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Guidance

THE REBBE'S CALL TO HEED THE WORDS
OF THE MISHNAH "ASEI LECHA RAV,"
AND APPOINT MASHPI'IM AND MASHPIOS

Bearer of Our Heritage

THE STORY OF REB REFOEL
NACHMAN HAKOHEN
("FOLLEH") KAHN

Early Memories

AN INTERVIEW WITH
RABBI NOCHUM
KAPLAN

ויעקב הרב

מורכב



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

Derher**Editorial**

THE MITZVAH OF OUR GENERATION

Towards the end of the month of Cheshvan many shluchim from around the world gather for the Kinus Hashluchim Ha'olami. A program initiated by the Rebbe, many *sichos* are dedicated to the meaning and nature of the Kinus, even expounding on its very name. The Rebbe used these *sichos* as an opportunity to shed light on the function of shluchim and their shlichus in bringing the *geula* and how everyone must take part in this work.

The Rebbe called shlichus the “mitzvah of our generation.” Shlichus is not just something to be excited about for one Shabbos of the year—it is a constant in our lives. The Rebbe emphasized time and again that every Yid in this generation is a shliach of *nessi doreinu*. Whether or not the person recognizes this and lives in accordance with this truth, whether he has the privilege of making this his primary occupation or if for whatever reason, *b'hashgacha pratis*, his *parnassa* brings him to other fields of work. No matter the specifics, every Chossid has the responsibility and the *zechus* to spread the *maayanos* of Chassidus, Yiddishkeit, and an awareness of Hashem along with the *sheva mitzvos B'nei Noach* to his or her surroundings.



One of the most important elements of shlichus to remember is that spreading Yiddishkeit in its purest form needs to be permeated with the innermost truth of Torah, *pnimius haTorah*.

There may be those who feel that when dealing with Yidden who unfortunately don't even know the “Aleph-Beis” of Yiddishkeit, we first need to teach them about the basics and only then can we attempt to expose them to the ideas of the Rebbe and Chassidus. When someone doesn't yet know about tefillin or *kashrus*, why would you begin with anything deeper than that?

But the Rebbe teaches us that this is a total misconception.

In the inaugural farbrengen of Yud Shevat 5711¹, the Rebbe redefined the meaning of shlichus: Just like a person who works a regular job understands that his occupation is only a cover for the real *avoda* of spreading Torah and mitzvos, so too, in a sense, a shliach whose primary occupation is spreading Torah and mitzvos also has an ultimate aim that lies beneath the surface. The ultimate shlichus is to teach and spread Chassidus—as the Alter Rebbe said that he doesn't want Chassidus to belong to members of one party or another. Chassidus is for each and every Jew. It is our charge to do the work of *hafatzas hamaayanos chutza*, and make this a reality.

That is what shlichus is all about.

But how does this make sense? How can you teach Chassidus, which talks about enhancing our mitzvah observance with *ahava* and *yirah*, to a Yid who doesn't even yet know about the mitzvos themselves?

The Rebbe explains:²

Nowadays, as the footsteps of Moshiach are approaching, we cannot be sidetracked by such calculations. Our *avoda* is to grab whatever opportunity comes to our hands and act on it. Just because a Yid doesn't yet know about tefillin, that's not a reason to withhold from him the teachings of Chassidus.

Additionally, Chassidus was revealed specifically in recent times, when people are less inclined to spiritual truths. The reasons being that: a) With the darkness of *galus* thickening each day, we need the bright light of Chassidus to

combat it; and b) As we approach the time of Moshiach when *pnimus haTorah* will be revealed for all to see, we must prepare for it with the study of Chassidus in our time.

Either way, it is of utmost importance that spreading Yiddishkeit, Torah, and mitzvos be permeated with the teachings of Chassidus, no matter what the situation on the ground might deem sensible.

This is a theme repeated often in the Rebbe's *sichos* throughout the years. It is not enough to bring only the basics of Yiddishkeit to the people we encounter, and letting them learn about the Rebbe and Chassidus later on in their journey of life.³

THE WELLSPRING AND ITS SOURCE

A connection with Chassidus, of course, is a connection with the Rabbeim. As the Rebbe explains—the “*maayanos*,” the wellsprings of Chassidus need to be attached with the source of the “*maayanos*”—the *nossi* of each generation.⁴

It is fascinating to learn that the Rebbe's father, Harav Levi Yitzchok seems to have adopted this approach in his dealings with the non-frum Yidden of his city.

Even the most seemingly “secular” Jews of his town were moved by his *hiskashrus* as a Chossid the Rebbe Rashab. Rebbetzin Chana records in her memoirs that on the day the news reached them about the *histalkus* of the Rebbe Rashab: “...It felt as if our whole life had stopped. That's how it was in our home, and for those who were close to us, and particularly among members of the Lubavitch community. My husband, of blessed memory, wept aloud, something he almost never did.

“...I recall how an engineer named Y. L. Koren, came in. He was a freethinker and thoroughly irreligious. Nevertheless, seeing how everyone, young and old, together with my husband—whom he described as having an exceptionally stalwart character—were all so brokenhearted, he wept with them together... Even when he left our home, he couldn't calm down and cried hysterically in the street.”⁵

The Rebbe expects a similar approach from us as Chassidim and shluchim. In a lengthy letter to the venerated *mashpia*, Reb Shlomo Chaim Kesselman, the Rebbe bemoans the fact that the refugee community of Chassidim in postwar Paris weren't doing enough to be *mekarev* their fellow Jews to the Frierdiker Rebbe. There's a Yid without a beard, the Rebbe said, who spoke candidly and sincerely with his acquaintances about the supernatural capabilities of a Rebbe, and he impressed upon them to write letters to the Frierdiker Rebbe asking his advice. One of the women who wrote a letter asking for advice in her business is not necessarily *frum* in her day-to-day life. Yet now that she made this connection, she will undoubtedly begin coming closer to Yiddishkeit and keeping mitzvos as well. This Yid impressed upon others to connect with the Frierdiker Rebbe in this way, because this is what made the most sense to him; logically, the best life both materially and spiritually can only be achieved by consulting with the Frierdiker Rebbe. All other matters of Yiddishkeit follow as a result!⁶

In other words, the Rebbe maintains that by bringing people closer to the Rebbe, their own Yiddishkeit and their connection with Chassidus and its ways are automatically rekindled in the process.

In practical terms: As Chassidim and shluchim of the Rebbe, it is our responsibility of *ahavas Yisroel* and concern for our fellow Jews and all creations of Hashem, as well our great *zechus*, to connect all the Yidden and (להבדיל) non-Jews⁷ with the *nossi hador*, encouraging our acquaintances to connect with the Rebbe on their own by writing to the Rebbe and bringing the Rebbe's *brachos* into their lives.

As the Rebbe said at the Kinus Hashluchim 5752—every part of our shlichus must be permeated with the drive to bring Moshiach, by the shliach of Hashem—“שלח נא ביד תשלח”—the *nossi* who will lead us out of *galus*,⁸ now!

A Chassidisher Derher

שלהי תשרי, ה'תשפ"א
שבעים שנה לנשיאות כ"ק אדמו"ר

1. Toras Menachem vol. 2, p. 207.

2. Simchas Torah 5711; Toras Menachem vol. 2, p.

3. See 3 Tammuz 5742; Hisvaaduyos 5742 vol. 3, p. 1701. 5 Teves 5747; Ibid. 5747 vol. 2, p. 173.

4. Yud-Tes Kislve 5711; Toras Menachem vol. 2, p. 124.

5. Rebbetzin Chana's Memoirs part 34.

6. Igros Kodesh vol. 3, 15 Shevat 5709.

7. See Yud-Aleph Nissan 5738, sicha 2.

8. See *se'if* 13-14.

A JEW IS A JEW AND THERE IS NO TIME TO WASTE

Beginning with the year 5730, the Rebbe often spoke at farbrengens with great anguish about the fallacy of the Law of Return in Eretz Yisroel which would not qualify that conversion to Yiddishkeit must be according to Halacha. Aside for the actual topic of "Mihu Yehudi" that the Rebbe was addressing, there is a wealth of Torah and hashkafa that the Rebbe introduced to us in the many hundreds of hours he spent talking about this painful subject, which help educate us on the uniqueness of a Jew and the distinction between the Jewish people and all the other nations.

In the following section, we offer you a glimpse into the topic:

STORIES THAT CORRECT PERSPECTIVES

The Rebbe addressed two of the popular arguments commonly made by those against the correction of *Mihu Yehudi*:

1. We should be focused on rebuilding *klal Yisroel* after the

Holocaust, not limiting who can enter.

2. Hashem is the one who set up the divide between Jew and gentile and embedded it in the structural makeup of the world, just like the division between night and day. Why should we expend so much effort in preserving something that has divine backing? Are we afraid that day too, can turn into night?

To counter these claims the Rebbe brings two anecdotes; the *shidduch* of Yitzchok and Rivka, and the incident of Nachum ish Gam Zu and the pauper, demonstrating how each provides an answer to these claims.

THE ELTERE BOCHUR

In the *shidduch* of Yitzchok and Rivka, the question is why this *shidduch* didn't take place sooner. Of course Rivka was only born three years earlier and Avraham waited for

her to be fit to consummate the union. But was she the only girl?

Was "taking a daughter from the Canaanites" such an atrocity that it was worth delaying Yitzchok's *shidduch* until he was 40 years old?

Also, considering the fact that the possible loss of continuity of the Jewish nation at the *akeda* caused Avraham to consider allowing Yitzchok to marry a Canaanite, one would think he would be more forgiving and less selective.

But ultimately, Avraham still stood his ground and directed Eliezer to specifically find a *shidduch* from his family and his father's house, not from Canaan. He was unrelenting, he would not compromise with Yitzchok marrying a Canaanite despite the risk of the discontinuation of his progeny.

The reason for this is because for Avraham this was equivalent to a Jew marrying a gentile for which he had a zero tolerance policy.

As long as Yitzchok was learning Torah, Avraham saw no rush in getting him married. When he finally conceded to the need, he would not compromise on this principle.

The Jewish people as a whole were challenged with the same question in the post-Holocaust era. Some say, six million Jews were killed and now we are faced with the need to rebuild *klal Yisroel*; let's not get stuck on the details, let's take whoever we can as part of the Jewish people.

They use this argument in respect to the "Law of Return." They say, let's incorporate people that although they are not Jewish, or have non-halachic conversions, because they are good people. The response to this is Avraham's precedent; he taught us that the divide between Jew and gentile is divine and thus absolute. It is embedded in creation and is as unchangeable as the divide between night and day.

NACHUM AND THE POOR MAN

That being said, we are now faced with the reverse argument. Why fight to create change when the divide is so stark. Chances are that everything will work out in the end, so we don't need

to be concerned with diplomacy and enact rectification proposals when we are anyways dealing with an issue that is already divinely "covered."

In a more nuanced format, this was where Nachum Ish Gam Zu erred. He was missing both arms and legs and his body was covered in boils. His students challenged him¹, "You are a righteous man, why has this suffering befallen you?"

He replied, "Once I was traveling along the road to my father-in-law's house and I had with me a load distributed among three donkeys; one of food, one of drink, and one of delicacies. A poor person came and stood before me in the road, saying: My rabbi, sustain me. I said to him: Wait until I unload the donkey, after which I will give you something to eat. However, I had not managed to unload the donkey before his soul left his body.

"I went and fell upon his face and said: May my eyes, which had no compassion on your eyes, be blinded; may my hands, which had no compassion on your hands, be amputated; may my legs, which had no compassion on your legs, be amputated. My mind did not rest until

I said: May my whole body be covered in boils."

Nachum Ish Gam Zu prayed that his suffering should atone for his failure.

Although this sounds like exceptional accountability, the Beis Yosef² cites this as the reason for extra caution with tzedakah and the need to give it immediately, because any delay can lead to bloodshed, "as in the incident with Nachum Ish Gam Zu."

The same can be said of the "Law of Return," and in a much greater measure. In the case of delaying tzedakah there is only a *possibility* for a tragic outcome, whereas in the case of the "Law of Return" we have *already* seen the catastrophic results. To the extent that some still say it is no big deal, the way things are going, in a few years you will not even be able to tell the difference between a Jew and a gentile.

The story of Nachum Ish Gam Zu tells us that we must do all in our power as soon as possible, for every moment lost can lead to irreversible repercussions.³ **T**

1. Taanis 21a.

2. Shulchan Aruch Yoreh De'ah, siman 247:1.

3. Sichas Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sarah 5732.

לע"נ
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בת הרה"ת ר' שמעון ע"ה
ברוק

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רוהר

How can one say such a thing about Yitzchak Avinu?!

CHESHVAN 5728



Collected from three different *yomanim* of *bochurim* at the time, these lines bring to life the month of Cheshvan 5728 in 770 with the Rebbe.

SHABBOS PARSHAS NOACH, ROSH
CHODESH CHESHVAN

In the first two *sichos* of today's farbrengen, the Rebbe spoke about the concept of "v'Yaakov halach

ledarko," and about how when we say that the month of Tishrei is a "full" month, a month packed with *giluyim*, this applies to the entire month of Tishrei. This year especially, the *avoda* has to be with *simcha* "and if one sets himself on a broad path—the *Aibershter* gives in a broad manner."

After saying a *maamar*, the Rebbe explained the Rashi from last week. When the Rebbe mentioned

the Rashi, he turned to Reb Zalman Duchman and asked him, “Nu? Where is this Rashi?”¹

Then the Rebbe began to explain the Rashi from Parshas Noach ²: הָאֵךְ נֹחַ

The Midrash says that Noach worked so hard taking care of and feeding all the different animals that he literally was “spitting blood” from the backbreaking labor. From this the Rebbe teaches a lesson: If you were sent on a shlichus, even if there is “blood”—the shlichus must still be carried out. If need be, go to a doctor but the shlichus must continue. Deriving a lesson from the second opinion in Rashi (that he was late in bringing food to the lion and was injured by the angry beast) the Rebbe explained: *Sigufim*—self-inflicted physical pain or deprivation—may be fine for yourself. But when it comes to someone else, you need to make sure that that individual has everything that he needs, even if that means providing him with a servant to clear the path before him... For example, regarding yourself—exercising *iskafya* through pushing off a meal is a valid form of *avoda*, as it is brought down in Tanya Perek 27. But when it comes to someone else’s eating, this is not the correct approach to take.

THURSDAY, VOV CHESHVAN

After *krias haTorah*, Reb Moshe Leib Rodshtein’s wife went in to see the Rebbe. While she was there, the door to the Rebbe’s room remained open.



REB MOSHE LEIB
RODSHTein.

SUNDAY, TES CHESHVAN

The Rebbe’s (as well as the Frierdiker Rebbe’s) secretary, Reb Moshe Leib Rodshtein,³ passed away on Motzei Shabbos. Throughout his years of service, his primary work was to write the Rebbe’s letters as they were dictated by the Rebbe. Earlier this year he took ill and now he has returned his soul to its Maker.

The *levaya* took place today before noon. The Rebbe joined the *levaya* and walked until where he normally walks (crossing Kingston Avenue on Eastern Parkway), and then continued by car to the cemetery.

The Rebbe sat in the back of the car along with Rashag and Reb Shmuel Levitin. In the front were the driver, Rabbi Krinsky; Rabbi Hodakov; and Rabbi Shlomo Aharon Kazarnovsky.

The Rebbe walked up to the fence near the Ohel, turned to Rabbi Hodakov and said that everybody else should go inside.⁴ The Rebbe stood outside the fence near the Ohel, his hands in his coat pockets, and watched the proceedings from there, wiping his eyes throughout.

Rabbi Hodakov relayed to the family specific directives that the Rebbe had told him: First of all, that there should be *tefillos* in his home three times daily. An extra Torah reading should take place in the house on Shabbos for Mincha.⁵ Additionally, being that the *niftar* was very involved in the publishing of the Frierdiker Rebbe’s *maamarim* from תרצ”ט, a few lines from that *sefer* should be learned after each *tefillah* in the house.

That night, the Rebbe received people for *yechidus*, lasting until 6:00 a.m. One of those seen by the Rebbe was Reb Zalman Gurary, who later related that the Rebbe had told him:

“I am still in a Simchas Torah mood. Why are you not?!”

WEDNESDAY NIGHT, CHOF CHESHVAN

Dr. Yaakov Herzog (director-general of the Israeli Prime Minister’s office) went into the Rebbe’s room for a *yechidus* at around 1:40 a.m. together with two other people. About an hour into the *yechidus*, an additional person was called into the room and eventually a fifth person joined as well. The Rebbe spoke with this last individual for a few minutes, asking him about his learning, and what they learn on Shabbos.

When Dr. Herzog was asked what the Rebbe said during the *yechidus*, he thought for a moment and then said that it will remain a secret. Eventually, though, he revealed some of what the Rebbe spoke to him about, on condition that it should not be publicized: The Rebbe had said that Israel should not rely on the *Goyim* (regarding the talks going on in the U.N.). He also spoke with the Rebbe in learning regarding the *nes* of Purim and about how Hallel is not recited over miracles that occur outside of Eretz Yisrael.

SUNDAY, CHOF-GIMMEL CHESHVAN

Yechidus began tonight at 8:30 p.m.

At 1:10 a.m. Harav Meir Halberstam⁶ went in for *yechidus*. After about an hour, his brother Reb Moshe joined him in the Rebbe’s room, and when he entered the room the Rebbe rose from his chair.

While they were in *yechidus* the Rebbe was *mefalpel* with them in learning. During the discussion, the Rebbe made reference to a *sefer* that Reb Moshe had just printed, and he later said that it was obvious that the Rebbe knew the *sefer* better than he himself knew it!

