

# Derher

A Chassidisher

א חסידישער זערהער

## A Greater Business

REB MAYER ZEILER

## Education from the Womb

THE REBBE'S INSISTENCE  
ON ONLY POSITIVE  
INFLUENCES

# TALKS AND TALES

CAPTURING THE HEARTS OF  
THE YOUNG, THEIR PARENTS,  
AND THEIR TEACHERS



TEVES 5781  
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# DO YOU DERHER?

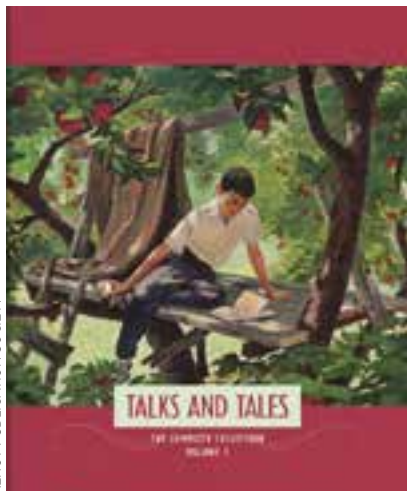
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## Vaad Talmidei Hatmimim

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## Publisher

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## Editor in Chief

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## Administration/Development

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## Design

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## Contributors

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(718) 305 6859, [Feedback@Derher.org](mailto:Feedback@Derher.org)

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

בקשר עם יום הבהיר ה' טבת

## Derher **Editorial**

### WONDROUS DAYS

The month of Teves is unique in that it begins with a Yom Tov—the final days of Chanukah. A few days later, we celebrate the Yom Tov of Hei Teves, the day that the Federal Court of the United States recognized the meaning of a Rebbe and offered a ruling on the eternity of a *nossi*. A ruling that solidified how a *nossi's* entire being is one and the same with his people, and demonstrated the eternity of the movement and mission of Chabad.

Interestingly, the Rebbe connected the Yom Tov of Chanukah with the story of Hei Teves in various ways. In response to a claim leveled against Chabad during the trial that we are “not active,” the Rebbe requested that shluchim all over the world send photographs of their public menorah lighting ceremonies to be published in an album called “Let There Be Light.” One year later, just before the “Didan Notzach” verdict was issued, the Rebbe requested that a sequel be published, “And There Was Light.”

In the *sicha* delivered hours after the victory on Hei Teves 5747\*, the Rebbe spoke about the connection between the victory of Hei Teves—a catalyst to the furtherance of *hafatzas hamaqanos*, and the Yom Tov of Chanukah: The miracle of the oil reminds us of the teachings of Chassidus, which are compared to oil.

According to *halacha*, a central component of Chanukah is *pirsumei nissa*, publicizing the miracle. Many details of the *halachos* are specifically tailored towards this end.

In our time, the Rebbe took this notion to a whole new level with Mivtza Chanukah, bringing awareness of the miracle to the world stage. The Rebbe's continued push for greater Chanukah awareness has reached a level as such that for many people in the wider world, Chabad has come to be identified with public menorahs.

In this season of *pirsumei nissa*, it would seem appropriate to examine what the Rebbe says about miracles and what our approach as Chabad Chassidim should be to this idea.

Years before the Rebbe assumed the *nesius* of Chabad, the Rebbe had dealt quite extensively with the subject. In a letter written to the Rebbe<sup>1</sup>, the Frierdiker Rebbe addresses the fact that: “It seems at face-value that the approach of the Chassidishe communities of Vohlin, Poland, and Galicia are more in line with that of the Baal Shem Tov, especially when it comes to *mofsim*...”

The Frierdiker Rebbe responds to this question at great length, citing various stories and anecdotes from the Alter Rebbe and early Chassidim validating the approach of Chabad. “In Chabad, everything revolves around studying Chassidus, toiling on davening, and working on improving one's *middos*... The younger Chassidim always wanted to hear stories of *mofsim*, but their elders rebuked them. For the elders, stories of miracles were a disgrace to the true glory of Chassidus. They

would never pay attention to such insignificant things...”

Of course, the *mofsim* were always there. But, as the Friediker Rebbe quotes in the name of his great-grandmother, Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, “By my father [the Mitteler Rebbe], there were plenty of *mofsim* lying around, but no one wanted to pick them up...”

But the Rebbe responded with a different approach. In a letter to the Friediker Rebbe, the Rebbe asks why *mofsim* don’t take on a more important role; especially in our times.

“I cannot restrain myself,” writes the Rebbe, “from seeking further explanation on this matter... I have heard so many times that ‘In Chabad we don’t hold of *mofsim*.’

“...In previous generations, this was certainly the case. People did not need *mofsim* to inspire them, because their hearts and minds were refined. But nowadays...the only way to uplift the souls and transcend the coarseness and physicality of the world is through *moisim* and wonder stories of *tzaddikim*...”<sup>2</sup>

The *mofes* has the ability to shatter through the darkness of *olam hazeh*; to allow the light of *Elokus* to shine through into people’s lives and connect with spirituality, recognizing the truth of Hashem.<sup>3</sup>

It is clear from all of the above that although as a general rule Chabad Chassidus shunned the notion of *mofsim*, the Rebbe clearly sees that they still play an important role and have the ability to reach and touch us in a profound way.

The unique quality of wonder stories and *mofsim* it two-fold:

1. *Mofsim* can be used as a means to bring others closer to the Rebbe and the study of Chassidus. Some people will be more inspired only by hearing stories of *mofsim* first (as explained above<sup>4</sup>).
2. In addition to that, the Rebbe explains that *mofsim* possess an important element in the ways of Chassidus.

The Baal Shem Tov used the power of *mofsim* as a channel, bringing immense *giluy Elokus* to inspire people and awaken their souls. With the founding of Chabad, the Alter Rebbe wanted instead that Chassidim should attain their inspiration through their own hard work. Nevertheless, says the Rebbe, there still remains a need for both of these approaches in each of our lives; the two complement one another.<sup>5</sup>

In the later years, from the year 5750\*, the Rebbe connected the number of the year with the imminent arrival of Moshiach by pointing to its acronym of נסִים ופִּלְאוֹת.

In fact, at the farbrengen of Shabbos Parshas Vayeshev, 5752\*, the Rebbe asserted that by recognizing and appreciating (and *publicizing*) the many wonders and miracles that Hashem performs for us, we will ultimately merit to see the coming of Moshiach.<sup>6</sup>

The Gemara tells us that Hashem wished to make Chizkiyahu the Melech Hamoshiach, but he was ultimately not chosen because of his failure to praise Hashem for the miracles he experienced. Obviously then, if we *do* appreciate and publicize the miracles Hashem does for us, we will surely see the coming of Moshiach speedily.

As the Rebbe says in the sicha of Hei Teves, 5751\*—the *roshei teivos* of פ"א is פלאות אראנו—"I will show you wondrous things."

May we indeed merit to see Hashem’s open and revealed wonders with the coming of Moshiach, when we will be reunited with the Rebbe, *teikef umidyad Mammosh*.

**A Chassidisher Derher**  
יום הבהיר י"ד כסלו ה'תשפ"א  
שבעים שנה לנשיאות כ"ק אדמו"ר

1. Igros Kodesh Rayyatz vol. 2, p. 361.
2. Igros Kodesh Rayyatz vol. 15, p. 112.
3. Reshimos, 138.
4. See also 2 Iyar 5710, Toras Menachem vol. 1. p. 42.
5. See also Shabbos Parshas Tavo 5747, Hisvaaduyos 5747 vol. 3, p. 342.
6. Sefer Hasichos 5752, vol. 1, p. 185.



# Late in the Afternoon

רמב"ם הלכות תמידים ומוספין, א:ג

The *korban tamid* of the afternoon should be slaughtered when the shadows have been extended and it is obvious to all that they have been extended. This is from six and a half hours of the day until the day's end. Every day, they would not slaughter it until eight and a half hours of the day and they would offer it at nine and a half hours.

Why would they delay [its slaughter] for two hours after the beginning of the time? Because of the *korbanos* of individuals and those of the community. For it is forbidden to offer any *korban* before the *korban tamid* of the morning and no *korban* is offered after the *korban tamid* of the afternoon with the exception of the *Korban Pesach*. [That leniency was granted, because] it is impossible for all of Israel to offer their *Korban Pesach* in two hours.

תמיד של בין הערבים שוחטין אותו משיאריד: תצל ויראה לכל שהאריד. והוא מושש ומחצה ומעלה עד סוף היום. ולא היו שוחטין אותו בכל יום אלא בשמונה שעות ומחצה וקרב בתשע ומחצה. ולמה מאחרין אותו שתי שעות אחר תחילת זמן שחיטתו. מפני הקרבות של יחידים או של צבור. לפי שאסור להקריב קרבן כלל קדם תמיד של שחר. ולא שוחטין קרבן אחר תמיד של בין הערבים חוץ מקרבן פסח לבדו. שאי אפשר שיקריבו כל ישראל פסחיהן בשתי שעות:



# מחזור הארבעים 40 CYCLES OF LEARNING RAMBAM

לזכות  
עליזה תחי'  
שוחאט  
לרגל יום הולדתה - כ"ב טבת  
ולזכות הוריה  
הרה"ת ר' שלום דוב בער  
וזוגתו מרת חיה מושקא שיחיו  
ולזכות אחיותיה  
ברכה ליפשא ושיינדל תחיינה

Every morning in the Beis Hamikdash, a lamb was brought as the *korban tamid*. This was a public *korban* brought on behalf of all Yidden. The same would happen every afternoon, when a second *korban tamid* was offered.

The afternoon (בין הערביים) *korban* may be brought starting at six and a half hours into the day, a half hour after noon. Yet almost every day of the year it was brought two full hours later, at eight and a half hours into the day.

The reason for this delay is because the *din* is that no *korban* can be brought after the afternoon *tamid*. If the afternoon *tamid* would be brought at six and a half hours, any Yid who shows up after that with his personal *korban* would have to wait until the next day. As a courtesy to those Yidden, we *consistently delay* the *korban tamid* for two full hours.

Imagine this: The entire Jewish nation is kept waiting for two full hours on a daily basis just in case one Jew will show up late with his *korban*.

The importance of this is amplified considering that everything in the *Beis Hamikdash* was done with utmost speed, *zrizus*, as every holy endeavor should be done. *Kohanim* are known to be *zerizin*, and most importantly, the afternoon *tamid* atones for any *mitzvas aseï* transgressed by any Jew in the world since the morning *tamid*. Yet we are told to hold off for two full hours because of a *single* Jew who may show up late. **T**

(Adapted from *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Nitzavim* 5745)





לעבן מיטן רבין

6 CHESHVAN, 5746

JEM 271214

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

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

# Where Are The Bochurim?

TEVES 5746\*



In connection with the Yom Tov of Hei Teves this month, we present a *yoman* of the occurrences at 770 during Teves 5746\*, one year before Didan Notzach.

The weeks of Kislev and the beginning of Teves 5746\* were times of great worry and stress for Chassidim across the globe as the court case about the *sefarim* commenced. For weeks on end, the Rebbe went to the Ohel (fasting and standing in

the cold for hours) almost every single day—the Rebbe was evidently in great distress from the *matzav*.

Every day, throngs of *bochurim* flooded the courtroom, eagerly awaiting what would happen next.

Chanukah that year was filled with surprises as the Rebbe announced a number of new initiatives and showed much interest in the activities of Mivtza



Chanukah taking place. On Shabbos, 2 Teves, the Rebbe farbrenged. During the farbrengen the Rebbe announced that he would be farbrenging again that night (Motzei Shabbos), and after coming back from the Ohel on Sunday, the Rebbe farbrenged again—the third time in two days!

At these farbrengens, the Rebbe spoke about a *kitrug* against the spreading of Chassidus and strongly encouraged intensified joy as a way to counter what was going on.<sup>1</sup>

The following descriptions are based on the *yomanim* of Hirshel Raskin, Motti Misholovin, Meir Yechiel Hershkowitz and Moshe Sassonkin; all *bochurim* in 770 at the time. Due to the length of these diaries, we have only included selected snippets.

#### MONDAY–THURSDAY, 4–7 TEVES

The Rebbe visited the Ohel every single day this week, sometimes returning two hours or more after *shkia*. On Thursday, when the Rebbe received an *aliya* at *krias haTorah*, his voice sounded weak.

Being that the court case is ongoing and Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky needs to attend, Rabbi Binyomin Klein has been driving the Rebbe to the Ohel these

days instead. Rabbi Krinsky drives the Rebbe home in the evening, and sometimes, the Rebbe spends up to 45 minutes in the car hearing updates on the development of the case.

#### FRIDAY, 8 TEVES

The court is now taking a three-week recess from the case until 28 Teves, upon which they will resume the proceedings. Several testimonies that were given in writing will be read out loud for the court to hear, after which they will make their summaries. We are hoping that *b'ezras Hashem* by Yud Shevat, the judge will have given his verdict that will clearly proclaim *Didan Notzach*—victory is ours.

(Since photography in the courtroom is not allowed, an artist drew a sketch depicting the proceedings. It was published in the *Algemeiner Journal*.)

#### SHABBOS PARSHAS VAYIGASH, 9 TEVES

There was a surprise farbrengen this Shabbos; the last time a farbrengen was held on Shabbos Vayigash was 10 years ago, so no one expected it.

In the first *sicha*, the Rebbe explained that there is no need to provide a justification as to why we



are farbrenging today for Shabbos itself is already enough. Nevertheless, being that everything needs to come in *maaseh bepoel*, the reason for the farbrengen is to encourage and to reiterate what was spoken in the previous farbrengens; about sending in a report and pictures from the recent Chanukah *peulos*. The Rebbe wanted these reports, along with the pictures, to be submitted before Asara B'Teves, and those who still have not done so should do so now, and in an increased measure.

Later on in the farbrengen, in the Rambam *sicha*, the Rebbe discussed how Yaakov Avinu was first in *galus* by Lavan, and now in Parshas Vayigash, after he was finally able to live in peace and comfort, the *Aibershter* tells him to go down to Mitzrayim—back into *galus*. Here, the Rebbe began to speak with great pain, how it has already been 1,900 years that we are in *galus*, the *Shechina* is in *galus*, and that there are those who do not want Moshiach to come; “Should the *Aibershter* destroy his world because of fools...?!” The Rebbe cried as he quoted these words.

After the fifth *sicha*, the Rebbe announced that those who gave in bottles of *mashke* to *mazkirus* before Shabbos should come up (as was the *seder* at every Shabbos farbrengen).

The Rebbe gave a bottle of *mashke* to Rabbi Menachem Gerlitzky for a *Siyum Harambam* and for the opening of a new institution for women's learning (*Kolel Chochmas Nashim*), and Rabbi Gerlitzky made an announcement about the above details.

The Rebbe gave a bottle to Rabbi Shlomo Cunin and instructed him to make his announcement.

He announced that in the coming week a regional *Kinus Hashluchim* for the state of California will take place in S. Diego, and that all of the Rebbe's *brachos* should be fulfilled. The Rebbe asked him when it will take place, and he announced that it will be on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. The Rebbe asked him where it would take place. “In the *Beis Chabad*,” he replied. “There is only one *Beis Chabad* in S. Diego?” the Rebbe asked. He announced that it will take place in the school there. The Rebbe asked him, “Does the *Beis Chabad* have a street name?” Rabbi Cunin started to announce the name of the street but he became overwhelmed and broke out in a smile. The whole crowd laughed along and the Rebbe smiled too. Suddenly, the Rebbe began singing the *hakafos niggun* with tremendous *simcha*. The entire 770 shook as the

Rebbe encouraged the singing strongly with his hand and the high part of the *niggun* was repeated 15 times!

It was very difficult to hear the Rebbe during the farbrengen. Almost every day over the past three weeks, the Rebbe has been going to the Ohel and spending hours there in the freezing winter weather. The Rebbe's voice was very weak and those who were standing further away could barely hear the words.

#### SUNDAY—TUESDAY, 10—12 TEVES

On Sunday, Asara B'Teves, the Rebbe came down to Mincha holding a *sefer Hisvaaduyos B'Lahak* (the Rebbe's *sichos* from 5745 vol. 2). Following Mincha,





the Rebbe said a *sicha* and distributed dollars for tzedakah through the *tankistin*.

On Monday and Tuesday the Rebbe went to the Ohel. On Monday, the Rebbe left for the Ohel later than usual, and by Mincha and Maariv he was coughing a lot.

### ENOUGH!

... Monday and Tuesday the Rebbe went to the Ohel; the *matzav* does not look good... Who knows how much longer this will continue? Needless to say, these are not regular times and Hashem should have mercy on us that very soon there will be clarity in all of this, the Rebbe will be able to have peace; at least from such matters and such *agmas nefesh* like this... Hashem should say "Enough!" to these

*tzaros*. Obviously, *anash* are not indifferent to what is going on, and everyone is doing what he can with his *tefilla* and with his *hosafa* in tzedakah...

(From a letter written by  
Hatomim Moshe Sassonkin)

### WEDNESDAY, 13 TEVES

As the Rebbe was distributing coins for tzedakah this morning, an elderly man wished the Rebbe that he should be healthy. The Rebbe answered him, "Amen, *gam atem*," and gave him a coin.

The Rebbe went to the Ohel today.

Tonight after Maariv, a gathering was held in *zal* for the *bochurim* with the participation of the *hanhalah*. Reb Dovid Raskin spoke and encouraged the *bochurim* to learn with more diligence,



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especially now that this is a time of “battle.” He mentioned that Rabbi Hodakov asked the *hanhalah* today why there are so few *bochurim* in *zal* during *seder*. From this, Reb Dovid concluded, it is clear that the Rebbe cares about what is going on.

