters and that the doctors and parents were unsure if their children should receive a certain injection that could have other negative effects. I added that the only one that could give an answer that would satisfy the parents is the Rebbe. The Rebbe answered:

האומנם אינו יודע שיש רבנים גדולים בעירו
יפנה כל הנ"ל אליהם.

Is it possible that you do not know that there are great rabbonim in your city[?] You should forward all this [information and the question] to them. ①

He Grew up on Shlichus; she grew up around 770

When the time came for Rabbi Raskin to get married, his parents wrote to the Rebbe asking about three people who had been suggested as possible *shidduchim* for their son to consider. With each name, Rabbi Raskin's father included some information. The Rebbe circled the name of Mrs. Sarah Raskin (then Sternberg) along with the words his father had written "770 של אמות בד'—[Go with] the proposal of Sternberg who grew up and was educated in the *daled amos* of 770."

Interestingly, during the period that they were meeting for *shidduchim*, Mrs. Raskin wrote to the Rebbe and received special answers. One of the answers was about Rabbi Raskin growing up on shlichus:

ע"פ הידוע המדובר שיחי' "עסק" גם בבעלי הבתים, אנשים מחוגים שונים והצליח ונשא
חן בעיניהם וכו'... וכן ראה בביתו תמיד כל הימים בפעולות הוריו שיחי'.

As is known, the suggested [*bochur*] *sheyichye* was also "active" with *baalei-battim*, people of various communities, and he was successful and had positive appeal with them etc. He also saw this constantly [growing up] with the activities of his parents' *sheyichyu*.



LUBAVITCH AT THE WORLD'S FAIR



**HAFATZA
ON THE
BIG
STAGE**



LUBAVITCH.COM

UNITED STATES WORLD TRADE FAIR

When the Rebbe arrived in the United States on Chof-Ches Sivan 5701* and was appointed by the Frierdiker Rebbe to lead Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch, the stated goal was to bring Yiddishkeit and Chassidus to every single Yid wherever he or she may be on the globe. Publication was an important department of Merkos and over the years vast amounts of literature in various languages were published to aid Yidden in learning about Yiddishkeit and Chassidus, each on their own level and at their own pace.

In the early years, selling the books, newsletters and pamphlets published by Kehos and Merkos were an integral element of *hafatza*, and *bochurim* and *yungerleit* would sell them by visiting Yidden in their homes and shuls throughout New York City and other major Jewish communities. When *bochurim* went out on Merkos Shlichus during the summer they brought with them cases of these publications and sold them to the Yidden they met all over the world.

But in 5720*, Lubavitch broadened its horizons and its reach by displaying its uniquely Jewish and Chassidic literature on an entirely new platform.

"I had seen an advertisement about the United States World Trade Fair being held at the New York Coliseum," Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky relates. "The Trade Fair was a venue for large corporations and over 60 countries to display their innovations and big ideas, and there was room for cultural displays as well. I thought it would be a proper space to display Merkos publications and the work of Lubavitch in general."

He discussed the idea with Rabbi Hodakov and after asking the Rebbe it was agreed upon that Merkos would



BOCHURIM AT 770 PACK BOXES WITH MERKOS AND KEHOS PUBLICATIONS.

rent a space for a pavilion at the trade fair.

"We needed to build special furniture for the pavilion," recalls Rabbi Krinsky. "There were some book shelves and display racks. In addition to publications and records, we displayed photos of the Rebbeim and photos of Chabad's work around the world."

The fair ran for close to a week during the spring and there were two *bochurim* manning the pavilion the entire time. Thousands of visitors passed by, being exposed to Lubavitch for the first time and having the opportunity to peruse through the literature and purchase some as well.

In addition, the fact that a Jewish organization had rented space at the Trade Fair made a big splash in the Jewish media and beyond, receiving a lot of publicity, especially in light of the fact that it was the only Jewish organization represented at the fair.

The *peulah* was so successful that the next year, LNS (Lubavitch New Service) sent out a press release announcing that Merkos "will again display a large assortment of its publications at the United States World Trade Fair, which will take place from May 3 till May 13, at the Coliseum in New York City.

"The exhibit of Merkos publications, some appearing now in seven languages, was quite an attraction to tens of thousands of Jewish visitors at the Fair last year, and it is anticipated that this year's exhibit will even surpass that of last year.

"The Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch, in line with its wide range expansion program to offer its services to a larger number of Jewish people, is the first, and thus far the only Jewish organization to utilize the facilities offered by the World Trade Fair."

Indeed, during the week-long World Trade Fair in 5721* the Merkos pavilion engaged many more people



and when Rabbi Krinsky submitted a *duch* of both years for comparison the Rebbe responded:

כיון שהיה הנ"ל בהצלחה רבה (וכמובן - שזכות הוא לכל המתעסקים בזה, ובפרט להעומדים בראש), כדאי לה[ת]ענין ע"ד עוד תערוכות כהנ"ל.

[כמדומה, ישנו משרד מיוחד ע"ז בהנהלת העיר].

ויה"ר שג"ז יהא בהצלחה, ובגו"ר.

Since these were very successful (and understandably - it is a merit for all who were involved with it, especially those heading [the project]), it is worthwhile to explore the possibility of [doing this] at other similar exhibitions.

(I believe there is a dedicated office for this at City Hall).

Rabbi Moshe Feller was one of the *bochurim* who manned the Merkos pavilion at the World Trade Fair in 5721*. One day the Rebbetzin came to visit the booth together with Rabbi Krinsky. The *bochurim* stood at the side while Rabbi Krinsky explained the various displays.

In the spring of 5722*, for the third consecutive year there was a Lubavitch presence at the United States World Trade Fair and, as in the previous years, there was a financial deficit; the sales did not cover the money Merkos

invested in the project. The Rebbe addressed this point on a note that Rabbi Krinsky submitted detailing the expenses and the income:

הריח העיקרי - הפרסום בכלל, וברוחניות בפרט.

ובודאי עוד יתקבלו.

The main profit [is]—the general publicity, and especially the spiritual [benefits].

Certainly more will be received.

Several months later, LNS announced that Merkos "will exhibit a large assortment of its educational literature at the Chicago International Trade Fair, this summer.

"The Fair will take place from July 25 through August 12 and will be held at Chicago's huge McCormick Place. Aside from its pavilion in the regular exhibiting area, the Merkos will maintain exhibition space in the World Marketing Section of the Chicago Fair where it will display an array of its multilingual publications printed through its regional divisions in foreign countries, such as Eretz Israel, England, France, Italy and Denmark, among others.

"The Merkos decision to take part in the Chicago Fair came in recognition of the popular acceptance its exposition received during three successive years of

EXPENSES for
United States World Trade Fair - 1962

stand 150'-A	\$400.00
lumber	11.28
salary for Spielman (98 hours)	128.00
book case	50.00
electrical fixtures	16.90
electrical rental and install.	40.08
carpenter	12.85
table	7.19
signs	11.00
plastic flowers	13.00
hardware, tools, parking, tips, carfare & miscellaneous	63.12
	\$770.36
Telephone	
loading & unloading at cellars	

income
cash
orders
\$25.39
\$25.39

participation in the U.S. World Trade Fair in New York City."

One month later LNS sent out a press release about the exhibit in Chicago highlighting the fact that the work of Lubavitch around the world is on display.

"The Jewish "Peace Corps," an organization inaugurated more than ten years ago by the world renowned Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, known as the Lubavitcher Rebbe, embraces a wide range of ramified educational and rehabilitation activities in Jewish communities around the globe.

"This group... maintains regional offices in more than a dozen countries

I WAS THERE...

Mrs. Pesha Razel Lieberman relates:

I was at the US World Trade Fair in the early 5720s*. My friends and I went there to see the Flowers Exhibition from Holland and elsewhere. After being enthralled by the Israeli Exhibit, I happened to notice four large pictures of holy-looking rabbis attached to the front of a table with young bearded men wearing black coats and hats, standing behind it.

As a teen-age college student, I was a “truth-seeker” looking for more spirituality and mysticism than I enjoyed during my Orthodox upbringing. Some of my friends talked about their saints and their gurus, I wondered if there were any Jewish holy men. Though I knew of shul rabbis, I had never heard of Rebbees.

Since missionary groups were rampant in New York at the time I hesitated approaching the table because I was not sure if it was a Jewish display. However, I was especially attracted by the picture of the holy Tzemach Tzedek dressed all in white and wondered if he could be a Jewish saint.

Most importantly, I noticed that the men behind the table looked like Rabbi Dovid Edelman from my hometown Springfield, MA, whom I had met briefly a few times. Though our Modern Orthodox community did not identify with the European dress style of Rabbi and Rebbetzin Edelman, my family regarded them as among the nicest people in town and supported them financially as well.