In the course of the conversation, a certain book was mentioned. This particular book was a secular work, and when the Rebbe asked how Reb Moshe came to read it, he answered by quoting a *possuk*: מִיָּמֵינוּ יִמְתָּקוּ. In connection with this, the Rebbe related how when the Alter Rebbe would learn together with Reb Avraham Hamalach (son of the Mezeritcher Maggid), he would wind the clock backwards in order for them to learn longer. He justified doing so based on this *possuk*. The Rebbe explained that *this* is the true מִיָּמֵינוּ יִמְתָּקוּ.

The Rebbe also related how someone had been by him and asked a question: If until now Yidden were fine without Chassidus, why suddenly now are the teachings of Chassidus vital? The Rebbe also repeated the answer he gave the person: When your grandfather woke up in the morning, the first thing he did was go to *mikveh*. After *mikveh* he would learn some *nigleh*, go daven, and after davening he would learn some more! But you? When *you* wake up in the morning: The first thing you do is read the “holy” newspaper, and only then do you daven...

Yechidus ended at 3:00 a.m. after which Rabbi Hodakov went into the Rebbe's room. At 3:30, the Rebbe went home by car with Rabbi Krinsky.

THURSDAY, CHOF-ZAYIN CHESHVAN

Tonight, people started going into *yechidus* at 8:15 p.m. One of the people that went in tonight was Harav Brodshstein, the recorder of the Beis Din Tzedek of Yerushalayim. He was in the Rebbe's room for around 45 minutes. During their conversation, when discussing aspects of Eretz Yisroel and *geulah*, the Rebbe stated again that *as'chalta d'geulah* has not yet begun.

Reb Yosef Kotlarsky went into *yechidus* and gave the Rebbe the *maamar dibbur hamaschil* Mayim Rabim from the year 5717, which was printed *l'iluy nishmas* his son Yaakov Dovid. The Rebbe asked him if he participated in the costs of the printing and he answered that he did not, but that he could ask the *bochurim* involved in the printing and arrange something. The Rebbe said that it is not so important that he be involved in this printing; it

was arranged by his son's friends. But what he could do is to buy from them the rights and the *zechus* to publicize and disseminate the *maamar*. Another option, the Rebbe said, would be to participate in the printing of another *maamar* that will also be dedicated to the memory of his son.

The Rebbe also added that this *maamar* was published at an opportune time: Around that time, there were some Yidden saying that all the miracles that happened last year during the Six-Day War were from the *sitra achara*; the *Aibershter* would never perform a miracle through Yidden who are not Torah and mitzvos observant, they claimed. The Rebbe pointed out that every single Yid has a *neschama*—a flame—and nothing, not even the greatest amounts of water (*mayim rabim*) can extinguish that flame.

FRIDAY, CHOF-CHES CHESHVAN

Tonight after Maariv, the Rebbe waited for the announcement regarding the Rashi which will be discussed at the next day's farbrengen.

SHABBOS MEVARCHIM KISLEV, CHOF-TES CHESHVAN

The Rebbe entered the shul for the farbrengen at 1:35 p.m. In the first *sicha* the Rebbe spoke about the *parsha* of the week, and afterwards he said a *maamar* *kein sicha* on the *possuk* וַיִּתֵּן לָךְ. After the *maamar*, people started going over to the Rebbe with bottles of *mashke* to receive *l'chaim* for various occasions.

The Rebbe then said another *sicha*, and during this *sicha* the Rebbe made reference to a recent incident where a certain individual made an inappropriate remark about Yitzchak Avinu. He said that the reason Yitzchak loved his son Eisav was because he brought him a meal... “How can one say such a thing about Yitzchak Avinu?!” the Rebbe demanded.

This person had apparently involved the Alter Rebbe and Lubavitch in his remarks about Yitzchak Avinu, and had made some sort of comparison in order to knock Lubavitch with regards to *mitvza tefillin*. The Rebbe continued and said that regarding the “*shidduch*” that was made between Lubavitch and Yitzchak Avinu—with that he is happy! But how is it possible that such a thing could be said, and not one person present objected or challenged



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TO SHEVAT 5730. JEM 287201.

him?! And to top it all off—he was titled “honorary guest!”

“The explanation Rashi gives he does not know—he is a *rosh yeshiva*! He is busy with ‘more important’ things... Yitzchak Avinu was also a *rosh yeshiva*! It is true that Yitzchak did not have as many *talmidim* as he has—Yitzchak only had his son Yaakov and maybe a few other servants—but he was one of the Avos!”

The Rebbe also said that according to Shulchan Aruch, the individual who made these remarks must go to *Me'aras Hamachpela*, and ask *mechila* from Yitzchak Avinu in front of ten people!

The Rebbe also spoke strongly about the fact that when he starts speaking about “exciting” topics such as this—all of a sudden nobody is sleeping! When a Rashi or a *maamar* of the Rebbe Rashab is being discussed there are those who sleep or they sit there with their eyes open but are clearly thinking about other things. But when it comes to speaking about this—no one is sleeping!

“It should really have been the opposite... here I would not mind if I had only ten people listening — in order to fulfill my obligation — and the rest of the *olam* could sleep... In fact, the fact that there are those who speak against Lubavitch is a direct result of people sleeping during a *maamar* Chassidus. It is just that those who attack Lubavitch do not have *seichel*, and therefore do not know the right place to attack.”

The Rebbe said that he had waited six days(!) for some sort of protest to be made in response to this person's remarks, but when it comes down to the facts—it is a *dor yasom*... “Not one person stood up for the *kavod* of Lubavitch, of the Alter Rebbe, or of Yitzchak Avinu! I am therefore forced to fulfill my obligation and respond to those remarks.” The

Rebbe then went on to explain a Rashi in this week's *parsha* as an answer to the above remarks.

The farbrengen concluded at 4:15 p.m., and the Rebbe came into Mincha immediately following the farbrengen. It was clear that the Rebbe was in a rush. After Mincha, the Rebbe hurriedly walked home. He returned to 770 at 5:10 p.m., came into the shul for Maariv 10 minutes later at 5:20 and left back home at 6:15 p.m.

SUNDAY, ROSH CHODESH KISLEV

At 12:10 a.m, Rabbi Moshe Tzvi Neriya went in for *yechidus* and was in the Rebbe's room for about two hours. The Rebbe repeated for him *b'kitzur* the *maamar* “*B'shofar Gadol*,” and spoke with him regarding *mitvza tefillin* as well. The Rebbe commented that the Satmar Rebbe is not an enemy, he is just trying to “safeguard” his *shitah*... “But I,” the Rebbe said, “have ‘*breite pleitzes*’ [lit. ‘broad shoulders’] that I received from my Rabbeim!”

Yechidus ended at 3:15 a.m., and at 3:45 the Rebbe went home by car with Rabbi Krinsky. **T**

1. Reb Zalman was the *gabbai* in 770 and would announce in shul the Rashi that the Rebbe was going to speak about at the farbrengen.
2. Bereishis 7:3.
3. This was the name that he went by in later life. His real name was Zushe Shifrin—he changed his name in order to flee the Russian border.
4. According to one version, the Rebbe said, “I need to stay here.”
5. According to halacha, a *sefer Torah* is generally not supposed to be moved to a different location unless it will be read from three times at the new location.
6. Father of Reb Chaim Baruch and Reb Chesed שחיי.
7. Literally: “Stolen waters are sweetened.” Meaning, something acquired “illegally” is “sweeter” than that which is to be had through conventional means.

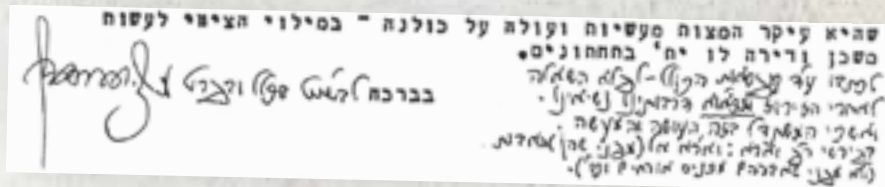


כתב יד קודש

לזכות החיילים בצבאות ה'
מנחם מענדל בן חי' מושקא שי'
לרגל יום הולדתו בז' מר-חשון
אסתר הנ' רחל בת חי' מושקא תחי'
לרגל יום הולדתה בי"א מר-חשון
שמעון בן חי' מושקא שי'
יה"ר שיגדלו חי"לים בצבא כ"ק אדמו"ר
מתוך שמחה, בריאות והרחבה

Not Just a Gracious Host

This is the Rebbe's postscript to a letter written to Reb Yitzchok Dubov, on the importance of a Chossid supporting the Rabbeim's endeavors, regardless of how he himself perceives them:



About which you write regarding the *pushkas* of the Colel [Chabad]:
I was surprised by the question, considering that every single one of the Rabbeim encouraged [people to contribute].
Fortunate is the one who engages in this cause, whether by giving on his own or encouraging others to give.

See Rashi at the beginning of Parshas Va'era:

[The *possuk* says] וארא—And I appeared to [Avraham Yitzchak and Yaakov. Rashi comments:] To the *Avos*. (I.e. because they are the patriarchs of the Jewish people. Not because Avraham was hospitable, etc.)¹

לכתבו ע"ד קופסאות הכולל
- לפלא השאלה לאחר
הזירוז ומכא"א דרבתינו
נשיאינו. ואשרי המשתדל
בזה העושה והמעשה.

בפירש"י ר"פ וארא: וארא אל
(מפני שהן) האבות (ולא מפני
שאברהם מכניס אורחים וכו').

1. Igros Kodesh vol. 23, p. 344. See Likkutei Sichos vol. 3, p. 860.

It seems that Reb Yitzchok was asking the Rebbe why supporting Colel Chabad takes precedence over many other fine organizations and institutions that do good work. In response, the Rebbe explains that when it comes to an institution founded and supported by our Rebbeim, the mere fact that it is connected to the Rebbeim is enough to warrant our utmost support—all other factors are irrelevant.



REB FOLLEH SPEAKS AT A
KINUS CHASSIDEI CHABAD 5717.

of

לזכות
הרה"ת ר' לוי יצחק
ומרת אסתר ביילא ומשפחתם שיחיו
חנאוויטש



Bearer Our Heritage

Reb Refoel Nachman HaKohen ("Folleh") Kahn

Early Life

Refoel Nachman ("Folleh") haKohen Kahn was born in Rudnya (a town near Lubavitch) on 5 Shevat 5657 to Reb Boruch Sholom and Slava Kahn, devoted Chassidim of the Rebbe Rashab.

Folleh once recalled the extent of his father's utmost devotion to the Rebbe, that when asked to buy mattresses for *beis harav*, Boruch Sholom did not rest until obtaining the best of the best: a set prepared for the Tsar.¹

A few years after marriage, the family moved to Warsaw. Around the year 5664, with his real estate business failing, Reb Boruch Sholom traveled to Lubavitch to consult with the Rebbe Rashab, who advised him to do business in Moscow. While he worked there, his family remained in Warsaw and he would visit them sporadically.² On 10 Iyar 5666, they had a second son, whom they named Michoel Yehuda Arye Leib.³

Lubavitch

Reb Folleh, as he was affectionately called, wrote that he was five or six years old when his father first brought him to Lubavitch for Rosh Hashanah.⁴

At the tender age of eight, his mother brought her young Folleh to the yeshiva in Lubavitch. Rebbetzin Shterna Sara expressed her wonder at the prospect of such a young child living so distant from his parents and advised Slava to take Folleh into *yechidus*. Upon Folleh's entry, the Rebbe smiled at him, inquired about his studies, and tested him. During the *yechidus*, the Rebbe asked about many life details, including if he sleeps in his *tallis katan* and *yarmulka*.

As they were winding up, the Rebbe asked softly: "Would you like to remain here?" "Yes," replied the boy. "Won't you miss your mother?" pressed the Rebbe with a smile. At that point, the child burst into tears and



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the Rebbe sent him out of the room, calling for his mother. He instructed her to return to Warsaw and penned a letter to her husband, stating: "Your son still needs his mother. If *chas veshalom* Moshiach won't come in another two years, by all means bring him to learn here!"⁵

Tomchei Temimim

Indeed, two years later, in 5667, young Folleh returned to study in Lubavitch. After a few years, he joined the branch of Tomchei Temimim in Shchedrin under the tutelage of Reb Shaul Ber Zislin,⁶ returning to Lubavitch in 5672, just in time for the now-famous *hemshech* that began that Shavuot ("*Hemshech Ayin-Beis*").⁷ Young Folleh received a special *sefer limmud* from the Rebbe Rashab that included Tanya *baal peh*, which he mastered not long after. In addition to his study of *nigleh* and Chassidus and *tefillah ba'arichus*, Folleh was deeply involved in communal affairs too.⁸

Reb Nochum Guralnik related that young Folleh was a '*tziyur*' in Lubavitch. One of his talents was

negina; he sang very well! At one *farbrengen*, as a *niggun* progressed, the only ones who were able to reach the climactic note were the Rebbe Rashab and him. It was a sight to behold! As soon as Folleh left his *dveikus* and realized what was going on, he quickly became quiet. The Rebbe, however, urged him to continue, which he of course did.⁹

Reb Folleh described his constant burning desire to catch a glimpse of the Rebbe's holy countenance. As such, he once snuck into a gathering of the *chevra kadisha*, which the Rebbe headed, and watched the proceedings together with a few friends. Another time they followed the Rebbe when he went to sell a few horses to the *goy* with the *chametz*. When the Rebbe noticed them, they ran away, only to hide and continue watching. At every opportunity, the *bochurim* yearned to see the Rebbes' holy face, as if for the first time.¹⁰ This was something Reb Folleh learnt from his father, as evident from his description of a bar mitzvah in Moscow that the Rebbe Rashab attended, during his stay for an

asifa (see below). Reb Folleh recounted that his father did not remove his eyes from the Rebbe throughout the entire event, carefully noting the Rebbe's every movement.¹¹

Yud-Tes Kislev 5673, known as 'Yud-Tes Kislev Hagadol' — the great

Yud-Tes Kislev — fell out on a Friday. The *seder* was that the Rebbe would eat *seudas Shabbos* together with his Rebbetzin, Shterna Sara. Originally, the '*menagnim*' would sing during the meal but at a certain point this stopped. On that Shabbos, it was

restarted. The *menagnim*, Folleh amongst them, sang beautifully. The Rebbe's expression was serious, yet his son the Frierdiker Rebbe exuded great joy, attempting several times to cheer up his father. Together with the *bochurim*, the Frierdiker Rebbe sang a *freilicher niggun*.¹²

At every opportunity, the bochurim yearned to see the Rebbes' holy face, as if for the first time.

Lift Yourselves Up!

Those who recall Reb Folleh throughout his lifetime relate how on Simchas Torah, he became a different man.

Later in life, when he moved to Ramat Gan, Eretz Yisroel, in the 5690s, it was in the Kahns' home where the main *farbrengen* took place. After a warm, lively *farbrengen* with Reb Folleh, the Chassidim began a long *tahalucha* throughout the neighborhood, stopping in each Chossid's home to *farbreng* for a short while. When they reached the main road, Reb Folleh stood up tall, stopped the traffic and began preaching about Simchas Torah to the crowds of people. Then he made "*kulehs*" in the street and all the Chassidim followed.

Even in his final years, living in Kfar Chabad, Reb Folleh did not allow his old age and physical ailments to stop him from rejoicing on Simchas Torah. He would stay in shul until the wee hours of the morning, long after all the elders of Kfar Chabad had gone to rest.

This started in his youth, in Lubavitch. As Reb Folleh related:

"When we were in Lubavitch, the first and seventh *hakafa* were given, obviously, to the Rebbe Rashab along with his son, the Frierdiker Rebbe. For these two *hakafos*, the Rebbe and his son danced alone in the center, while we all danced at our places around the sides.

"What a beautiful and holy sight to behold! The Rebbe and his son dancing in unison, the *shtreimel* on their heads, right hands holding the *sifrei Torah* and left hands folded over one another. The whole crowd danced and danced with such great joy, almost till *kelos hanefesh*!

"Whoever did not see this has never seen rejoicing in their lifetime!

"When the Rebbe Rashab finished dancing, he would return to his place, and the Frierdiker Rebbe would then be joined by the crowd of Chassidim in a dancing circle.

"Once, while dancing in this circle, I felt a hand tapping on my shoulder to the beat of the *niggun*. I turned around and saw the Frierdiker Rebbe dancing with closed eyes, murmuring the following words:

"True, the *avoda* of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, *nu*, we cannot reach that level. But the *avoda* of Simchas Torah, to dance with our feet, this we can all do! So dance! Lift yourselves up! *Freilicher un freilicher...*"
(*Shmuos V'sippurim* p.193)

"Who is Moscow? Boruch Sholom..."