As a result of the *asifa*, the *bochurim* decided to implement a few practical ideas in order to bring *nachas ruach* to the Rebbe during these extremely stressful and difficult times. To name a few: 1. To be more diligent about davening with a *minyan*. 2. To come to *seder Chassidus* in the morning five minutes earlier. 3. Not to stand in the hallway when the Rebbe arrives at and leaves 770 during *seder* of yeshiva and times of *tefilos*. 4. To divide all the printed *sefarim* of Kehos amongst all *anash* and *temimim* around the world and to finish the entire undertaking by Yud Shevat.

Signs went up in 770 and *anash* around the world were notified and informed about the above project.

#### THURSDAY, 14 TEVES

The Rebbe went to the Ohel today, and after he entered the car—in an unusual fashion—he motioned very strongly towards the *bochurim* to encourage the singing.

Before the Rebbe entered the car, he gave coins for *tzedakah* to a group of children from camp (winter camp). The Rebbe’s face was beaming as he distributed the coins to the children.

The Rebbe returned from the Ohel at 6:45 p.m., about two hours after *shkia*.

A Tanya was printed today in the building of the Kotel (*Beis Machane Yisrael—Oholei Yosef Yitzchok*).

Also, today all of *anash* were contacted in the name of Agudas Chasidei Chabad with instructions to make *farbrengens* this coming Shabbos (Parshas Vayechi), or the days around it, in light of the current *matzav*.

#### SHABBOS PARSHAS VAYECHI, 15–16 TEVES

On Friday night after *seudas Shabbos*, a large *farbrengen* took place in the upstairs *zal* with the participation of all the *mashpi'im*.

During the Shabbos *farbrengen* the next day, the Rebbe discussed the Rashi in this week’s *parsha* which speaks about *עקב לא מת*.

Later in the *farbrengen* the Rebbe gave bottles of *mashke* to: Rabbi Meir Steinmetz for a *melave malka* in the Chevras Shas shul; Rabbi Yaakov

Friedman for a *melave malka* for Chadrei Torah Ohr; Rabbi Shammai Ende for the opening of a new *kolel* in Brazil; Rabbi Y.Y. Altein who is traveling to Russia and Rabbi Leibel Kaplan for the Irgun Gag (Chabad’s umbrella organization in Eretz Yisroel).

The Rebbe instructed Rabbi Kaplan to announce that “the umbrella organization of all the *mosdos* in Eretz Yisroel notifies that the *mosdos* are taking on to add in their *peulos* many times over.” After Rabbi Leibel Kaplan made the announcement, he added some *brachos* of his own and the Rebbe said in a loud voice, “*Amen, hatzlacha rabba!*”

#### ACHDUS AMONG CHASSIDIM

Due to the current situation, *anash* and shluchim are working harder these days to be more *bachdus*. In one community of *anash* where there had been some conflict for a while—peace was made and things were settled.

Rabbi Shlomo Cunin spoke to Rabbi Hodakov on the phone today and asked him what he can do to help with all the news coming out of 770. As he was on the phone, he heard that the Rebbe picked up the line.

Rabbi Hodakov asked him why he does not send a full report to the Rebbe about activities in the recent initiatives the Rebbe spoke about (establishing new Chabad Houses, establishing Kolelei Tiferes Zekeinim, and Tzivos Hashem).

“Why is there nothing being done for there to be *ahavas achim* among the shluchim?” asked Rabbi Hodakov.

This past Thursday (after the above conversation between Rabbi Hodakov and Rabbi Cunin), all the shluchim got together on the phone to speak about *ahavas Yisroel*. There were around 60-70 shluchim on the call. One of the *hachlatos* that were made is to send a *duch* of certain *peulos* into the Rebbe; this will definitely bring the Rebbe *nachas ruach*.

Also, because of the current *matzav*, a *minyan* of people have recently started to go every day to the Ohel to daven.



CHANUKAH IN BRAZIL, ONE OF THE MANY PICTURES AND DUCHOS THAT ARRIVED FROM AROUND THE WORLD.

LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASSIDEI CHABAD

At the end of the farbrengen, the Rebbe encouraged the Chassidim to increase in *simcha* (as was discussed in the previous farbrengens), and to make a strong commitment in this area.

#### SUNDAY, 17 TEVES

After about 10 minutes of distributing coins for tzedakah to those who were present, the Rebbe went to the *mikveh*. At around noontime, a police car arrived outside of 770 in order to escort the Rebbe to the Ohel, as usual.

A little after 3:00 p.m., while everyone waited expectantly for the Rebbe to leave to the Ohel, Rabbi Groner suddenly came out and announced that the Rebbe is coming to Mincha; the Rebbe changed his plans and is not going to the Ohel today. This news created a great *simcha*, and the *bochurim* in 770 got together in the evening for a lively farbrengen which lasted till the wee hours of the morning.

There is a rumor that the shluchim wrote to the Rebbe, begging him not to go so often to the Ohel.

#### TUESDAY, 19 TEVES

Today, the Rebbe was informed of the initiative to divide the learning of all of the *sefarim* of Kehos among Chassidim around the world.

Once again, the Rebbe didn't go to the Ohel today. The tremendous and sincere joy that is prevalent amongst the *bochurim* and *anash* now that the Rebbe is going less to the Ohel is indescribable.

#### WEDNESDAY, 20 TEVES

The Rebbe visited the Ohel today.

Rabbi Shammai Ende left today for S. Paulo, Brazil in order to establish a new *kolel* there. Before he left, he received a *hora'a* from the Rebbe that the *kolel* should not bear the official title of Chabad.

Tonight, a farbrengen took place for the *bochurim* together with Reb Dovid Raskin and Reb Sholom Marozov. Reb Dovid announced: **Every single day, mazkirus inquires about what is going on in zal during seder; Why is it empty? Where are the bochurim?** (The inquiries and interest are obviously at the behest of the Rebbe.) They also want to see the lists of *bochurim* at the different *sedarim*, and the main concern is about who is coming on time to *seder*. "What exactly will be the outcome of these inquiries, I do not know... but there should not be any *tainos* later."



CHESHVAN 5746 LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 209175

#### FRIDAY, 22 TEVES

The Rebbe was at the Ohel yesterday.

Today in the morning, while distributing coins for tzedakah, the Rebbe stopped near the *pushka* (in the lobby) to listen to *chazaras hashatz* of Shacharis taking place in the *zal*. The Rebbe waited from *birchas kohanim* until the end of *Sim Shalom*.

#### SHABBOS PARSHAS SHEMOS

At the end of the third *sicha* of today's farbrengen, the Rebbe spoke about those who sleep during the farbrengen: When Moshiach comes, they too will be transported to Eretz Yisroel with *ananei shmaya*. When they will wake up from their sleep and wonder where they are, they will be told that they are in Yerushalayim... They will wash *negel vasser* and say *brachos* according to Shulchan Aruch...

Two *bochurim*, Yossi Gorelik and Yehoshua Metzger, who are right now in Jordan, finally gave notification that this week they will be able to start





29 KISLEV 5746 YOSSI MELAMED VIA JEM 24103

printing a Tanya there, and in the meantime they found a Yid who lives there.

#### SUNDAY, 24 TEVES

The Rebbe went to the Ohel today.

N'shei Chabad from all around the world sent letters to the Rebbe informing him of the various *hachlatos* they took on, and asking the Rebbe to guard his health (and to not go to the Ohel so often). The N'shei Chabad of Tzfas wrote to the Rebbe that they will see to it that the entire Tehillim be recited every day at the *kevarim* of the Rashbi, the Rambam and the Arizal.

#### MONDAY, 25 TEVES

Today, something special happened. A non-Jewish man came into the *mazkirus* office holding in his hand an old *sefer*. It was the *sefer Sha'alos u'Teshuvos Maharik*. The man said that he is willing to sell it for more than \$1000. *Mazkirus* sent him to Reb Yitzchak Mishulovin's store since he is a *sefarim* dealer.

Realizing that something was fishy, Reb Yitzchak called Reb Sholom Ber Levine from the library, and, sure enough, after a quick look, Rabbi Levine noticed the Frierdiker Rebbe's handwriting inside... The Frierdiker Rebbe writes that this *sefer* had been



in the possession of the Alter Rebbe! He also found on one of the pages short notes in the Alter Rebbe's own handwriting...

Based on various factors, they determined that this *sefer* is most likely from the *sefarim* that were confiscated from the Friediker Rebbe in Poland. Apparently, this man only recently arrived from Poland, and before he left Poland he received the book from his family as a source of income when he arrived in the US. The man was pacified by a smaller sum of money than he initially demanded, and he went on his way.

This *sefer* caused the Rebbe tremendous *nachas ruach*. The Rebbe took the *sefer* home with him on Tuesday.

## TUESDAY, 26 TEVES

The Rebbe requested that the printing of the Friediker Rebbe's *maamarim* from the years תרפ"פ-תרפ"ג should be hurried up, and that inquiries should be made over the phone to try to find more *maamarim*. The Rebbe wants it to be printed in time for Yud Shevat.

## THURSDAY, 28 TEVES

The Rebbe went to the Ohel today.

This afternoon, after a long break the court resumed hearings for several hours. Parts of written testimonies that were already heard were re-read, and there were some examinations regarding a few points. On Chof-Daled Shevat the court case will resume, summaries will be made and only later will the judge give his final verdict.

## SHABBOS PARSHAS VA'ERA

On Friday night, when the Rebbe walked to the library from 770, the crowd sang "Didan Notzach" and the Rebbe encouraged the singing strongly.

At the farbrengen on Shabbos, the Rebbe spoke about the importance of demanding from Hashem that he take us out of *galus*. The Rebbe ended the *sicha* with the words "*Yidden, geit arois fun galus* (Yidden, go out of *galus*)!" Then the Rebbe paused, and concluded: "*L'chaim, l'chaim v'livracha!*" T

1. See "Through The Eyes Of Bochorim," Derher Teves 5776, for an extensive overview of these farbrengens and other occurrences at the beginning of Teves 5746.



JEW 24091



כתב יד  
קודש

# We Can Do Better

The following is one of the Rebbe's corrections on the draft of  
an invocation to be given in the United States Senate on 5 Iyar 5726\*:



נדפס ע"י ולזכות  
הרה"ת ר' אברהם שמואל זוגותו מרת  
חי' צפורה  
בניהם ובנותיהם  
מושקא ובעלה הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל  
ובנם לוי רפפורט  
מנחם מענדל, נעכא, יוסף שיחיו  
מאן

הערה כללית ועיקרית: דאס הייזט אונז ווער און ווער  
- און דאס יודע איז אונז "?! - הייזט דאס אונז  
די באהאלטענע אונז "?! - דאס אונז אונז  
- און נאך דאס אונז אונז אונז אונז אונז  
און! און און און און און און און  
אונז אונז אונז אונז אונז אונז אונז  
און אונז אונז אונז אונז אונז אונז  
און אונז אונז אונז אונז אונז אונז  
Watcheth and guideth דאס אונז אונז אונז  
ווער און אונז אונז אונז אונז אונז

**A general and fundamental observation:** This is all certainly good and fine, etc. etc. However, [as Moshe Rabbeinu said in Shemos 33:16:] "With what will we know [that our nation is distinguished from others]?"

All this could have been said by **any** of the hundreds of religious sects in the United States! It is certainly not noticeable that [the speaker] is Orthodox (and not Conservative or Reform, *chas veshalom*)!

Obviously, the point being delivered needs to be understood and acceptable by **all** the members of the Senate. It must obviously be a concept permissible [by *halacha*] to share with non-Jews—but even such a concept can be found and integrated at the appropriate place [in the speech]. (For example: [You can include the concept of *hashgacha pratis*—Hashem's individual and **constant** providence [by adding the words] "Watcheth over and guideth," and [adding a prayer] that this [Divine providence and guidance] should be experienced at all their meetings and informing their decisions, etc.)

(Teshura Simpson-Zajac, Cheshvan 5771)

**הערה כללית ועיקרית:** בטח הכל טוב ויפה וכו' וכו' - אבל "במה יודע איפוא גו"?! - הרי כ"ז יכול להאמר ע"י כאו"א ממאות ה"סעקטעס" דתיות שבארצה"ב! **ופשיטא** - שאין ניכר כלל שזהו אורטודוקס (ולא שמרני ורעפרם ח"ו)!

מובן שצ"ל ענין המובן ומתקבל על כאו"א מחברי הסענאט, ופשיטא שצ"ל ענין שמותר לדבר בו גם לנכרים - אבל גם מסוג זה יש למצוא כמה ענינים ולשלבם במקום המתאים (לדוגמא: השגח"פ **ותמידיית** Watcheth over and guideth and בכל רגע ובכל פעולה, ויה"ר שכן יהי בכל אסיפות שלהם וההחלטות וכו')



נדפס ע"י ולזכות  
הרה"ת ר' יוחנן וזוגתו מרת לאה  
ומשפחתם שיחיו  
גאלדמאן

כ"ה

# TALKS AND TALES

CAPTURING THE HEARTS OF THE YOUNG,  
THEIR PARENTS, AND THEIR TEACHERS

”

*When I arrived in this country in Adar Sheini 5700 and learned of the situation in American and Canadian cities, I understood that writing letters is not enough. It is necessary to provide Jewish educational literature. Notwithstanding the publishing costs, I began a monthly newspaper called “Hakria Vehakedusha” as well as talks for the young and youth in Yiddish and English, which is, with the help of Hashem, having a great effect.*

*(Igros Kodesh Rayatz vol. 7 page 22)*



**ON** Tzom Gedalya 5702\*, Rabbi Hodakov wrote in his diary: *Today the [Frierdiker] Rebbe said to me that he notified Ramash (the Rebbe) that it was time to publish a newsletter for children. I was instructed to speak with Ramash about this.*

It was barely three months after the Rebbe arrived in America from war-torn Europe and was appointed to lead Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch and Kehot Publication Society. Jewish education in America at the time was precarious at best and there was a critical need to provide Jewish American youth with genuine Jewish content. In time for Chanukah 5702\*, a simple four paged mimeographed newsletter titled "Talks and Tales for Children" in English and "שמועסן מיט קינדער" in Yiddish saw the light of day, a historic first for a series that would continue unabated for the next 47 years transforming the market of Jewish children's literature.

Talks and Tales both in English and Yiddish was produced by Rabbi Dr. Nissan Mindel. Dr. Mindel arrived in America together with the Frierdiker Rebbe on 9 Adar II 5700\*, and merited to serve as a secretary for the Frierdiker Rebbe and later for the Rebbe. In addition to his many responsibilities in handling the English correspondence for the Rabbeim and other scholarly works, one of his primary assignments was to author the various articles and columns each month

that for many years served as the only source of timely Jewish content for thousands of children around the world.

The Rebbe was directly involved in the development of every column in the Talks and Tales and even commissioned specific artwork for the publication. Throughout the years, until 5749\*, all the English articles as well as many of the Yiddish articles were personally reviewed by the Rebbe prior to publication with utmost precision.

In many letters from the Rebbe's early years in the United States, the Rebbe mentions that he is currently preoccupied with the editing and publishing of the "Shmuessen," alongside many other tasks.

In countless letters, the Rebbe is seen busy with their dissemination and encourages others to get involved as well. "What were the results of your efforts to spread the Shmues'n at the High School?" the Rebbe asks one Chossid.<sup>1</sup>

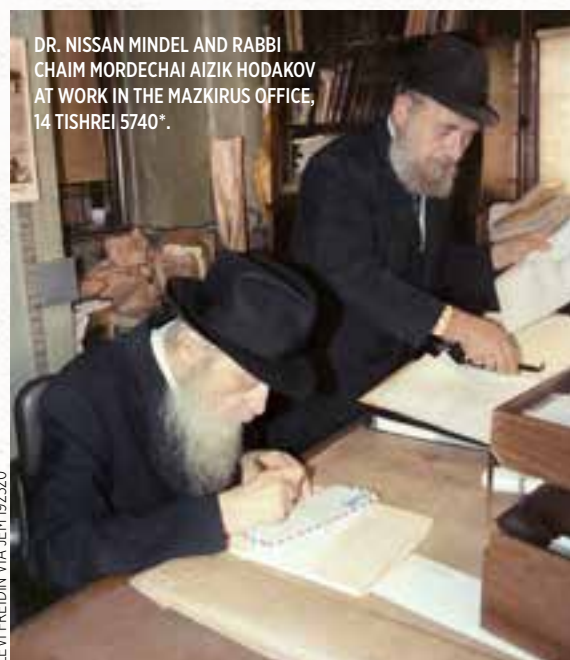
With time, Talks and Tales was published in Hebrew, Spanish, French and Italian (translations from the original English and Yiddish) and became the foundation for much of the children's literature published by Kehos in various languages.

Although much of the content was translated and used in all the languages of the Talks and Tales, each issue was independent of the other. Even as the Yiddish and English series were being published simultaneously, they did not have the same content in a given month.

The first issues of the Talks and Tales and the Shmuessen had identical content, but beginning with the second issue they were different. In a diary entry from 23 Teves 5702\*, Rabbi Hodakov notes: "With regard to the Yiddish (newsletter), I reported



THE REBBE'S NOTES ON A DRAFT OF "IN NATURE'S WONDERLAND," INSTRUCTING THE WRITER TO ADD A FOOTNOTE THAT 15 SHEVAT IS ABOUT EDIBLE FRUITS, SPECIFICALLY OF ERETZ YISRAEL (AS OPPOSED TO ACORNS, THE SUBJECT OF THE COLUMN).