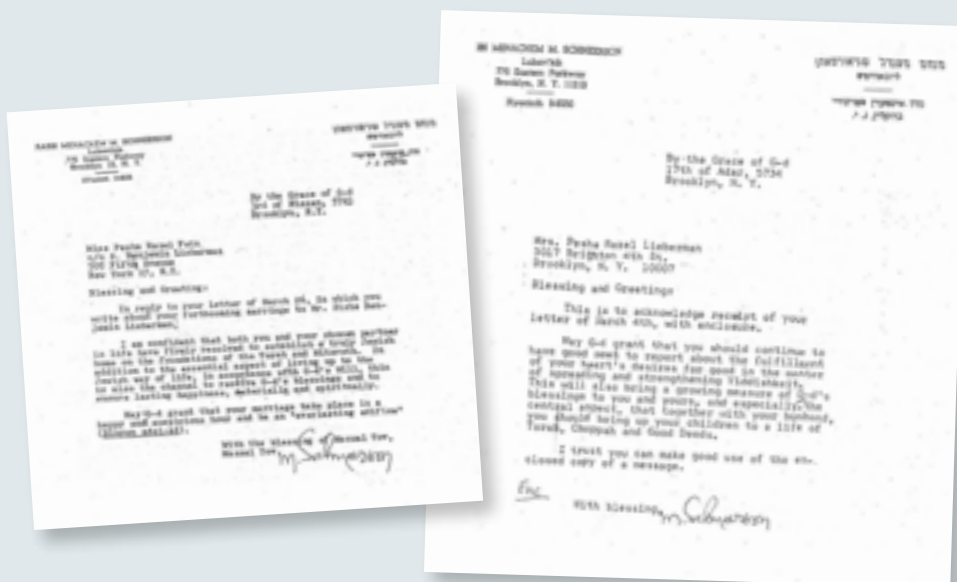
It was these shluchim’s genuine friendship that compelled me to approach the stand with the photos and to ask questions. I bought the four large photos of the Rebbeim for \$1 each, which I have until today.

The young man enthusiastically told me about the current Lubavitcher Rebbe and how much he cares about every single Jew everywhere. I was thrilled to buy the books and pamphlets about various mitzvos for 10, 15 or 50 cents each.

They respectfully answered all my questions and pointed out the number on the back of the pamphlets saying that if I had any further questions I can call that number at any time. It was the phone number to the Merkos office and I had many conversations with Rabbi Binyomin Klein, the Rebbe’s secretary, who patiently answered my many questions.

Eventually Rabbi Klein suggested that I spend a Shabbos in Crown Heights at the home of Rabbi Moshe and Esther Goldman. He said I would have the opportunity to see the Rebbe, daven in 770 and have all my questions answered by the wonderful Goldmans.

I excitedly accepted the invitation and the rest is history. The Rebbe sent a letter of blessing for my wedding two years later and my husband and I merited to be in *yechidus* several times and to receive many letters over the years.





RABBIS HODAKOV AND KRINSKY CONVERSING AT THE MERKOS BOOTH.



and has more than 300 capable volunteers stationed in Jewish communities in Europe, Israel, Africa, Australia and South America. Their purpose is to facilitate the education of what is now more than 30,000 children and young adults.

"In underprivileged areas in the world they have not only established educational facilities, schools, books and instruction, but have also had to clothe thousands of individuals and afford them with food, shelter and medical needs.

"The "Peace Corps" term has been borrowed by the group from that of President Kennedy, but has actually been in operation since 1951."*

The Chicago exhibition garnered tremendous media attention as did the previous three exhibitions in New York City.

THE WORLD FAIR

In the spring and summer of 5724* and 5725* respectively, New York City hosted two six-month long World Fairs that attracted over 50

million visitors and showcased the achievements of over 80 nations and all the major up and coming corporations in the US. Hailing itself as a "universal and international" exposition, the fair's theme was "Peace Through Understanding." The fair is noted to have been the showcase of mid-20th-century American culture and technology.

In addition to the huge pavilions built in numerous structures covering over 600 acres in Queens by major companies such as General Motors, IBM, Ford and Westinghouse, there was a Hall of Education where over 50 groups, mostly businesses involved in education, showcased their ideas for the future of education.

Following the enormous success of the Lubavitch exhibits at the three US World Trade Fairs, Merkos contracted space in the Hall of Education and set up two separate exhibits, notwithstanding the enormous cost.

"After we set up our main pavilion before the start of the World's Fair, I saw an advertisement that a space in

the Hall of Education was available for rent at a very reasonable price," recalls Rabbi Krinsky. "I asked the Rebbe if we should contract the second space as well and the Rebbe said we should do it."

An LNS press release explained that the *"Lubavitcher exhibit will portray the history, development and growth of the Chabad-Lubavitch movement since its inception nearly 200 years ago, with emphasis on its current world wide activities. Its publications department, the largest among all existing Jewish organizations, will exhibit its educational literature which will also be available on the Fair premises.*

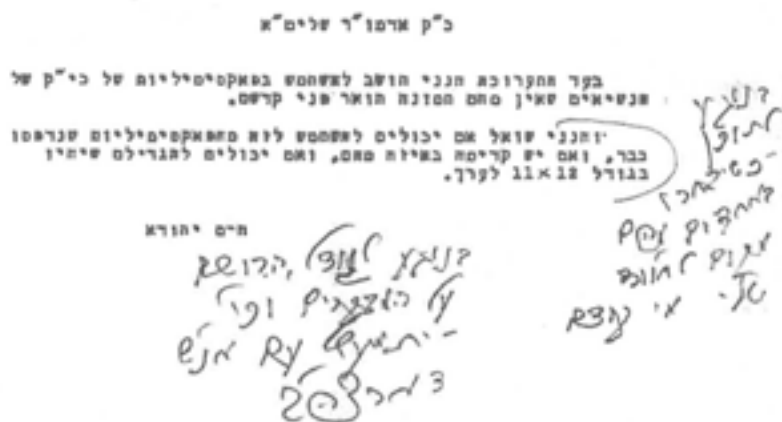
"The pavilion will be located opposite the Fountain of Planets between the IBM and Bell Telephone buildings. An estimated 40,000,000 visitors will view the Lubavitcher exposition.

"A unique aspect of the exhibit is that it will be closed on Saturdays and Jewish holidays.

"The spokesman also stated that the group is planning a wide range of activities to highlight its participation at the Fair."

On the second floor, opposite the escalator there was a large exhibit of Merkos and Kehos publications, records and various

"One day the Rebbe tzin came to visit the booth together with Rabbi Krinsky."





“They should submit a calculation of all the money they ever donated to Merkos and they will be fully reimbursed.”

history and it came as a culture shock to several members of *anash*, some who even complained about it. During the month of Cheshvan 5726*, approximately two months after the conclusion of the second World's Fair, Rabbi Hodakov called a public meeting on behalf of Merkos for all *anash* in the main shul of 770. At the meeting Rabbi Hodakov spoke about

the importance of supporting the work of Merkos and announced that if there are those who have complaints that Merkos spent too much money on extravagant projects they should submit a calculation of all the money they ever donated to Merkos and they will be fully reimbursed. The message was clear: The work of *hafatza* had

entered an entirely new stage and would only grow.

In 5727* Merkos sponsored exhibits at the International and Universal Exposition (known as Expo 67) in Montreal and at the Jerusalem Book Fair in Eretz Yisroel, which were visited by many dignitaries as well.

Rabbi Krinsky summarized all of these exhibitions as follows: “There is no question that all these exhibits were very valuable in a spiritual sense. No other Jewish organizations at the time had the concept or worldview of doing such a thing. It was very pleasurable and the Rebbe had tremendous *nachas* from it.” T



Who Belongs?

The Tzemach Tzedek had the custom of receiving people for *yechidus* every Sunday night.

One Shabbos, a large delegation of wealthy and distinguished *baalei-batim* arrived in Lubavitch for a visit. They decided that instead of seeing the regular people on Sunday evening and listening to all their “petty” issues, the Tzemach Tzedek should better say a *maamar* in honor of the important guests.

At the appropriate time, they stood outside the Tzemach Tzedek’s room and began singing the Alter Rebbe’s niggun, knowing that he would certainly come out. Indeed, upon hearing their song the Tzemach Tzedek emerged from his room and asked, “What is it that you want?”

“We want Chassidus!” they cried out. “We don’t want the Rebbe to be bothered by all these people. The Rebbe should say Chassidus instead!”

The Tzemach Tzedek agreed, but only on condition that all the locals who had gathered for *yechidus* should first go home. The *maamar* was to be exclusively for the guests.

Excitedly, the guests chased all the locals away and eagerly anticipated their special time with the Tzemach Tzedek.