The Kahn family remained in Warsaw until Cheshvan 5675, when Reb Boruch Sholom brought them to Moscow. That Simchas Torah, the Rebbe Rashab had warned of the dangerous German Kaiser, a notorious Jew-hater, who had declared war with Russia and was approaching Warsaw. Some time after Simchas Torah, the Rebbe began a new *hanhaga* of sending a daily *pan* to be read at the Ohel by a group of 10 *bochurim* led by the *mashpia* Reb Shilem Kuratin. When Folleh's turn came, he received permission to copy the text of the *pan*, and he later published it in his *Shmuos V'Sippurim*.¹³ That Cheshvan, the Rebbe himself left Lubavitch, which was close to the war front, ultimately settling in the southern city of Rostov, at the Black Sea's northeastern tip.¹⁴

Although the Rebbe had left Lubavitch, the *yeshiva gedolah* of Tomchei Temimim stayed there for another two years. Wartime communication between Lubavitch and Rostov was limited but both cities had open lines to Moscow. The capital city was therefore the communication hub between the yeshiva and the Rebbe. At a certain point, the tension in Lubavitch was such that the *hanhala* decided to dispatch a *bochur* to Rostov to talk face to face with the Rebbe. While passing through Moscow, he was to raise funds for the yeshiva. The *bochur* lodged by Reb Boruch Sholom, who, together with Reb Zalke Persitz, raised a sizable sum for the yeshiva. On his way back from Rostov, the

emissary shared that when he entered the Rebbe Rashab's room, the Rebbe asked: "How is our Moscow crowd doing?" When the *bochur* answered that the only people he knows there are Reb Boruch Sholom and Reb Zalke, the Rebbe laughed out loud and repeated several times: "Ye ye, who is Moscow? Boruch Sholom and Zalke."¹⁵

Yiras Shamayim Under the Chuppah

Reb Folleh merited a unique and special care from the Rebbeim not seen with others. Prior to his wedding, the Rebbe Rashab instructed Reb Folleh that while under the chuppah, he should accept *yiras Shamayim* upon himself and for all his descendants.¹⁶ It should be noted that the Rebbe's father, Harav Levi Yitzchok, wrote something similar to the Rebbe in a telegram, based on the Rebbe Rashab's instructions to him on his wedding day.

Asifas Harabbonim in Moscow

During the reign of the provisional Russian government following the revolution, a large *asifas harabbonim* was held in Moscow in Elul 5677.¹⁷ The Rebbe Rashab participated in this summit accompanied by the Frierdiker Rebbe. The Chossid Reb Chaim Moneszson gave his entire house for the Rebbe's use, and Reb Boruch Sholom provided the food. His dedication was such that he temporarily dropped all his business dealings to focus on this duty. He spared no expense, treating the Rebbe like a king. After buying the best fish from one store, he noticed an even choicer one elsewhere and used that for the Rebbe. White flour was scarce at the time so he telegraphed his friend to send the best variety from where he lived with the conductor of the express train.¹⁸



REB FOLLEH, ALONG WITH REB PINYEH ALTHOIZ, REB NOCHUM GOLDSCHMID AND REB YITZCHAK GANSBURG, SING THE DALED BAVOS AT A YUD TES KISLEV FARBRENGEN, Kfar CHABAD 5719.

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Reb Folleh recounted that together with another individual he tended to the Rebbe's day-to-day needs. This was after his marriage, and together with his wife, he lived in Alexandrov, a town some three hours northeast of Moscow. Their primary source of income was a grocery store which he left in the care of his wife in order to tend to the Rebbe.

Upon asking the Rebbe how exactly to go about *shechting* and cooking and which *keilim* to use, the Rebbe responded that the vessels touching the flame should be brand new, but those from the Kahns' home were fine for serving. Only cold things should be put in the host's utensils and *shechting* should only be performed by a certain *shochet*.

As far as dairy products, Reb Folleh's wife would watch the milking, boil the milk, and send it to Moscow with the store worker. This was a daily process and quite a feat considering that the journey was three hours each way. When someone else brought milk, the Rebbe turned it down. "Yet the Rebbe never even asked me where my milk was from," concluded Reb Folleh.

The Rebbe and his son stayed for only one Shabbos, 11 days total. As the conference took place during Elul, the Rebbe recited a *maamar* that Shabbos beginning with the words '*Ani Ledodi Vedodi Li*.'

"On Erev Shabbos," Reb Folleh later wrote, "my mother mistakenly cooked the *tzimmes* in her own pot. When I informed the Rebbe and asked if he would still eat it, he inquired: 'Your family probably doesn't eat just any meat...' 'Of course not,' I replied. 'Only from *shochtim* and butchers whom we personally know to be *mehadrin*.' 'In that case,' said the Rebbe, 'I will eat it.'

"Aside from this incident, we followed the Rebbe's instructions to the tee. Ever since then, my parents had a special set of *keilim* that the Rebbe used. When the Frierdiker Rebbe visited Moscow in the years 5682-5684, he again used those utensils."¹⁹

Rabbinic Conferences with the Rebbe

These *asifos* would take place at the home of the chief rabbi of Moscow, Reb Shmuel Rabinovitch, who was not a Lubavitcher Chossid. In addition to



the general sessions, the Rebbe Rashab would host smaller meetings at his residence with those who allied with him. They would discuss their position for a united front at the conference.

"Amongst those I remember," wrote Reb Folleh, "were Harav Hagaon Harav Hachossid Reb Levi Yitzchok, the Rebbe's holy father, of Yekaterinoslav; Reb Mendel Chein of Niezhin; Reb Shmarya Medalia of Moscow; Reb Moshe Madayevsk; Reb Mendel Gluskin of Minsk; Reb Menachem Mendel Schneerson, son of the Babruysker Rebbe; Reb Shimon Lazaroff²⁰ of Petrograd (Petersburg), as well as a secretary and several more individuals."

The Frieddiker Rebbe would generally attend these gatherings, and on the occasion that he was absent, his father the Rebbe Rashab would thoroughly brief him of the proceedings. The internal meetings, on the other hand, would not be attended by the Frieddiker Rebbe.²¹

Open Access to the Rebbe

Harav Levi Yitzchok also lodged at Reb Chaim Moneszson's home,

sleeping on a couch in a room near the Rebbe Rashab's. Folleh and his friend caught some rest on the floor.

"Late one night," Folleh recalled, "I could hear the Rebbe calling me from his room: 'Refoel! Refoel Nachman! Folleh!' I jumped up, washed *negel vasser*, and approached the Rebbe.

"The Rebbe shared that he had a bad headache, requesting pills from his suitcase and some water. After helping the Rebbe, I left the room. I noticed through the cracks, however, that the light was still on. After a short while, I tapped at the door and re-entered. (This was my regular conduct, for the Rebbe once told me: 'If you need to approach me, knock lightly and come in, without awaiting a response'.)

"I asked the Rebbe how he was feeling, and he answered, '*Nishkoshe* (not too bad), you can go back to sleep.' As soon as I left the room, the Rebbe closed the light."²²

Come and Hear Good Talk from Father

During these Moscow visits, the affluent Reb Zelik Persitz (Zalke's relative) would often visit the Rebbe

Rashab. On this particular occasion, Reb Zelik was out of town, and only visited the Rebbe several days into his stay.

"I was the only one in the house," Reb Folleh recounted. "I told him that the Rebbe was at the conference. He immediately instructed his driver to take him to the chief rabbi's house. As the Rebbe exited at the session's end, Reb Zelik offered to take him home in his carriage, which only seated two. 'And him?' asked the Rebbe, pointing to his son, the Frieddiker Rebbe. My father, who was standing nearby, exclaimed: 'Reb Zelik! The Rebbe and his son will go in your wagon, and we will travel behind them in a hired wagon.' That is indeed what happened.

"Upon their arrival, the Rebbe proceeded to his study with Reb Zelik, while the Frieddiker Rebbe went to his room.

"Suddenly, my friend and I were approached by the Frieddiker Rebbe, who told us to come and hear a 'good talk from father.'

"Upon reaching the Rebbe's door, which was slightly ajar, the Rebbe embraced and then leaned on us, one holy hand resting on each of us. We stood and listened to the Rebbe's conversation with Reb Zelik the philanthropist."

The conversation centered on the Rebbe's sharp stance against the early Zionist movement, and using *lashon hakodesh* for mundane talk, which was being done in a yeshiva Reb Zelik was funding.

"When the Frieddiker Rebbe assumed the *nesius* some three years later, I recalled his great interest in the *temimim*. Who were we, after all, that he told us to 'come and hear a good talk from father...'"²³

Return Trip to Rostov

"Prior to the Rebbe's departure to Rostov, he instructed me where to put everything; which luggage should go

Carrier of the Heritage

More than anything else, Reb Folleh became known to generations of Chassidim due to the treasure-trove of memories and stories he retained and published. So much of our rich heritage as Lubavitcher Chassidim was preserved due to Reb Folleh's many writings, published at the Rebbe's behest in various volumes.

Shmuos V'Sippurim

The name for this *sefer* was actually based on a letter Reb Folleh received from the Rebbe. As is well known, the Rebbe constantly encouraged elder Chassidim who learned in Lubavitch to record all their memories for posterity. In one of the letters to Reb Folleh in this regard, the Rebbe wrote that he should record "הר"ד וכו' והשמועות וסיפורים מרבותינו הקדושים וכו'—The points, the things you heard, and the stories of our holy Rabbeim." Based on this line, Reb Folleh decided to call his collection שמועות וסיפורים מרבותינו הקדושים, including scores of stories about each of the Rabbeim and many events that he himself witnessed in Lubavitch.

Lubavitch V'Chayaleha

A unique compilation by Reb Folleh published in honor of Chai Elul 5742—marking 85 years since the founding of Tomchei Temimim. Reb Folleh writes in the introduction of the *sefer* that the Rebbe encouraged him in this project as well. The book tells the story of the city of Lubavitch and its "soldiers":

"Those *talmidim* who stood on the front as soldiers of *Beis Dovid* for more than 50 years, many of whom paid the ultimate sacrifice, or were sent to Siberia, never to return, for standing bravely and fearlessly in preserving the embers of Yiddishkeit. Others have since spread out across the globe to promote Yiddishkeit and Chassidus."

This *sefer* includes many intricate details of everyday life in Lubavitch, and the Rebbe encouraged Reb Folleh to allow others to review the text for accuracy. Reb Zalman Shimon Dvorkin, the rav of the Lubavitcher community in Crown



FIRST EDITION OF SHMUOS VESIPURIM

Heights—himself a *tomim* from Lubavitch—carefully reviewed the *sefer*, correcting and adding details from his own recollections.

Behind the Iron Curtain

Another special book by Reb Folleh מאחורי מסך, "הברזל," tells the story of his own challenges of *mesiras nefesh* during the difficult years in the Communist Russia, leading to his ultimate arrest, interrogation, and years of imprisonment and exile in Siberia.

Yud-Tes Kislev HaGadol

The thousands of stories and memories recorded by Reb Folleh are available for perusal, many also in English. Here we will offer just a small glimpse of how Reb Folleh relates a beautiful Yud-Tes Kislev as a youngster with the Rebbe Rashab and the Frieddiker Rebbe in Lubavitch:

In 5673, Yud-Tes Kislev occurred on a Friday, and it became known as the "Great Yud-Tes Kislev." I will relate some of what I remember from then:

On Thursday evening, everyone went to the home of the elder Rebbetzin Rivka [mother of the Rebbe Rashab], because the Rebbe [Rashab] would spend time there. The Rebbetzin sat and related a few stories, as did her son the Rebbe. Then we sang a few *niggunim* and stayed for a short while. This happened every year.

Reb Avraham Pariz (who would later become my *mechutan*) was one of the older *bochurim*, while I was younger. We lived in the same quarters and he would look after me. That night, he told me that the Rebbe's son [the Frieddiker Rebbe] had invited some of the older *bochurim* to come to his residence for a *farbrengen* after the gathering at the Rebbetzin's home. He suggested that I join as well.

I came over to the Frierdiker Rebbe's house early, and the gathering at the Rebbetzin's was still going on. When the Frierdiker Rebbe came home with his guests, he saw me there and didn't say anything [i.e. he allowed me to stay]. He motioned to me to help him carry another table into the dining room. He then invited everyone to wash for bread. A younger friend and I had not been invited, so we stood on the side, but the Frierdiker Rebbe asked us to come to the table and offered us food like everyone else.

That night, the Frierdiker Rebbe said a lot of *l'chaim*, and he invited the older bochurim to do the same. He was in very good spirits and he told a story of how he and the Rebbe Rashab were able to spend time in the booth of King Wilhelm of Germany in the Royal Gardens of France (each king had a special booth for when they visited). The Rebbe Rashab sat on the chair and wrote out a deep concept in Chassidus.

During *bentching*, the Frierdiker Rebbe recited "ועל הנסים" before the *bracha* of הכל ועל.

...On Shabbos afternoon, the Rebbe Rashab ate the meal in his mother's home, and a group of *bochurim*, including me, were invited to sing *niggunim*. The Rebbe Rashab was very serious, but his son, the Frierdiker Rebbe was in a happy mood, and he tried to make his father happy as well.

During the meal, the Rebbe Rashab said: It is obvious that the *Yam Suf* was not made of *mashke*. For if it was, there would be no miracle in the fact that it dried up!

...On Motzei Shabbos, the Rebbe Rashab farbrenged in the big *zal*. Reb Zalke Persitz had said some *l'chaim*, and he wished the Rebbe Rashab, "*L'chaim*, you should not want to leave [Lubavitch] anymore!" (He meant that the Rebbe should be healthy and not need to seek medical remedies in other cities.)

The Rebbe Rashab responded: "Hashem is my witness, I do not want to leave! When I leave, it's like leaving my source of life. My life is to teach Chassidus and for Yidden to hear Chassidus..."

"Nothing can truly separate us from Hashem. Even *aveiros* cannot cause that. Only having poor health. If the body is not in good health we cannot accomplish anything.

"*Dovid melech Yisroel chai v'kayam*—we [i.e. the Rabbeim's family] are descendants of *Beis Dovid*, and his light will never be extinguished..."

The farbrengen lasted all night. The Rebbe Rashab left the *zal* at 7:30 in the morning. Then we sat down to do *chazara* and review everything we had just heard.

That day the Frierdiker Rebbe told the administration of the yeshiva to prepare a festive meal, but since everyone was still very tired, the *seuda* was pushed off till the next night, 23 Kislev. The entire yeshiva participated: the older students, the younger students, the *mashpi'im*, the *maggidei shiur*, everyone! We sang and celebrated very, very joyously. I will never forget that Yud-Tes Kislev!

(*Shmuos V'Sippurim* p. 132)

in the cargo compartment, and which he would be taking in the train car. I was to carry one suitcase, watching it closely until the Rebbe was seated, at which point I was to hand it to him.

"While I was arranging everything, a Georgian-looking Jew ran over and asked me in Russian where the 'Rostovker Rebbe' was. I pointed to the train-car around which local *anash* had crowded to bid the Rebbe farewell. After packing everything in its place, I too entered the train-car.

"The Rebbe Rashab was already seated in his place. Harav Hagaon Harav Hachossid Reb Levi Yitzchok, the Rebbe's holy father, was also travelling on this southbound train. He would disembark at Kharkov, en route to Yekaterinoslav. The Frierdiker Rebbe stayed in Moscow for an additional day. When I handed the small suitcase to the Rebbe, he motioned for me to place it in the overhead compartment. The Georgian Jew finally made it on, and it seemed that the Rebbe and him were acquainted with each other. He spoke in Russian while the Rebbe responded in Yiddish. He then proceeded to hand over many banknotes. After placing them in his pockets, the Rebbe slowly blessed him: 'Hashem should grant you long life,' after which he left the train."²⁴

Mesiras Nefesh in Moscow

In Cheshvan 5678, Russia was in turmoil. A civil war raged between the Bolshevik 'Red Army' and the anti-communist 'White Army' of the provisional government. Amidst all this, bloody pogroms were being perpetrated against Jews throughout Russia.

Against this backdrop, another *asifa* was set to take place, this time in the bustling port city of Petrograd. Upon arriving in Moscow, on the way



"...My parents had prepared food for the Rebbe, and we delivered it to the Rebbe, bullets whizzing over our heads."

to Petrograd, the participants realized that they could not continue their trip.

Reb Folleh recalled: "When I heard the Rebbe was in Moscow, I rushed there from my home in Alexandrov. Meanwhile, my parents had prepared food for the Rebbe, and we delivered it to the Rebbe, bullets whizzing over our heads."

Photo of the Rebbe Rashab

After the revolution in 1917, Georgia²⁵ broke away from Russia and became an autonomous state. The Rebbe was in Rostov at this time and

the exiled Georgian government was working out of Rostov hotels. One of their staffers who davened at the Rebbe's *minyán* on Rosh Hashanah, secretly informed *beis harav* that the government-in-exile planned on relocating to Turkey by boat on the Black Sea. The Rebbe and his family then began the process of joining the Georgian government's escape, the Rebbe even having a passport photo taken (which is today the only known picture of the Rebbe Rashab²⁶).

"The ship was prepared," recalled Reb Folleh, "and many of the

household possessions were sold off. I was among those who assisted with the sales. Rebbetzin Shterna Sara handed us two quilts to sell and they were all set for the voyage."

One morning however, the Rebbe informed his household that they would not be travelling after all. He added that no questions should be asked.²⁷

This, Too, Shall Pass

Following the Rebbe's Rashab's *histalkus* on Beis Nissan 5680, Reb Folleh was the first to give a *pan* to the Frierdiker Rebbe. Reb Folleh related:

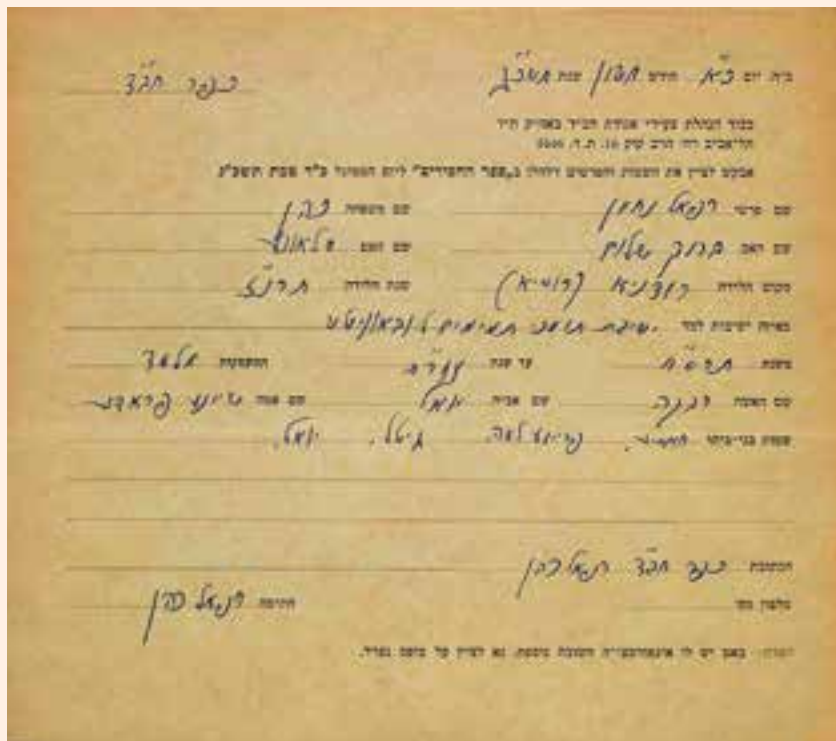
"I was absent during 'ashkavta d'Rebbe' (the *histalkus*—see Kesubos 103b) as I was sick with typhus. Moreover, immediately after



Pesach, my father contracted the disease, and I cared for him, despite my own weakness. The doctors actually forbade me from leaving my bed, yet I was compelled to tend to him, as there was no one else.