DR. NISSAN MINDEL AND RABBI CHAIM MORDECHAI AIZIK HODAKOV AT WORK IN THE MAZKIRUS OFFICE, 14 TISHREI 5740\*.

LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 192320



to the [Frieddiker] Rebbe that we think it should have different content than the English.” In fact, some columns which debuted in the Yiddish Shmuessen early on did not appear in the English Talks and Tales until much later. For example the fascinating “In Nature’s Wonderland” column debuted in Yiddish in Elul 5706\* and was incorporated into the English Talks and Tales only in Shevat 5724\*.

Furthermore, the Rebbe discouraged the idea of reprinting old articles in later editions in the same language. Once, Dr. Mindel planned to reprint an article about Shiva Assar B’Tammuz and made a note at the bottom of the draft that was submitted to the Rebbe for editing that it was “Reprinted from the TALKS of Tammuz, 5714.” The Rebbe wrote on the draft:

ע[ד]ע[תה] לא הדפיסו ב"פ[עמים] (לבד דינים  
וכי[צא] ב[זה]) - ואין כדאי לשנות מנהג טוב זה. למלאות  
בהמשך הסיפור שלבסוף שבטח מן המוכן הוא.

*Until now an article was never printed twice (aside for pertinent halachos and the like), and it is not worthwhile to change this appropriate practice. Add more details to the story which are certainly available.*

In those early days of Lubavitch in America, when the mission of bringing Yiddishkeit to the masses drifting away into assimilation was of prime focus, the Talks and Tales was a powerful tool to anchor so many children and their families to authentic Yiddishkeit. Day schools and Hebrew schools subscribed their

Rabbi Yossi Goldstein was a *talmid* in 770 in those early years and once while standing outside the Rebbe’s room he overheard the Rebbe say to Rabbi Sholom Mendel Simpson, “I need to stuff the envelopes myself and place the stamps. Perhaps I need to take them to the post office as well...” Rabbi Goldstein approached the Rebbe a little later and offered to do the work of preparing the Talks and Tales for mailing. At first he wanted to do the work in a different room so as not to disturb the Rebbe but the Rebbe insisted that all the mail prep should be done in his room.



KEHOT PUBLICATIONS AT THE WORLD'S FAIR OF 5722, INCLUDING TALKS AND TALES IN FIVE LANGUAGES.

LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASSIDEI CHABAD

students, *bochurim* set off on Merkos Shlichus with many copies and *rabbonim* and *shochtim* in various towns and cities throughout the country made an effort to disseminate them as widely as possible.

In addition to focusing on timely topics related to that month, such as pertinent *halachos* for an upcoming Yom Tov, historical context and a relevant story, every issue included columns that ranged from explaining sections of the *siddur* and the origin of Hebrew names, to a fascinating story and the acclaimed “In Nature’s Wonderland” column describing a natural phenomenon with a lesson in *avodas Hashem*. None of the content was random and every line was pure Yiddishe content suffused with *yiras Shamayim*.

The Rebbe once described at a *farbrengen* how one can never know the full extent of their impact when doing *hafatza*, and used the dissemination of Talks and Tales as an example: “When a child comes home and tells his parents that he saw a young man with a beard selling Talks and Tales who tried to shove a booklet into his hands but the child dodged his efforts, the parents are reminded of their parents, and in one moment they are inspired?...”

In those early years the Rebbe and the Frieddiker Rebbe personally solicited Chassidim and *askanim* to get involved in disseminating the Talks and Tales.

In a letter addressed to Agudas Chabad and the Ladies Auxiliary of Newark, New Jersey, the Rebbe thanked them for their financial support to Merkos



and encouraged them to continue their support mainly through finding ways to bring the Talks and Tales to every Jewish child in their city.

*"I am glad to see your warm interest in our vital work, and we hope you will continue to express your support not only financially but through disseminating the 'Shmuessen' which is published by Merkos L'inyonei Chinuch, in order to bring a great spiritual boost to your city."*<sup>3</sup>

In a letter to Dr. Mushkat the Rebbe writes, "We are glad to add you to the subscription list and you will receive the newsletters every month. Certainly you will send the payment for your subscription and also work on recruiting more subscribers. You certainly appreciate the great value of these newsletters and it would be proper to make the Shmuessen and Talks and Tales into household items in every Jewish home."<sup>4</sup>

Although the Talks and Tales in both languages were originally published as a resource for children not receiving a proper Jewish education, it became clear over time that the intended readership was every Yid, even *talmidei hayeshivos* and elderly Chassidim. The readership was encouraged to write to the editors and sometimes the Rebbe himself would respond to their inquiries.

Rabbi Moshe Pesach Goldman related that once, during the 5700s\*, he was standing in the foyer of 770 when the Rebbe approached and asked the *bochurim* standing there how much time must one wait after eating *milchigs* before eating *fleishigs*. One of the *bochurim* responded that one needs to wait a half hour and a rav who was nearby said that in Lithuania it was customary to just rinse your mouth between *milchigs* and *fleishigs*. "I did not ask what was customary in

Lithuania, I asked what is the *halacha*," the Rebbe said. "You don't read the Shmuessen? In it we wrote that one needs to wait one hour between *milchigs* and *fleishigs*. Someone wrote us a letter asking what the source for it is and we responded that the source is from the Shaloh."

Someone once wrote to the Rebbe about a foundational question in *emunah*.

"What is the proof that Torah is from Sinai? If it is just tradition, then is this also the proof of all other religions, *lehavdil*?"

The Rebbe responded: "I am surprised that apparently you did not read what was printed on this topic in the Shavuot booklet from Merkos, in the Talks and Tales."

Often the questions touched upon deep discussions in *nigleh* and Chassidus and it was clear that, while errors were inevitable, the content was painstakingly prepared and the presentation was intentional.

One example of this can be found in a letter the Rebbe addressed to Reb Moshe Pinchas Katz answering several questions he had on the content of the Shmuessen.<sup>5</sup>

In the first edition there was a story about Elazar Hatzaddik who heroically defied King Antiochus and did not agree to eat kosher meat next to an idol to give off the impression that he was following his decree. He was cruelly tortured and then died. The Yiddish article used the word "געשטארבן" and Reb Moshe Pinchas wondered if perhaps it would have been more appropriate to use the term "נפטר" to describe the passing of such a *tzaddik*.

The Rebbe responded that the children would not understand the term *niftar*, besides for the fact that in *cheder* the word מת was always translated into Yiddish as געשטארבן. The Rebbe then added parenthetically "similar to the idea of לא מת לעקב אבינו" and proceeded to write a deep *pilpul* on this *maamar Chazal*.

## NOT A NEWS MEDIUM

*"The Talks and Tales is not a news medium, to be read and discarded; nor does it accept advertisements. Its material is of permanent Jewish interest, a veritable treasure store of Jewish interest."* – Rabbi Nissan Mindel







THE SIX LANGUAGES THE SHMUESSEN WERE PUBLISHED IN.

In the winter of 5714\*, a reader sent a letter to the Rebbe asking why the Shmuessen and Talks and Tales did not report on the recent passing of a venerable Talmid Chacham. The Rebbe responded:<sup>6</sup>

אם קורא הוא בשימת לב הראוי את ירחונינו בטח כבר הי' יכול לראות שבאופן פרינציפי אין הוא דן אלא ע"ד תומ"צ ומאורעות דזמן העבר ולא ע"ד המאורעות דזמננו זה (וע"ז יש די מכ"ע יום יומיים). והטעמים מובנים לכל המתבונן בהמצב בזמן ההוא - (יוצא מן הכלל יחידי הי' המאמר ע"ד הסתלקות נשיא המל"ח ומיסד עתוננו - הרבי מליובאוויטש זצוקלה"ה)

*If you read our monthly newsletter with the appropriate attention certainly you will see that in principle it contains only information about Torah and mitzvos and events of the past and nothing about current events. (For that there are many daily newspapers.) The reason for this is self understood to anyone who observes the current situation. (The only exception to this rule was an article about the histalkus of the nossi of Merkos L'inyonei Chinuch and the founder of our newsletter—the Lubavitcher Rebbe זצוקלה"ה.)*

Many years later, in the summer of 5736\*, Reb Moshe Pinchas Katz wrote a letter to the editors:

*I am very surprised with the esteemed editors that all this time there has been no mention of:*

1. All the mitzvot the Rebbe has recently launched, which have been reported about in many newspapers throughout the world.
2. The same is true with the fact that this year the Rebbe declared as "Shnas Hachinuch!" The Rebbe emphasized that this should be widely publicized and there is no mention of it in the Shmuessen.
3. The twelve pismim the Rebbe suggested for all children, which were published in a special booklet, were also publicized in many newspapers throughout the world and there is no mention of them in the Shmuessen.

*How is it possible that the Shmuessen in Yiddish and in English which are published by Merkos under the Rebbe's leadership should not mention such important topics which are relevant to all Yidden throughout the world? We see how strongly the Rebbe kochs in them and you are silent with a deafening silence? Isn't this information more important than writing about a*



creature found in the far ends of the earth? Certainly if this was published in the Shmuessen which has such a wide readership it would inspire many hundreds and perhaps thousands in a practical way.

Rabbi Hodakov responded simply that, “The Rabbeim instituted that the content of the Shmuessen should have a special character—without including new things—regardless of how important they may be.”

## OTHER LANGUAGES

For many years, the Shmuessen in Yiddish were disseminated in Eretz Yisroel as well but in the summer of 5716\*, two Chassidim, Reb Avraham Meizlish and Reb Naftali Kraus undertook the mission of publishing a similar monthly newsletter in Hebrew titled שיחות לנוער. It had the same cover design and many similar columns which were often translations of old articles but some original content as well.

In a letter to Reb Naftali, the Rebbe clarifies that a translation must never be verbatim and should be done in a way that is most accessible and relevant to the respective culture. However, the cover design and other illustrations should be the same in order to emphasize how they are all part of the same umbrella publication.<sup>7</sup>

In a letter dated 5 Elul 5716\*, the Rebbe acknowledges receipt of the first issue of Sichos Lenoar.

“...ותנוח דעתו כאשר הניח דעתי כאשר הופיע לאור עולם”  
*“May your mind be at ease as you have put my mind at ease with the publication of the Sichos Lenoar. Yehi ratzon that this will serve as a good beginning for the Torah of the Rabbeim to conquer Israeli literature, especially of the youth.”*<sup>8</sup>

Many of the original articles that appeared in the Hebrew language Sichos Lenoar were edited by the Rebbe as well.

When Reb Gershon Mendel Garelik arrived on shlichus to Italy in 5719\*, one of the earliest *peulos* was to publish Talks and Tales in Italian. A professional translator was hired to prepare the content and all the drafts were sent to the Rebbe before publication. The Rebbe returned the drafts with grammatical edits and the translator was astounded at the Rebbe’s command of Italian.

Talks and Tales was published in French, as well, through the Lishka.<sup>9</sup> Reb Refoel Wilshansky was responsible for the project. Once, when an article from “In Nature’s Wonderland” was chosen for translation, the French translator vehemently disagreed with a certain line in the article and refused to translate it.

“Please explain the following statement that you wrote in the Shmuessen,” wrote Rabbi Wilshansky to Rabbi Mindel. “According to Einstein’s theory [of relativity] it is possible that the earth is stationary and the sun revolves around it.’ One of our translators caused an uproar about this and says this is completely inappropriate.”

The Rebbe responded to this question in his own holy handwriting.

*“This is a necessary result of the theory of relativity. Einstein adds that:*

- a. *From a scientific perspective there is no meaning to the words “moving” or “stationary” unless you immediately explain that this position is relative to something else.*
- b. *It is impossible to prove which is true: a) whether the sun revolves around the earth, b) if the earth revolves around the sun, c) or if they both revolve around a point between them.”*





## A DESIGN WITH A MESSAGE

As a publication created and directed by the Rebbe, everything in the Talks and Tales was specific and purposeful. Even the illustrations were reviewed carefully; especially the front cover, which debuted in 5703\* and remained unchanged for 46 years, was unique in its precision and messaging down to its finest details.

In 5719\*, several years after the Hebrew version, Sichos Lenoar, rolled off the presses in Israel, an Israeli architect Mr. Meir Ben Uri wrote a letter to the Rebbe with several questions about the cover design. Following is a free translation of the Rebbe's response with editorial notes in parentheses for clarification.<sup>10</sup>

*With much interest I read your letter from Erev Rosh Chodesh Nissan, which was a follow up to our conversation during your recent visit.*

*You focus on the design of the cover page of the Sichos Lenoar which is published by Merkos L'inyonei Chinuch, and you have three main points of critique:*

- 1. The placement and design of the luchos. (Why are they placed above clouds? Why are they drawn on an angle?)*
- 2. The placement and design of the globe. (It is drawn in a way that Asia and Australia do not appear there at all.)*
- 3. The illustration of the saying of Chazal על שלושה דברים העולם עומד - תורה, עבודה וגמילות חסדים (the world stands on three pillars - Torah, avoda and gemilus chasadim) through an illustration of three physical pillars. [On what do the pillars stand?]*

*As a preface, I would like to point out that you surely understand this cover design has been widely publicized for over 18 years in the United States, Israel and around the world so it is important not to make any changes to it unless there are extremely compelling reasons to do so.*

*The main purpose of publishing this monthly newsletter is in order to strengthen Yiddishkeit and to permeate the hearts and minds of the youth in every way possible. To accomplish this, the textual content is not enough and it is important that the first glance at the newsletter should have this effect as well. This is accomplished through illustrating that on the one hand, Yiddishkeit and its practical applications—namely*

*Torah study and mitzvah observance—are the loftiest and greatest in all of creation; and on the other hand, everything in creation is based on Torah and mitzvos.*

*The luchos are the clearest icon of Torah and mitzvos. Even children who have not received a Jewish education—a demographic certainly included in the intended readership of the newsletter—are familiar with the luchos.*

*The illustration emphasizes that the luchos (Torah and mitzvos) are above the earth and the heavens. The most practical way of illustrating the heavens is through clouds, therefore the luchos are placed above the clouds. Only Hashem, the creator of heaven and earth, is above the luchos. This is represented by the ב"ה which appears on the top right corner of the page.*

*Under the heavens is the earth and since Matan Torah happened at Har Sinai, the globe was drawn in a way that one can draw a line from the ב"ה on the top right corner, through the luchos, ending at the approximate location of Har Sinai on the globe.*

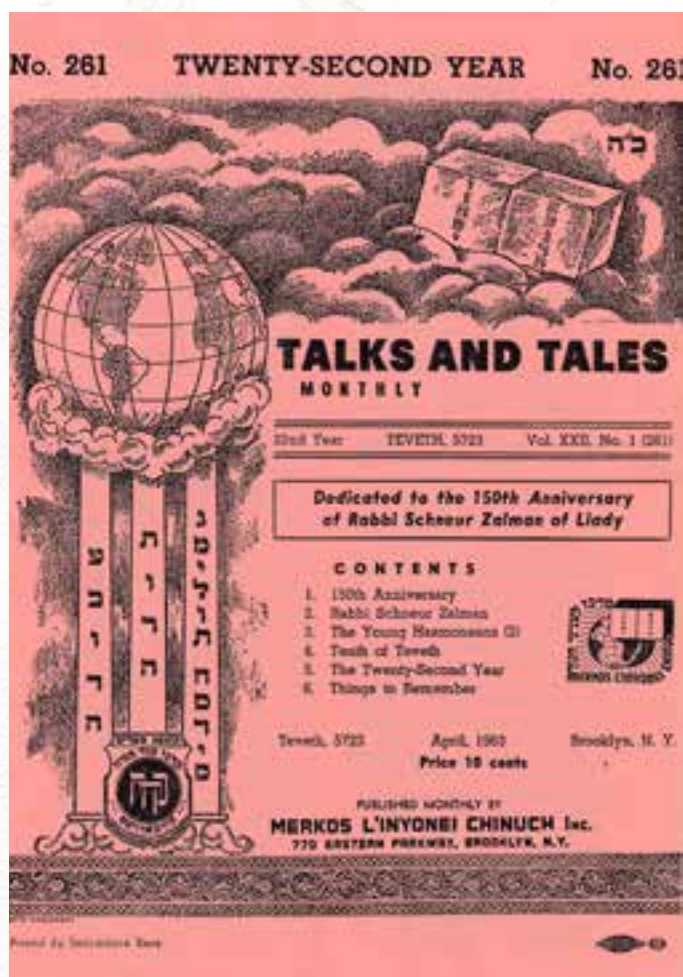
*These three elements (the ב"ה, the luchos and the globe) were therefore drawn diagonally from each other, for if they would be drawn one on top of each other perpendicularly, the globe would need to be drawn in a fashion that would place Har Sinai at the top of the globe. Children are unaccustomed to seeing the globe drawn in such a way that the east is drawn on top of the globe and the west on the bottom of the globe. As previously mentioned, the intention was for the initial cover design to convey a message without any lengthy explanations. (It was therefore important to draw the map on the globe in a way that is more familiar to people.)*

*Another reason (for not placing the globe directly under the luchos and then drawing Har Sinai on the top of the globe) is because then most places of civilization would not appear on the globe, and the illustration is meant to emphasize that Torah and mitzvos are relevant everywhere.*

*These are the reasons for the luchos being drawn on an angle, because the message is being conveyed through the straight line that runs from the ב"ה, the luchos and the globe.*

*You ask about the illustration of the globe standing on three pillars - on what do the pillars stand?*





*It is self understood that your question is essentially about the Mishnah in Pirkei Avos itself, as the cover design is meant to illustrate its most literal meaning. But in truth there is no need to explain this even in the words of the Mishnah since everyone understands that Torah, avoda and gemilus chasadim are not physical pillars upon which the physical world stands. They are all spiritual concepts which certainly have practical application.*

*Everyone knows that the Torah “stands” and comes from Hashem, the Nosen haTorah. The Mishnah is obviously using figurative speech and there is no room for misunderstanding at all. Just as none of the commentators on Pirkei Avos deal with this question*

*since the idea is so basic and self understood, so too, in the illustration there is no room for such a misunderstanding.*

Mr. Ben Uri also suggested that the three pillars be replaced with the three coordinates of width, length and depth which would represent the three pillars of the world. The Rebbe explained that in addition to the fact that there are various types of coordinate systems, these are concepts only understood by those who have a higher degree of knowledge in physics and mathematics and would be lost on the minds of young children. As the Rebbe emphasized throughout the letter, the purpose of the illustration is to express an idea that would not need much interpretation.