A few minutes later, the Tzemach Tzedek came out again and asked if all the locals had indeed been sent away. “Yes Rebbe!” the

guests assured him. “There are no more locals in the vicinity.”

“If so,” answered the Tzemach Tzedek, “I too must leave. What am I doing here? After all, I am also a local from the town of Lubavitch!”

With that, the Tzemach Tzedek returned to his room and locked the door, teaching the arrogant *baalei-batim* an important lesson in *ahavas Yisroel*. ①

(Migdal Oz, *Maasei Avosai*, ch. 123)



Where Do These Questions Come From?

In this letter, the Rebbe answers the following questions: Is there proof that Hashem exists? Is there proof that Hashem gave us the Torah? How does Judaism differ from other religions? Why can't we change the rules that the chachamim made?



Regarding the various questions you write about fundamental tenets of our faith and how they can be proven logically—there are many *sefarim* and essays printed regarding this and it is surprising that you do not mention any of them. Obviously, it is difficult to write at length and to repeat things that have been published for many years. Having said that, I will make a few points here, so that your questions will not remain unanswered.

1) Is there positive proof that Hashem exists—or proof that He cannot *not* exist?

Answer: There is clear and simple proof, as follows:

A) When a person observes a book made up of a number of printed pages, the observer knows as a matter of fact that there must be a printhouse, for how else could the letters have been arranged in such a way that they explain something logically. It cannot be that ink spilled, and by chance, the droplets of ink fell onto hundreds of pages, forming letters that explain things. The same applies—but many times over—when one observes a stone or branch, and is aware of its atomic makeup—the atoms contained in it are not hundreds or thousands, but billions of billions—and all of them are arranged in a wondrous way, which is in keeping with established and immensely precise laws. This is explained at length in *Chovos Halevavos*, *Kuzari*, and others. See also *Sefer Hachakira* by the Tzemach Tzedek.

B) It is similar to a person knowing that souls exist by observing the life-force in living things.

2) What is the proof that the Torah was given to us by Hashem at Har Sinai? If it relies upon tradition, that would be the same proof that other religions—*lehavdil* between the holy and profane—rely upon.

Answer: It is surprising that you didn't read what was written about this in the Shavuot booklet published by Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch and in "Talks and Tales" and so on. The difference [between the proof of the Torah being given at Sinai and the proofs that other religions bring] is a fundamental one: It is possible that a single person deceived others in his generation, or that several people collaborated and deceived others in their generation, or even that a group of people deceived others in their generation, having a common reason to do so. This applies to all [other] religions: Christianity, Islam, the religions of India, and so on, whose beginnings all were that one person told a few pupils that G-d revealed Himself to him and gave him commandments, instructions, laws, and decrees. This is true of every religion without exception—other than our religion and our Torah, the knowledge of which was passed to us by the generations that came before us. The Yidden of our generation heard about it from those of the previous generation, and each generation in turn heard it from the



preceding generation, all the way back to the generation that stood at Har Sinai, when 600,000 men between the ages of 20 and 60, and several million more younger and older men as well as women and the *eirev rav* heard—**all at once**—“I am Hashem your G-d, etc.”—not through an intermediary, but directly from Hashem. The 600,000 and more people were made up of many types of people: ignoramuses and learned sages, rich and poor people, etc. etc. They all heard the same exact version of the same exact words, and they gave over an **identical version** to their children, and their children to their children, all the way to our generation. You certainly know that the Reform and Conservative movements began only a few decades ago. Before that, there may have been a few individual *apikorsim*, but millions and millions said the same thing in the same words. Throughout the **entire** history of the Jewish people, there was not even a single **moment** that this tradition was not being transmitted by hundreds of thousands of people **at the same time**. There is not a **single** other thing anywhere in the world about which there is testimony as reliable as that about *matan Torah*.

3) Why can't we alter the resolutions Chazal made?

Answer: I will preface by bringing an example from the science of mathematics. Modern mathematics are based upon principles that were known and written down as far back as the time of the ancient Greeks such as Euclid, etc. Although their scientific works are far smaller

than modern-day books, that is because the **principles** and **guidelines** that come from those scholars are later expanded upon with more and more concepts and theories. However, since these [expanded, modern-day mathematical works] are based upon the guidelines and principles that they [the ancient Greek mathematicians] created, these [modern works] were already included in their words [—those of the ancient Greeks].

Lehavdil, the same applies to our holy Torah: Principles were given, as well as guidelines on how to use these principles and how to reach new conclusions from them. This was all given at Har Sinai to several million people at once. In time, the sages in each generation, **on the basis of these principles**—the rules with which the Torah is expounded, as they are commonly known—followed the guidelines that **the Torah** established as the true path, and they reached a number of conclusions—several laws and instructions, as they are commonly known. Even though these rules were said by specific *tannaim*, *amoraim*, and *geonim*, everything that they said is included in the very principles, guidelines, and paths that Moshe Rabbeinu received from the Giver of the Torah. From this it is clear that if we wish to solve a question that has arisen in modern times, such as those connected with electricity and so on, and we wish to solve it in the spirit of **the Torah**, as the rabbanim solved them in previous generations, we must follow the guidelines and principles of **the Torah**. One of



these principles is that a Beis Din cannot annul the rulings of another Beis Din, unless it is greater, etc. This, too, is a principle from the **Giver of the Torah**. There is also a rule that the majority ruling of a Beis Din must be followed, if it is a Beis Din of people who follow the Torah in these teachings.

4) You ask whether letters are holy, and whether this is written in Shulchan Aruch.

This is written in a *sefer* that precedes the Shulchan Aruch—in Gemara Shabbos 104a, and in a number of places in the Zohar and in Tikkunei Zohar. The same applies to *nekudos*. (Tikkunei Zohar *tikkun* 5, 21. See *Zohar Chadash, tikkunim*.)

All of the above is obvious and very easy to understand. The fact that there are people who disagree with it all, is because doing so is the only way they are able to justify to themselves their violating the mitzvos of our Torah, the Torah of life. They're embarrassed to say that the temptation is too much for them to bear, and so they want to explain and remove the chain from their necks [i.e. the responsibility] and cast doubt upon the essence of the matter.

In general, you should know that it must be one of the following two options: Either one believes that the Torah is from Hashem, [and if that's the case, then you must accept the Torah in its entirety, including] the ruling of the Rambam that anyone who accepts the entire Torah as

Divine, except for one letter—that is the opposite of the **foundation** of belief in Hashem; and if one doesn't want to follow the rulings of the Torah, that automatically casts doubt upon one's belief in Hashem's unity, as written in the Torah.

Those who believe that Hashem created the world—on Yom Kippur and when they say *yizkor* in shul—but believe otherwise the rest of the year and on weekdays—that is the opposite of healthy thinking. One who truly believes in this manner belongs in a hospital for those with emotional illnesses, G-d forbid. [In truth, they don't really believe this,] but, as mentioned previously, many people don't want to fight their *yetzer hara* and they try to justify the *aveiros* that they do in this way.

May Hashem grant you success to be a good *messenger*, that through your true faith should be passed on to your congregation, especially now, the days before [Pesach, when we eat matzah, which is] the food of faith and the food of healing, strengthening the simple and pure faith of every Yid. As Chazal tell us, when a child (i.e. one who is intellectually a child) eats food made of grain (which as Chassidus explains, refers to matzah), he calls out to his father—our Father in Heaven.

May you have a kosher and happy Pesach.¹

¹ Igros Kodesh vol. 11 p. 6. Also printed in Likkutei Sichos vol. 16 p. 544.



"Ich For Doch Mit Eich"

An interview with
Rabbi Sholom Ber Lispkar



RABBI LIPSKAR RECEIVES LEKACH FROM THE REBBE AFTER YECHIDUS WITH MEMBERS OF MIDF, 8 TISHREI, 5749.

LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 252390

The Rebbe's Mekuravim

"Personally, I try to avoid entering the Rebbe's room," shares Rabbi Lipskar. "The first time I entered the Rebbe's personal study, referred to as *Gan Eden Haelyon*, after Gimmel Tammuz, I was struck by the room's modest size. Over the years, when I merited to have many *yechidusen* with the Rebbe, the walk from the door to the Rebbe's desk seemed a mile long. We didn't perceive the place as physical at all. The Rebbe's presence transcended the reality of the space; it was like '*makom ha'aron eino min hamidah*.' And that is a feeling that I want to retain."

We sat down with Rabbi Sholom Ber Lipskar, to hear about his youth in 770 and his early years on shlichus, when he merited to receive extensive guidance from the Rebbe.

"I've learned over the years of my shlichus that one of the most impactful things I could do with my *mekuravim* was to bring them to the Rebbe. Over the years, *baruch Hashem*, we've brought countless Yidden to the Rebbe, before and after Gimmel Tammuz, where each one was impacted in a significant way and the impact continued to be priceless."