“My father asked me to write a *pan* on his behalf, and specifically hand it to the Rebbe Rayatz. This despite the fact that the new Rebbe hadn’t yet accepted the *nesius*, and wasn’t officially taking *pidyonos*.

“Despite my weakness, I made it to the Rebbe’s residence... After waiting a short while, the Rebbe asked about my father’s health. Despite explaining the situation and my father’s special request,



REB FOLLEH'S SEFER HACHASSIDIM CARD.

the Rebbe resisted taking the *pidyon*, stating that he didn’t intend to visit the Ohel at that moment...

“The Rebbe continued: ‘You’re still feeling the effects of the illness, and therefore can’t *tovel*. Your younger brother, however, is after bar mitzvah. He should go.’

“Reb Shmuel Guarary, a Chossid who was present, queried: ‘Why should a small child go to the Ohel?’

“The Rebbe responded: ‘What’s the matter? He is indeed a child, but it’s his son, and he should go.’

“Reb Shmuel countered: ‘Thus, a son is indeed something. His honor is his father’s son, and should take the *pan*.’

“The Rebbe motioned for me to pass it, and so I did. *Baruch Hashem*, the Rebbe took it from my hand. I believe

this is the first *pidyon* that he received.”

Reb Folleh recounted that following the *asifa* in Moscow (see above), the Frierdiker Rebbe stayed in the city.

“On our way back from the train station,” continued Reb Folleh, “we stopped to send several telegrams at the post office. The Frierdiker Rebbe then asked how I was doing, and how business was going. I replied that *baruch Hashem* my *parnasa* was great, and in fact, just that day, I had profited 800 rubles. After conversing a bit more, the Frierdiker Rebbe said:

‘An individual from an earlier generation had a staff upon which were inscribed the three letters: ג,ד,ר – this too shall pass. That is to say, when one sees his *mazal* shining, he shouldn’t get overly excited, as it will eventually pass; the wheel of fortune will turn. And on the other hand, if one is *chas veshalom* suffering, he must not

despair. Rather, he ought to realize that this too shall pass.” (Zeide Folleh p. 6)

Fascinatingly: almost 40 years later, our Rebbe used this exact saying in a letter to Reb Folleh! Reb Folleh had expressed feelings of despair, and in addition to providing practical advice, the Rebbe wrote: “גם זה יעבור.” (*Igros Kodesh vol. 10 p. 263*)

A Heavenly Sight

Following the *histalkus* of the Rebbe Rashab in 5680, Reb Folleh immediately connected himself completely with his successor, the Frierdiker Rebbe (see above).

“One day,” Reb Folleh related, “I climbed up on a tree and peeked into the Rebbe Rashab’s Ohel while the Frierdiker Rebbe was inside. I was met by a frightening sight: The Frierdiker Rebbe straightened his *gartel* and began shaking back and forth in concentration, just as he would while his father recited Chassidus. He stood there in this position for some 50 minutes, after which he nodded his head, as if to say, ‘Thank you!’ and exited the Ohel!”²⁸

...The Frierdiker Rebbe said, “Ah! Gut! Folleh can also help us.”

The Difficult Years

When the new Bolshevik government began their war to stamp out any remnant of Yiddishkeit, Reb Folleh, like so many other Chassidim, stood at the forefront of the fight to keep Yiddishkeit alive.

Reb Folleh’s address in Moscow was the one where all the secret *melamdim* in the area turned to for help.

After the Frierdiker Rebbe’s release from prison on Yud-Beis Tammuz 5687, he spent some time in Malachovka, near Moscow. Many of the letters for the Frierdiker Rebbe were received at Reb Folleh’s home, or his father’s, Reb Boruch Sholom, and they would send them to the Frierdiker Rebbe through a messenger. Although most people were not allowed in to see the Frierdiker Rebbe, Reb Folleh really longed to see his Rebbe after his liberation, so he took the opportunity to bring a few telegrams and letters over one Motzei

Shabbos. Seeing Reb Folleh, the Frierdiker Rebbe said, “Ah! Gut! Folleh can also help us.”

As it turned out, the Frierdiker Rebbe wanted Reb Folleh to help him on his final trip to Rostov, where he visited the Ohel of the Rebbe Rashab on Tes-Vov Elul, before leaving Russia.

You Are Not Yotzei!

For Rosh Hashanah 5688, Reb Folleh traveled from Moscow to be with the Frierdiker Rebbe in Leningrad. On Tzom Gedalya, he was in *yechidus* and the Frierdiker Rebbe blessed him, “May Hashem help that we should see one another *gezunterheit*...”

After Yom Kippur, the news became public that the Frierdiker Rebbe would indeed be leaving Russia immediately after Sukkos, and throngs of Chassidim came to Leningrad to see their Rebbe one last time before he left.

On Simchas Torah night, the Frierdiker Rebbe handpicked the people who would be allowed to join his *farbrengen* (since the crowd was immense and the room was too small). Reb Folleh was one of them.



THE FRIERDIKER REBBE IN RIGA CIRCA 5690.

LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASIDET CHABAD/KEHOT PUBLICATION SOCIETY

Handing him a chocolate bar, the Rebbe said, "You analyze concepts very well!"

Who is Jealous?!

At the farbrengen of Purim 5716, the Rebbe said:

Folleh Kahn made a farbrengen for Yud Shevat. [At this point the Rebbe turned to his son, Yoel, and told him to say *l'chaim*.]

When he reached the point of "טוב לב המלך ביין" [having said some *l'chaim*], he said that *ploini-ben-ploini* [one of the famous *rabbonim* of Eretz Yisroel who had recently passed away] is jealous of the smallest student of Tomchei Temimim for having learned Chassidus. Now that he is in the world of truth and he sees what Chassidus is, he is jealous.

All of sudden, the Israeli post started making huge profits in selling stamps. People were sending letters to me, one after the other:

How can one say such a thing, they asked.

This man was the greatest of the great, he was a *posek*, who sat and learned Torah his whole life! How can you say that he's jealous of the smallest student in Tomchei Temimim?!

So I answered them that this is based on a clear Gemara in Bava Basra. The Gemara says that in future times, Hashem will make seven *chupos* for each *tzaddik*, and every *tzaddik* will get "scalded" by the *chupa* of their colleague.

Why? Because he is not allowed in. The only Torah you are allowed to learn in the world to come, is based on the Torah you learned while here in *olam hazeh*. Hence, if a person was in opposition to a certain part of Torah, he cannot join in later on. While he lived on earth, he did not study this part of Torah, because he disagreed with it. But *teshuva* does not exist in the next world, only here in *olam hazeh*. So when he sees the truth of *pnimius haTorah* in the next world, and he wants to join in, he is told that it's too late. Obviously, he is jealous of those who have the chance to learn Chassidus!

While in Latvia, Reb Folleh really wished to stay there instead of continuing to Eretz Yisroel, as there was already an established Chabad community and good *chinuch* for the children. But the government would not allow them to stay on a transit visa, and so they continued to Eretz Yisroel. Unbeknownst to them, this "inconvenience" ultimately saved their lives, as almost the entire Chabad community of Riga was later wiped out by the Nazis.

When leaving to Eretz Yisroel, Reb Folleh and his family traveled through Vienna, Austria, where they were able

to see the Frierdiker Rebbe again, bringing the *bracha* to fruition.

Meeting the Rebbe

At the time, the Frierdiker Rebbe was in Vienna for health reasons, assisted by our Rebbe.

When Reb Folleh asked if he can bring his young son Yoel with him for *yechidus*, the Frierdiker Rebbe said he should bring the entire family!

When they went into *yechidus*, the Frierdiker Rebbe inquired about how the Yidden were doing in Moscow and gave Reb Folleh a special *shlichus* to do in Vienna: To farbreng with



the members of Tzeirei Agudas Yisroel, and talk to them about the *mesiras nefesh* of the Yidden in Russia. About the exact time and place, the Frierdiker Rebbe said, "My son-in-law [the Rebbe] will help arrange it for you..."

When the young Yoel started walking towards the Frierdiker Rebbe, his father tried to stop him, but the Frierdiker Rebbe insisted, "*Lozt im—* Let him..." and he gave him a *bracha*.

Later, when the Kahns were leaving for the dock to embark on their journey, they were surprised to be met by the Rebbe, who told them, "My father-in-law wanted me to see you off."

The Rebbe struck up a conversation with Yoel, who was all of five years old at the time. Yoel told the Rebbe, "Meir Avtzon is the rebbe [i.e. the *melamed*] of the girls, Yaakov Maskalik is the rebbe of the boys, but the [Frierdiker] Rebbe is the Rebbe of all the rebbes!" The Rebbe was very pleased with Yoel's remarks.

Handing him a chocolate bar, the Rebbe said, "You analyze concepts very well!"²⁹

In Eretz Yisroel

The Kahns settled in Tel Aviv, where a small fledgling Chabad community was forming. Life in their new home brought with it a new set of challenges. The economy in Eretz Yisroel in those years was in its infancy and there were times when there was no money for basic necessities.

When it was time for Yoel to go to *cheder*, Reb Folleh wanted to have him learn in a *Chassidishe cheder*, so he created one in his home! Never mind that the family of six was living in a house of two rooms. One became the *cheder*, while the other was the bedroom. The four families who joined the *cheder* each paid for one month of the *melamed's* salary, and thus the *Chassidishe cheder* was born!

Reb Folleh's Vort

In Eretz Yisroel, Reb Folleh's authentic *Chassidishe neshama* was able to shine and have immense influence on his surroundings. Years of soaking up *Toras* and *darkei haChassidus* in Lubavitch and beyond would now spread out to the many others he would encounter through years to come.

Reb Folleh became known for his passionate farbrengens exuding Chassidishe warmth and penetrating his listeners to better themselves in the true Chassidishe way. No matter what community, Yidden of all types and stripes flocked to Reb Folleh's farbrengens to listen and be uplifted.

Decades later, at Reb Folleh's *levaya* which took place late at night in Yerushalayim, one of the great *talmidei chachamim* of the city, who was not known to have any connection to Reb Folleh in his lifetime, surprisingly showed up. He explained that some 20 years earlier, he had chanced upon a farbrengen of Reb Folleh at a family *simcha* and his life had never been the same since.

Reb Folleh was *zoche* that the Rebbe actually repeated one of his *vertlach* at a farbrengen and offered a deep explanation to his words (see sidebar).

With the Rebbe

Reb Folleh first traveled to the Rebbe for the month of Tishrei, 5717. Throughout the month, he sent letters back home to his family detailing all the occurrences of the festive month in the Rebbe's court. The Rebbe pointed out that the relatively large number of guests who arrived from Eretz Yisroel can be attributed to the fruit of the labor of the shlichim who were sent earlier that summer (after the terrorist attack in Kfar Chabad³⁰). Throughout the month, the Rebbe gave extra *kiruvim* to the guests from Eretz Yisroel and especially to Reb Folleh.

At the farbrengen on Simchas Torah, the Rebbe asked Reb Folleh, "Why are you so *בכיוץ*?" Reb Folleh didn't understand, so the Rebbe explained: "I don't mean *בקיבוץ*, but *בכיוץ* (downtrodden)!" Reb Folleh answered that the wine is not doing its job.

"Nu, take *mashke*!" the Rebbe replied.

The Rebbe poured a lot of *mashke* in Reb Folleh's cup, and "*baruch Hashem*, I was obviously quite *b'simcha*!" Reb Folleh concludes.

When Is He Coming?

Reb Folleh lived to the ripe old age of 90. Throughout his whole life, he waited eagerly for the coming of Moshiach.

In fact, when the Frierdiker Rebbe announced "*לא לתור לגאולה*," Reb Folleh is said to have disposed of his copy of Tisha B'Av Kinos, with the certainty that he would never need to use it again.

Two days before his passing, on 17 Tishrei 5748, all he was heard saying

was, "When is he coming? When is he coming?"

Thus concluded the life on earth of a fiery Chossid, who lived with Moshiach all his life and awaited his coming every day. **T**

1. Zeide Folleh (Teshura Taichman-Cohen) p. 31.
2. Refoel Nachman Kahn, *Hechossid Reb Boruch Sholom a"h Kahn*, Bitaton Chabad 14 p. 32.
3. Lev HaAri: *The Life of Michael Yehuda Areyeh Leib Kahn*.
4. Bitaton Chabad 14 p. 32.
5. Zeide Folleh p. 31.
6. For more on this, see *Toldos Chabad B'Russia HaTsaris*. See also *The Chabad Shtetl Schedrin*, chabad.org/2529074.
7. See *The Marvels and Wonders of Chassidus: Uncovering the Hidden Treasure of Hemshech Ayin-Beis*, Derher Kislev 5777.
8. Zeide Folleh pp. 3-4, 29.
9. Zeide Folleh p. 4.
10. *Shmuos V'Sippurim* vol. 1 p. 120.
11. Ibid. p. 144.
12. Ibid. p. 136.
13. Vol. 1 p. 115. Printed thereafter in *Igros Kodesh Rebbe Rashab* vol. 2. p. 796.
14. Refoel Nachman Kahn, *Hechossid Reb Boruch Sholom a"h Kahn*, Bitaton Chabad 14 p. 33.
15. Zeide Folleh p. 33.
16. Ibid. p. 29.
17. For more on the *asifos*, see *Igros Kodesh Admur HaRashab* vol. 5.
18. Zeide Folleh p. 34.
19. *Shmuos V'Sippurim* vol. 1 p. 138 ff., 147.
20. Grandfather and namesake of Rabbi Shimon Lazaroff, head shliach to Texas.
21. Ibid. p. 142.
22. Ibid. p. 148.
23. Ibid. ff.
24. Ibid. p. 146.
25. See *Toldos Chabad BeRussia Hasovietis*.
26. See *Lighting Lamps*, Derher Nissan 5780 p. 45, that the Rebbe Rashab avoided photographs.
27. *Shmuos V'Sippurim* vol. 1 p. 171.
28. Zeide Folleh, p. 7.
29. As recalled by Yoel's sister, Mrs. Chasya Paris; www.ravdori.co.il.
30. See *Transforming Tragedy*, Derher Sivan 5774.



IEI 201925

When Hair Grows On My Palm

This story was related by Reb Yehuda Leib Kramer, who established Beth Rivka and Pardes Chana in Montreal. Rabbi Kramer was personally involved in this story. The individuals' names have been omitted to protect their privacy.¹

A couple visited me many years ago. They poured out their hearts, telling me that they had been married for more than two years and had not been blessed with children. After some time, they had gone to a doctor, whose diagnosis was far from reassuring. He stated that due to a medical condition present in the husband, the couple would never be able to have children, G-d forbid.

The couple belonged to a traditional congregation and the husband had studied in the Lubavitch Yeshiva's afternoon classes as a boy. So now he came with his wife to see if I could help them with their problem.

"My opinion is," I told them, "that you should go to New York and have a *yechidus* with the Rebbe. Now, getting an appointment for a *yechidus* any time soon is not possible, but you have another option. It's almost Pesach, so you should travel to New York for Pesach—or at least for the second half of Yom Tov, and then, as guests, you will have the opportunity to join a *yechidus* after Yom Tov.

They listened to my advice and right after Pesach, when the guests entered the Rebbe's room for *yechidus*, they did so as well.

They told the Rebbe about their situation and asked the Rebbe to help them and bless them with a

child. The Rebbe gave them a *bracha* and suggested that they visit a certain doctor for an examination.

The couple made inquiries about the doctor and found out that he was away and would only be back in town in a week's time.

The husband, a businessman, wanted to hurry back to Montreal and his business—he did not want to wait in New York for the doctor's return. His wife, however, said, "No. The Rebbe told us to go to the doctor in New York, and so we must do that." They reached a compromise: They would meet Rabbi Hodakov, the Rebbe's *mazkir*, and do as he would tell them. Rabbi Hodakov met them and told them to write their question to the Rebbe.

So they wrote to the Rebbe: Seeing as the doctor will not be in town for another week, they wanted the Rebbe's opinion whether they should wait in New York or return home to Montreal. The Rebbe replied that they should go back to Montreal and visit a doctor there, and the Rebbe specified which doctor they should visit.

After receiving this answer, they returned to Montreal. The wife, however, was still troubled by the fact that they had not heeded the Rebbe's original instructions to visit the doctor in New York. They once again came to visit me and before they entered my office, I could hear them arguing about something. When they walked in, I asked them, "What happened? Why were you arguing outside?"