## UTILIZING AMERICAN CULTURE

In 5705\*, the Rebbe wanted to introduce a new feature in "Talks and Tales," an illustrated page with five or six items, little known facts about Jewish customs, lore and legend, which would add a new dimension to the publication. A 15-year-old artist named Michel Schwartz, who was learning in the Lubavitcher Yeshiva at the time, was hired to create this new feature, titled "Curiosity Corner," to be something that the children would look forward to reading from issue to issue.

Originally, most of the Rebbe's ideas were dealt with by Rabbi Mindel. However, very early on, Rabbi Mindel suggested that Michel should report directly

to the Rebbe and was ushered into the Rebbe's room, known then as the Merkos office, for his first meeting.

"I will never forget this awesome scene," Michel recalled. "His sparkling blue eyes and welcome smile... without uttering a word. I'm sure I was too young to appreciate the significance of the moment, that I was being invited, by the man who was later to become the greatest of all Rebbes, to execute under his tutelage, some of the earliest pictorial interpretations of Judaism for Lubavitch children's books.

"When describing the feature," the Rebbe said, 'Es zol oys'zahn vee Ripley—It should look like Ripley.' I was taken by surprise."

For many years, in many newspapers throughout the country, a square measuring approximately 5"x 5"





contained the work of Robert Ripley, titled “Believe It Or Not.” The Rebbe wanted these Torah ideas to be conveyed to Jewish American youth in a way they would relate to culturally as well.

The Curiosity Corner debuted in Teves 5705\* and continued for two consecutive years when it was replaced with a similar illustrated column titled “Sayings of Our Sages” for several more years. Both columns appeared in English and Yiddish.

In 5708\*, the Rebbe asked Michel to create a true to life character about whom adventure stories could be written and suggested that the format and look should be “like Dick Tracy,” a popular syndicated American comic strip at the time. The comic strip titled “Chusham” appeared in the Talks and Tales from 5708\* through 5711\*.<sup>11</sup>

## UNENDING INSPIRATION

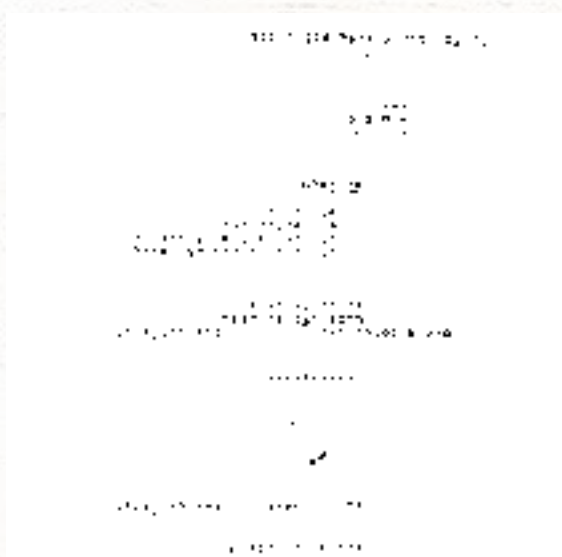
The long-lasting effects of the dissemination of Talks and Tales are beyond measure. Pages and pages of unadulterated Torah and *yiras Shamayim* shaped generations of hearts and minds and brought them closer to Yiddishkeit. As the Rebbe attested in a letter, in Teves 5703\*, after one year of the publication of the Shmuessen and Talks and Tales, “*With Hashem’s help, we have now completed one full year with 24 of these issues [12 in Yiddish and 12 in English], which have captured the hearts of the youth, their teachers and parents.*”<sup>12</sup>

Even today, thousands of young and old readers still enjoy the timeless articles of Talks and Tales, recently reprinted by Kehos with a detailed index. ❶

1. Igros Kodesh vol. 1, letter #65.
2. Likkutei Sichos vol. 2 page 370.
3. Igros Kodesh vol. 21 page 16.
4. Igros Kodesh vol. 1 page 94.
5. Ibid. page 36.
6. Ibid. vol. 21 page 255.
7. Igros Kodesh vol. 16, letter #6,075.
8. Igros Kodesh vol. 13, letter #4,689.
9. Lishkas Lubavitch—the Lubavitch Office of Europe.
10. Igros Kodesh vol. 18 p. 303.
11. The Rebbe and the Artist, [www.chabad.org/375089](http://www.chabad.org/375089)
12. Igros Kodesh vol. 1, letter #34.

א"ה, כגון חשוון תשס"ה.  
רצוי מאד שיהי' נאמן בלילי סוף חשוון, וז"ל מילא דעיר על  
הערב נגד.  
הנכנס המספר יש בארבע שעה לפני לילי נגד חשון קנינים לפי  
המדינה, כגון בלילי ישראל, בלילות חשון, בינתיים (לפי חשון)  
כגון סיפורים חאסידי, סיפורים דמיוניים חאסידי, סיפורים לפי חאסידי  
וכו"ו, עדים דמיוניים דמיוני ידי ישראל.  
בנוסף למישים, כגון שיש להוסיף מילה עם סדר המסמך -  
כדוגמי למישים חאסידי.

A LETTER FROM DR. NISSAN MINDEL NOTING THAT THE REBBE WANTED THE PUBLICATION OF A TALKS AND TALES INDEX. (IT WAS EVENTUALLY PUBLISHED BY KEHOT IN 5780.)



COVER OF THE FIRST EDITION OF THE SHMUESSEN.

א"ה, כגון חשוון תשס"ה.  
רצוי מאד שיהי' נאמן בלילי סוף חשוון, וז"ל מילא דעיר על  
הערב נגד.  
הנכנס המספר יש בארבע שעה לפני לילי נגד חשון קנינים לפי  
המדינה, כגון בלילי ישראל, בלילות חשון, בינתיים (לפי חשון)  
כגון סיפורים חאסידי, סיפורים דמיוניים חאסידי, סיפורים לפי חאסידי  
וכו"ו, עדים דמיוניים דמיוני ידי ישראל.  
בנוסף למישים, כגון שיש להוסיף מילה עם סדר המסמך -  
כדוגמי למישים חאסידי.

A LETTER FROM RABBI HODAKOV TO RABBI GERSHON MENDEL GARELIK, INFORMING HIM THAT THE ISSUES OF SHMUESSEN AND TALKS HAD BEEN SHIPPED TO ITALY FOR TRANSLATION.

RABBI LEVI GARELIK

# “Do It!”

## “המעשה הוא העיקר”



“המעשה הוא העיקר”

With these words, the Rebbe concluded hundreds upon hundreds of lengthy and deep explanations, whether of a mystifying story in the Midrash, a puzzling piece of Rashi on the *parsha*, or even a disturbing occurrence in the recent news. It all boiled down to one thing only: action! What lesson can we take from the above to implement in our *avodas Hashem*, and how are we going to act on it?

Over the years, this statement has become known as a trademark in the Rebbe's *sichos* and a hallmark of the Rebbe's approach.

Of course, the source of this statement is the *psak din* of the Mishnah in Avos:

“לא המדרש עיקר אלא המעשה”

**“Not study, but the deed is the essential thing.”<sup>1</sup>**

The truth is, much of *Toras haChassidus* and its “Torah

*Shebiksav*”—the *Sefer HaTanya*, has come to impart this very point.

As the Alter Rebbe explains<sup>2</sup> in great detail: The fact that a *neshamah* comes down to this world is an immense decline (“ירידה גדולה”) from the place it enjoyed on high. No matter how high a level it will reach through *avoda* in this world, it will never come close to the connection it had with Hashem before coming down here. The only reason the *neshamah* has to make this long arduous journey is in order to refine the body and the surrounding physical world through Torah and mitzvos. The underlying reason being that Hashem desires a *dira b’tachtonim*—a dwelling specifically down here, in this lowly world.

This idea was further developed by the Alter Rebbe in many *maamarim* and letters, especially in Iggeres Hakodesh where he extolls the notion of actionable mitzvos—most notably the mitzvah of tzedakah.

But the real breakthrough came from a letter the Alter Rebbe wrote shortly before his *histalkus*, in the village of Piyenna.<sup>3</sup>

The letter was printed in Iggeres Hakodesh *siman* 20, and contains the groundbreaking idea that:

מהותו ועצמותו של המאציל ב”ה שמציאותו הוא מעצמותו... הוא לבדו בכחו ויכלתו לברוא יש מאין ואפס המוחלט ממש בלי שום עילה וסיבה אחרת קודמת ליש הזה...

Only *Atzmus u’Mehus* itself, the very essence of Hashem which is not caused or preceded by any other entity, *chas veshalom*, can create the physical world which feels itself as a self-sustaining entity without any causation in sight.

This idea is life-changing. The Frierdiker Rebbe describes in great detail in a *sicha*<sup>4</sup> how this *vort* changed Chassidim’s perception and brought a previously unfelt excitement in fulfilling mitzvos with physical objects in this mundane world:



לע"נ  
 מרת רחל לאה  
 בת הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' ניסן ע"ה  
 פטוונער  
 נלב"ע כ"ו טבת ה'תשע"ג  
 ת"צ'ב'ה'  
 נדפס ע"י  
 משפחתה שיחיו



Until then it was understood that mitzvos were important because Hashem's desire for a *dira b'tachtonim* can only be fulfilled in the physical world, but this idea did not give any credence to *gashmius* in and of itself. But in this new letter, the Alter Rebbe explains that the *gashmius* itself is precious, because by elevating the *gashmius* of this world through Torah and mitzvos we have a direct line connecting us with *Atzmus u'Mehus*, more than any spiritual pursuits could reach.

In truth, the Rebbe points out that this premise of "*hamaaseh hu ha'ikker*" is really a foundational concept in the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov:

Many people are prone to believe that Chassidus came to overemphasize the role of the heart in serving Hashem. They take the statement of "רחמנא לבא בעי"—Hashem wants heart—to mean that the main thing is to have the right feelings and intentions in the heart. This is obviously mistaken.

In letters marking 200 years since the *histalkus* of the Baal Shem Tov, the Rebbe repeatedly asked that this notion be disputed:

*The most important point to emphasize is to reeducate the mistaken who claim that the whole of the Baal Shem Tov's teachings was only about* רחמנא לבא בעי—*chas v'shalom, contrary to the clear ruling of the Mishnah that*

*which leads them to all types of mistaken beliefs.*

*We must emphasize that the Baal Shem Tov would not bend even one iota from the most minute detail of a mitzvah d'rabbanan. It is only that on top of that, he also stressed the importance of 'kavana'. Moreover, he taught that each and every single Yid (no matter what his or her intellectual capabilities may be) has the ability to be at one with Hashem through Torah and mitzvos...<sup>5</sup>*

In this vein, the Rebbe cited the teaching of the Baal Shem Tov

countless times (as the Rebbe once remarked: More than one thousand times!): Every single thing that a Yid hears or sees, must teach him a lesson in *avodas Hashem*. This even includes every concept in Torah—every thing that a person learns must have a practical implication in strengthening his observance of Torah and mitzvos.

This is what Chassidus Chabad is all about: Allowing the intellect to understand the deepest concepts of *Elokus*, and from there to affect the feelings of the heart, and to manifest it in tangible action.<sup>6</sup>

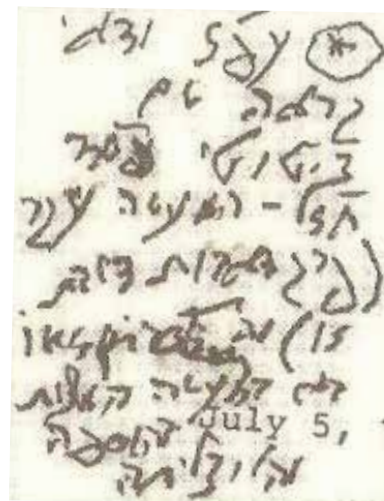
## What's in Likkutei Sichos?

In the year 5748\*, a woman wrote to the Rebbe that she felt inspired when learning the weekly "*likkut*" from Likkutei Sichos.

The Rebbe replied:

עפ"ז ודאי קראה שם ציטוטי פס"ד חז"ל  
 - המעשה עיקר (פרק דאבות דשבת זו) וה  
 בא במעשה המצות בהוספה  
 וה' יצליחה.

If so, you have certainly read there citations of the ruling of Chazal that "*hamaaseh hu ha'ikkar*" (from this week's *perek* in Pirkei Avos) and the inspiration will also manifest in tangible action of increased mitzvah observance. May Hashem grant you success.





The Alter Rebbe explains this in his *maamarim* by way of the famous *marshal*: When one wishes to lift up an entire building, he uses what's called a "lever" (לייווער), gripping the building from the lowest point possible. Only through this method can all the higher floors of the building be lifted too. The same is true with *maaseh*, the realm of action: Although it is the lowest of all the human faculties and it deals with the lowliest of creations—the physicality of *olam hazeh*—nevertheless it has the power to uplift all the spiritual realms above it.<sup>7</sup>

## Credible Accusation

Over and over throughout the years, the Rebbe impressed upon Yidden who were not yet observant and did not understand the importance of mitzvos that the essence of Yiddishkeit lies in the act. Learning, contemplating, and feeling are all nice and fine, but nothing will bring you closer to Hashem than *mitzvos maasiyos*.

At one point, the Rebbe held a lengthy and fascinating correspondence with a secular Israeli author named Eliezer Steinman, who had taken interest in and was writing a series of books on Chassidus.<sup>8</sup>

The Rebbe's words to him in this letter speak for themselves:

*"When one wishes to convey concepts from the Torah—which is a living Torah and a Torah of life—especially the area of Torah that deals more with emotions [i.e. Chassidus], and all the more so if he wishes to bring these ideas to a crowd that is unfamiliar with them, it is not enough for the author or courier of this message to merely read books about this Torah and examine the text carefully.*

*If he really wishes to convey the ideas accurately, he needs—to the extent possible—to "enter" the way and "spirit" of life of the proponents and leaders of this philosophy.*

*"...I do not know you personally, but I hope that you will not take offense if I allow myself to suggest that if you wish to truly reach the goal you set for yourself by writing these books, it would seem appropriate that you should adopt the way of life purported in the books, i.e. a life according to the Torah in practice, as explained in the sources for your books, in Chassidus. The approach of רחמנא לבא בעיי (Hashem wants heart) is not enough at all, even if it is needed as an entryway.*

*"...You may suspect me, that my true intention is to influence another Jew to become fully observant of Torah and mitzvos, as Chassidus would expect. And I must admit that Chazal's words would be appropriate in this situation: A person is never accused of something unless there is at least a grain of truth to it..."*<sup>9</sup>

In another letter the Rebbe takes the matter one step further, explaining that when the feelings of the heart are manifest in concrete action, then we know that the feelings were indeed sincere.<sup>10</sup>

With time, Mr. Steinman did indeed grow closer to Torah-observant Yiddishkeit.<sup>11</sup>

## Action Above All?

But if action is paramount and is the only way to refine the world, why do we find that so much emphasis is placed on Torah study, with many sources in Chazal putting the mitzvah of *talmud Torah* above all else?

And what about the many mitzvos that are duties of the heart—mitzvos

connected to thoughts and feelings, like *ahavas Hashem* and *yiras Hashem*?

In order to understand this issue, let us preface some context:


The Gemara<sup>12</sup> cites a debate between the *tannaim*: Which is greater, *talmud*—study, or *maaseh*—action?

Rabbi Tarfon maintained that *maaseh* is greater while Rabbi Akiva maintained that *talmud* is greater. The *tannaim* concluded that *talmud* is greater, since it ultimately leads to *maaseh*.

The Alter Rebbe explains in Likkutei Torah<sup>13</sup> that even from this conclusion that *talmud* is greater we can deduce that ultimately *maaseh* is the most important thing for the only reason that *talmud* is considered greater is because it leads to *maaseh*!

In Chassidus it is taught that throughout most of history, *talmud* is the greater virtue because the *Elokus* that is found in the physical world is hidden. But in Moshiach's time, when *Elokus* will be revealed for all to see, it will be clear that *maaseh* is the main thing. Nowadays, as we come closer to the time of Moshiach, this virtue of *maaseh* already begins to shine.

The Rebbe points out that even while we usher in the coming of Moshiach through *hafatzas hamaayanos chutza*—spreading the teachings of Chassidus to the outside world, which is seemingly an element of "*talmud*," we still need to allow the part of "*maaseh*" in too. For this reason the Rebbe instituted the concept of "*tahalucha*"—walking far distances to shuls and spreading the joy of Yom Tov with other Yidden



along  
with a *vort*  
of Chassidus.