Some of these individuals experienced open miracles. One couple who didn't have children for many years joined a group of benefactors traveling to New York for dollars. They asked the Rebbe for a blessing for a child, but the Rebbe gave them two dollars, saying, "This is for the children."

"The wife was so shaken by the experience," Rabbi Lipskar relates, "she needed to be supported as she left the Rebbe and was taken to Ess & Bench to calm down. Nine months later she gave birth to twins, after which she had two more sets of twins. Needless to say, their Yiddishkeit

was strengthened and they became dedicated Chassidim of the Rebbe."

In other instances, Rabbi Lipskar witnessed how the Rebbe personally motivated and demanded of *mekuravim* to enhance their commitment, both on a personal and financial level.

In 5734*, the Federation's "Young Leadership Cabinet" of the tri-state area came for a *yechidus*, and Rabbi Hodakov arranged that a few young and eloquent shlichim join the group. Among them was Rabbi Lipskar.

During an hour-and-a-half of intense discussion, the Rebbe answered questions about Russian Jewry, fundraising, spreading Yiddishkeit, *chinuch* and the Holocaust. Towards the end of the *yechidus*, the Rebbe said that he hoped he answered all the questions adequately and satisfactorily. "But now," the Rebbe said, "I'd like to ask you something."

"I'm 72 years old," the Rebbe said. "Before I go to sleep tonight, I hope and pray to Al-mighty G-d that when I wake up tomorrow morning, I will do one thing more or one thing better than I did until today. And for that reason, I have the right to ask you to do the same."

"People always left the Rebbe's room impacted," Rabbi Lipskar explained. "But for us Chassidim, especially as *bochurim*, it took on a whole new dimension. When I was a *bochur* in 770, we prepared for *yechidus* for at least a week before. On the day of *yechidus*, you fasted and spent time alone, *b'hisbodedus*. It was a very serious matter. I vividly remember the feeling of standing at the Rebbe's door, about to be called in. It was an awesome feeling."

We asked Rabbi Lipskar to share some details of his personal *yechidusen*, and he shared the following story.

"Iskafya means to not waste your time, to not do what you want, and to eat healthy."

"When I was a 17-year-old *bochur* in 770, I began to observe *iskafya* to an extreme degree, as a result of learning Chassidus and hearing the stories of Chassidim in Russia.

"The Rebbe said to me in *yechidus* that *iskafya* in our day isn't achieved through physical deprivation. *Iskafya* means to not waste your time, to not do what you want, and to eat healthy. He said that this type of behavior brings to *atzvus*, not *merirus*, and that I should approach my *mashpia* to better understand the difference. Afterwards, Reb Yoel learned with me Perek 26 in Tanya."

The Long and Short Way

During the *yechidus* with the Federation leaders, the Rebbe made a point to them which has served as a guiding light for Rabbi Lipskar in his shlichus.

"The Rebbe repeated the Gemara's story of the long and short way to Yerushalayim. There are two ways of raising funds, the Rebbe explained to them. The short and long way is to publicize a touching story, and, with the help of a good spokesman, the donor will be impressed and write a check. But the following year, if a new emergency arises in another environment, it will take precedence over your project. Although you received your financial needs in the short term, you haven't ensured any long term progress. The long and



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RABBI LIPSKAR RECEIVES KOS SHEL BRACHA FROM THE REBBE, CIRCA TISHREI 5724.

short way, the Rebbe said, is to make the benefactor own the project, where it becomes his project. In that case, you won't need to approach him again. 'Whatever he gives, he gives to himself.'

The Rebbe expressed a similar sentiment when Rabbi Lipskar accompanied a well-known judge (Judge Weinstein) to the Rebbe for dollars, where he informed the Rebbe that he would share the Rebbe's views on imprisonment with the Federal Sentencing Commission. That wasn't enough for the Rebbe. "But you will tell them as your personal views also," the Rebbe emphasized.¹

Another important directive Rabbi Lipskar received from the Rebbe in his shlichus was "*Kol d'poshit maale tfei*—the simpler, the better."

"This was after a certain benefactor was very inspired by our work and offered me an unlimited amount of

money to spread 'my' message of an accessible Yiddishkeit in a massive campaign across the country. The Rebbe rejected the idea outright. National media campaigns might be nice, but real impact is made organically, from the ground up, when a shliach makes a real connection with a person, who goes on to form more connections himself. That's how real change and success happens."

Today, The Shul of Bal Harbor is one of the most famous Chabad Houses in the world, with thousands of Jews coming through its doors on a regular basis. The Shul's foundation began in the year 5741* through the help of an individual who already had a connection to the Rebbe.

"When we moved to Bal Harbor, most people were against us, if not just apathetic. But there was one Jew, a friend, Mr. Sam (Shmuel) Greenberg, who while in *yechidus* was asked by

the Rebbe why no shul existed in Bal Harbor. He provided us with our beginning, arranging for a space that he had through his real estate connections."

When Rabbi Lipskar came for a *yechidus* with one of his main supporters, the Rebbe noted that The Shul was a pilot project which could serve as an example for many other locations because Florida draws visitors from all over the world, specifically mentioning the entire US, Canada, Central and South America and Europe. People could observe the community in Bal Harbor and then implement those same ideas in their home communities. ("We once received a similar message about the Aleph Institute," says Rabbi Lipskar. "When one of our staff told the Rebbe that she worked for Aleph, the Rebbe said, "*Aleph iz doch der vegveiser far ale andere osios. Ba zei zol azoy oich zein*

der Aleph—Aleph is the lodestar for all the other letters. May this Aleph also be so.”)

When Rabbi Lipskar first wrote to the Rebbe about the idea to open The Shul in Bal Harbor, the Rebbe responded, ‘נכון הדבר—it is an appropriate idea.’

“Over the years, we received countless *brachos* from the Rebbe for

our projects and the Rebbe always took an interest in our activities. Rabbi Sholom Duchman once reported to the Rebbe that he had witnessed a very well-attended Torah class, saying, ‘I hope it will give the Rebbe *nachas ruach*.’ The Rebbe underlined the last two words, and added ‘מאוד.’”

Shortly after he started The Shul and the Aleph Institute, the Rebbe sent

Rabbi Lipskar a three thousand dollar check (for Mivtza Tefillin, Mivtza Pesach and all other *mivtzoim*, one thousand each), but he didn’t want to cash the check as it was signed by the Rebbe. He soon received a call from Rabbi Hodakov.

“It seems that you are doing well financially,” Rabbi Hodakov said.

Mel Landow

One of the Rebbe’s most profound connections with a *baal habos* of Rabbi Lipskar was with Mr. Mel Landow, a philanthropist who built much of Chabad in Florida in those early years.

“This connection began in a way which was totally *himeldik*,” says Rabbi Lipskar.

During an early stage in Mel’s relationship with Rabbi Lipskar, a sudden call arrived to Rabbi Lipskar’s office from Rabbi Hodakov.

“The Rebbe wants to know if Mel Landow puts on tefillin.”

Rabbi Lipskar answered in the negative. Although he had convinced him to put on tefillin during their first encounter (“He was playing tennis, so I made a ‘bet’ with him that if he loses, he needs to put on tefillin with me,”) Mel had said not to ask him again.

Suddenly Rabbi Lipskar heard the Rebbe’s voice on the line. “I jumped out of my seat in shock; I had never heard the Rebbe’s voice on a phone-call before.”

A three-way conversation ensued, with the Rebbe quietly telling Rabbi Hodakov what to instruct Rabbi Lipskar.

“*Men zol leigen mit em teflin*,” the Rebbe said.

When Rabbi Lipskar said he had tried and Mel had refused, the Rebbe said to tell him “*Men fort oifen Ohel*.”

“Tell Mr. Landow to put on tefillin, because the Rebbe is going to the Ohel,” Rabbi Hodakov repeated.

Rabbi Lipskar was somewhat confused about the connection, but he responded, “I’ll ask him to.”

“*Sheine tefillin*,” the Rebbe said quietly.

“Make sure you have nice Tefillin,” Rabbi Hodakov said.

Rabbi Lipskar didn’t have new tefillin on hand.

“*Eigene*,” the Rebbe said.

“Your personal tefillin are not nice?” Hodakov asked.

“*Gute sheidlach*,” Rabbi Lipskar heard.

“Your cases are probably worn out, so find new ones that look nice,” Rabbi Hodakov instructed.

“*Modia zein*.”

“Let me know what happened,” Rabbi Hodakov concluded.

“I ran to the Judaica store and asked if he has new tefillin cases,” says Rabbi Lipskar. “He didn’t, but he did have tefillin available for \$50. I paid him, left the Tefillin and took the boxes. The guy thought I was crazy.”