The wife replied that she still disagreed with her husband, and maintained that because the Rebbe told

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

them to go to the doctor in New York they should have listened and done precisely that. "Yes, it would have been difficult to remain away for so long, but if we have to wait, we have to wait!" she said. "If we want to be helped, we need to put in the effort and go out of our way."

The husband's stance, however, was that the Rebbe told them that they could go see a doctor in Montreal, and doing so would be the same as going to the doctor in New York—so it would still be following the Rebbe's instructions.

What did they want from me? They wanted me to get them an appointment. They had called the doctor and he had refused to see them. As it turned out, the doctor was a close friend of mine, so I called him and said, "Listen, my friend. When the Lubavitcher Rebbe sends you patients, it should be a tremendous honor for you! But instead I'm hearing that you don't want to give them an appointment. I don't understand."

The doctor replied, "Rabbi, you know me very well. You know that I am a straightforward person. I know this couple came to Dr. ..., who shares an office with me. I know they came and I know this man can't have children. I don't want to take their money for nothing."

I replied, "That all makes sense and such an argument should be taken into account; but not when the Rebbe sends someone to a doctor. When the Rebbe sends a patient to a doctor, it is a totally different matter. You must see them and do what you can and they will be helped."

"What do you want?" the doctor asked me. "That I should make a miracle?" "No," I told him. "You don't have to make a miracle. You need to do what a doctor needs to do. Take them in for an appointment and examine them and Hashem will make the miracle."

"Alright, let them come to me," he finally agreed.

That same week, I happened to visit New York. I had the *zechus* of going in for a *yechidus* with the Rebbe and I told the Rebbe about my conversation with the doctor. The Rebbe told me, "I heard about this doctor and couldn't believe he could be so foolish as to think that I expect him to make miracles. Hashem will make miracles, and he has to do what he has to do."

The doctor took them in for an appointment, examined them, and reached the same conclusion: that they were unable to have children, G-d forbid. *Nu*, he did what he could.

Time went by. On Erev Yom Kippur I met the doctor and told him, "You know, doctor, in a few days I'll be officiating at the *bris* of that couple's newborn son." "Unbelievable!" the doctor exclaimed. "It can't be!" Showing his palm to me, he said, "Just like hair can grow on my palm, so can they have children! Impossible!"

"What do you mean, 'impossible,'" I asked. "Come, let's go to the *bris* together."

In time, that couple had many more children. **1**

1. Printed in *Reshimas Sippurim* p. 1.



14 TISHREI 5737, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEW 204591

The concept of having a *rav*, *mashpia* and spiritual guide is a longstanding institution in Yiddishkeit, and especially the world of Chassidus, beginning from the times of the Alter Rebbe.

On two separate occasions, the Rebbe made a massive push for this to become common practice: In 5737,

the Rebbe reenacted the institution of *mashpi'im*, asking that eligible people in every city and shul should step up and lead their communities. Then, in 5746, he broadened the campaign under the term “*asei lecha rav*”: Whereas the previous campaign was directed at the *mashpi'im*, this time the Rebbe called for every

individual—men, women, and children—to appoint for themselves someone who they could confide with, be accountable to, and who could help resolve questions—for this would give them tremendous help in *avodas Hashem*. The Rebbe spoke about it many times throughout the year,

לזכות
הרה"ת הרב שלום דוב בער שיח'ל
שוחאט

לרגל יום הולדתו - י"ז מרחשון
ולזכות אשתו חיה מושקא, ובנותיהם
ברכה ליפשא, עליזה ושיינדל תחינה

GUIDANCE

The Rebbe's call to heed
the words of the Mishnah
"Asei Lecha Rav,"
and appoint
mashpi'im and mashpios.

ויצא פה זמאנא דאע"פ
דאזא - כ"ט חשוון תרנ"ז
אוריאל זאנאוויטש

explaining the *mivtza*, defining it, and beseeching everyone to fulfill it.

WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT?

First and foremost, the Rebbe said, we are commanded in the first *perek* of *Pirkei Avos*, *asei lecha rav*, to appoint for ourselves a *rav*—and it is repeated twice, by two different *tanna'im*.

Thus, even if we wouldn't understand *why* it's important, we would still be obligated to do so without asking any questions. But it happens to be that *asei lecha rav* is one of the *mishpatim*—its importance is clearly understood, and if you think about it even briefly, you recognize how crucial it is,¹ as we will explore below.

THE ROLE OF A RAV:

As the Rebbe explained, there are several key roles that a *rav* fills:

1) **An unbiased view:** Everyone has areas in *avodas Hashem* where they can improve: we all have a *yetzer hara* who attempts to block our progress,² and there is always room to rise and grow in Yiddishkeit.³ The challenge is that people are not usually good self-evaluators, and we cannot depend on self-assessment. In order to get an honest assessment, we must appoint a *rav/mashpia* who is greater than ourselves, someone we will confide in, who will measure and test our progress in *avodas Hashem*, and whose guidance we will follow.⁴

2) **Accountability:** The Rebbe's campaign to appoint a *rav* came together with a push for tests for *yeshiva bochurim* with a similar goal. Just as tests should be used to motivate students, every person should go to their *rav/mashpia* to test and measure their progress from time to time. The very fact that one is accountable to someone else is a powerful motivator.

(At times, the Rebbe himself filled this role. In the earlier years, the Rebbe would sometimes instruct *bochurim* to send reports of their learning and *hafatza* to him on a regular basis—not expecting a reply, but so that they would feel accountable and motivated. Later on, there were times when the Rebbe wanted everyone to report to their *mashpi'im* for specific projects—and for the *mashpi'im* to report back to him (see below)).

3) **Resolving questions:** Due to the darkness of the world, one might be confronted with a situation in which he doesn't see Torah's light and guidance. Torah provides us the tool to resolve these questions, enabling us to continue doing our work: to ask a *rav*.

(In fact, in the landmark *sichos* of 5748, when the Rebbe gave the guidelines on how to make decisions

without his personal input, he said that questions in *avodas Hashem* should be resolved with the help of a *rav*, medical questions should be resolved by an expert doctor, and business decisions by understanding friends.)⁵

You can be confident with his advice: Being that you fulfilled the Torah's command to appoint a *rav* and chose this person *b'hashgacha pratis*, he will certainly resolve all your questions.⁶

Resolving your questions helps you be as stringent as you need to be—and also not to be *too* stringent: When one has a conundrum, it is not always correct to err on the side of caution, and resolving these questions with a *rav* helps chart the proper path.⁷

WHO IS IT FOR?

Every single person is enjoined in Pirkei Avos *asei lecha rav*—appoint for yourself a *rav*. This applies to *everyone*: Even a child needs a *rav* to help deal with his *yetzer hara* (sometimes even more so than adults). And the child will be willing to listen to a *rav* when he sees that his father, too, has a *rav*.⁸

In fact, even a *rav* needs a *rav*, for he, too, is biased about himself and needs an honest opinion.⁹ As the Rebbe said many times, the Mishnah uses the term *asei*, which implies that one must *force* themselves to do so. Even if it's not easy, even if one doesn't understand why they need a *rav*¹⁰—and even if one thinks that they cannot find anyone greater than themselves. Even if one is very methodical and wants to find the perfect candidate, don't wait around and have nothing to show; appoint a *rav* now, and if necessary it can be changed later.¹¹

(In one *sicha* the Rebbe says that if one cannot find anyone greater than himself, he should find someone lesser—the point is to have an unbiased perspective.¹² In another *sicha* the Rebbe says that if one was

THE CHASSAM SOFER NEEDED A RAV

Following the Rebbe's words on *asei lecha rav*, Rabbi Yossi Hecht wrote to the Rebbe that a certain passage of the Chassam Sofer might be of interest. He was asked about the unification of two shuls and what the congregants should do regarding differences in *nusach* and *minhagim*. The Chassam Sofer writes various possible proofs for the issue, but then he concludes, "I need to appoint myself a *rav* for this issue."¹⁵

The Rebbe replied:

יכניס זה לאחד הקובצים, ולכחב"ד.

You should put this into one of the *kovetz* [*ha'aros*], and into the Kfar Chabad [magazine].¹⁶

In fact, even a rav needs a rav, for he, too, is biased about himself and needs an honest opinion.

commanded to get a *rav*—there is certainly someone out there who is greater than him...¹³)

In fact, it is even *more* important for a *rav* to have his own *rav*, since he is involved in *piskei dinim* that affect many people, and therefore he must have access to an unbiased view.¹⁴

WHAT SHOULD I BE TALKING ABOUT?

You should discuss all areas of *avodas Hashem*, both *sur meira* and *asei tov*¹⁷—including Torah-learning, your *tzedakah*, and even how you're serving Hashem in mundane matters.¹⁸

The Rebbe said that some people appoint themselves a *rav*—but the *yetzer hara* tries to convince them to be selective about which things they discuss. If they are confident that the *rav* will agree with them—they immediately consult with him. If they are unsure if he will agree—they cannot decide whether they should go to him today or push it off until "tomorrow." And in areas where they are *certain* that he will not agree with them, areas that are against their *geshmak*—then they really push it off: "Why put myself in hot water?"

The Rebbe said, "A great foundation of true moral conduct is to ask the *rav everything*. The priority should be to specifically discuss areas that you feel are not going well, or things you aren't sure about. This means even if you simply notice that someone else disapproves of your behavior... it is certainly *hashgacha pratis* [and you should speak it over with your *rav*]."¹⁹

Obviously, you will not threaten your *rav* that you will drop him if he doesn't give you the answer you're looking for... Once he gives you his opinion, you must follow it.²⁰ He should become your full fledged *rav*, so that your entire life is lived according to his guidance—not that you listen to him sometimes and to someone else at other times...²¹

WHICH QUESTIONS TO ASK

When it comes to resolving questions and doubts, the Rebbe cautioned that the *rav* should not become an easy fallback:

Someone might think that whenever he has a question or doubt (in Torah, *avodas Hashem*, or in his life), he can get away with simply asking a *rav* and placing the



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responsibility on him, thus avoiding working on it himself.

Hashem gave each person the power to find the solution to all his questions and doubts, through true toil, *yagaata u'matzasa*.

Today, the Rebbe said, after so much was accomplished in spreading Chassidus and Yiddishkeit, every one of us has been given the power to successfully be *mechaven* to the truth, especially through studying and toiling in the Rebbe's Torah and spreading Chassidus. The ultimate goal of a teacher is that his student's mind becomes like his—that our minds should decipher the Rebbe's *kavana*.

We are told to appoint a *rav* for ourselves—but that is only *after* we work on it ourselves. Once we've found all the answers that we can, we should not convince ourselves that we know the answer to everything, rather we should go to our *rav* for further



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guidance. (The Rebbe added that even the act of finding a *rav* and speaking to him is part of our *own avoda* and it is meant to develop and grow the mind of the *talmid*.)²²

WHOM SHOULD YOU CHOOSE?

Men should find a *rav*; women should find a *mashpia*, and children should go to their parents, teachers, or *madrichim* (“counselors”).²³ *Bochurim* in yeshiva should go to their teachers, and if there are several *roshei yeshiva*, they can choose one.²⁴ (In a private answer to a *bochur*, however, the Rebbe said that he could choose someone from outside the *hanhala*. See sidebar.)

The Rebbe gave several specific pointers:

- You can choose whichever *rav* you want—similar to the fact that we are enjoined to study the areas of Torah that our hearts desire.²⁵

- A *rav/mashpia* should be someone who is greater than you, yet on *your* level. For example, if a child studying Chumash asks his questions to a prominent *rav*, he will be wasting both of their time—the *rav*’s time will be spent on answering a simple question, which could have been posed to someone else, and it will also waste the child’s time, because the *rav* has to figure out how to communicate the answer with a child. A child should be asking his *melamed*, his teacher, who is fluent in the child’s terminology and will have an immediate answer.²⁶
- As a person grows, he may graduate (or even surpass) his current *rav*, and it will be time to find someone else.²⁷
- As a general rule, the *rav* should be someone who truly has the traits that

personify Yidden: *Baishanim*, *rachmanim*, and *gomlei chassadim*—he should be bashful, merciful, and one who does kind deeds.²⁸

CHOOSING A RAV / MASHPIA:

The following is a series of *maanos* from the Rebbe about who should be selected as a *rav*:

Someone wrote to the Rebbe that he was taking the Rebbe as his *mashpia*. He received the following answer:

ההצעה לעשות זאת היתה שיהיו בחינות בפועל, ומה היא השייכות להנ"ל?!

The proposal [of *aei lecha rav*] was so that there would be actual tests—so how does this relate to that [your choosing me]?

Rabbi Shaul Moshe Elituv asked the Rebbe whether *bochurim* should appoint a *rav* for themselves, and if so, whether they can choose someone from outside the yeshiva



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HISTORICAL POINTERS IN THE CAMPAIGN FOR MASHPI'IM/ASEI LECHA RAV

As mentioned, there were two different campaigns for *mashpi'im/asei lecha rav*, in 5737 and in 5746-5747 (and a bit later).

The 5737 campaign for *mashpi'im*: In the farbrengen of 19 Kislev 5737, the Rebbe announced that the time had come to reinstate a fundamental institution of Lubavitch: the concept of *mashpi'im*. Since the times of the Alter Rebbe, every community and town was led by a *mashpia* who taught Chassidus, guided people in *avodas Hashem*, and whom people confided in. (This continued until the times of the Rebbe Rashab and the upheaval of the World Wars.)

The Rebbe was now asking for people to step up to lead their respective communities. Anyone who felt that he could be *mashpia* in an area of Yiddishkeit, whether in Torah, *avoda*, or *gemilus chassadim*, should come forward and do so now.

People shouldn't attempt false humility, the Rebbe said. If you *might* be able to provide leadership in any of these three areas, you should begin doing so immediately. (There was no commitment; after an initial trial period it would become clear who was more qualified than others).³²

In the farbrengen on Shabbos Mevarchim Shevat, the Rebbe asked that all the *mashpi'im* and *mashpios* should send in their names before Yud Shevat. On Yud Shevat itself, he gave a lengthy, fascinating *sicha* on the name "*mashpia*" and the unique role that the position entails. The following month, the Rebbe signed and distributed special-edition copies of *Kuntres Ahavas Yisroel* to all the *mashpi'im* and *mashpios* because, as the Rebbe explained, leadership and influence are successful when permeated with *ahavas Yisroel*.³³

The 5746 *asei lecha rav* campaign: While the previous campaign focused on the *mashpi'im* volunteering to lead their communities, this was focused on individuals: Every person must take upon himself a *rav*.

It began at the farbrengen of Devorim 5746: After speaking about the importance of increasing Torah-learning and tzedakah, the Rebbe said that *bochurim* should begin having tests on their studies in order to motivate their learning. The Rebbe then said that the general idea of getting "tested" applies to people who aren't in the yeshiva system too; every person should have a *rav* whom they are tested by and are accountable to. After outlining the guidelines of what having a *rav*

entails, the Rebbe said that this campaign was directed at every single person.

"This is my *bakasha nafshis*—and even more than that, but I have no better expression—that these words should be publicized everywhere: *Every single person*, men, women, and children, should fulfill the directive of the Mishnah "*asei lecha rav*" and be tested by the *mashpia* from time to time regarding their level in *avodas Hashem*.

This will certainly cause every single person to increase their *avodas Hashem* with ever more light. This should be publicized either in my name or not, however it will be better accepted."³⁴

The Rebbe said that this was extremely urgent—*mahir dachuf*—and should be publicized in that manner, even if it incurred additional costs. (The Rebbe added that he doesn't expect people to run to the airport and take the fastest planes around the world to relay this message—it must be in line with *tikkun* (i.e. down to earth), but it should be done as fast as logically possible.)³⁵

The Rebbe also added: "In order to deal with the *yetzer hara*, there needs to be a warning in addition to the promise of reward. I am therefore giving a warning: When someone writes a *tzetel* with a question, it is possible that I will ask (before or after I give the answer) whom he has chosen as a *rav*!"³⁶

In following farbrengens, the Rebbe discussed the campaign at length, and in a *sicha* on Sukkos, he remarked, "There is much more to say—and I probably won't be able to hold myself back from speaking about this over and over again."³⁷

Throughout the year, as he was encouraging the widespread adoption of having a *rav*, the Rebbe bemoaned the fact that *machlokes* and terrible problems could have been avoided if only people would take this seriously and follow the advice and authority of an unbiased *rav*. (When speaking about the fact that even *rabbonim* need a *rav*, the Rebbe mentioned that even the Vilna Gaon had a "*mussar zugger*" who would speak to him from time to time.)³⁸

The Rebbe also emphasized that the term used in the Mishnah to "appoint" a *rav* is "עשה לך"—implying that sometimes it must be done forcefully. However, after a while a person will come to understand and appreciate the benefits of having a *rav*, an unbiased and objective party who can mentor and guide his *avodas Hashem*. Then he will fulfill the instruction of the Mishnah not by force—but willingly and with joy.³⁹



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“When someone writes a tzetel with a question, it is possible that I will ask (before or after I give the answer) whom he has chosen as a rav!”

administration. The Rebbe (through circling and crossing out) answered yes to both questions.²⁹

A *bochur* wrote to the Rebbe about his *chayus* in learning and about the general atmosphere of the yeshiva in 770, and the Rebbe told him to consult with his *mashpia*. In response, the *bochur* wrote that there aren't any *mashpi'im* today, that they are disinterested and aloof. He received the following answer:

כשדור דעה לא רצו בקב"ע דמשפיע, הסבירו זה וכו' בנוגע למרע"ה, ואין פלא שמסביר זה בנוגע לדורנו. ויכריח עצמו לקבל עול המשפיע דתו"ת ולקיים הוראותיו בפנ"מ ויבש"ט

The [Yidden in the *midbar*, the] “most knowledgeable generation,” also didn't want to accept the yoke of a *mashpia*, and they managed to *explain* why Moshe Rabbeinu [was unfit]. So it is no surprise that you have explanations regarding our generation. You must *force* yourself to accept the yoke of the *mashpia* of Tomchei Temimm, and *actually fulfill*³⁰ his directives, and *you will share good news*.³¹ T

1. Toras Menachem 5747 vol. 1 p. 207; 212.
2. Toras Menachem 5747 vol. 3 p. 61.
3. Toras Menachem 5747 vol. 2 p. 425.
4. Likkutei Sichos vol. 29 p. 247; Toras Menachem 5747 vol. 1 p. 208.
5. See Sefer Hasichos 5748 vol. 1 p. 240.
6. Toras Menachem 5747 vol. 2 p. 410.
7. Toras Menachem 5747 vol. 3 p. 204.
8. Toras Menachem 5747 vol. 3 p. 61.
9. Toras Menachem 5747 vol. 1 p. 208.
10. Ibid.
11. Toras Menachem 5746 vol. 4 p. 183.
- 12.
13. Toras Menachem 5747 vol. 1 p. 209
14. Ibid.
15. Shu"t Chassam Sofer Choshen Mishpat

Hashmatos, Teshuva 188.