This brings the effort  
of *hafatzas hamaayanos*  
into action: all the way to the  
movement of the feet!<sup>14</sup>

Additionally, Chassidus explains  
that even the mitzvos that are thought/  
feeling-based are essentially meant to  
affect the physical body as well. For  
example, *ahavas Hashem* is supposed  
to penetrate and affect the physical  
organ of the heart in the physical  
body!

The Rebbe offers a number of  
examples of this concept as seen in the  
lives of great *tzaddikim* and others.

The Gemara tells the story of Rabbi  
Yochanan Ben Zakai meeting the  
Roman general, how the arrival of  
good news caused the general's foot to  
physically grow in size!

Additionally, in Hayom Yom the  
Rebbe cites the story of Reb Nochum  
of Chernobyl who gained weight from  
the joy of saying "*Amen, yehei shmei*  
*rabba...*"<sup>15</sup>

But the Rebbe takes this matter one  
step further:

Even *talmud* itself can be  
considered *maaseh*!

The fact that a Yid sits down  
to learn Torah—in and of itself—is  
a great *maaseh*. One need not  
understand why it is so important  
to study Torah and all its spiritual  
accomplishments. One needs only to  
know that Hashem gave us the Torah  
and therefore it is our job to study it!

When the Rebbe launched the  
"*Ufaratzta*" campaign, he explained  
that for *talmidei hayeshiva*, *Ufaratzta* is  
to manifest in *limud haTorah*.

"For them, this is all they should  
know. Just like we tell everyone else  
that '*hamaaseh hu ha'ikkar*' and they  
need to just do the action, so too,  
*yeshiva bochurim* need to sit and  
learn. This is their *maaseh b'poel*. In  
fact, Hashem looked at the Torah and  
created the world. Everything begins  
from the Torah. The *bochurim* need  
to sit and learn, *nigleh* and Chassidus,  
both during *sedarim* as well as outside  
of *seder*, in the spirit of *Ufaratzta*—24  
hours a day!"<sup>16</sup>

The Rebbe would never cease  
encouraging *maaseh b'poel* again  
and again throughout the years. The  
Rebbe famously derided the approach  
of those who, before actually getting  
anything done, first need to form  
a committee and call a meeting to  
discuss all the details, with the only  
concrete decision of the meeting being  
that another meeting still needs to be  
called!

"Just start doing your shlichus," the  
Rebbe insisted. "You'll already see how  
many of the questions and problems  
you thought you had will actually take  
care of themselves!"<sup>17</sup>

Professor Velvel Green related a  
fascinating story in this regard:

"In the 1960s, my field of research  
was in epidemiology, getting to the  
root of various viral illnesses, what  
caused them to spread, how many  
people were vaccinated, etc. Gathering  
all the intricate details of the sickness  
was paramount in order to figure out  
the proper way to avoid its spread.

"In a *yechidus* I had with the Rebbe,  
I told the Rebbe that my background  
in epidemiology got me thinking  
about the state of Yiddishkeit in the  
United States. We all know that the  
vast majority of immigrants from  
Europe were extremely *frum*, yet  
within one or two generations, almost  
any semblance of Torah and mitzvos

### You Do Yours; The Rebbe Does His

When a Yid goes out on the shlichus of the *nossi hador*, the most  
important thing is to "do the do"—*naaseh*, and not to worry about  
understanding and feeling—*nishma*. Your job is to find another Yid and  
help them put on tefillin, do more mitzvos—*maaseh b'poel*.

In previous generations, when people's hearts were more refined and  
their minds had greater capacity, perhaps then they were able to have  
both *naaseh* and *nishma*. But today, if we were to tell a shliach to focus  
on *nishma*, chances are it will diminish his ability to fulfill the *naaseh*  
properly—at least partially. Every minute is precious! Use the time you  
have to influence another Yid to do more mitzvos.

The Rebbe, *nessi doreinu*, himself personifies both *naaseh* and *nishma*  
together. Since you are going out on *his* shlichus, all you should worry  
about is doing what you have to do, and the Rebbe will take care of the  
rest...

(*Sichas Shabbos Parshas Pinchas* 5737.  
See also *Reshimas Hayoman* p. 369)





was all but gone from their families. What caused this to happen? Which mitzvos were the first to be dropped? I felt that if we could research these questions and come up with informed answers, the Rebbe's shluchim would have a much easier time doing their work in a targeted, results-based manner.

"I said, 'The Rebbe has hundreds of shluchim. [This was long before the army of thousands of shluchim that we know today was a reality.] Why not offer them this research-based approach of how to prioritize their efforts?'

"The Rebbe responded: 'If I do indeed have that many shluchim,

they need to do it all! There are no priorities or best approaches. They need to do it all!'

"I understood the Rebbe's answer in the context of his timeless approach to always prefer action over anything else. The Rebbe didn't have time to sit and strategize what seemed to be the 'best approach' and make a detailed 100-year plan. The Rebbe wants anyone who has the ability to influence others to use their capabilities and do whatever they can to bring Moshiach, now!"<sup>18</sup> **T**

1. Avos 1:17. See also Tikkunei Zohar 52 (87a).
2. Likkutei Amarim *perakim* 35-37.
3. Derech Mitzvosecha, 170a.

4. Acharon Shel Pesach 5694; Likkutei Dibburim vol. 1, p. 309.
5. Igros Kodesh 20 Tishrei 5720, et. al.
6. Purim 5723.
7. Torah Ohr, Bereishis 4a.
8. See Kovetz L'Chizuk Hahiskashrus, issue 47 (Tishrei 5773), Vaad Hatmimim Haolami.
9. Igros Kodesh vol. 12, 26 Shevat 5716.
10. Ibid. vol. 16, 24 Teves 5718.
11. 'My Encounter' interview with Rabbi Chanoch Glitsenstein, Living Torah disc 128 program 509.
12. Kiddushin 40b.
13. Parshas Acharei-Mos 26d, et. al.
14. Acharon Shel Pesach 5720, et. al. See *Tahalucha*, Derher Sivan 5776.
15. Likkutei Sichos vol. 1, p. 31.
16. Shabbos Parshas Kedoshim 5719.
17. Yud Shevat 5746, *se'if* 8.
18. Professor Green, *Shalom U'bracha*, p. 40.



# Unusual Advice

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

During the times of the Alter Rebbe, it was common practice for Jews to lease a parcel of land with an inn from a nobleman and use it as a source of *parnasa* by farming the land and using the inn to serve drinks to the local peasants and hosting travelers overnight.

One year, a group of these Jews faced a calamity; there was no rainfall and the fields would be devastated. Making matters worse, without the ability to sell crops, they would have no funds with which to pay the nobleman and that would surely mean their immediate eviction from the property.

They turned to the Alter Rebbe, begging him to intercede on their behalf before Hashem to bring the much-needed rain. "Rebbe," they cried, "If it doesn't rain in the next few days, we will

be ruined! Please daven for us!"

To their great dismay, however, the Alter Rebbe just listened and did not say a word. They left the room and burst into bitter tears. All those present heard their woes and shared their pain but practically there was not much anyone could do.

Their story and plight made its way around from person to person until it reached the ears of young Menachem Mendel, who would later become the Tzemach Tzedek. He advised them, "Go back into my grandfather's room and say exactly as I tell you."

He then scripted them word for word how they should present their case. "If you have the ability to help and you are choosing not to, then it is simply cruel. If you don't have the ability

then with what right have you taken upon yourself to be a leader of *klal Yisroel*!?"

Menachem Mendel continued sharing with the worried group the argument they should make based on a Gemara. "In *Maseches Taanis* it says that Reb Yehuda Hanossi decreed a fast day for rain, and when it did not help he became distressed. A few other stories on the same *daf* show a similar idea; when the *nossi* did not succeed in bringing about the *bracha* of rain, it would affect him so much that he became weak. So Rebbe, we are presenting this to you so it can have a profound impact and cause rain to come down."

The group looked at each other with surprise! A daring argument indeed, but what choice did they have? The situation was desperate!

They entered the Alter Rebbe's room, and repeated the words exactly as they had been told.

The Rebbe's face instantly became serious and he put his hands over his face and rested his head on the table for a long period of time. Finally, he raised his head and blessed them and wished them well.

A short while after they left the room, the skies began to cloud up and turn grey. To their great joy, a heavy rain began to fall from the sky and they could not even travel home for three days due to the incredible downpour.

Shortly after the incident, the Alter Rebbe commented, "Ah! Mendel's head." <sup>1</sup>

1. Meaning the whole idea was orchestrated by his smart grandson, the Tzemach Tzedek.





## “We Will Think of You”

*The following story was told by Reb Lipa Brennan to a member of the Derher editorial team.*

In 5736\*, Nechemya Kessler and I traveled to Alberta, Canada, as well as to Alaska, on Merkos Shlichus. The way it worked back then was that a pair of *bochurim* would choose a state or region to travel to, submit a proposal to Rabbi Hodakov, and he would agree—or not agree<sup>1</sup>—and based upon that, we would go.

We didn’t know too much about world geography, but Nechemya knew that there was a need for Merkos Shluchim in Alberta, so we looked for a US state that began with an “A,” and Alaska came up. We had no idea where it was, really, but we put the two together and received a *bracha* to go.

Before we left, as we were learning about the regions we were going to visit, we realized that there were halachic questions as far as *zmanim*, Shabbos and so on.<sup>2</sup> We went to Rabbi Zalman Shimon Dvorkin and asked him, as far as Shabbos

was concerned—if there is no nightfall, but rather a long period of dusk, after which the sun rises again, when does Shabbos begin and end? He answered that we should follow the times of the nearest Jewish community, which was in Seattle, Washington. We then asked him what to do about davening in a place where daytime lasts longer than 24 hours in the summer, and he told us to ask Rabbi Hendel who was in 770 at the time. Rabbi Hendel had been to Alaska recently with Rabbi Gershon Grossbaum, where they were *machshir* a *mikveh* at Elmendorf Air Force Base.

We went to see Rabbi Hendel and he told us to ask Rabbi Hodakov. Rabbi Hodakov told us to come back in the evening.

When we returned in the evening, Rabbi Hodakov told us “We daven Shacharis here at 9:30 a.m., Mincha at 3:15 p.m. and Maariv at 9:30 p.m. and you should daven at these times. You will think of us, and we will think of you.” The way Rabbi Hodakov told us this, it was quite clear that this was an answer from

לזכות הורינו  
 ר' אברהם שמואל  
 וזוגתו מרת רבקה מירל שיחיו  
 שפאלטר  
 ר' משה חיים  
 וזוגתו מרת שרה שיחיו  
 גיפערן  
 נדפס ע"י  
 הרה"ת ר' יצחק מאיר וזוגתו מרת לאה  
 ומשפחתם שיחיו  
 שפאלטר



PICTURES FROM RABBI BRENNAN'S REPORT ON AN "EVENING WITH CHABAD" ARRANGED IN EDMONTON, ALBERTA

the Rebbe, which was very exciting to us—the Rebbe had said, “We will think of you.”

As our shlichus progressed, we traveled further and further north. We were hoping to reach a point north of the Arctic Circle, so that we would have at least one *tefilah* during which we would think of the Rebbe, and the Rebbe would think of us, but *hashgacha pratis* determined that that was not to be. The closest we got was to a place where there was no clear night, but a two-hour dusk, and then the sun came up.

### Balancing Risk and Reward

When we arrived in Alaska we heard about the Trans-Alaska Pipeline which was then under construction, and would allow oil to be transported south from Prudhoe Bay in Northern Alaska. There were camps every 20 miles or so for the workers who were building the pipeline. Many of the workers were students from the West Coast who had come

for a summer job. The only way to get to parts of the pipeline was by air—a small plane or helicopter.

We wanted to visit these workers—some of whom were Jewish—but we knew that the Rebbe had reservations about traveling by plane in some cases. We asked Rabbi Hodakov, and he told us that on the one hand, we needed to try and reach as many Yidden as we could but on the other hand flying on a single-engine plane was not allowed. As a result, we couldn't get to the more remote parts of the pipeline. We did, however, reach a number of Jewish workers in the camps closer to cities, and were able to put tefillin on with them. **T**

1. Of course, Rabbi Hodakov would be conveying the Rebbe's decision.
2. In the northern extremes of Alaska, north of the Arctic Circle, the sun does not set for days or weeks during the summer, and does not rise for days or weeks during the winter, posing complicated halachic questions as to the times Shabbos begins and ends, when to daven and so on.



# EDUCATION from the Womb



לזכות  
 יהודית יפה תח'י  
 לרגל מלאת לה ח"י שנים  
 כ"ט טבת ה'תשפ"א  
 ולזכות אחותה  
 מנוחה תח'י  
 לרגל מלאת לה י"א שנים  
 ר"ח שבט ה'תשפ"א  
 לע"נ  
 ר' יהודה מרדכי  
 בן ר' ברוך ע"ה  
 נלב"ע כ"ט טבת ה'תש"י  
 תנ"צ'בה'  
 ולע"נ  
 הרה"ת ר' אריאל ע"ה  
 בן יבלחט"א ר' שאלתיאל זאב שליט"א  
 נלב"ע ח' שבט ה'תשע"ה  
 תנ"צ'בה'  
 נדפס ע"י  
 הרה"ת ר' דובער וזוגתו מרת רחל  
 ומשפחתם שיחיו  
 מאטשניק

*If you want to truly learn the Rebbe's approach to children, you have to do so from seeing his interactions with them in real-life, more than just reading about it in the sichos or listening to farbrengens. The "dollars" distributions where he affectionately waves dollars on their faces; the davenings as the Rebbe gives them coins; the rallies where he waves at them as his face has this special glow.*

*It might be said that a focal point of the Rebbe's nesius was a special emphasis on children and their central standing in Yiddishkeit and Chassidus. The Rebbe's personal interaction with children—which ranged from holding rallies to creating a special children's program (Tzivos Hashem) to testing children in yechidus—is unparalleled in any previous generation of the Rabbeim.*

*One particular area the Rebbe focuses on is early-childhood education, when the child is still an infant. The following is a short guide to, and sampling of, the Rebbe's insights and instructions, beginning well before birth and continuing into infancy.*



# During Pregnancy: Studying the Entire Torah

At this stage, the actions of the mother (and father) already affect the child, for whatever she eats and drinks is consumed by the child as well.<sup>1</sup>

However, much of the child's education now is not yet in the parent's arena. The Gemara<sup>2</sup> teaches us that while an infant is in its mother's womb, "a candle shines over his head... and he is taught the entire Torah." (This refers to the *neshama* in *Atzilus*, which is above the limitations of creation. This is how it can study the entire Torah in such a remarkably short amount of time.<sup>3</sup>)

However, the *neshama* is not *born* knowing the entire Torah because as it enters the world, "a *malach* comes and slaps it on the lips," causing him to forget everything he learned.

The reason he must forget the Torah is simple: If a child were born knowing the entire Torah, he would have no free choice.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, if he is going to forget it anyway, what is the point of teaching it to him in the first place?

Chassidus explains that a *roshem*, an effect of this Torah study, remains with the child, giving him a natural tendency and pull towards Torah and mitzvos.<sup>5</sup> The Rebbe takes it a step further, explaining that the study of the entire Torah—given to the infant as he is above the limitation of creation, as above—causes everything the child will later study to be permeated with the infinite power of the entire Torah, so that even the "*kametz alef uh*" that the child recites contains the Torah in its entirety.<sup>6</sup>

## During Birth and Immediately Afterward: The Shir Hamaalos



As soon as a child is born—as close as possible to its study with the *malach*—the education begins.

For generations, Yidden have had the custom of hanging certain holy things in the delivery room (as a woman is giving birth) and surrounding the infant. This could include *Shir Hamaalos*, *mezuzos*, *kamei'os*, and so on (depending on the local *minhag*). These were a *segula* to ensure an easy delivery and to safeguard the infant.

But times have changed, the Rebbe said. In past generations, women would give birth at home, and these customs were followed. Nowadays, women give birth in the hospital. This is done based on the medical instruction of doctors—and thus must be followed, as with all doctors' instructions—but it has caused that these *minhagim* are (often) not followed until the woman returns home.

The Rebbe spoke at length about the importance of following this *minhag* immediately in the hospital. This is easy to arrange in any hospital, the Rebbe said, even in locations where this woman is the only Yid in the hospital—for any conscientious doctor knows that the most important element in birth is the woman's comfort, and he would be happy to accommodate whatever makes her comfortable, no matter his personal belief.

In addition to the *segulos* involved—ensuring an easy and healthy labor, and a healthy child—the Rebbe explained that it is essential for a child to be surrounded by holiness immediately upon birth. Although we do not know whether the child physically registers what he hears from the outside world, the *neschama* is certainly listening. These early impressions have long-lasting effects throughout its life, years and decades later.<sup>7</sup>



# Holy Lullabies

This is also why it is so important to continue women's long-standing custom of rocking their babies to the tunes of holy lullabies (e.g. describing how Torah is the most precious commodity and so on).

Unlike those who believe that religion should be something given to children later on in life when they are old enough to make choices, but their early childhood should be spent like everyone else, so that the child could fit in with friends—the Rebbe pointed to the reality: The parents who followed that path ended up with children who strayed from their parents' way of life—and from their parents themselves.