Rabbi Lipskar called Mr. Landow and arranged an immediate meeting for an urgent matter.

“I have a very important request,” he said when he arrived. “I want you to put on tefillin.”

“I already told you, it’s not my thing.”

“But today is a very important day,” Rabbi Lipskar explained. “The Rebbe is going to the resting place of his saintly father-in-law, the previous Rebbe, to say special prayers, and if you would put on tefillin, I’ll let him know.”

Mel’s attitude changed immediately. “Let’s do it.”

Rabbi Lipskar was stunned.

“Afterwards, I called *mazkirus*. They had been waiting for my call and by then the Rebbe was already at the Ohel. Rabbi Krinsky told me that when he went inside to inform the Rebbe, the Rebbe smiled broadly. A few days later, the Rebbe purchased a new pair of tefillin for him.”

Later, the Rebbe asked Professor Branover while he was in *yechidus* to encourage Mr. Landow to come for *yechidus* with his wife.

“He was somewhat hesitant, but he ultimately acquiesced, and we arrived together in 770 late one Thursday night. Mel brought along plans he had to build a grandiose health club and tennis convention center in Eretz Yisroel, hoping to share with the Rebbe his exciting new investment in the Holy Land. In fact, he

That couldn't have been farther than the truth, and Rabbi Hodakov told him in no uncertain terms that the check must be cashed or returned to the Rebbe.

"In addition to constant encouragement, the Rebbe also ensured that the institution be run properly. He instructed me, for example, to make sure that everything

was punctual; the announced time for *tefillos* should be carefully observed."

First Encounters

Rabbi Lipskar's early childhood was spent in the DP camps of Schwabisch Hall and Feldafing, where *cheder* was taught by Reb Elya Chaim Roitblat in a basement and recreation meant walking long distances to milk cows for *cholov Yisroel*. He was born only

20 days before his family's escape from Russia on the famed *eshalones*, where, for lack of a proper passport, he was concealed in a suitcase by his grandfather, Reb Zalman Duchman.

"During that journey, my father, Reb Eliyahu Akiva Lipskar, merited to assist Rebbetzin Chana," says Rabbi Lipskar, "and with the Rebbe's approval, we engraved on his *matzeiva*,



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was traveling the next morning to meet with Minister Pinchas Sapir of Eretz Yisrael to work on making the plans a reality. When he finally entered the Rebbe's room, he was sorely disappointed."

The Rebbe posed Mel with a question:

"When you welcome guests into your home, do you bring them into your living room and library, or into your bedroom and bathroom?"

"The public quarters, obviously."

"So why are you building bathrooms in Israel? Why don't you build a library?"

"After an hour-long *yechidus*, he walked out devastated," relates Rabbi Lipskar. "He told me, 'The Rebbe knocked me out.' He had come with a profound respect for the Rebbe, but he didn't expect anything like that. Rabbi Hodakov called to find out his reaction, and I told him the truth."

Soon Rabbi Hodakov called back with the Rebbe's response, as retold by Rabbi Lipskar:

"I met a person last night that A-lmighty G-d gave him merits that even I don't have. Hashem gave him the merit to open the spigots, the faucets through which he

will bring back 100,000 children to the Jewish faith. The foundations of buildings are not what you see, but that which is at the origin of those foundations. The pillars are what you see, but the foundations are what hold up the pillars." The Rebbe referred to Mel as one of those foundations.

Rabbi Lipskar called Mel and told him the Rebbe's message, and he was very touched. The next day, Mel received a letter by special delivery mail.

"Reb Mordechai Shaul,
Greetings and blessings.

"Frankly, I had wondered what your reactions might be to my 'un-American' manner of welcoming you. For, the accepted American way, if I am not mistaken, is to greet one with a shower of compliments and praise, even if not always fully merited. In your case, of course, it would have been very well deserved credit, for I was fully aware of your accomplishments and generosity on behalf of the Lubavitch work in your community..."

"My guiding principle in this case, as when meeting with people in general, is the *bon mot* I heard from my father-in-law of saintly memory: 'When two Jews meet, they should not be content with the benefit that the meeting brings to each of them, but they should immediately be concerned with the prospect of bringing a benefit to a third Jew, a fourth, and to as many Jews as possible.' Moreover, I was hopeful that you would accept my suggestions in the right spirit, precisely because you have already made a magnificent start..."

"This was the beginning of an extensive connection to the Rebbe," Rabbi Lipskar relates. "He received some 25 personal letters from the Rebbe. He built the yeshiva, and gave a tremendous amount of money to Chabad. When the Rebbe saw him by dollars, the Rebbe told him something very special: 'Landow Yeshiva has many *talmidim*, and everyone [studying there] has the name that he is a *talmid* in Mel Landow's yeshiva.'"²

עזר הרבה בהצלת אמו של כ"ק אדמו"ר שליט"א—he greatly assisted in the rescue of the Rebbe's mother.”

Upon the Rebbe's instruction, his father searched for immigration opportunities in North America, ultimately receiving a Canadian visa, and they set sail in 5711* (the ship they sailed on was so rickety that it sank on its return trip).

“We settled in Toronto, where my father soon became a *melamed*, on the Rebbe's suggestion. Our first real welcome to ‘Jewish America’ was when we unsuspectingly walked into a Reform temple to attend the bar mitzvah of a relative who had immigrated and assimilated much before our arrival. Upon entry, my father was informed that he wouldn't be allowed to wear his tallis or

yarmulke, and then we noticed men and women sitting together. It hit us like a ton of bricks; we immediately made our way to the exit.”

The family made trips to the Rebbe twice a year—each Sukkos-Simchas Torah and Yud-Beis Tammuz. Rabbi Lipskar shared memories of hearing the Rebbe teach the *niggunim* on Simchas Torah night (“*Chazarah* on the niggun would go on for several hours, often in Reb Yoel's home”), participating in the *farbrengens* from under the Rebbe's table (“There was literally no space for us anywhere else”), and helping his grandfather bring kettles of hot water to 770 after the *farbrengens* were over (“The rain would seep in through the canvas cover of *shalash*, and everyone would be shivering cold”). A special moment of the trips would also be visiting Rebbetzin Chana, whom they knew well. She would converse with the adults and give candies to the children.

An interesting anecdote from those trips that Rabbi Lipskar shared was his curiosity to see the Rebbe's home.

“My uncle, Reb Yankel Lipskar, had a grocery store, and his children would make deliveries to the Rebbe's house. On this one occasion in 5717*, they allowed me to make the delivery. I nervously knocked on the front door and the Rebbetzin opened; she showed me where to place the box and then tipped me a quarter, which was a lot of money in those days; it was worth several soda cans... As soon as the door closed behind her, I fled down the stairs.”

The highlight of the visit was the *yechidus* before they departed.

“When I was young, the Rebbe would smile at us and ask us if we knew *brachos* or Shema, but my first real conversation with the Rebbe was when I was nine-years-old. The Rebbe asked me which *perek* Gemara I was learning, and I responded that I had



RABBI LIPSKAR AT A COMMUNITY DINNER, CIRCA 5730S



RABBI LIPSKAR GIVES A CLASS FOR INCARCERATED JEWS IN MIAMI, 5746.

just learned a portion of Hamafkid by heart.

“Nu, say it,” the Rebbe said.

“I was very nervous, but I recited the entire daf and a half. It took several minutes, and the Rebbe listened to me closely the entire time.”

Even as a child, Rabbi Lipskar would often write directly to the Rebbe, something he was taught to do by his grandfather, Reb Zalman Duchman. The Rebbe would usually acknowledge them with a letter signed by Reb Eliyahu Kwint³ of *mazkirus*, and on one unique occasion, he received a letter with the Rebbe’s personal signature.

Learning in New York

Rabbi Lipskar arrived in New York to learn in Tomchei Temimim on Bedford & Dean when he was 15-years-old, where he joined the class of Leibel Kaplan, Leibel Shapiro,⁴ Shlomo Zarchi, Zev Katz, and others.

“Whenever there was special news from 770, we would race the 20 minute walk from Bedford & Dean to 770, jumping into a *mikveh* that was on the way. But we went to 770 primarily on Shabbos, and for the Rebbe’s farbrengens.

“We came to learn in 770 in Elul 5723*. Our relationship to the Rebbe was unique in those days. Although we wrote to the Rebbe sparsely and had *yechidus* only once a year, we were still a tight little group, where everyone was on a first name basis. Davening was upstairs, which is a tiny area.”

The Rebbe would come in for Mincha, Maariv and *kriah*. Two *bochurim* would also have the opportunity to accompany the Rebbe home from a distance each evening. “Sometimes when he would turn the corner, he would look back to see us.”

“We would remain in 770 until the end of *yechidus*,” Rabbi Lipskar says, “until one in the morning or later. When important people would come,

“We asked him what the Rebbe said. ‘You won’t understand anyway.’”