16. Likkut Maanos 5747 p. 89.
17. Toras Menachem 5747 vol. 1 p. 208.
18. Likkutei Sichos vol. 29 p. 247-248.
19. Toras Menachem 5747 vol. 1 p. 212
20. Toras Menachem 5746 vol. 4 p. 183
21. Sefer Hasichos 5747 Shabbos Pinchas p. 27.
22. Sefer Hasichos 5748 vol. 1 p. 240; Sefer Hasichos 5749 vol. 1 p. 208.
23. Sefer Hasichos 5747 vol. 1 p. 246.
24. Toras Menachem 5747 vol. 2 p. 245.
25. Toras Menachem 5747 vol. 2 p. 245
26. Sefer Hasichos 5749 vol. 1 p. 208.
27. Toras Menachem 5746 vol. 4 p. 183
28. Toras Menachem 5747 vol. 3 p. 62.
29. Likkut Maanos 5747 p. 25
30. This is a double underline.
31. This is a double underline.
32. Sichos Kodosh 5737 vol. 1, p. 346-349.
33. Introduction to *kuntres Ahavas Yisroel*, from the *sicha* of Erev Shabbos Hachodesh.
34. Likkutei Sichos vol. 29 p. 248.
35. Sichos Kodosh Shabbos Devorim 5746 p. 18.
36. Sichos Kodosh Shabbos Devorim 5746 p. 19.
37. Toras Menachem 5747 vol. 1 p. 212.
38. See Toras Menachem 5747 vol. 2 p. 339
39. 15 Menachem-Av 5747.



A Telegram, Surgery and Medical Miracle

"The test results are in and I'm afraid the prognosis is grim. You have contracted the terrible disease!"

Baruch had been sick for a while but now, as he heard the final report from his doctor, his heart sank.

"A Jew must never give up hope," he told himself, "Healing is in the hands of Heaven."

With renewed hope, he went to the Rebbe Rashab in Rostov for advice. The Rebbe suggested that he travel to Kharkov, to arrange an appointment with Professor Fabrikant and have him do surgery to remove the growth. "All will be good," he promised.

Baruch made the journey to Kharkov and arranged an appointment with the professor. "I refuse

to do the surgery," he exclaimed after conducting a thorough examination and reaching the same diagnosis as the other doctors. "It will be of no benefit at all, and worse, it could cause even more damage ending your life sooner than if we left it alone."

He returned to the Rebbe Rashab and reported what had transpired. "Go back to Kharkov and demand that the surgery be done," instructed the Rebbe. "I will also send him a telegram with a personal request that he operate on you." The professor knew the Rebbe because he had helped the Rebbe with some matters of health in the past.

With the telegram in hand and the patient in front of his eyes, the

professor decided to go ahead with the surgery on the grounds that so many were asking him and the potential damage was not that great. His opinion and that of many other medical professionals was that this man was beyond help anyway.

Baruch was admitted into the hospital and the professor carried out the operation as they had agreed. At his post-surgery visit, he realized that Baruch's situation had not been as diagnosed by him and the other doctors. Had they not done the surgery, Baruch's situation would have been much worse.

Baruch returned to full health.

The professor was very moved by what he had seen.

"I am a doctor with many degrees and I personally checked him and saw that he was in a state where no surgery would help. The Rebbe had never even checked him and yet he recommended the operation and it had helped. I am in awe from the great miracle I have witnessed before my very eyes!"

Professor Fabrikant was a very dignified and honored doctor who had many medical miracles to boast of, yet he kept the Rebbe's telegram in his pocket for 25 years to share with anyone who would listen to the great miracle that he had been blessed to be a part of. **1**

*(Likkutei Sippurim
Perlow, #75)*

Fresh Daily

בכל יום יהיו בעיניך
חדשים ממש!



A happy camper at one of the early summers at Camp Gan Yisroel shared with his father:

"You know?" he asked with excitement, "the Lubavitcher Rebbe visited us in camp!"

"Wow, did he speak to the children?"

"Yes, he told us that Moshiach is coming!"

"We always say that," father told him. "You've heard that many times at home too."

"I know. Everyone says it, but he meant it!" came the reply.



This little boy observed what would be evident in every *sicha* the Rebbe said for decades to come. The Rebbe's approach to everything Torah says, promises, and predicts, is absolute. It is true in every aspect and real to the utmost. Nothing in Torah is random, mistaken or even exaggerated, *chas v'shalom*.

True, this principle is shared by many. Few, however, truly understand the weight it carries under the Rebbe's direction. Below we will attempt to convey the intricacies and fine points that can be gleaned from the Rebbe's *sichos* in regards to אמיתית התורה.

Authentic Encouragement

In Torah, everything is real. There is nothing in it that even slightly deviates from the complete truth. This is a characteristic unique to Torah and cannot be emulated in any other field of wisdom. On the contrary, all other *chachmos* will occasionally warrant the use of falsehood.

Take medicine for example. Even the greatest doctor or specialist is limited to the confines and capabilities of medical science. Therefore, if he stumbles on an illness that has no cure, the use of misleading information is *required* in some situations. For instance, if a patient is very weak, it may be harmful to tell

him the full truth about his physical state. His only chance for recovery is by intentionally misleading him, for the sake of strengthening his optimism and in turn, his health.

The same is true in child-rearing. It is impossible to educate one's child while he is in the midst of throwing a temper-tantrum. If the only way to calm him down is by the means of a mistruth, then that is the most practical solution, since it will then allow the educator to continue teaching in a truthful fashion. (Below we will explain how this does not apply to Torah education.)

Some may assume that in Yiddishkeit we use similar tactics, stretching the truth for the sake of a beneficial outcome.

But in reality this is not the case. In Torah there is no exaggerated inspiration or empty promise. An instruction from Hashem is real in every aspect, free of illusions and fantasies.

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

In fact, this is quite self-evident. After all, the Creator of the solution is also the Creator of the predicament itself. Nothing is beyond His reach, so the reality can be adjusted to His proposed solution.

For example, some people don't believe that their prayers are actually a satisfactory replacement for the *korbanos* in the *Beis Hamikdash*. This idea was cited merely for encouragement, they say, so that we have better *kavana* in our *tefillos*.

In truth, however, once Hashem told us "ונשלמה פרים שפתינו", there is nothing in the way of actually making *your* lip-service just as powerful as the service of our ancestors in the *Beis Hamikdash*. There is obviously no plight too hard for Hashem to resolve, so He doesn't need to resort to deception.¹

Indeed, all words of reassurance and similar expressions in *Torah Shebaal Peh* are consistent with this principle as well. Not only are they the whole truth, but as a part of *Toras Emes* they are an actual and accurate portrayal of reality.

Hence, the guarantee of "יגעתו" teaches that it is impossible to be unsuccessful in the face of proper effort. When the Gemara says "ריקנין שבך מלאין מצות" ("Even the empty among you are filled with mitzvos like a

pomegranate"), this means nothing other than the literal translation of the words.

The Torah's loyalty to *emes* is infallible, to the point that the Rebbe taught that even when Torah *tells* us to "imagine" something, the implication is that we are envisioning the actual reality, not just thinking motivational thoughts.

This is the truth of the Rambam's advice לעולם יראה עצמו שקול, וכל העולם יעולם יראה עצמו שקול, ("a person should always see himself, and the entire world, as on an even scale between meritorious and guilty"). It is not just a meditative exercise to help make the right decision, rather every Jew is indeed on a scale perfectly balanced and can, at any moment, choose to bring salvation to the whole world.² Likewise, when studying the work of a *gadol b'Yisroel* we are instructed to – "ראה כאילו" – "בעל השמועה עומד כנגדו". One is not expected to "pretend as if" the author is standing in front of him; instead he must realize that the spirit of the *tzadik* is actually with him as he learns his teachings, and therefore must behave accordingly.³

In the Details

Toras Emes does not only mean that there is nothing false in Torah. More than that, it teaches that every detail is precise and nothing is extra

or superfluous. The Rebbe would thoroughly analyze even the most fine points of every topic in Torah, to verify that each detail contributes to the matter at hand.

This is especially apparent when discussing comparisons and examples given in Torah itself. The Rebbe's pointed attention to the details of a *mashal* is a perfect illustration of this. Where most people would suffice with taking a general lesson from a metaphor, the Rebbe pointed out that because it is offered by *Toras Emes* it must be accurate down to the last detail.

The Rebbe would often explain how Rosh Hashanah is referred to as the "head" not just because it begins a period of time, but because it resembles the human head. Just like one's head is the source of his body's life force, so too Rosh Hashanah is a day that contains in it the *chayus* for the rest of the year.

Furthermore, the Rebbe learned that each word in Torah implies the truest connotation possible.

With this perspective, "big" means "big without limits" and a "continuation" must be endless, since the truest definition of a word is not in the relative sense (e.g. big compared to other entities), but in the intrinsic and independent meaning that it can imply. Therefore, in a Torah of utmost

truth, this is the correct understanding of the terminology used.

This is a key in understanding terms that characterize Jewish concepts. The chosen phrase is not merely an imaginative expression, rather each word is used to impart its greatest emphasis and significance.

With that said, “פוצו מעינותיך” (which is understood not just as a catchy motto, but as a guideline in spreading Chassidus) will teach us that the wellsprings of Chassidus must reach the outermost posts that may exist. “חוצה”—which means outside—cannot mean anything other than the farthest point imaginable.

So too, with the term מעשים טובים—the Torah must be referring to the very best deeds that can be done, with no shortcoming or defect whatsoever.

Rejected Yet Welcomed: הזה אמינא

Anyone familiar with Gemara knows that it is built of שקלא וטריא, a dialogue of keen logical deduction. In it, an assumption will be rejected, and any sharp argument can be disproved. The *Amoraim* will rebut a rationale that has all but one small discrepancy, to favor the solid irrefutable final logic that decides the *halacha*. All previous notions are disregarded when we finally arrive at the *psak din*.

But every word is *Elokus*. Every opinion is true. Even the opinions that were denied entry into our Shulchan Aruch because they were refuted, are *emes*.

This point is stressed in a fascinating letter the Rebbe received from his father in 5692.⁴ In it, Harav Levi Yitzchok puts forth a revolutionary idea that perhaps shaped

the Rebbe's own approach and became a cornerstone in his future teachings.

Not only is there truth also in the theories that were disregarded, the letter tells us, but much more than that. Harav Levi Yitzchok goes on to say that “everything recorded in *Torah Shebichsav* and *Torah Shebaal Peh...* and even the *halachos* that the *Gemara* itself calls a “*bedusa*,” a mistake—all of them were said by Hashem himself, and He said it exactly as it is written; Hashem himself said the *halacha* and He himself said that it is a mistake... all of them were said by Hashem, and He also said the *teiku* or *teyuvta...*” (emphasis added).

But how can that be? How can an opinion be invalidated for a good reason on one hand, and yet be true and holy — the word of Hashem, no less — on the other?

The Rebbe once explained:

Torah is the wisdom of Hashem, and comprehension thereof is a truly spiritual and lofty experience. The way we know it is only how it appears in our reality, in our world. In the bigger picture, however, there are many worlds. *Seder hishtalshelus* has levels upon levels on end and worlds that go on and on. Each layer is another reality and has its unique understanding of Torah. Therefore, no two worlds have identical conclusions, and the truth in one is not the truth in the other.

This can be understood with *chesed* and *gevurah*. In the world of *chesed*, the priority is to dispense liberally to the recipient. In *gevurah*, great care is taken to ensure that the beneficiary is properly deserving of the care he is receiving. Thus, when judging any given subject in Torah,

the outcome will vary based on the outlook of each respective *sefira*, while at the same time they are all entirely true. Each result is the accurate outcome of a certain viewpoint.

This is the way it works in Gemara. Each *Tanna* or *Amora* presented his argument and logic corresponding to his source in the heavenly spheres. Everyone's *neshama* is rooted in a specific level in *ruchniyus*, and the sages of the Mishnah and Gemara were finely in tune with it to the extent that it shaped their way of thinking.

At the same time, *halacha* has considerations of its own. So while each view and opinion in the Gemara is true, the *halacha* will be decided according to the one which is most compatible with the priorities of *halacha*. (E.g. Hillel ruled based on his *neshama*'s roots in *chesed*, and Shammai according to his in *gevurah*. Nevertheless, the *halacha* only follows one — usually Hillel.)

From here we see that opinions in Torah that do not form *halacha* are not irrelevant nor untrue. Their truth is not applicable in our reality but it is holy nonetheless. Therefore, even if it cannot be applied in *halacha*, it must have relevance elsewhere. Often, it exists to teach us a lesson in *avodas Hashem* or to help us gain an understanding of the higher *olamos* that it comes from.

This is not only applicable to the discussions of the Gemara but to any questions or claims brought down in Torah (even as a false claim). The very fact that it has place in Torah shows that it is of utmost truth, just manifest



and understood in a higher world. (An example of this is what Chassidus explains about the words of Lavan to Yaakov Avinu: “הבנות בנותי והבנים בני והצאן צאני וכל אשר אתה רואה לי הוא”—“The daughters are my daughters, the sons are my sons, the sheep are my sheep, and all that you see is mine...” Even in the false claim of *Lavan harasha*, there is mystical significance.⁵)

Even an idea that is mentioned in Torah only for the sake of refuting it is holy as well and is the truth of a certain reality.

When the Torah says, “רחוקה לא היא ולא מעבר לים”—“It is not far away nor across the sea...”; Torah ruled out the notion that Hashem’s words are distant. However if such a conception is offered in the first place, then there must be truth to this as well. (Chassidus interprets it to be a description of Torah beyond the confines of *hishtalshelus*.)⁶

Spoon Feeding the Truth

Even when teaching Torah to a child (as opposed to education in the secular sense) there is no situation that would call for the use of an untruth. In the curriculum for school-children prescribed by Torah, there is no fictitious *pshat* to better accommodate the young minds of its pupils; rather, we give explanations that are in total conformation with the truth of Torah. If the accepted way of understanding is not taught because it is too deep for the student, the substitute — no matter how different it may seem — must be a (simpler but) equally true

way of understanding. In fact, it is the very same *pshat* as the accepted one, but as it is manifested in an alternative reality, as discussed above.⁷

Torah forbids us from teaching anything other than *emes*. This is a fundamental rule when it comes to *chinuch* according to Torah. Nothing is presented to a child in a false light.⁸

It would seem, however, that in Chasidic tradition there is an exception. When a child is brought to school for the first time, the custom is to throw candies on him and tell him that *Malach Michoel* is throwing them. This *minhag* was practiced by the Rebbeim as well.

Now what about this is true?

The Rebbe explained this based on the principle stated above: In truth, the candies did come from *Malach Michoel*. Not only the candies but every form of *chesed* or *hashpa'a* in this world comes through *Malach Michoel* “*Sar Hachessed*.” The “thrower” is just a conduit through which the blessings come from the *malach* to the child.⁹

So too, anything told to children is of the utmost truth as we are forbidden to deceive them.

The Truth of Existence

Until now we’ve been exploring the intricacies of the Rebbe’s approach on the truth of Torah, and how dedicated it is to the subtle details. But the Rebbe pushed this idea further, bringing it outside the realm of Torah itself.

The very nature of our world, said the Rebbe on more than one occasion, is shaped by the rules of Torah. The Rebbe explains:

Something can only be termed “*emes*” if it is eternal. Anything temporary is not truly real, since it

does not have its own independent existence and relies entirely on other factors for survival and endurance. How can one ensure that an element in our world is a lasting one? If it was based on the truth of Torah.

People have tried to implement new ideas, change status-quos and introduce novel innovations. Anything that was not established in sync with the guidelines of Torah, came and went as if it had never existed. The only enduring contributions are — and can only be — those that further the values of Torah.

Emes is the system on which our world runs, as Hashem sealed it into creation, חותמו של הקב"ה אמת, and anything outside of תורת אמת is a fleeting illusion.

This is a guiding principle that must be taken into account: Anything one may try to accomplish has constancy only when its foundation is the truth of Torah. All actions are otherwise empty and weak and will not last, whereas an initiative firmly grounded in the precepts of *Toras Emes*, is sure to enjoy a perpetual existence until the end of time.¹⁰ ①

1. See for example *Toras Menachem* 5744 vol. 3 p. 1779-1780, 1891.

2. See *A World in Balance*, *Derher Tammuz* 5776

3. *Toras Menachem* 5745 vol. 2 p. 1286-1287.