The Rebbe said that science has confirmed the importance of early infant experiences as well—but it has only been “discovered” recently. For centuries, Yidden have been behaving this way based on *emunah*, in an era when conventional wisdom believed that it was nonsensical and that it made no difference at all. (The Rebbe once added, “Being that this is crucial to a child's education, how is it possible that Hashem—the source and essence of all good—allowed the world to remain in the dark for thousands of years on such an important issue, without explaining and revealing that one must be careful with a child's education from the first few weeks and months? It's a good *taine*, but it was answered when He gave the Yidden the Torah, where He explained how to deal with children...”<sup>8</sup>) Whether one does it based on the *minhag* or the science, the Rebbe says—the main thing is to do it...

(Furthermore, the Rebbe said, when a child causes *Shir Hamaalos* to be brought to the hospital on his behalf, he is thereby



fulfilling his own shlichus of bringing *kedushah* there.<sup>9</sup>)

We see a fascinating example of this early effect regarding one of the *tannaim*: Pirkei Avos tells us that Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai would list the special qualities that defined each of his five outstanding students: Rabbi Eliezer possessed an outstanding knowledge and memory, “a cistern that loses not a drop;” Rabbi Yossi Hakohen was a “Chossid;” and so on. When it came to Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chananya, he described him as “*Ashrei Yoladeto*,” fortunate is the mother who birthed him.

This does not seem to be describing a specific quality, but the *mefarshim*<sup>10</sup> explain that this was actually referring to something very specific: When Rabbi Yehoshua was an infant, his mother would take his carriage to the *batei midrash* to soak in the sounds of Torah<sup>11</sup>—and that was why he reached such great heights in Torah learning.

The Rebbe notes how powerful an effect this had on his life: Decades later, when he was a tremendous Torah scholar and his teacher was describing *his* specific quality—his defining attribute was “fortunate is the mother who birthed him”—the fact that his carriage hung around *batei midrash*!

# Only Kosher Animals

Following this reasoning—that a child’s early observations have an inordinate effect on the rest of his life—the Rebbe campaigned that a child should only be shown holy and pure pictures and that all non-kosher animals should be removed from all children’s books and toys.<sup>12</sup>

Acknowledging that this constituted a shift from common practice, the Rebbe said that this was a simple oversight that could be easily changed (as long as people don’t make a “*natzchanus*” i.e. a “gotcha” issue out of it). The Rebbe said that this included all stages of children’s development: The toys hanging around the crib in infancy, the toys they play with, and the books that they read. (Interesting to note that the Rebbe provided two specific examples: a mouse that was commonly used, and a cat that might be featured in Alef Beis books.<sup>13</sup>)

(The Rebbe noted that there were some major exceptions, including: visiting a zoo to experience the wonders of Hashem’s creation; illustrations of Tanach and so on; drawings of lions that can be found in shuls.<sup>14</sup>)

On different occasions, the Rebbe also commended the *minhagim* of saying Modeh Ani with children, even before they can speak;<sup>15</sup> and of kissing the mezuzah multiple times a day and before bed. The Rebbe also encouraged that every child’s room should be a holy place—a Beis Chabad—with its own tzedakah *pushka*, *siddur*, *haggadah*, and Tehillim.<sup>16</sup> T



1. Hisvaaduyos 5745 vol. 1 p. 133. Igros Kodesh vol. 27 p. 229.
2. Nidah 30b.
3. Likkutei Sichos vol. 5 p. 14, see footnote 55, citing Likkutei Torah Shir Hashirim 8:4.
4. Likkutei Sichos vol. 20 p. 109.
5. See Likkutei Torah Shelach 44a.
6. Likkutei Sichos vol. 5 p. 13-14
7. Yud-Tes Kislev 5747; Hisvaaduyos 5747 p. 33.
8. Sichos Kodesh 5740 vol. 2 p. 582.
9. Hisvaaduyos 5750 vol. 2 p. 433.
10. Midrash Shmuel in the name of Rashi.
11. Yerushalmi Yevamos 1:5.
12. Likkutei Sichos vol 25 p. 309
13. Ibid. p. 309-310
14. Ibid. footnotes 1, 5, 7.
15. Toras Menachem 5749 vol. 2 p. 36
16. Shabbos Parshas Vayera 5752. Shabbos Parshas Vayigash 5747; Hisvaaduyos 5747 vol. 2, p. 212.
17. 18 Elul 5742.

## The Merit of Kimchis

The Kimchis family was a respected family of Kohanim during the time of *Bayis Sheini*. The matriarch of the family, whose name was Kimchis, once explained why she merited that all her seven sons became Kohanim Gedolim: “The walls of my house never saw the hair on my head...”

The Rebbe pointed out that this illustrates just how much a child is affected by the behavior of his surroundings, even from a very young age. What caused this child to grow up and become a Kohen Gadol? The fact that decades earlier, his mother was so careful with *tznius*.<sup>17</sup>



לעילוי נשמת  
יעקב בן אייזיק ע"ה  
נלב"ע ח' טבת ה'תשע"ז  
ת"נ צ"ב

נדפס ע"י בנו  
הרה"ת ר' אלכסנדר וזוגתו מרת חנה  
ומשפחתם שיחיו  
קאלער



# A Greater Business

Reb Mayer Zeiler

Reb Mayer Zeiler is the proprietor of Flocktex, a textile business in Eretz Yisroel. He shared his fascinating story with the My Encounter team at Jewish Educational Media.

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# *my* story

Volume II

Some of Reb Mayer Zeiler's stories that are presented here are adapted from **JEM's** upcoming book, **My Story, Volume 2.**





## Beginnings

I was born in 5707\* in a DP camp in Germany. At the age of two, my parents moved to New York and settled in Crown Heights but I didn't have much of a connection to Lubavitch during my childhood. My father was associated with Bobov and I learned in Litvisher yeshivos. My real connection to Chabad and the Rebbe began upon my marriage to my wife Ella, daughter of the noted Chabad philanthropist, Reb Dovid Deitsch of New Haven.

Life was comfortable. After some time in kollel in 770, I began to settle down. I joined my father-in-law and started working at his business.

On one occasion in *yechidus*, the Rebbe looked at my *pan* and asked, "*Vos iz vegem parnasa?* What about livelihood?"

"Baruch Hashem," I said. "We have *parnasa*."

"*Uber a bracha darf men betten*—But you still need to ask for a blessing in this regard," the Rebbe responded.

I immediately responded by asking for a *bracha*, which I received, and throughout my life I saw the Rebbe's *brachos* come to fruition in amazing ways.

In those days, the Rebbe encouraged and strongly requested that everyone buy a home in order to support the *shchunah*<sup>1</sup> so I searched for a suitable home in Crown Heights and soon wrote to the Rebbe asking for a *bracha* to close on the sale. To our surprise, the Rebbe told me to reject the offer. Instead, he said, I should continue with a rental. This was out of the ordinary, to say the least, but we followed the Rebbe's instructions and soon we understood what was behind them.

## Much More Than A Check

Shortly after the Yom Kippur War, my father-in-law asked the Rebbe how he could support Eretz Yisroel. He

assumed the Rebbe would tell him to write a check to "Tzach" (Lubavitch Youth Organization, headed by Rabbi Yisroel Leibov), but the Rebbe told him something else entirely: build a factory in the Holy Land. More specifically, the Rebbe instructed that it be situated in Nachlas Har Chabad in Kiryat Malachi which would soon be populated by a large number of Russian immigrants in need of jobs.

In those days, Eretz Yisroel was a backwater. Infrastructure was weak, taxes were high, and the bureaucracy was enormous. Starting a business there didn't seem to be a profitable endeavor. In fact, our financial advisors offered to meet with the Rebbe to "convince" him out of the

idea but we explained to them that we were building this factory at the Rebbe's behest to contribute to Eretz Yisroel and any potential profit was secondary.

We began working on a plan to erect a factory to produce our material—my father-in-law produced textiles—but the plans dragged on. There was a hurdle to overcome every step of the way and things weren't moving very fast. A year or two later, as my father-in-law and I passed by the Rebbe for *lekach* on Erev Yom Kippur, the Rebbe asked, "What's going on with the factory?"

There wasn't much to report but my father-in-law understood that the Rebbe wanted us to move on it. I had



RABBI YISROEL LIEBOV AT A TZACH KINUS, 5729.

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## Good News Too

After the *bris* of one of our sons, there was significant bleeding and I took the initiative to ask the Rebbe for a *bracha* at a farbrengen which happened to take place that night. Thankfully, the bleeding stopped soon thereafter. At a *yechidus* several months later the Rebbe asked about the incident and I explained that everything had worked out. The Rebbe responded,

"*Uber gute neiyes vil ich oichet gleich heren*—but I would like to hear the good news right away too."

been involved in the business's sales department but now I was drafted to travel to Eretz Yisroel every few months to work on this new project.

There were mountains of stumbling blocks. The Israeli bureaucracy created obstacle after obstacle and every permit was a challenge. The industrial zone of Nachlas Har Chabad didn't even have normal infrastructure for sewage and electricity.

Every time I returned, I would go into *yechidus* and describe the difficulties to the Rebbe. Truth be told, I hoped the Rebbe would absolve me of the project which was turning out to be a total misery. But every time, the Rebbe would give me a *bracha* that everything would work out and encouraged us strongly to continue.

During one such *yechidus* in 5736\*, the Rebbe noted that a business could not be run from afar; someone needed to be on-site in Eretz Yisroel in a more steady fashion. My father-in-law decided to write to the Rebbe what everybody's position in the company was and asked for his advice regarding who should transfer to Eretz Yisroel.

I was only 27 years old, and officially only in sales but the Rebbe's answer was that since I was already familiar with some of the government people it made sense that I should be the one to make the move. It wasn't exactly news that I was waiting for but I didn't question his instructions. I went in for a *yechidus* and asked for how many weeks I should go.

The Rebbe replied that my children needed to enroll in school in a few weeks—it was the middle of summer. Changing schools in the middle of the year isn't a good idea, so it would be worthwhile, the Rebbe said, for us to remain the entire school year. It sounded like a jail sentence. I attempted to change his mind, but needless to say, the attempt wasn't very successful.

Well, at least it was only for a year.

### “Why Would You Leave?”

A few weeks later, on 15 Av 5736\*, we arrived in Eretz Yisroel. On the Shabbos before our move, I drove down from the summer bungalow colony to Crown Heights for the farbrengen. The Rebbe called me up,

gave me a bottle of *mashke*, and gave me a warm *bracha*, saying, “*S’zol zein mit grois hatzlacha, un asach, asach mishpachos velen hobin hana’a derfun*—It should be with great success and many families will benefit greatly from it.”

From our comfortable home in Crown Heights we moved into an apartment in “Nachla” that was perhaps a fifth of the size. In those days, Nachla had no roads or telephones, and the sewers only worked occasionally. To obtain fresh, clean milk or bread, you needed to get on line early in the morning to receive it.

There also was no infrastructure in the industrial zone. I was getting into more and more arguments with more and more bureaucrats and nothing seemed to be moving. We felt the government should be grateful we were contributing to the country by building a factory and creating jobs but the reality was the opposite. Everything was a fight, a negotiation, a problem. Every month or six weeks or so, when I would come to New York, I would report to the Rebbe on the latest issues that arose.

Soon, my year in Israel was drawing to a close. I recalled that before our departure, the Rebbe had commented, “I’m sure you will ask me before you return,” so I mentioned during my *yechidus* around Shavuos time that we planned to return.

“Why? Is your wife unhappy?” the Rebbe asked.

“No, she is happy.”

“Are your children unhappy?”

“They are happy as well.”

“So what’s the problem with staying?”

I don’t know what got into me but I blurted out, “I can’t take it anymore...”

The Rebbe listened to my litany of complaints, and then responded with a wave of his hand,



REB MAYER AND OTHERS STUDY WITH PRIME MINISTER SHAMIR FROM THE TANYA JUST PRINTED AT THE KNESSET. 5752.



“The most difficult times have already passed. From now it will be easier.”

## A New Administration

In 1977, the Begin government came to power. During a *yechidus*, the Rebbe asked for my opinion on the new administration. It was a surprising question, to say the least. I was 29 years old but apparently the Rebbe wanted to know my opinion.

“Have you befriended the administration yet?” he asked.

I hadn’t reached out to very high levels of government but hearing that question, I decided to reach out to the new “Minister of Industry, Trade, and Labor,” Yigal Hurvitz.

I tried to arrange for an appointment but his aides repeatedly pushed me off. After attempting for several months, I decided to go another route. I identified which car he drove and began to follow him as he left the Knesset one night. I certainly spooked out his security men. I jumped out of my car as he parked in front of the Ministry of Industry but his security detail blocked me. Not giving up, I ran into the building and raced up a stairway, emerging right as he exited the elevator.

I introduced myself as a new industrialist in Israel and asked for an appointment. He was a gentleman. He asked his assistant to arrange a meeting and went into his office. Again, his assistant tried to push me off for three months or six months, so I declared that I would wait near his office that night as long as it would take until I had my meeting. They finally relented and gave me an appointment that week.

We had a very productive meeting. The next week, to my surprise, he actually drove over himself to our facility to see with his own eyes what the discussion was about. As the

Rebbe had promised, there was a marked turnaround. Suddenly, doors started opening up. I started making friends in the ministries and banks and officials began to look for ways to help.

Moshe Katzav, the former mayor of Kiryat Malachi, was elected to the Knesset and he invited me to lunch in the Knesset dining room. As we sat there, Prime Minister Begin walked in to grab a bite. Many people wanted his attention and he seemed a bit annoyed. Katzav insisted on introducing me anyway. At first, Begin expressed his annoyance to Katzav but after a moment he looked back and asked me,

“Are you the Lubavitcher with the factory in Kiryat Malachi? The Rebbe spoke to me about you when I was sitting with him in *yechidus*. I hope you don’t have any more headaches.”

Looking at Katzav, he said,

“Make sure he has everything he needs.”

## “You Are A Salesman...”

After several years, the building was ready and the machinery was installed. It was finally time to begin production. Our plan was to produce quality velvets but the process was difficult; our machines didn’t seem to produce anything better than second-grade goods.

During my next *yechidus*, I explained to the Rebbe that the machines were running but we couldn’t manage to produce quality material.

“*Uber di mashinen arbet?* The machines are working?” He was happy that things were moving and didn’t seem very perturbed about the second-grade material.

“Do you have samples?” The Rebbe asked.

“Yes,” I answered.

“*Du bist doch a salesman*—you are a salesman, go out and sell,” the Rebbe said.

I understood from the Rebbe that I should begin sales even though we didn’t have the quality material that we wanted to produce. I asked for a *bracha* and traveled to Europe to peddle my second-grade material.

I was directed to various people who were supplying North African companies that might be interested in second-grade goods. To my surprise, when I sat down with their representative, he informed me that they wanted first-grade material and not second-grade materials.

I had no idea how to make the first-grade but remembering the Rebbe’s *bracha*, I agreed. He wanted a huge amount, and he wanted it in five weeks. There was no way we could achieve that goal but I agreed anyway and raced back to Israel. We worked around the clock and through many small miracles, we managed to produce our first order. The factory was finally a reality.

## “What Can I Do For You?”

From the very beginning, we understood that our purpose wasn’t only to turn a profit—although we did turn a great profit, *baruch Hashem*, as the years went on. Our factory’s goal, as the Rebbe set it out, was to create *parnasa* for many immigrant families in the area.

However, the Rebbe clearly had another shlichus in mind: we were to be an example for Yiddishkeit and a source of inspiration for others. Being in business, we had the opportunity to reach places and individuals who in those days classic shluchim would have had difficulty getting to.

These opportunities often arose during visits of dignitaries to our factory where I would offer them to put on tefillin and encourage them to strengthen their Yiddishkeit. Before



REB MAYER ZEILER PUTTING TEFFILIN ON LORD MARCUS SIEFF.

and after these visits, I would send reports to the Rebbe and often receive detailed guidance.

One early example was when Moshe Katzav brought us a very prominent visitor: Lord Marcus Sieff of England, the chairman of Marks & Spencer.

Lord Sieff was a strong supporter of Israel and the president of the Weizmann Institute, and he came to see the new industry we were developing in the country. His company sold clothing and furniture, so his visit had great business potential as well. We were warned ahead of time that no publicity was allowed while he was in Israel, to ensure that he remains safe from Arab repercussions. He was accompanied by Professor Sella of the Weizmann Institute.

After a light breakfast, we gave him a tour of our plant. We had just developed a new type of velvet which was inherently blackout; it had the ability to fully block out sunlight. He was very impressed. He said we

had a nice plant and that he thought we would be successful. At the time, we had yet to turn a profit, so his statement was encouraging.

"What can I do for you?" he asked.

No doubt, he expected us to ask him to market our product. Velvet fabrics were very popular in England, and we had created the perfect new version. To his surprise, I asked him something else entirely.

"Lord Sieff, how about putting on tefillin?"

Moshe Katzav and Professor Sella started to laugh. Lord Sieff was surprised.

"Tefillin? It's been 54 years since my bar mitzvah when I last put on Tefillin."

After some hesitation, he agreed. He put on the tefillin, the photographer snapped a few photos, and we said Shema together. Always the perfect gentleman, he thanked me for the opportunity.

The visit went off without a hitch. But the next morning I was shocked

to discover the picture of me putting on tefillin with the Lord on the front-page news. I was mortified. We had been specifically asked not to publicize any pictures until Lord Sieff left the country.

The photographer wouldn't answer my calls, so I called Professor Sella and began to apologize profusely. To my surprise, he said there was no need to apologize. The day before, the photographer had called him for permission to use the picture, and Lord Sieff, who happened to overhear the question, said that he wasn't embarrassed about it and they were welcome to use it.