RABBI LIPSKAR (FAR LEFT) WATCHES AS THE REBBE RECEIVES AN ALIYA, CIRCA 5724.

PINNY LEW

they would lock the door to the *zal* to keep the *bochurim* away, but we would make sure to catch the individual at some point and ask him what the Rebbe said.

“I’ll share two notable incidents.

“Reb Chaim Zimmerman was a brilliant and eccentric *rosh yeshiva* in Chicago who wrote a *sefer* called ‘Agan Hasa’har’ about the international dateline. He only printed 50 copies, because he felt that nobody would understand what he writes anyway. He sent one book to the Rebbe even though he wasn’t a Chossid; he was known as a strong supporter of Rabbi Hutner.

“He came for *yechidus* after Mincha one day. He was told to wait in *Gan Eden Hatachton*, and when the Rebbe returned from Mincha he had his *yechidus* there. He paced the entire hallway back and forth while talking to the Rebbe, who was standing in the doorway of his office.

“He came out after a significant amount of time, and we asked him what the Rebbe said. ‘You won’t understand anyway,’ he said. ‘One thing I could tell you: You don’t know what you have here. You don’t understand what you have.’

“On another occasion, Arik Sharon came to the Rebbe, some time after his son was accidentally killed. We asked him to tell us something about the Rebbe when he came out, and he said as follows:

“The Rebbe isn’t like the IDF Chief of Staff, nor like the generals; he is like every soldier combined in one person. The Rebbe knows what is going on behind every tree in El Arish!”

With the Rebbe's Brachos

“When I went into *yechidus* in Av 5727*, I asked the Rebbe for a *bracha* that nobody should bother me about *shidduchim*, as I had just turned 21. The Rebbe responded that



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I should push them off until after Rosh Hashanah. *B'hashgacha pratis*, a *shidduch* was suggested right after Rosh Hashanah, and we soon got engaged.

“I spent a year in kollel upon the Rebbe’s instructions, but then the Rebbe said it was time to go. He said to bring suggestions of places for shlichus, and of the three places I proposed, he chose Miami and instructed us to be involved in education.

“When we moved to Miami in 5729*,” says Rabbi Lipskar, “it was the type of place that if a *yeshiva bochur* was caught visiting, he would be immediately expelled from his yeshiva.

It was a spiritual desert. In *yechidus* before we left, my wife mentioned that although she is fully dedicated to the Rebbe’s mission, leaving her family and friends behind was going to be difficult. The Rebbe looked up with a smile and exclaimed, *Ich for doch mit eich! S’zol zein b’simcha. Oib nit b’simcha, vos darft ir mir mitnemen*—I’m traveling with you! You should go joyfully. If you won’t be joyful, why do you need to take me along?’

“Looking back, there is no way to explain our shlichus if not for the fact that the Rebbe came along with us, literally. This was something we experienced at every step of the way.”

There were several stories of open miracles.

Rabbi Lipskar’s first job in Florida was to run the day school that had been established by Rabbi Avraham Korf several years earlier. Mrs. Lipskar served as a teacher.

“Our school building was declared a fire hazard, so we paid a fireman to sit in the lobby during school hours every single day, where he got to see my wife and everyone else in the school.

“One night, I was out at a meeting when a fire started in my apartment. A lock malfunctioned, my wife couldn’t get out of the apartment, and she passed out from smoke inhalation.



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RABBI LIPSKAR AND A SUPPORTER WITH THE REBBE, 7 TISHREI, 5752.

When the fire department found her, she was already in a very severe situation. Amazingly, she was found by the same fireman from the school. He took off his own mask and put it on her, a selfless deed which, we discovered later, actually saved her life.

“When she began to recover, a plastic surgeon offered to do cosmetic surgery over her burns, but the Rebbe told her to reject it outright. During our next *yechidus*, the Rebbe asked if she still had scars from the burns, and when my wife answered in the affirmative, the Rebbe said, ‘*Noch a sreifah vert men reich*—One becomes rich after a fire...’

“Miraculously, my wife healed completely.”

Another medical miracle occurred with Rabbi Lipskar himself:

In 5732*, Rabbi Lipskar was going through some medical tests in the hospital, when he didn’t wake up after being administered anesthesia. In the midst of the mayhem of doctors and nurses around his bed, Mrs. Lipskar ran to call *mazkirus* and inform the Rebbe.

Rabbi Hodakov soon called back and said he had a message from the Rebbe for Rabbi Lipskar, and asked that he be put on the line.

“He’s in a coma,” Mrs. Lipskar reminded him.

Rabbi Hodakov was insistent. “I have a message for him from the Rebbe; please put him on the line.”

Mrs. Lipskar transferred the call from the nurse’s station to the hospital room and pressed the phone to the unconscious Rabbi Lipskar’s ear.

**“He’s in a coma,
Mrs. Lipskar
reminded him.”
“Who made you
the boss?”**



RABBI LIPSKAR HELPS
AN INCARCERATED
JEW DAWN TEFILLIN.

ALEPH INSTITUTE

Aleph Institute

Rabbi Lipskar relates:

During one of the farbrengens during my “temporary leave of absence,” the Rebbe spoke strongly about the need to help Jews in prison, who were thirsting for Yiddishkeit (for some reason, this *sicha* wasn’t included in the *hanacha*).

While I was in *yechidus* the week before, the Rebbe said, “In regards to your shlichus, Hashem will give you a *machshava tova*h...” Hearing the *sicha*, I thought about establishing an institution for prisoners, and I felt that was what the Rebbe meant.

We called it Aleph, because the Rebbe spoke about the concept of adding an Aleph to the word *gola*, thereby making it *geulah*. It was also perfect in a practical sense, because there was significant anti-Semitism in the prison system, and we wanted a name and symbol that Jewish prisoners would recognize but would not be recognizably Jewish to anyone else.

The Rebbe’s basic guidance was to bring in as much Torah learning as possible, and that they should always have all the basic needs to lead a Jewish life; they shouldn’t have to work on Shabbos, and so on.

The Rebbe also ensured that we never shame anybody by using personal names in fundraising and so on. In 5745*, when I brought a group of prisoners to the Rebbe for Shabbos, I had arranged for a group of *bochurim* to reserve a table for the group at the farbrengen, but Rabbi Groner came down looking for me before the farbrengen began and said that the Rebbe instructed that they shouldn’t sit together, and nor would he give us a bottle of *mashke*, “Although they were more worthy than anyone else,” so as not to draw attention to them.

We once held a meeting of our board of directors in Crown Heights, and the Rebbe davened Mincha downstairs in their honor. Rabbi Groner also gave me a hundred single dollar bills to distribute to each of the attendees, as the Rebbe’s personal participation.

We printed a special *siddur* to give each participant, and we sent one to the Rebbe as well. That afternoon, when the Rebbe left for home, he was already on the sidewalk when he turned around, returned to his room, and retrieved our little *siddur*.

"The next thing I hear," Rabbi Lipskar says, "is Rabbi Hodakov telling me that Professor Branover is coming to Miami to give a lecture, and the Rebbe wanted us to welcome him and care for him..."

"On a side note: The doctors claimed that because of defects in my heart, I would end up in a wheelchair by the age of 40. When I repeated it to the Rebbe, the Rebbe waved his hand in dismissal, saying 'Ah!' Needless to say, I am, *baruch Hashem*, in good health 45 years later."

A unique period in Rabbi Lipskar's life was when the Rebbe allowed him to do something extraordinary.

"A friend of Mel Landow once came to my office and asked me a surprising question. What was something that I deeply wanted to do, but didn't have the opportunity to accomplish, he asked. He was ready to sponsor it.

"I was stunned by the question but when I began to think of it, I realized that I wanted to take a year off to learn Chassidus on a deeper level. I had been interacting with people for over 10 years, and I was dealing with many difficult questions that I felt I didn't have the proper answers to. It was also a difficult period in my shlichus in the school, and I felt that a year off would be beneficial.

"To my surprise, the Rebbe approved of the idea, calling it a 'temporary leave of absence for one year.'

"The benefactor sponsored the entire year, including travel expenses to every single farbrengen of the Rebbe. That year, 5740*-5741*, the Rebbe farbrenged for many hours almost every single Shabbos!

"I also traveled to many Jewish leaders of other communities to better understand their movements, and I had the opportunity to make many connections which came to good use years later.

"Throughout the year, I wrote to the Rebbe often, and the Rebbe would answer my questions almost immediately. On many occasions, the Rebbe answered them in the course of the *sichos*.