4. *Likutei Levi Yitzchok*, *Igros Kodesh* p. 266.

5. See *Hisvaaduyos* 5746 vol. 2, p. 111.

6. *Hisvaaduyos* 5746 vol. 1, p. 545.

7. *Hisvaaduyos* 5744 vol. 2, p. 923.

8. See e.g. *Likutei Sichos* vol. 15 p 79-80, *Hisvaaduyos* 5743 vol. 3, p. 1599. *Hisvaaduyos* 5747 vol. 2, p. 364.

9. *Toras Menachem* 5745 vol. 3 p. 2184-2186

10. See e.g. *Toras Menachem* 5742 vol. 2 p. 695-696, 926-927.



RABBI KAPLAN RECEIVES KOS SHEL
BRACHA, MOTZOEI ROSH HASHANAH 5737.

Memories

RABBI NOCHUM KAPLAN'S
STORIES FROM 770



Rabbi Nochum Kaplan is a noted Chossid and educator, *menahel* of Vaad Rabbonei Lubavitch, and the director of the Merkos Chinuch office. Rabbi Kaplan merited to spend many years in the Rebbe's presence through his childhood and *bochur* years, and received a significant amount of guidance throughout his years in *chinuch*. He graciously agreed to an interview with *A Chassidisher Derher* to share his memories of growing up near the Rebbe, as a child and a *bochur*, in the *chof* years.

LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 203949

Pioneering Chassidim

I was born in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, shortly after the end of World War II. As an infant, my parents and I left Russia on the famous *eshalons*, and spent time in the DP camp in Poking, Germany, and later in Paris, France. From Paris we moved to England and several years later we immigrated to the United States. We arrived in New York on 5 Tammuz 5717 and I saw the Rebbe for the first time during a Maariv that week.

The first farbrengen I attended was a week later, on Yud-Beis Tammuz, held in the *shalash*. The next week our family entered *yechidus* and the Rebbe blessed each of us personally. Although I don't remember many details, I can still see the smiling countenance with which the Rebbe welcomed us.

I enrolled in Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim on Bedford and Dean and joined a unique class along with my brother Leibel, who later went on to become the Rebbe's shliach to Tzfas. Our class had 15 Lubavitcher boys (more than any previous class in

New York ever had), all born shortly after the war. We went on to become a pioneering group of Chassidishe *bochurim* in the yeshiva. The *hanhala* treated us as such; for example, as young *bochurim*, Reb Yoel Kahn taught us Chassidus for three consecutive years until we joined the yeshiva in 770 at age 16!

As children, we were impressed with the importance of *valgeren zich tzuvishen Chassidim*, spending time among Chassidim. Our lives outside of yeshiva hours revolved around 770.

We would nudge the *bochurim*, watch the older Chassidim, and find every opportunity to see the Rebbe. If the Rebbe attended a *chupah*, we all attended, regardless of our connection to the families. When the Rebbe would farbreng late into the night, we children would remain until the very end. If we became tired, we would lay down on a pile of coats in the corner.

On Shabbos morning, I would come to 770 as soon as I woke up, even if I had nothing to do there. One such morning in Adar Alef 5718, I was wandering around the *zal* at 8:30 a.m. when the Rebbe suddenly appeared

in the doorway of the *zal* and invited everyone into his room for a *maamar*. Only two children were present: Sholom Yisroel Hodakov and myself.

When the elder Chassidim from overseas began to travel to 770 — Reb Nissan Nemanov, Reb Shmerel Sasonkin, Reb Chaim Shaul Bruk — we seized the opportunity to spend time with them. Before Tishrei 5721, for example, when the first charter arrived from Eretz Yisrael, we heard about a bus that would be going to the airport to welcome the guests. I don't know if children were invited, but we were determined to join, and we snuck onto the bus at an opportune moment. We relished the opportunity to see and meet an entire new group of Chassidim that came to spend Tishrei with the Rebbe.

Are You So Successful in Learning?

The hobby of the younger children was all around Chassidishe things. I would trade pictures of the Rebbe in my spare time. One day, after our bar mitzvah, a friend and I decided to



THE REBBE VISITS CAMP, SUMMER 5720.



10 SHEVAT 5722.

obtain our own camera to take new, original pictures. In those days, we knew that the Rebbe was not fond of pictures being taken, so we always made sure to turn off the flash.

One day, as the Rebbe returned from a *chupah*, my partner snapped a photo. To our surprise and consternation, the camera flashed. We immediately knew there would be trouble. The Rebbe walked right up to him, and, calling him by his first name, said, “*Gib mir di photo appurat—give me the camera.*” He handed the camera to the Rebbe. I beat a hasty retreat.

“*Du bist azoi matzliach in lernen az du farnemst mit photographye?* — Are you so successful in learning that you have time for photography?” the Rebbe asked.

The Rebbe looked around, and Rabbi Tenenbaum—our principal—came running over.

“Who is your *melamed*?” the Rebbe asked.

“Rabbi Garfinkel,” my friend stammered.

The Rebbe handed the camera to Rabbi Tenenbaum and said, “Find out

from Rabbi Garfinkel if his learning is so successful that he can be involved in photography.”

We continued taking pictures afterward—albeit without flash. Many famous pictures, such as the images of the Rebbe in Camp Gan Yisroel in 5720, are from our camera.

After a while, we matured and began to put our efforts into *kesavim* and *hanachos*. We obtained typewriters and copied letters and *reshimos* of the Rebbe and previous Rabbeim. For example, I retyped the entire *lange briv* (written by the Friediker Rebbe to Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka). Soon, it was published, and I was disappointed that all my work had been for naught...

Obviously, life in 770 revolved around the Rebbe’s farbrengens. Even in our young years, we worked hard to listen and retain the *sichos*. Reb Yoel would do a *chazarah* for us on Sunday night in Bedford and Dean. In order to have some background beforehand, we would also listen to the *chazarah* on Motzei Shabbos. We were also involved in all of the Rebbe’s new initiatives. When the Rebbe spoke about shlichus, it was at the forefront of our minds. As kids, we all knew, for example, that Reb Itche Shpringer—then newly married—hadn’t even unpacked his suitcase, because he was awaiting instructions to move on shlichus.

The first *maamar* that Reb Yoel had some of us learn by heart was Balayla Hahu 5720, which is a very powerful *maamar*. From then on, we became much more involved. We wrote full *hanachos* of *sichos*, and really got involved in the Rebbe’s Torah.

As time went on, the crowds grew and the *shalash* became too small. On Lag Baomer 5720, the roof of the *shalash* was taken down and the building of the new shul began. During that period, all the weekday farbrengens moved to halls and Shabbos farbrengens took place in the small *zal*. It was interesting; when we had arrived in 5717 from England, the back of the *zal* would be empty during farbrengens, but now every inch was packed. There was no place for the kids. It was so packed that the walls were steaming, and one kid began drawing pictures in the moisture, until someone yelled at him, “Shabbos!”

Then, late in 5720, the new *zal* was ready. It was relatively large, and a large *bima* was installed a few weeks later. But it didn’t take long for this *zal* to reach capacity as well. Once, Reb Yochanan Gordon announced, “We are going downstairs to the new, big shul.” The Rebbe commented, “*Nei iz dos, uber grois iz dos nisht*—It’s new, but it is not big.”

A Kuleh

We would often spend time with the older *bochurim* in 770. One Shabbos afternoon, the *bochurim* farbrenged in honor of Reb Eizik Schwei’s *ufruf*, and one *bochur* humorously lined up all the empty bottles of *mashke* on a table in the *zal*. As the Rebbe walked in for Mincha, he noticed the bottles and commented with a smile, “*A ponim az m’hot shtark farbracht*—there seems to have been a serious farbrengen.”

On another occasion, as *bochurim*, we emerged from a farbrengen in the basement of 749 onto Eastern Parkway



“FIND OUT FROM RABBI GARFINKEL IF HIS LEARNING IS SO SUCCESSFUL THAT HE CAN BE INVOLVED IN PHOTOGRAPHY.”



PINNY RIVKIN

THE REBBE ATTENDS THE CHUPA OF REB GERSHON MENDEL GARELIK.

at three o'clock in the morning. Being in high spirits, one of our friends decided it was time for a *kuleh*. At that very moment, the Rebbe walked out.

One Shabbos afternoon, between Purim and Pesach 5718, my brother Leibel and I were hanging around 770 when we hit upon an idea. We knew the Rebbe liked to open his window for a cool breeze. He would usually open the window behind his desk, where the *aron kodesh* is situated today. In those days, it opened above the staircase to the porch which later became Rabbi Groner's office.

We knew that the Rebbe always kept his shade closed, even when the window was open. But there was the possibility that the wind would push the blinds slightly, and then we would be able to see the Rebbe.

We grabbed a pile of milk-crates and very quietly stacked them onto the staircase. One of us remained on the lookout to ensure no older *bochurim* caught us and the other climbed up and peeked inside.

To our surprise, we caught a glimpse of the Rebbe sitting at his desk in a tallis, in front of—what seemed to be—a siddur. It was 3:00 in the afternoon, after a morning Shacharis where we had both clearly seen the Rebbe participate in the *minyan*. He had taken his *tzitzis* during Shema, done the motions of *oseh shalom* and so on; nonetheless, he was still sitting there in his tallis several hours later.

Pins and Needles

When we learned in Bedford and Dean, we normally didn't have the opportunity to participate in the Rebbe's *minyan* for *krias haTorah* or Mincha, as well as Maariv during the winter, because they fell out during the *sedarim*. But I remember a few occasions where we 'played hooky.'

On 5 Tammuz 5718, Reb Gershon Mendel Garelik got married, and the Rebbe was *mesader kiddushin* at the *chupah* which took place early, at 2:00 in the afternoon. It was the last day of yeshiva and an end-of-year ceremony was planned. We weren't particularly

excited about the ceremony and were itching to leave. As 15-year-olds often do, we calculated that being the last day of yeshiva the *hanhala* wouldn't be able to punish us, so we snuck out and attended the *chupah*.

Another similar story:

On the afternoon of 11 Nissan 5722, the Rebbe's sixtieth birthday, we were sitting in the Bedford and Dean *zal* in front of our Shulchan Aruchs on pins and needles. The Rebbe had gone to the Ohel, and we suspected there would be 'action' upon his return. We urgently needed to get to 770.

We approached the Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Bukiet and asked his permission to leave. "Absolutely not!" he replied.

A half hour later, we decided to try again. This time, we tried a different tactic. We 'informed' him, respectfully, that we would be leaving.

"Baruch Hashem!" he responded, to my surprise. "Now I can go as well!"

So we all went to 770. Some time later, the Rebbe returned from the Ohel and we found out that there

L'chaim from the Roof

On Simchas Torah 5719, the Rebbe was holding a farbrengen in the sukkah. The sukkah was packed and it was very hard to get a place close to the Rebbe. We children realized that if we would climb onto the roof of the sukkah, we could be very close to the Rebbe. A few of us clambered onto the roof and then we decided that we should say *l'chaim* to the Rebbe. One of us obtained a small cup of wine and took the liberty to call out, “*L'chaim!*” The Rebbe looked up, and noticed us all laying on the roof. He answered the first *bochur*, and then looked at the next one, “nu...” He said *l'chaim* to each of us.

would be a farbrengen in honor of Yud-Aleph Nissan.

In the Rebbe's Presence

I merited a total of 20 *yechidusen*. As a *bochur*, the *yechidus* was so overwhelming that I often had difficulty remembering what the Rebbe said.

The first three *yechidusen* were together with my father, but when I turned 14 I began to go in by myself. As children, the Rebbe would often test our learning; I was tested at every *yechidus* until I was 17 years old.

During my bar mitzvah *yechidus*, the Rebbe instructed that I visit the Ohel on the day of the bar mitzvah, and, interestingly, he said that I should not go with my parents. Instead, Reb Berel Futerfas took me on the long ride with public transportation.

“Will you say a *maamar*?” the Rebbe asked at that *yechidus*. “Which *maamar*?”

Memories of Rebbetzin Chana

In Peking, Rebbetzin Chana lived in the room next to ours and we therefore merited to have a lifelong relationship with her.

Two unique memories stick out from my encounters with Rebbetzin Chana:

On the Shabbos after my bar mitzvah, I met Rebbetzin Chana on Kingston Avenue. I wished her good Shabbos and told her about my bar mitzvah, and she wished me well. Then she asked me a question.

“*Ir gedenkt epes fun Peking*—do you remember anything from Peking?”

I did not.

“*Du gedenkst ich hob dir nochgelofen untun dir di yarmulke*—do you remember how I chased you to put on your yarmulke?”

She explained that my mother would send me out with a little hat, but I would often tear it off, and she would chase me around to put it back on. She explained why:

איך האב געהערט פון מיין מאן אז א קינד דארף מען נישט ארויסלאזן בגילוי ראש.
ער רייסט דאס אפ, טוט מען דאס אן נאכמאל. דאס איז נוגע צו יראת שמים.

“I heard from my husband that a child should not be let out of the house bareheaded. If he tears off his hat, you put it back on. It impacts his *yiras Shamayim*.”

My second memory is from the morning after the Rebbe taught the *niggun* “Shamil” on Simchas Torah 5719. I was 11 years old at the time and it was my first time present when the Rebbe taught a *niggun*. It made a profound impression on me. The Rebbe wept profusely while telling the story and singing the *niggun*, to the extent that I wasn’t able to catch on to the tune.

Late the next morning on my way to 770, I met Rebbetzin Chana.

“Were you at the *niggun* last night?” she asked.

“Yes,” I answered.

“Are you going to shul now? Come, let’s go together.”

The Rebbetzin asked which *niggun* the Rebbe taught, and I answered, “Shamil.”

“What *niggun* is that?” she asked.

“I don’t know who Shamil was and I don’t know the *niggun*, but the Rebbe cried a lot.”

To my surprise, she entered the men’s section of 770 together with me. The Rebbe was in the middle of encouraging the singing of *Sisu Vesiumchu* after *krias haTorah*. Tapping on the shoulder of the person in front of me, I motioned to him to move aside and cleared a path for Rebbetzin Chana to see the Rebbe. Soon, a complete opening was formed. As soon as the Rebbe caught sight of her, he made a slight motion of recognition, and she immediately turned around and left the shul.

At the time, I didn’t understand why she came in, but later it dawned on me that I had told her about the Rebbe’s profuse sobs. To me, it was a point of the story, but to Rebbetzin Chana, perhaps it was a point of worry, and she wanted to see how the Rebbe was doing.



LAG BAOMER 5727, JEM 287306

“YUNGERLEIT VELEN AMOL VEREN ALTELEIT—YOUNG PEOPLE WILL BECOME OLDER PEOPLE ONE DAY AS WELL,” THE REBBE TOLD HIM.

“Will you also say a *pilpul*? What will you say?”

I looked at my father. Should I repeat the entire speech?

“The *tochen*,” the Rebbe said.

I said over the points of my *pilpul* and the Rebbe asked several questions. The first question I answered but the second I didn’t know.

The Rebbe replied, “If you ask the person who gave you the *pilpul*, he will probably explain it to you...”

A few years later when my birthday was on Friday, the Rebbe instructed me in *yechidus* to recite *Shnayim Mikra* on Friday afternoon, something that I continue to do until this very day.

First Understand the Basics

I enrolled in 770 in 5723 and spent the following years until my wedding in the Rebbe’s presence (aside for two years I spent in Eretz Yisrael, as per the Rebbe’s instructions).

The *hanhala* would enter the Rebbe’s room every Rosh Chodesh with a report and the Rebbe would give instructions pertaining to specific *bochurim*.

For example, at one point my *chavrusa* became a *chosson*. In those days, *semicha* would only be learned once one became a *chosson*, with permission from *hanhala*, which meant permission from the Rebbe. During their *yechidus*, the *hanhala* asked if my *chavrusa* should learn Yoreh Deah. Hearing that I was his *chavrusa*, the Rebbe responded in the negative, because I was not yet a *chosson* myself. Instead, the Rebbe instructed that we learn Perek Kol Habasar in Chullin which is learnt

as a preparation for the laws of *basar b’chalav*.

When I did learn Yoreh Deah, the Rebbe gave me an instruction: In order to have a proper background to the *siman*, I should first learn it in Tur and Beis Yosef before proceeding to the Mechaber. My brother Leibel had a similar directive: The Rebbe told him to first learn and review the *siman* with the Mechaber, Mapah (Rema), and Ba’er Heitev for a basic understanding of the concepts and only afterwards to proceed to Shach and Taz. This was a general rule in the Rebbe’s learning directives: first become fluent in the general idea and then proceed with the details.

Rebbetzin Chana’s Shivah

During the *shivah* of Rebbetzin Chana, we divided *mishmaros* to participate in the *tefillas*, and we also divided the hours to manage the door—to greet people who came to be *menachem avel* and to ensure that everything ran smoothly. During my shift (on the morning of Erev Yom Kippur, just before the Rebbe got up from *shivah*), I was posted inside the room where the Rebbe sat and my job was to open the door whenever I heard a knock from the *bochur* outside, who would welcome the guests in.

We heard that the Satmar Rebbe, Reb Yoel Teitelbaum would be coming. When I opened the door, I saw that he came with a huge entourage. I decided that I would close the door as soon as he and his *gabbai* entered. I waited for him to pass through, but instead of closing the door, I was pinned

behind it until his entire entourage entered. Only afterwards was I able to emerge...

It wasn’t a long visit. The Rebbe spoke with him regarding *mikveh* on Erev Yom Kippur, and the main part of the conversation dwelled on that. It was quite evident from the Satmar Rebbe’s demeanor that he came with a great *hadras kavod* for the Rebbe.

Another group of visitors were relatives of the Rebbe, from the Lavut family, who lived in Montreal. They were modern Jews and we had never seen them in 770. From my post at the door, I heard several snippets of their conversation.