The following Hoshana Rabba, I passed by the Rebbe for *lekach* and the Rebbe suddenly asked me, "*Vos iz mit dem Lord*—What's with the Lord?" I was momentarily confused. What does the Rebbe want from me? Suddenly, it hit me. He was asking about Lord Sieff! We hadn't been in contact since our meeting at the factory, but the Rebbe gave me a piece of *lekach* to bring to him.

I wasn't exactly sure how he would react to me bringing him a piece of cake but I put the cake in the freezer and called him up after Yom Tov. I asked to meet with him in person so I could relate a personal message from the Rebbe. He responded that he would be in Israel the following week and I could meet him there.

The following week I met with him at the Weizmann Institute. I told him about the custom of *lekach* and how the Rebbe had asked about him and sent him a piece with best wishes for a new year. He received me very graciously, put on a yarmulke to recite a *bracha* with me, and ate a piece. He also saved a piece for his wife.

Later, Rabbi Hodakov asked me how I had related the concept of *lekach* to him and when I told it over, he expressed that I had done well.



Soon, it became a custom. The Rebbe would give me *lekach* or a dollar for Lord Sieff, and he would receive it with great respect. I brought him other things as well, like matzah for Pesach each year.

During my trips to New York, Rabbi Hodakov would give me instructions for my interactions with people and receive my reports about previous encounters. During one such conversation before a trip to see Lord Sieff, Rabbi Hodakov said that I should encourage people to have Shabbos meals with their families.<sup>2</sup> With that in mind, I purchased a beautiful silver *kiddush* cup for Lord Seiff. Rabbi Hodakov said I should buy a gift for Lady Sieff as well, suggesting the new N'shei Chabad cookbook, which I did.

Several years later, they visited us in our home, and his wife commented,

“Mr. Zeiler, you should know that my husband is a traditional Jew. He recites *kiddush* every Friday night.”

### What's The Connection To Fabric?

Shimon Peres visited our offices twice, once as foreign minister and once as prime minister. During his first visit, I put on tefillin with him. It was a good atmosphere, someone snapped a picture, and it was later printed in the newspapers as a front page headline.

The second time he came, as prime minister, his security detail called me up a day before to discuss the meeting. Normally, they would come to see where exactly the Prime Minister would walk but this time they also wanted to speak to me. They asked me what I would be discussing with the Prime Minister; clearly, they wanted to know if I would offer to put on tefillin. “We would appreciate it if you don’t put the Prime Minister in this position,” they said.

“The Prime Minister is very welcome at our factory,” I told



REB MAYER HELPS SHIMON PERES PUT ON TEFILLIN.

them, “but no one should tell me what to discuss with him. If he is uncomfortable, he’s always welcome not to come.”

Before the visit, I asked the Rebbe whether I should talk to him about the significant issues of the day—I don’t recall whether it was *Shleimus Haaretz* or *Mihu Yehudi*. I received a phone call very quickly from Rabbi Hodakov. “What does it have to do with fabric? Talk to him in business; these discussions are not your issue.”

Yitzchak Rabin also visited our factory. We have an unusual picture of him holding a large glass of whisky with a huge smile. I had offered him a small shot for a *l'chaim* but he said, “You’re making a joke of me,” and took a large one instead.

When he visited as prime minister, I asked him to put on tefillin. He began to laugh.

“You know,” he said to me, “I visited the Rebbe when I was in Washington as an ambassador. His blue eyes went right through me.” He



REB MAYER GIVES MEMBERS OF THE SHINUI PARTY A TOUR OF HIS FACTORY. EHUD RASSABI IS SEEN ON THE FAR LEFT.

spoke about the Rebbe's wisdom with great respect.

"But he didn't ask me to put on tefillin!"

I later gave a report to Reb Binyomin Klein and he told the Rebbe about our exchange. The Rebbe smiled, Rabbi Klein told me later. "*Mistame given ba nacht*—[his *yechidus*] was probably at night..."

### A Shinui For Shinui

Years ago, there was a political party in the Knesset called Shinui, headed by Tommy Lapid, a known antagonist to the religious community. I was friendly with one of their Knesset members by the name of Ehud Rassabi.

One time he decided to bring a group of his associates to see our factory to show them an example of religious people who do honest work. We were happy to host them. I gave them a tour, had lunch, and we had a conversation about how I came to Israel.

I shared with them that I was sent by the Rebbe himself to help develop industry in Israel—this was a story I shared quite often with visitors. I explained that I had passed by with

my father-in-law at *lekach*, and so on. Suddenly, a woman in the group corrects me.

"*Leikech*, not *lekach*."

She was a self-declared anti-religious advocate, so I asked her where she got her clearly religious *Poilishe* accent.

"Do you know Moshe Klein, a *sofer* in New York?"

"Of course I do."

"He's my cousin. I'm the black sheep of my family. I was born in Meah Shearim..."

Before leaving, the woman came over to me. "I live in Ashkelon and I'm on the city council. If the Chabad schools ever need any help, let me know."

Towards the end of the visit there was a great atmosphere in the room and I saw that we had made a real connection. I turned to Ehud who was of traditional Yemenite origin and said, "Let's show them how to put on tefillin."

He rolled up his sleeve, put on tefillin, took a picture with us, and several others followed. I gave each of them a beautiful leather Tehillim.

The visit was considered a big accomplishment. They were a very anti-religious party but we had managed to make a real connection with them. They were clearly touched about the Rebbe's interest in the well-being of the Israeli economy and his concern for Israel's wellbeing. We brought real *shinui* to Shinui...

Afterward, I sent Ehud Rassabi the photo of him putting on tefillin. He placed it proudly on his Knesset desk. "All my associates wanted me to take it down," he told me later, "but I insisted that it remain."

### The Failed Test

In 5751\*, England passed a law that all fabrics in furniture had to pass a certain flame-retardancy test. Most companies added a coating to their fabric which ruined the soft touch, but we were able to develop a technique where we inserted the chemicals in the actual materials without changing the quality of the fabric.

We were excited to market this new product in England but we discovered that we would need an English institute to certify that our material passed the test. When we sent our material to their laboratories, they replied that our material failed to meet their standards. This was disastrous news since I had already marketed the fabric as FR fabric throughout England. I immediately called Rabbi Klein to ask for the Rebbe's *bracha*. We received a *bracha*, and I sent the fabric again. Once again, it failed.

After several more failures, I was becoming increasingly despondent. I didn't see how it would pull through, and I called Rabbi Klein and asked him to request a *bracha limaala miderech hateva*.

I happened to be in New York then, for Yud Shevat 5752. As I passed by dollars after Maariv, the Rebbe asked me, "*Shoin altz b'seder*—Did everything work out?"



I replied, “If the Rebbe says so...”

The Rebbe said, “*Ich farshtei nisht*—I don’t understand.” Clearly, he wanted a more positive answer.

The next morning, I called up the head of our technical department and asked her to fly to England with the material and visit the institute herself. She didn’t understand why that would be of use if we had failed the test a number of times but I insisted that we had the *bracha* of the Rebbe and therefore it was worthwhile to make the trip and make sure we pass the standard.

A day later, she called me.

“I have the certificate in my hand.

### What’s The Rush?

In the late 5740s\*, I received a phone call from one of our major customers named Pete Robinson.

“Mayer,” he says, “A guy in England copied your material and he’s offering me the same goods for 20 percent less. I know we’ve been doing business for a long time but I need you to give me a better price.”

I tried to fight him off but he was an excellent negotiator and I began to get worried. We couldn’t afford the price he was requesting and I feared that the competition would have greater repercussions. I called Rabbi Klein and asked him to approach the Rebbe for a *bracha* and advice.

The Rebbe answered, “*Vart*—wait.”

I stalled for several days but at some point I had to call him back. After some negotiations, I got them to drop to 18 percent, or perhaps 15 percent. He wasn’t willing to compromise more.

I called Rabbi Klein again, and again the Rebbe said the same thing. “You don’t need to answer right away.”

I continue to stall and to argue, and he slowly went down to 13 or 14 percent. But then he said that was it, I had to make my decision.



FLOCKTEX BOOTH AT THE LARGEST INTERNATIONAL TEXTILE TRADE FAIR, GERMANY 5779\*

I happened to be in New York at the time. Pete called me and asked me to come to England the next week to hammer out the final details. I wrote about it to the Rebbe, but didn’t receive an answer. My departure date arrived. Not knowing exactly what to do, I decided to get onto the plane.

We sat down for a full day meeting to hammer out the issue. As *shkiah* approached, I told Peter that I would have to take a break to pray. With great respect, he gathered all of his people and had them leave the room until I was done.

The end of our meeting was almost miraculous. I managed to negotiate them down to a 2% discount. I felt like a hero and immediately called *mazkirus* to give over the good news. During that phone call, I was informed that the Rebbe had given an answer just after I had taken off.

“What’s the rush?”

Needless to say, I was quite deflated. I berated myself for not having waited for the Rebbe’s answer.

However, there was one gratifying element that came out of the story. Reb Leibel Groner later told me that the Rebbe mentioned this meeting to him: That during my meeting with non-Jews, I wasn’t embarrassed to stop and say that I needed to daven. It

felt as if the Rebbe was still giving me some credit...

### Exhibiting Judaism

In the early 1980s, we started exhibiting at an international exhibition for the fabric industry held in Frankfurt, Germany. The Israeli Ministry of Commerce suggested that we put up a stand there under the Israeli flag because it was a place of international standing and a great place for business.

The exhibition took place from Wednesday through Shabbos and the official contract stated that we needed to remain open the entire time. Nonetheless, we obviously closed for Shabbos. We also brought along tefillin and kosher food and used the opportunity to do *mitvzoim*. I set up a small corner at our stand where people could put on tefillin in privacy, and I would call over Jewish customers and sell them some “Jewish merchandise.”

After the exhibition, I wrote a report to the Rebbe about both the business and the Jewish element. I reported that we had closed the stand on Shabbos and I also shared several stories of people who hadn’t put on tefillin for decades.

The following year, I told the Rebbe that I wasn’t interested in returning to





"You believe in these religious things?" he asked me. "What business is this to close in the middle of an international expo?"

"Sir, would you like to put on tefillin?"

"Tefillin?! I don't believe in G-d. I went through Hitler."

"I fully understand that you would be angry," I told him. "But what does that have to do with putting on tefillin? You never had the opportunity to do a bar mitzvah. Let's do it right now!"

After a long conversation, he agreed. As he began to recite the words Shema Yisroel, he broke down in tears as did my son and I. When we were done, he hugged us, kissed us and thanked us profusely.

After he calmed down, I offered to show him some fabric that we were selling.

"Fabric? I'm in the fish business."

"So what are you doing at the fabric expo?"

"I'm thinking of going into fabric..."

It was another powerful reminder about our true mission at the expos.

## A Dollar For Lyon

Whenever I went by dollars before leaving New York, the Rebbe would always give me a dollar for Eretz Yisroel and a dollar "*far di nesiah*."

One time, I mentioned that I would be stopping in Lyon, France, on business, and the Rebbe gave me a dollar for Lyon.

At my meeting in Lyon, the non-Jewish gentleman asked me to join him for lunch.

"I eat only kosher, and I brought my own food," I explained.

"No," he said, "A Jewish woman here directed me to the kosher restaurant."

I had a conversation with the woman and it seemed to me that the restaurant standards weren't up to par.

Trying to explain to her why I couldn't eat there, I said,

"Did you ever hear of Chabad Lubavitch?"

"Yes, I did," she said. "I know of the Lubavitcher Rebbe in New York. I heard he gives out dollars, and how I wish I could have such a dollar from him."

I suddenly realized the true *tachlis* of our conversation.

"Today is your lucky day," I said.

"The Rebbe sent a dollar especially for Lyon..."

## From One Matzah

In the early 1980s, I had a meeting with a fellow named Oded Chetzroni, an officer in the Bank of Israel who

was responsible for the financial aspects of exports. Being before Pesach, I brought along a box of matzah and gave it to him as a gift. A year later, I sent him a box again.

Some time later, I was on a flight when I got a tap on my shoulder. It was Oded. As we were chatting, he introduced me to his wife as "the guy who gave me matzah."

"You should know," she said, "since you sent us matzah, we began holding a *seder* in our home, something we didn't do previously."

We became closer over the years, and he gradually climbed the ranks until he became the CEO of the Bank of Israel. When that happened, I called him up and asked him to arrange a



REB MAYER RECEIVES LEKACH, 21 TISHREI 5749\*.

big Chanukah party for his entire staff where we would light the menorah. I brought along some of my children, we put tefillin on all the men, and it was a great success.

One day, he says to me, “You know Mayer, you could eat in my home. We began to keep kosher.”

I expressed my delight, and he explained that my matzah had gone a long way, “My daughter became fully religious, and she is marrying a yeshiva student.”

### A Much Better Deal

After Gimmel Tammuz, based on the Rebbe’s instructions of “*Aseh lecha rav*”—I began to bring my questions to Rav Mordechai Eliyahu. He was a true

Chossid of the Rebbe and he would constantly ply me with questions about the Rebbe’s stand on various matters. His advice to me, as well, always reflected the Rebbe’s instructions.

I was once invited to a horse racing event by our largest customer in South Africa. It was a very “un-Jewish” event and I didn’t want to go, but Rav Eliyahu knew that the Rebbe wanted me to always go “out there” and he encouraged me to participate.

At the event, I shared the story of how the Rebbe sent me to Israel to open an industry, when someone spoke up.

“I know of the Rebbe. I write to him before every significant business deal.”

Needless to say, I was all ears.

“I am a congregant in Rabbi Yossi Hecht’s shul,” he says. “As a young man, when I entered the furniture industry, I was offered a position as a manager in a certain furniture company which came with a significant raise. There was one caveat. I needed to be available seven days a week.

“I’m not a religious person. However, I decided to ask the Rebbe’s advice before taking the job.

“The Rebbe advised me not to take the position. I don’t think he even connected it to Shabbos. He simply advised against it, and I followed his advice.

“A short time later, the company went into hard times, and I bought the entire firm for a low price.”

By the time of this story, he controlled three-fourths of the industry in South Africa and was a phenomenally rich man. All because he listened to the Rebbe’s advice.

### In Conclusion

I have been extremely blessed to have received the Rebbe’s personal guidance on a regular basis from the moment I entered the orbit of Chabad. From our years in Crown Heights, to our move to Israel, whether in business matters or family matters, we merited the Rebbe’s close guidance at every step of the way.

And in return, I had the merit—and continue to have the merit—to serve as a conduit for the Rebbe’s activities in countless ways. Outwardly, I am a businessman. But the Rebbe made me and countless other businessmen his shluchim. ❶

1. See Derher Cheshvan 5777.

2. This concept was actually the predecessor to Mivtzah Neshek. In the period before the declaration of Mivtzah Neshek, the Rebbe spoke on several occasions about the importance of Shabbos meals with family.



LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEW 256867





# דער רבי וועט געפינען א וועג...

לזכות החיילת בצבאות ה'  
השלוחה חי' מושקא שתחי'  
לרגל הולדתה ד' מר חשון ה'תשפ"א

נדפס ע"י הוריה  
הרה"ת ר' דוד וזוגתו מרת פערל גאלדא  
ומשפחתם שיחיו  
טייכטל

## Do You Know Where I Am?

AS TOLD BY RABBI MENDEL SAMUELS (SIMSBURY, CT)

Our youngest son Refoel Meir is a special needs child. He is a very sweet boy but due to his condition he cannot be left alone even for a minute. Every day a nurse comes to our home to assist in his care and this allows my wife to function in her many capacities as a mother for the rest of the household and as a shlucha.

Several years ago there were changes at our insurance and they started sending letters informing us that in their assessment, our son's condition did not meet the criteria for deserving a home nurse for 40 hours a week. These assessments were baseless and Refoel Meir's doctors wrote letters stating unequivocally that he needed the nurses desperately.

After months of warnings, on Erev Rosh Hashanah we were notified that the insurance would stop paying for the nurses indefinitely. We were devastated.

Instead of a trained nurse they were willing to provide us with an aide that would come for two hours each day to be with Refoel Meir. It was difficult to find the right person for the job but after some time we managed to find the perfect fit. Although this provided some measure of relief so my wife could catch her breath and do some basic chores each day, the new arrangement was extremely difficult for us all, especially for my wife.

After losing the much-needed funding, a representative from the appeals department was assigned to our case and

she assured me on the phone that she would do everything in her power to get the nurse back to our home.

Towards the end of our conversation she asked me, "How is the rebbetzin doing?"

Taken aback at the unexpected use of the term, I blurted out, "Are you Jewish?"

"I can't tell you that information over the phone," she replied laughing.

From then on this became a routine joke in our phone conversations. She would ask how "the rebbetzin" is doing. I would ask her if she is Jewish and she'd respond she was unable to divulge that information.

On Erev Pesach she called me with the bad news that after trying everything in her power to appeal their denial of Refoel Meir's nursing care, the final appeal had been rejected and the denial was final. We were broken by the news.

A few months later during the summer I was at the Ohel and as I prepared to enter, my wife called me in tears. The aide who had been coming for two hours each day for the past eight months found a better job and would not be returning henceforth.

She was beside herself thinking how life would be without even this bare minimum of help. I immediately assured her that everything will turn out for the best and asked her to write a letter to the Rebbe which I will read at the Ohel in a few minutes. Certainly the Rebbe will ensure we overcome this challenge as well.