"At the close of that year, I needed to make a decision about our future, and the Rebbe said:

בשטח החינוך והקשור לזה, כמענתי מאז, ללמד וללמד

(The Rebbe added *nekudos lilmod ulelamed*, to those words)

להתנהג על פיהם, ואין צריך כלל וכלל לקרות בספרי חיצונים, ובלב בטוח יכול לסמוך על גדולי ישראל האמתיים...

In the field of education, as I told you some time ago [meaning, when we originally went on shlichus] to learn and to teach, and to live according to [those teachings]. There is no need at all to study secular books, and with a complete assurance you can rely on the true *gedolei Yisroel*. The next year, we started The Shul.

Caring for Individuals

Another lesson that Rabbi Lipskar shared with us was about the importance of each individual.

"Every time we would have *yechidus*, I would write a report wrapping up all our activities of the entire year.

"One year, the Rebbe read through the entire 5-6 pages of the report, checking off the important points with a pencil, and then he asked, 'What's with the mother of the girl?'

"At first I was puzzled, and didn't understand the Rebbe's intentions. But then it hit me.

"On an earlier occasion, we had mentioned a girl whose mother had gone off to India with a boyfriend. The Rebbe asked us to ensure that she had received a proper Jewish divorce. We had tried to locate her, but were unsuccessful.

"I started to shake. I realized that the Rebbe had asked me to do

something and I hadn't delivered. I couldn't wait to get out of the room and I couldn't focus on what the Rebbe said afterwards, although my wife said he gave us beautiful *brachos*.

"I ran out of the room and started working for 24 hours, until I located the husband, arranged for a *get*, and then I reported it to the Rebbe.

"It taught me that although you may be involved in great and important endeavors, you must never forget the individual. The Rebbe didn't forget them.

"This had an impact on a story several years later.

"There was a young woman from Beis Rivkah who ended up in Miami in a very bad situation. It so happened that we were in New York at the time, and at Sunday Dollars, the Rebbe gave a dollar to my wife and me and said, '*Far gantz Florida*—for the entire Florida.'

"We searched for the girl upon our return, and we found her on the street late at night in a bad neighborhood. She wasn't interested in what we had to say, until my wife threatened her, 'If you don't start behaving, we will throw you out of the neighborhood.'

"Who made you the boss?'

"The Rebbe just made us in charge of the entire Florida,' my wife said.

"The girl took it seriously; when we mentioned the Rebbe she realized that she was dealing with something of a different nature, and over time she shaped up.

"It was amazing to see how one word of the Rebbe could make a huge difference in someone's life." **T**

1. 19 Kislev 5750. <https://www.chabad.org/471235>

2. [chabad.org/239247](https://www.chabad.org/239247)

3. Reb Eliyahu was a member of *mazkirus* in the early years, originally hired as the Rebbe's accountant. Not a Lubavitcher Chossid, he was a *lamdan*, and he would often sign letters in the Rebbe's name.

4. See *Derher*, Cheshvan 5780.



דער רבי וועט געפינען א וועג...

לזכות
שיינא ליבא בת אסתר
שתחי

Go On Shlichus!

AS TOLD BY RABBI BEREL KESSELMAN (CONCORD, CA)

It was in the summer of 5779*, a full year after we had been granted the mandate to become shluchim and establish Chabad of Concord, and we were still in limbo. There were certain technical issues that kept stopping us from making the move and there seemed to be no end in sight.

I went to the Ohel to ask the Rebbe for a *bracha* that we succeed in moving out to our *makom hashlichus* as soon as possible and decided to buy envelopes to send out a fundraising mailer for our new shlichus even though we were not yet at that point in the natural course of things.

On the way back to Crown Heights I received a WhatsApp message from my friend Sruly Duchman. "Berel,

I found a *kuntres* from the Rebbe in my house which has your name written in it. Are you missing your *kuntres*?"

He sent me a photo of the handwriting on the first page which I immediately recognized as my mother's handwriting and after confirming with my parents that the *kuntres* was indeed mine, I made arrangements to retrieve it from the Duchman home that evening.

We were all puzzled how it ended up in their home, but I was thrilled to be reunited with the *kuntres* I had received from the Rebbe on Chof-Ches Sivan 5751*. When I came home, I opened up the *kuntres*, started learning it and immediately noticed that the main theme of the *sichos* in the *kuntres* are about the mission of חוצה חוצה

which took on a greater urgency and *sheturem* when the Rebbe and Rebbetzin arrived in America on Chof-Ches Sivan 5701*—the essence of *avodas hashlichus*!

My wife and I were overwhelmed with excitement to receive such a clear sign and *bracha* from the Rebbe that we would succeed in moving out to our shlichus. This was the first time I had experienced receiving such a direct answer from the Rebbe.

We decided to go to the Ohel to thank the Rebbe for the answer and for the *bracha*. We also decided on a date that we would move out to Concord, California—Yud-Gimmel Av.

At the same time we discussed the different issues we needed to address in connection with our move. Our daughter was already four-years-old and learning in Beis Rivka. She was fluent in Alef-Beis and accustomed to the Chassidishe atmosphere, and we were concerned that she transition easily to the spiritual realities of Northern California. Rabbi Yisroel Resnick, a shliach in Pleasanton, which is half an hour away from Concord, had opened a *cheder* for area-shluchim and we intended to reach out to him to find out more about the school, if there was a class for our daughter and perhaps a teaching opportunity for my wife.

During the course of my fundraising efforts, my largest donation came from a very generous *yungerman* who is involved in many *tzedakos* and the Rebbe's *mosdos*, Rabbi Shloime Greenwald. Although I had mentioned his name and his donation by the Ohel on previous occasions, I had never done so using his full name and his mother's name. Since I was planning on notifying the Rebbe the date of our move, I wished to mention Shloime properly, so I texted him asking for his information.

As I left the Ohel, after reading my *tzetel* with all the above mentioned details, and started walking towards the pathway to the Beis Chabad, I was shocked to see Rabbi Resnick walking straight towards me on his way into the Ohel!

Rabbi Resnick is not often in New York and seeing him immediately after asking the Rebbe for a *bracha* for my daughter's easy transition, which I had associated with Rabbi Resnick's *cheder*, was a clear sign to me of the Rebbe's *bracha*.

He was happy to see me and we had a brief discussion which cleared up many of our questions.

Uplifted and inspired by all the encouragement I was recently experiencing in preparing to move out on shlichus, and since I had mentioned him by the Rebbe, I decided to share these two episodes with Shloime, with no intention at all of asking him for any more money.



He was very excited to hear my story and an hour later he called me and asked how much more money I needed to move. Hearing that I was short between \$30,000 and \$50,000 he said, "Over the next year I will give you \$10,000. Text me on the first of the secular month and I will make a payment."

The first time I texted him and he made the first payment was July 1, which occurred that year on Chof-Ches Sivan!

That summer we moved out on shlichus greatly inspired and motivated by the clear *brachos* we had received from the Rebbe. I noticed that both times we merited to experience the Rebbe's *brachos* in a revealed way was after we committed to doing something which transcended our rational calculations. The first time, we decided to send out a mailer even though our path to moving was far from clear and I was reunited with my *kuntres*. The second time was after we committed to moving on Yud-Gimmel Av, despite the fact that we were far behind in our fundraising, and our largest pledge to date came as a result. ①



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KRIAS HATORAH

26 ELUL, 5745, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 266351

The Rebbe faced the *aron kodesh* while reciting “*Vayehi Binsoa*” and “*Brich Shmei*” from the *siddur*. As the *sefer Torah* was taken out, the Rebbe would follow it with his gaze until it was placed on the *bima*.



21 TISHREI 5745, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 214146



11 TISHREI 5746, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 267948



During the *kriah* the Rebbe would follow along inside with a Chumash or *siddur*. Between *aliyos*, the Rebbe would sometimes glance at a Rashi. Often, this would be the Rashi discussed at the upcoming Shabbos farbrengen.



TISHREI 5744, LEV FREIDIN VIA JEM 196204

The Rebbe would usually receive the last *aliya*. If the Rebbe would be reciting *kaddish* or *haftarah* following the *kriah*, the Rebbe would bring his *siddur*.

Before reciting the *bracha*, the Rebbe would hold the right side of the tallis or the *gartel* of the *sefer Torah* in his right hand, place it on the beginning, end, and again the beginning of the portion of the *kriah*, and then kiss it.

While slightly facing away from the Torah to the right, the Rebbe would hold on to the *atzei chaim* with both hands, and raise them up by the words “ברכו, ברוך השם, ברוך אתה ה', ברוך אתה ה'”



26 TISHREI 5745, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 215942





22 ADAR, 5747, VELVEL SCHILDKRAUT VIA JEM 149639



1 CHESHVAN 5742, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 203169

During the *kriah*, the Rebbe would read inside from the *sefer Torah* at the same pace as the *baal koreh*, while holding onto the right *eitz chaim* with both hands.