One of them said to the Rebbe, “I thought you were surrounded by old people, but I look around and everybody here is young...”

The Rebbe smiled broadly. It was clear that he took immense pride in the compliment. “*Yungerleit velen amol veren alteleit*—young people will become older people one day as well,” the Rebbe told him.

Rabbi Hodakov

About 20 groups would go out each year on Merkos Shlichus. After receiving *reshus* from Rabbi Hodakov, we would unfurl a map of the United States and ‘divide and conquer.’ Rabbi Hodakov was very involved and he wanted detailed reports. One time, the Rebbe sent out a specific report and asked that all the *bochurim* read it. “*Dos iz a duch lemoifes*—this is an example of an excellent report.”

It wasn’t a ‘free for all.’ Rabbi Hodakov made it clear to us that a *bochur* is always in the *reshus* of the *hanhala*, even when he is not in yeshiva. Every morning during our travels, we were to wake up early for Chassidus, and only after Shacharis were we to visit people. If we ever needed to take a propellor plane, which we knew the Rebbe wasn’t so

RABBI KAPLAN ON MIVTZA PURIM AT
FORT BRAGG, NORTH CAROLINA, 5722.



Not For a Tomim

One Purim, we went on *mivtzoim* to an army base in South Carolina. During our visit, after a few *l'chaims*, a soldier and I took a humorous picture with us switching clothes: he put on my hat and jacket, and I donned his army uniform. He offered me his gun as well and we snapped the photo.

After our trip, someone sent in all the pictures to the Rebbe. I was soon called to Rabbi Hodakov's office. "The Rebbe wants to know, *vi kumt tzu a Tomim a klei mashchis*—why was a Tomim holding an instrument of destruction."

fond of, we had to call Rabbi Hodakov for permission.

It was difficult traveling. We brought along sardines, and we would search the local stores for matzah. Sometimes we would even find a prized jar of gefilte fish. We often lived for days on end on vegetables.

In addition to this, I had a personal relationship with Rabbi Hodakov. After Merkos Shlichus, he would call me in and grill me with questions regarding my trip. Sometimes he would press a button, and I understood that the Rebbe might be listening in. He would occasionally call us during the year also for some mission or another, but still, he was very distant; he never acted as our friend.

Before Pesach 5727, Rabbi Hodakov instructed myself and Yisroel Shmotkin (now the Rebbe's shliach to Wisconsin) to arrange a *kinus Torah* on Chol Hamoed, with *bochurim* from Torah Vodaas, Chaim Berlin, and so on. We did so. On Acharon Shel Pesach at the farbrengen, I raised my cup to say *l'chaim* to the Rebbe for a cousin of mine who needed a *refuah sheleima*. The Rebbe responded, "*Un far dir alein*—for yourself too," and motioned that I say *l'chaim* on a full cup of wine. Then, the Rebbe turned to Yisroel Shmotkin and gave him the same instruction.

That year, Lag Baomer occurred on Sunday and I was one of the organizers of the parade.

On Shabbos afternoon, about an hour before Maariv, we had a meeting with all the volunteers in the *ezras nashim* (now Rabbi Groner's office) and I was laying out the schedule to about 50 *bochurim*. Suddenly, Rabbi Hodakov appeared at the door (which led to *Gan Eden Hatachton*). "*Ich ken hoben reshus hadibur*—can I speak for a moment?" he said. Of course, I stepped aside and he said the following:

"*Der Rebbe hot gebetten ibergeben az mezol gedenken di groise achrayus vos m'trogt, un loit di groise achrayus is oich aza groiser zechus.* — The Rebbe asked me to convey that you should remember the significance of the responsibility you carry, and that the merit is commensurate to the responsibility."

On another occasion, Rabbi Hodakov asked me what we were doing for our non-Lubavitcher classmates from Bedford and Dean. He told us to arrange an alumni gathering. The Shabbos after our event, the Rebbe mentioned it at the farbrengen.

I once came to 770 from my shlichus in Norfolk, Virginia, with an important question about an idea I had. I gave my letter to Rabbi Hodakov on Friday morning and on Friday night, as he passed me he asked, "Did you receive the answer?"

I didn't understand—he hadn't given me any answer.

"*Nit kein entfjer iz oich an entfjer*—no answer is also an answer," he said. "And sometimes the proposal is worthy, but the time hasn't come yet for it."

Engagement

On the Shabbos after I got engaged, I went over with a bottle of *mashke* at the farbrengen to receive *l'chaim* from the Rebbe as the custom was in those years. The Rebbe asked me when the *vort* would take place, and then added,

“*Mistame vestu chazeren a maamar—you will probably recite a maamar.*”

I nodded my head, and the Rebbe added,

“*Mistame vestu chazeren an inyan in nigleh oich—you will probably recite a concept in nigleh as well.*”

I had my orders.

The following Thursday night we went into *yechidus*. The Rebbe asked, “Which *maamar* did you recite?”

I replied that I had said the *maamar* of the previous Shabbos. The Rebbe seemed pleased.

“Did you also say something in *nigleh*?”

“I started, but they sang over me.”

“*Aza batlan*,” the Rebbe responded.

A few days after my wedding, I received a message that Rabbi Hodakov was trying to contact me. I didn’t have a telephone yet, so I went to my father’s house to call him. He said that I should come to Mincha.

“Do you *chazer maamarim* at the *sheva brachos*?” he asked me after Mincha. I answered yes.

“The Rebbe said that you owe him an *inyan in nigleh*,” he told me after Mincha. “Make sure to do so at your *sheva brachos*.”

Five Minutes Late

I was part of one of the earliest groups of *kolel yungerleit*. At the outset, we were told to learn in the *veiber shul*, but space was very tight. I asked Rabbi Hodakov if we could use the house behind 770 that had recently been purchased by the Rebbe. The next day, Rabbi Hodakov approved of the idea, and the *kolel* moved into the house.

After Mincha some two weeks later, I spent a few minutes talking to friends in 770 and then made my way through the courtyard towards the *kolel*. To my shock and surprise, I saw the Rebbe approaching me from the direction of the *kolel*. I quickly moved aside and the Rebbe gave me a sharp look as he passed by. As soon as the Rebbe was out of sight, I raced to the *kolel*.

“What happened?”

Immediately after Mincha, the Rebbe had walked over to the *Kolel*. Only a few *yungerleit* had been there during the Rebbe’s visit. One fellow was wearing tallis and tefillin, and others were loitering around. The Rebbe had surprised them. He made a quick circle around the room, took

in everything that was going on, and quickly made his exit.

We were certain that the Rebbe wasn’t pleased with what he saw, and we expected immediate ‘fireworks.’ Less than five minutes later, Rabbi Klein came into the *kolel*. “Rabbi Hodakov would like to speak to all the *kolel yungerleit*.”

“The Rebbe has several comments,” Rabbi Hodakov told us in his office. “First of all, why weren’t you all present and learning immediately after Mincha? Why were you late?”

He then turned to me and added, “The Rebbe said to tell Kaplan that five minutes is also late...”

The Rebbe was also displeased to see that those who were present were all learning different subjects, and that there were not enough *sefarim* for reference. From then on, we were obligated to present a monthly report to Rabbi Hodakov, and only then were we given our \$72 allowance.

The Arum

When thinking back to my years as a child and young *bochur* in the Rebbe’s presence, it is very clear to me that everything I merited to see and to gain came as a result of being present. In other words, had I had numerous other distractions, like sports, gadgets and entertainment, I would have missed out immensely.

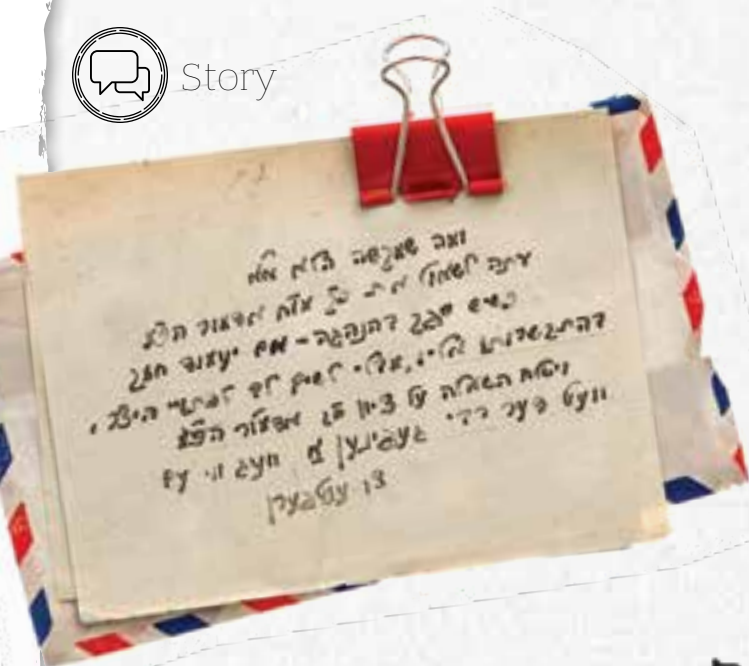
The same holds true for our day and age. For a child to become permeated with Chassidishe *hanachos* and Chassidishe values, he needs to be present. It is very important for parents and educators to create a space where their children can soak in *Chassidishkeit* without any outside distractions. And it is important for children and young *bochurim* themselves to seek every opportunity to spend time with Chassidim and soak in their presence.

Sometimes it could seem difficult, but the rewards are endless. **T**



LEARNING IN THE KOLEL, CHESHVAN 5736.

LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 143072



דער רבי וועט געפינען א וועג...

לזכות השלוחה
מינא עטל בת פערל גאלדא תחי'
טייכטל
לרגל יום הולדתה י"ב מר חשון
נדפס ע"י
משפחתה שיחיו

The Timely Story

AS TOLD BY RABBI MENACHEM ALMALIACH (KFAR CHABAD, ERETZ YISROEL)

5776 was my third year studying in Yeshivas Chabad of Migdal Haemek. Every Shabbos many *bochurim* would visit different shuls to share the Rebbe's *sichos* with other communities and I was very involved with this project with several friends.

Since it was *Shnas Hakhel*, we placed great emphasis on the Shabbos afternoon program and in honor of Shavuos we set a goal for ourselves to reach every single shul in Migdal Haemek over Yom Tov.

We contacted the *rabbonim* and *gabbaim* of all the shuls and we were pleasantly surprised that many of those who

usually resisted our visits happily granted us permission to come on Shavuos. Our hard work paid off and, *baruch Hashem*, the Shavuos program was a major success.

A few weeks later I traveled to New York with my father and brother for Gimmel Tammuz. We were there for one week and on one of the weekdays we went to the Ohel. I sat down in the second tent to write my *pan*. Several minutes later I stood up to retrieve something and by the time I returned my seat was occupied. I looked around for an empty spot in one of the other tents but none were available so I finally walked into the first tent and found a spot there.



YESHIVA IN MIGDAL HA'EMEK.

I usually prefer not to write my *pan* in the first tent because it is very busy, but that day I had no choice and I settled down to continue writing.

A few minutes later a couple walked into the tent and although there were many others sitting and standing closer to the entrance, the husband approached me and greeted me with a *shalom aleichem*.

"I am from Israel," he said.

"That's great, so am I. Where in Israel are you from?"

"Migdal Haemek."

"Wow! I study in yeshiva in Migdal Haemek. Which shul do you frequent?"

"Beit Knesset Yad Harav Buskill. Not only do I daven there regularly, I am the *gabbai* of the shul."

I was shocked to hear him say this. I was standing face to face with the *gabbai* of Beit Knesset Yad Harav Buskill!

"So you are the one who doesn't allow the yeshiva students to share a thought from the Rebbe in your shul?!" I blurted out.

The man was taken aback at my outburst and I quickly composed myself and explained:

"I've been involved for the last three years in coordinating a program every Shabbos for the students in yeshiva to share a *dvar Torah* in the shuls of Migdal Haemek every Shabbos. For some reason your shul has never allowed us in.

"I find it so astonishing to meet you here right now because at this very moment I was writing in my letter to the Rebbe about the amazing success we had over Shavuos by reaching almost every shul in the city and I just finished writing these words:

"May we merit that the great success of this project of Shavuos, when many of the shuls that previously rejected

our speaking there invited us to come, should continue throughout the year. And even the shuls that did not allow us to speak there on Shavuos should eventually welcome us as well."

"As I'm writing these words to the Rebbe I meet you, the man who can make this happen!"

By now his wife was standing next to him and gathered what my excitement was all about.

I showed both of them the words I had just written in my *pan* and she turned to her husband and said, "How can you not allow these boys to share a *dvar Torah* in shul? Invite him now to come and speak the next Shabbos he's in Migdal Haemek!"

My new friend was overwhelmed at what had just happened, and he excitedly invited me to come to the shul as soon as possible.

A beautiful conversation ensued and I explained to them how to prepare to enter the Ohel, how to write a *pan* and which *tefillos* to say.

A few weeks later I made my way to the Beit Knesset Yad Harav Buskill for Mincha on Shabbos and right before I spoke, the *gabbai* stood next to me by the *bima* and announced with a big smile: "I needed to travel all the way to New York to understand that I need to welcome the Chabad boys into our shul to share a *dvar Torah* from the Rebbe."

From then on we were always welcome in that shul. **1**

YOUR STORY

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



CHESHVAN 5745

A collection of photos from the month of
Cheshvan 5745 from JEM's Living Archive.



לזכות
הילד ישראל שלום נ"י
לרגל יום האפשרות י"ז חשוון
יה"ר שיגדל לתורה לחופה
ולמעשים טובים מתוך בריאות נכונה
ושפע בגו"ר לנח"ר כ"ק אדמו"ר
והוריו הי"ו



The Rebbe arrives in the morning. Crowds wait to greet the Rebbe. For many this was an opportunity to ask the Rebbe for *brachos* in emergency situations.

6 CHESHVAN 5745, LEVI FREDIN VIA JEM 216016



6 CHESHVAN, 5745, LEVI FREDIN VIA JEM 216017





On the way up the stairs
the Rebbe hands out
tzedakah to children.



6 CHESHVAN, 5745. LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 216018

The Rebbe enters 770.



6 CHESHVAN, 5745, LEVI FREDIN VIA JEM 216019

After a few minutes in his room the Rebbe comes to the small *zal* to listen to *krias haTorah*.



10 CHESHVAN, 5745, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 216048



6 CHESHVAN, 5745, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 216020



CHESHVAN, 5745, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 216025

Derher**Letters**

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

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



Tzimtzum

Shalom Aleichem,

I just wanted to share my positive feedback with you and a *hashgacha pratis* that happened. I'm a shliach in Nashville, TN and there is a *baal habos* here that I just started learning with. He did his PHD dissertation on Kabbalah and his understanding of Toras Ha'Arizal was leagues beyond mine. I offered to learn *tzimtzum kipshuto* in Tanya with him and hoped I could show him the depth of Chassidus. I still was nervous sharing it because I didn't feel I could *halt kup* with his Kabbalah sources.

The next day my Derher arrived in the mail and of course this article ["Reality", Issue 96 (173), Av 5780] was on the front cover! I read the article and gained so much from it! I felt Hashem arranged this for me to have clarity going into the *chavrusa*. *Baruch Hashem* we've been learning for three weeks now and he LOVES learning Tanya. *Yasher koach gadol* and *mechayil el chayil*! This magazine is one of the greatest publications out there. Keep up the good work!

Kol Tuv,

Gavriel Isenberg
Nashville, Tennessee



Davaning B'Avodah

Dear Editors,

In continuation to the article about Dr. Yitzchak Block a"h ["From Harvard to 770", Issue 97 (174), Elul 5780], I recall a special Shabbaton in 1974-5 at the Chabad House in Berkeley California. A newspaper ad for this Shabbaon was included in the article.

I was a shliach there at the time and we brought out Dr. Block to lead the Shabbaton.

Shabbos morning after davening, we all proceeded to the dining room to make *kiddush*, wash for challah and then begin the *seudah*.

The room was full to capacity with students who came specially to hear Dr. Block – the eminent professor from London, Ontario.

Lo and behold – Dr. Block was nowhere to be found!

I went to check to see what could have happened to him. I found him sitting in the corner of the shul, with his talis over his head, softly humming, totally oblivious to his surroundings and to the fact that he was the guest speaker this weekend!

I quickly went to find my colleague, Rabbi Chaim Citron, and with a slight panic in my voice told him what was going on... He wisely said to me:

“This is why we chose Rabbi Block to be with us here in Berkeley for this Shabbaton”. So we all can observe and indeed learn from a true Chosid!!”

Rabbi Binyomin Lisbon
Los Angeles, CA

”

Yud Aleph Nissan 5737

Dear Editors,

Thank you for the article in the Tammuz magazine about bringing Yidden to the Rebbe [“Neshamos Connect”, Issue 95 (172), Tammuz 5780] along with the beautiful *pirsum rishon* pictures of the Rebbe seeing off

the guests from Detroit that came to New York in the winter of 5718.

This was merely a few months after the shliach, Reb Berel Shemtov moved on shlichus to Detroit.

Interestingly, during a recent project, I came across a unique ad in the Detroit Jewish News for a group trip to the Rebbe in honor of Yud Aleph Nissan 5737. This was one of the many groups that Rabbi Shemtov brought to New York.

A.M.D.
Brooklyn, NY

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Correction

In the Tammuz magazine [Issue 95 (172)], we printed a picture of Robert M. Morgenthau, United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York visiting the Rebbe. We mistakenly wrote the date as 5 Teves 5723, but as a result of additional research we are fairly certain this visit actually took place two months earlier, on 4 Cheshvan 5723.