This is what she wrote:

*Dear Rebbe,*

*Firstly, I thank the Aibershter for the privilege of being given the responsibility of caring for such a special neshama. But He created me of flesh and blood and there is only so much I can do. I desperately need the nurse. I'm begging for a bracha that we should get our nurse back for 40 hours a week. I'll take 20 hours but the truth is that we really need a nurse for 40 hours a week.*

As I turned to leave after reading her letter and placing it at the Ohel, my phone rang.

"Hi Rabbi. How is the rebbetzin?"

I was shocked since I had never expected to hear from the insurance appeals department ever again.

"I never expected to hear from you," I said.

"Neither did I, Rabbi. Tell me, what did you do?"

"That's a loaded question. I have done a lot of things."

"Rabbi, whom did you speak to?"

"To many people. What's going on?"

"That's what I am wondering as well. Listen, in all my years working at this company I have never seen this happen. I am holding a letter here stating that the company



is reversing all their denials and your son will have a nurse for 40 hours a week!"

Standing near the Ohel with the phone to my ear I burst out crying and said to her, "Do you know where I am standing now? I'm standing near the Ohel of the Lubavitcher Rebbe. Have you heard of the Lubavitcher Rebbe?"

"Yes, Rabbi. I was there last week."

"So you are Jewish!"

"I'm sorry I can't tell you that over the phone."

We were both very emotional and she started crying as well. An open miracle had just occurred in front of our eyes!

When I shared the news with my wife moments later she was in absolute disbelief, but so exhilaratingly grateful at the miraculous turn of events.

The story continues. Although we had our funding back, finding the right nurse could be a serious challenge but I figured since we were already on a roll I would contact the nurse who had been coming up until Rosh Hashanah and see if she was perhaps available to care for Refoel Meir again.

"Rabbi," she said to me on the phone. "You are a man of faith. I knew G-d would bring me back to your family. I have been waiting by the phone all these months. I will be there on Monday."

May Refoel Meir experience a *refuah shleimah* u'krovah. **1**

## YOUR STORY

Share your story with A Chassidisher Derher by emailing [stories@derher.org](mailto:stories@derher.org).





# HANDS THAT GIVE

## *Tzedakah To Children*

A common scene in 770, after rallies or in and out of *tefillos*, was the Rebbe's constant distribution of coins for tzedakah exclusively to children under the ages of bar and bas mitzvah. This practice began formally during 'Shnas Hachinuch' - 5736\*, when the Rebbe showed a special interest and focused on education, specifically of children.

לע"נ  
הילדה התמימה אלטא מינא ע"ה  
בת יבלחט"א הרה"ח הרה"ת  
ר' ישכר שלמה ומרת שיינא שיחיו  
טייכטל

תלמידת בית רבקה  
חברה בצבאות ה'  
זכתה לקירוב מיוחד  
מכ"ק אדמו"ר נשיא דורנו

נקטפה בדמי ימיה  
ביום ש"ק, פרשת ואלה שמות  
כ"ג טבת ה'תש"נ  
ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

נדפס ע"י  
משפחתה שיחיו





The Rebbe would make sure that each child received the coin themselves directly in their hands, and if near a *pushkah*, would often wait for the child to put the coin in.





4 TISHREI 5747, VELVEL SCHILDKRAUT VIA JEM 749170



2 CHESHVAN 5746, LEVI FREDIN VIA JEM 271321



The Rebbe motions to a child  
to put the coin in the *pushkah*.



2 CHESHVAN 5746, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 271321



ELUL 5737, LEVI FREDIN VIA JEM 209579



24 ELUL 5741, LEVI FREDIN VIA JEM 200432

At the start of this practice circa 5736\*, there were times that the Rebbe himself lifted children who could not reach the *pushkah* on their own.



These distributions would often be lengthy, especially during the month of Tishrei. On one occasion, while entering the main shul for Shacharis on the fourth day of Chol Hamoed Sukkos 5748\* at approximately 10:00 a.m., the Rebbe began distributing coins for a full 45 minutes (!), before starting *Hodu*.





20 TISHREI 5748, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 15927



20 TISHREI 5748, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 15940



20 TISHREI 5748, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 15936



20 TISHREI 5748, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 15939



*Reb Shmaryahu Katzen related:*

One Chol Hamoed, I stood upstairs in 770 with two of my children who were very young at the time to receive coins from the Rebbe. Next to me was a Jew who did not look like a Lubavitcher Chossid, but seemed like a *choshuve Yid* with a special *levush*, watching as the Rebbe went around to each child.

After all the children received and put their coins in the *pushkah*, the Rebbe suddenly stopped right in front of this Yid and myself, pointed or somehow faced towards my children and said to him these words: “אט האסטו דא מעשה האסטו דא הבל שאין בו חטא, אט האסטו דא מעשה האסטו דא הבל שאין בו חטא – here you have ‘breath without sin,’ here you have ‘deed without sin’” and then continued walking.

I assumed that this Jew whoever he was, was wondering why the Rebbe was putting such an emphasis in having the small children give tzedakah.



CHOL HAMOED SUKKOS 5740, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 192436



20 TISHREI 5742, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 202064



CHOL HAMOED SUKKOS 5740, LEVI FREDIN VIA JEM 192526

“We have recently been *koching* about educating Jewish children in the mitzvah of tzedakah, through giving them a coin to put into the tzedakah *pushkah*. There are those who look for problems, and argue: What’s the point? Children are not obligated to fulfill mitzvos and they don’t even have their own money.

“The answer lies in a clear *possuk*: חנוך לנער גו' גם כי יזקין'—Educate a child... even in his old age he will not deviate from it.’ When you teach a child to put money into a *pushkah*, he will certainly continue doing so when he grows up. This trains his hand to be ‘a hand that distributes tzedakah.’”

(*Simchas Torah* 5737)



13 TISHREI 5748, LEVI FREDIN VIA JEM 15114



# Derher**Letters**

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



## Dr. Yitzchak Block

Dear Editors,

Your recent article (Elul, 5780) about Dr. Yitzchok “Irving” Block stirred many fond memories, because I had the good fortune to know him and his wonderful wife Leah “Lily” going back years before much of what was portrayed in that article. I hope your readers will enjoy sharing in some of these recollections.

In 5725\*, attending what was one of the earliest Pegishas (the year the Rebbe was saying *kaddish* for his mother), is where I met and became close to Dr. Block. As one of the three featured Pegisha speakers, the others being Moshe Feller and Zalman Posner, he impressed me very much. The all night midnight farbrengen Motzei Shabbos definitely was the highlight. I managed to grab a few minutes with Dr. Block several times during the weekend, and I was so affected that I decided I wanted to have more time with him on a one-to-one basis. With that motivation, I phoned him and invited myself to spend a weekend in London, Ontario as their houseguest.

Very exciting! And it definitely was, but not the way I anticipated. It turned out to be that that very weekend was the one where Yitzchok was preoccupied with seeking the five children the Rebbe had specified would be needed to start a school. It was to be a project of *yesh me'ayin*, since he began with only one—his oldest, Chaim (as described in

the article). I was recruited to be Yitzchok’s “backup,” accompanying him running all over town to speak with various families about enrolling their children in this new phenomenon, the London Hebrew Day School! Little time was left for me to spend with him for any lengthy talks, but when I left town after several days, he was very grateful for my help. We really didn’t know where things stood, because most people wanted to think about this before deciding. Back in Newark, where I was living at the time, I waited anxiously day after day to hear the good news that finally arrived—five children were enrolled, and a new school was to open!

After getting married the following year, my wife and I moved from Crown Heights to London; Yitzchok had made some contacts, facilitating my admission to the University of Western Ontario as a graduate student in the Psychology Department. Being a freshly-minted Lubavitcher, I was a little shy about wearing my *kapota* walking to the new shul in London on Shabbos; there were no sidewalks for a long part of the way. At one point, he and I discussed the matter and he strongly encouraged me to wear mine, saying, “Don’t take me as an example (he had not yet begun wearing a *kapota*); the Rebbe would be very *tzufri* if I (referring to himself) would do so. I followed his advice and wore mine, and of course, in due time he also began wearing one.

There was a rabbi at the large local Conservative synagogue to whom Dr. Block

sent *shalach manos* the first year the Blocks were in town. The rabbi refused to accept it, telling Dr. Block, “We don’t observe these old-fashioned pagan customs.” Next year, Dr. Block sent again. This time there was no response at all. The following Purim, again Dr. Block sent *shalach manos*, and wouldn’t you know it—the rabbi reciprocated! As it turned out, this was the beginning of a gradual development of a working association between this rabbi, his Conservative synagogue, and the Blocks, with some of their *peulos* for advancing Yiddishkeit in London. For example, the London Hebrew Day School ultimately was housed there in an otherwise unused classroom wing. In addition, Dr. Block managed to arrange a very successful weekly Chassidus *shiur* there, which incidentally was closely “supervised” by Rabbi Zalman Shimon Dworkin, the rav in Crown Heights—the physical logistics, the contents, the official sponsorship, and such related *inyanim*.

Your article noted that the Rebbe wanted Yitzchok to write a book about Aristotle, but regretfully, he never did. Actually, he tried. He applied for, and received, a grant from the Canada Council to support him financially while he took time for his research and writing. With his other activities and responsibilities, there just didn’t seem to be the time or *menuchas hada’as* needed for such a scholarly project. Year after year, he applied for and received a renewal of the Canada Council grant. It became a veritable joke between the two of us—“How’s the book progressing? Is the Canada Council still funding you?” But as noted, it just didn’t work; the book never was completed.

It was mentioned that Yitzchok wanted to resign from his Hillel director’s position. When asking the Rebbe’s permission, he was told, “*Vest du gefinen a tzveiter yarei Shamayim dos tzu ibernemen, kensdu ‘resignen.’*” Not sure how to understand the answer, Yitzchok asked Rabbi Dworkin how was he to judge whether someone was a *yarei Shamayim*? Rabbi Dworkin replied: “*Poshut, er tragt a bord, tzi nisht*—Simple, does the replacement have a beard or not?!”

As we became closer, I was inaugurated bit-by-bit into some of his Chassidische practices. When we moved to London, there was no kosher *mikveh* in town. Yitzchok introduced me to the local river, which served as his *mikveh* at the time. Turning onto a dirt service drive, one came to a small clearing under the overpass where the highway crossed the river. We parked under the bridge, undressed, and walked gingerly into the river to *tovel*, being careful where we stepped. During pleasant weather, it was quite refreshing, although we only tarried briefly, not wanting to be spotted by the police or anyone else. In the winter, however, the freezing cold water was quite a challenge, in addition to the need to be careful not to fall through, or be injured by, the ice that clogged the river.

On the top floor of the Blocks’ home was a small room that, time permitting, Yitzchok used as a sanctuary to “get away from it all,” where he could learn Chassidus and daven to his heart’s content. One spring day, he approached me all excited about good news—he had just received his summer-school teaching assignment: one class several days per week, commencing at 8:00 am, and that was it for the week. After class, he would go to the “*mikveh*,” then retire to his special room where he would learn and “*tracht Chassidus*” for several hours, followed by a lengthy Chassidische *davenen*. *A taam Gan Eden!* He was so enthused!

Before summer school actually began, he had *yechidus* with the Rebbe, with whom he excitedly shared this plan. Was he ever stunned by the Rebbe’s response. “*Chas veshalom*,” said the Rebbe. First of all, he explained *al pi Shulchan Aruch*, one is not allowed to work before davening, so that is out of the question. Then the Rebbe explained a very profound additional *inyan*: The students will subconsciously sense “... *az doh shteit a mench vos hat shoin maniach tefillin geven, un durch dem vet di ‘teaching’ alain hoben gohr an andere peula, afilu by a nit-Yid*—here is a man who already put on tefillin. Then the teaching itself will have a completely different affect even on the non-Jews.” End of the plan!



Shortly after we moved to London, a major event occurred in the development of Yiddishkeit there; an official Orthodox shul opened in town, and a *lebedik* young rabbi was hired, a *musmach* from Y.U. Of course, the Blocks and the Getzs, among others, were active there, very involved with this “new” face in town. However, all was not so simple. I’ll relate several incidences:

There was no daily *minyan* there. Other than Shabbos and Yom Tov, we really struggled to gather a *minyan* on Mondays and Thursdays so there could be *krias haTorah*. Around this time, my father passed away, and I definitely wanted to daven at the *amud*. Yitzchok and I met with the rabbi, and a deal was struck that we would make calls and pick up people as needed so as to have a daily *minyan*, and in turn, I would be permitted to daven at the *amud* in Nusach Ari, even though the shul officially was Ashkenaz. The rabbi was quite pleased, because now his new shul had a daily *minyan*, a feather in his cap for his new *mosad*. Things were going nicely, but very soon, a problem arose. There was one *baal habos* who objected to the *nusach* with a few extra words in the *kaddish*. He complained regularly to the rabbi that it was not right to allow me to daven if not Ashkenazic. The rabbi was caught in the middle, because Yitzchok told him that if I weren’t allowed to daven at the *amud*, we would make another *minyan* at the Hillel where Nusach Ari would prevail. Since students we recruited (and transported) helped keep the shul *minyan* going, this was a serious concern to the rabbi. He decided he needed to ask a *shailah*, which he did, of Rabbi Weinberg of Ner Israel in Toronto, who *paskened* that the complainer was correct, and I should not be allowed to continue (I subsequently learned that from Nusach Ari this is permissible).

The rabbi reported to Yitzchok and me what he had been told, and offered a compromise: He would allow me to continue davening Nusach Ari until the end of *shloshim*, but after that, if I wanted to continue at the *amud*, it would have to be the shul’s *nusach*. I did continue during *shloshim*, but in the interim,

Yitzchok and I began planning for a *minyan* at Hillel.

During this same time (the plot thickens), I wrote the entire *maaseh* to the Rebbe, including our plans for a “learners” *minyan* at Hillel. The Rebbe answered that it would be a “*gleiche zach*” if we could assemble a learners *minyan* for students, with the only proviso being that “...*es zol nit shterin der minyan in shul in kein prat nisht*—it should not disturb the *minyan* in the shul in any way.” Of course, that was the end of our plan, because if we and the students pulled out, things at the shul would revert to what they were previously—no daily *minyan* at all!

Incidentally, I asked Reb Zalman Shimon if it would be acceptable to daven at the *amud* in shul using Nusach Ashkenaz. He said absolutely not, “*Du kenst nisht azoi biten dein nusach*—you can’t change your *nusach* on a whim.” I said that I wasn’t really changing my *nusach*, it was just an expediency so I could say the *kaddeshim* for my father. His response: “*Yankel, heint davensetu Ashkenaz, morgen Ari. Oib dos heist nit biten der nusach, demult vos iz*—Today you daven Ashkenaz, tomorrow Ari. If this isn’t considered changing, what is?”

Another issue in the shul was that the *mechitza* was too low, so we really couldn’t daven with the *minyan* on Shabbos and Yom Tov. Instead, we stayed in a classroom in the back of the shul and learned quietly, davening alone after shul was over. Although it was obvious, people accepted that that was the situation, and nobody made a fuss.

During that first year of the new shul, we had the *zechus* to hold the shul’s first *simcha*, my son’s *bris*. Again, the Blocks stepped in to help with all the arrangements, since I was inexperienced. Yitzchok arranged for a truly wonderful Chassidische mohel, Reb Heschel Tzeitlen from Montreal. In order to save us money, he took a train rather than fly. He also brought the food for the *bris* (cold cuts, challahs, etc.), all of which the Blocks arranged. It was a really wonderful *simcha*, and the whole community enjoyed it.

One Friday while traveling together for a Tzach *peula* at a university, the flight encountered some delays. In the taxi from the arrival airport enroute to the university, it became clear that we would not reach our destination on time, as already the sun was setting. We continued in the cab until what we estimated was the last permissible moment, when Yitzchok suddenly told the driver to pull over and stop at the side of the road. Asking the driver what would have been the charge had we continued all the way to our destination. Yitzchok explained that it was nearly Shabbos, and we could no longer ride. He gave the driver the stated fare, plus a generous tip, as well as the address of where we were scheduled to stay overnight, saying that we would walk the rest of the way, and when we arrived, it would be wonderful if all our luggage were there waiting for us. No doubt the driver thought we were (at least a little) strange, but *baruch Hashem* when we finally trudged into our room, we were thrilled to find all our luggage had been carefully brought there for us.

Some years later, when Chaim (the eldest Block son) had “graduated” from the London Hebrew Day School, his parents enrolled him in Cheder Ohel Yosef Yitzchok Lubavitch in Detroit, where I lived at the time. We had the pleasure of having him room and board in our home, in some small measure thus being able to reciprocate the kindnesses that the Blocks had extended to us over the years.

I hope I have conveyed the wonderful closeness that existed for many years between us and the Blocks. As you can well imagine, they are surely missed by so many people, especially by us.

**Dr. Yaakov M. Getz**

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## Wedding Picture

**Dear Editors,**

I just received the latest issue of Derher, Cheshvan 5781. I always enjoy the Derher and read it cover to cover.

I would like to make the following correction on your caption on p. 46. The caption reads “The Rebbe attends the chupah of Reb Gershon Mendel Garelik.” However the picture is actually from the wedding of Reb Avrohom Yitzchok Sasonkin (the Garelik’s brother-in-law), on Yud Tammuz 5722 (see picture on p. 286/7 of the *sefer* Mekadesh Yisrael). Incidentally that was one of two weddings the Rebbe was *mesader kiddushin* at after he officially stopped being *mesader kiddushin*. The other being Reb Shmuel Lew’s. I merited to be at both.

**Betzalel Gottlieb**  
Oak Park, Michigan

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