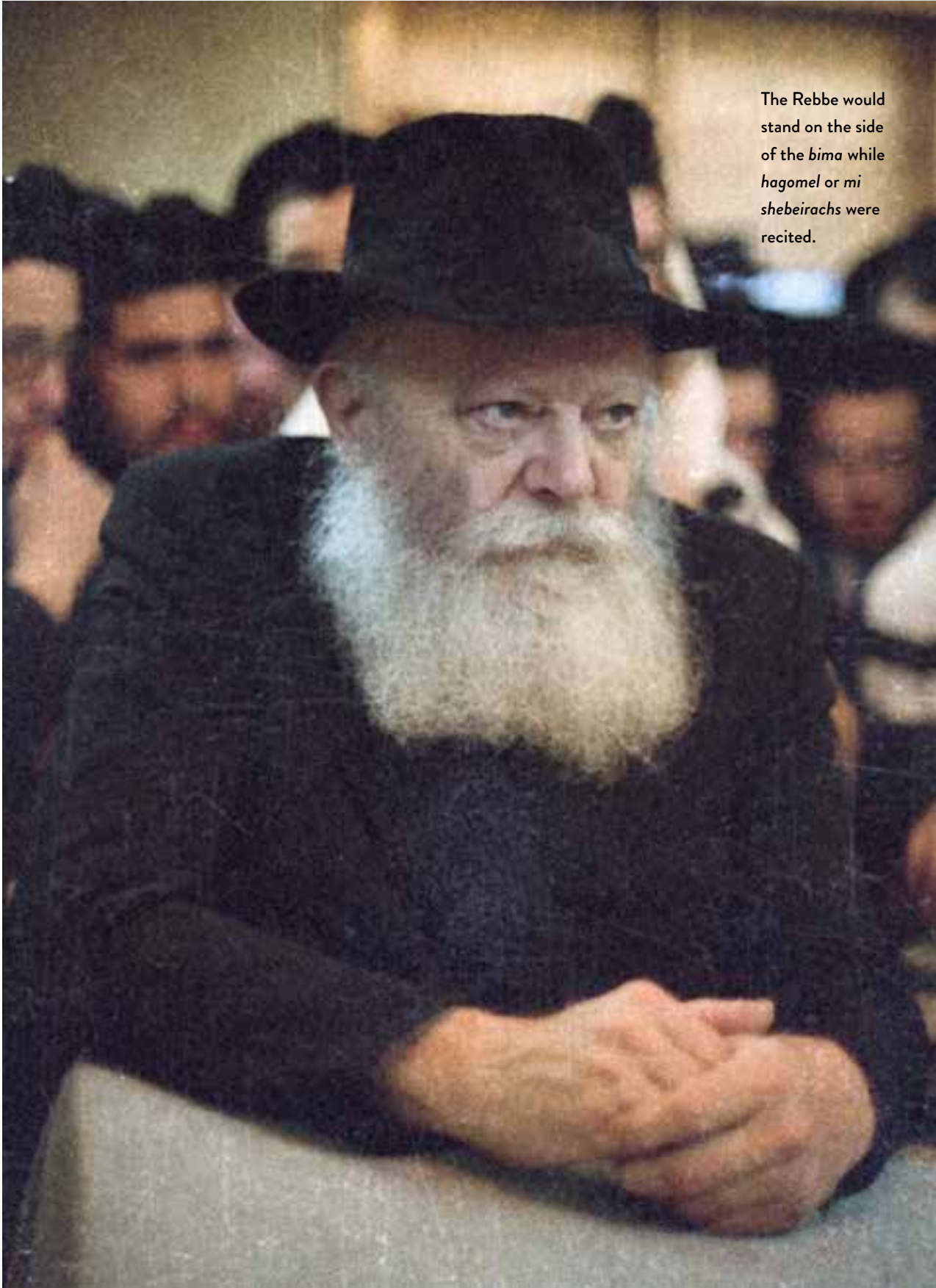
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30 TISHREI 5744, LEVI FREDIN VIA JEM 198128



After the *aliyah*, the Rebbe would again kiss the portion of the *kriah* with the tallis or *gartel*, this time in the opposite order (end, beginning, end) and then recite the *bracha* while lifting the *atzei chaim* by the words “ברוך אתה ה'”
“תורת אמת, ברוך אתה ה'”



The Rebbe would stand on the side of the *bima* while *hagomel* or *mi shebeirachs* were recited.



6 TISHREI, 5747, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 8172

Before *hagbah*, the Rebbe would kiss the outside parchment of the *sefer Torah* with his tallis.



28 ELUL, 5735, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM140682



The Rebbe watched the Torah until it was returned to the *aron*. (Note: When attending *kriah* in the small *zal*, the Rebbe would recite Tehillim at this time)

Derher**Letters**

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



Not Just a Lubavitcher Minhag

Dear Editors,

First and foremost, I must thank you once again for an incredibly insightful publication that is *maleh vegadush* with all things Rebbe and Chassidus.

I'd like to point out a few corrections/additions to recent articles:

After reading "The Great Debate" [Issue 91 (168), Adar 5780] about Rashi/Rabeinu Tam's tefillin, it seems clear to me that, 1) We should attempt to lay Rabeinu Tam's tefillin at least once with every Jew we encounter. I know it sounds radical, but since putting on two pairs is a *chiyuv*, not just a Lubavitcher *minhag*, this would seem appropriate. 2) When we discuss what type of *shochet* we want *shechting* our meat/poultry, we often use the term "*chassidishe shechita*." In most conversations I've ever had about this topic, it seems to always be about unshaved/untrimmed beards, daily *mikveh* use and learning Chassidus. From the *yiras shamayim* aspect discussed in the article, it seems straightforward that one must purchase their meat/poultry from places that the *shochtim* wear Rabeinu Tam's tefillin.

In the article "כל דצריך ייתי ויפסח" [Issue 92 (169), Nissan 5780] there is a section about *maos chittim* and the Rebbe using those funds to help families in Crown Heights and other communities. The article did not mention that the Rebbe's *maos chittim* operation was

under the umbrella of Machane Yisroel, cared for by the Rebbe's secretaries Rabbis Binyomin Halevi Klein and Chaim Yehuda Krinsky. The *gabbai* for the *maos chittim* campaign was my *zayde* Reb Shimon Goldman a"h. My *zayde*, who was a butcher by trade, would come home from work every evening between Purim and Pesach and head to 770 and sit with his receipt book as hundreds of Lubavitchers would give him their *maos chittim*. He would also receive hundreds of envelopes in the mail from the Rebbe's *maos chittim* campaign. I'm not sure why he was chosen, perhaps because he already helped so many as the *gabbai* of Gemilas Chessed Shomrei Shabbos. Today, the *gabbai* for the Machane Yisroel *maos chittim* campaign is my uncle Reb Moshe Halevi Klein.

In the same article it mentions a story about my wife's grandfather and the Rebbe encouraging him to ensure *kosher l'Pesach* food for the Jewish students at University of Western Ontario. It says, "Dr. Yitzchok Block, who was a professor at the local university." It failed to mention that Dr. Yitzchok Block, along with his wife Leah, were the Rebbe's Shluchim to London, Ontario for over 50 years and together founded the local shul, *mikveh* and Chabad center at the university.

Thanks again for a fabulous publication,

Chaim Shaul Bruk
Bozeman, Montana



Reb Mordechai Dubinsky

Dear Editors,

In the Lebben Mitten Rebbe'n article about Yud Shevat 5711 [Issue 90 (167), Shevat 5780], you reference my *zeide* Reb Moshe Dubinsky as the author of one of the *yomanim*. I believe the author of the *yoman* was actually my uncle Reb Mordechai Dubinsky, not my grandfather.

Binyomin Weiss

Charlotte, North Carolina



“We want Moshiach now”

Dear Editors,

In the Leben Mitten Rebbe'n article about the Shabbos after Purim 5745 [“A Second Chance”, Issue 91 (168), Adar 5780], you mentioned that in the middle of the *niggun* “אוי וואדע” the Chassidim started to sing “We Want Moshiach Now”.

Here is some background:

As children at farbrengens, my brother Leibel Kahan a”h would sit together with his best friend Yossi Jacobson (ben Reb Gershon) opposite the Rebbe.

When the crowd would sing אוי וואדע, most people didn't know the words, so they just sang the tune. On Purim 5742, close to the end of the farbrengen, this *niggun* was sung for a while and the Rebbe encouraged it very strongly. My brother decided to add the words “We Want Moshiach Now” to the tune and it caught on. Yossi Jacobson told this over to my family.

On the video of that farbrengen, you can see the Rebbe encouraging the *niggun* and hear how slowly it changes from the tune to the words “We Want Moshiach Now.”

Yossi Kahan

Brooklyn, NY

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