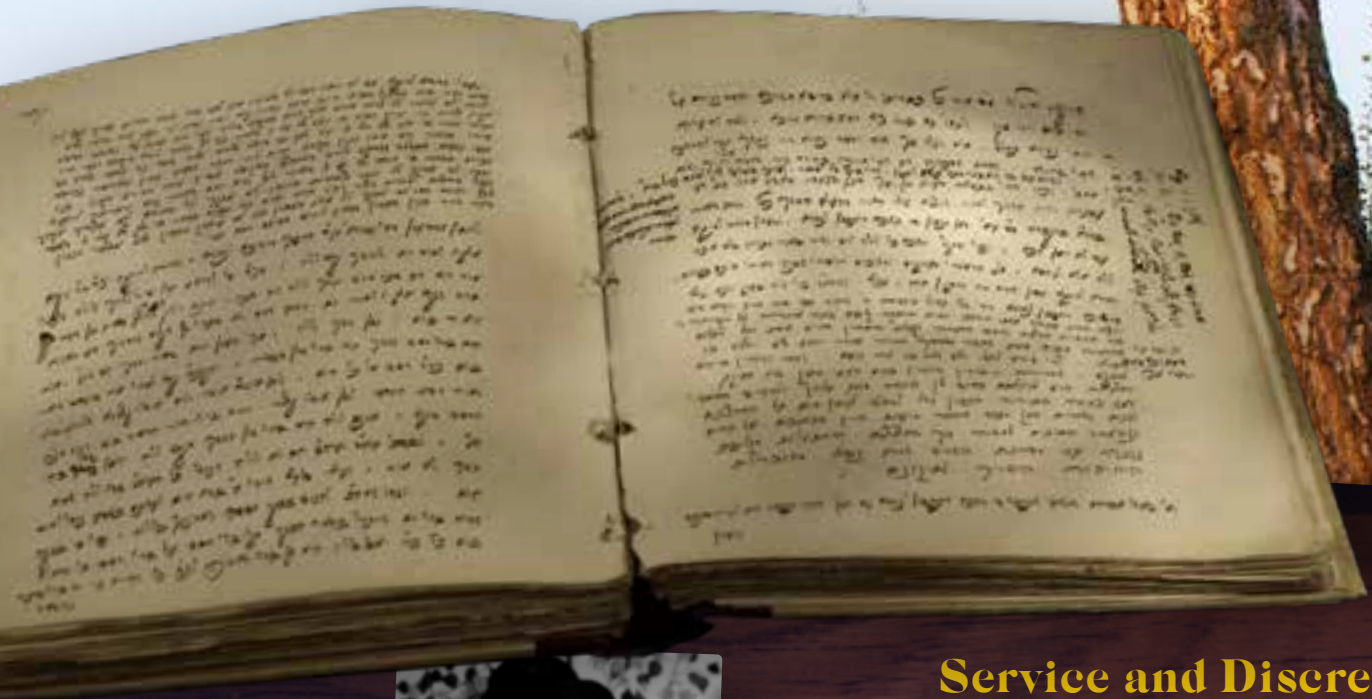


A Chassidisher **Derher**

א חסידישער דערהער

לכתחילה אריבער

THE REBBE MAHARASH



Service and Discretion

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF THE LEGENDARY MAZKIR,
REB MOSHE LEIB RODSHTAIN

Living Well

THE REBBE ON THE IMPORTANCE
OF A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE



IYAR 5781
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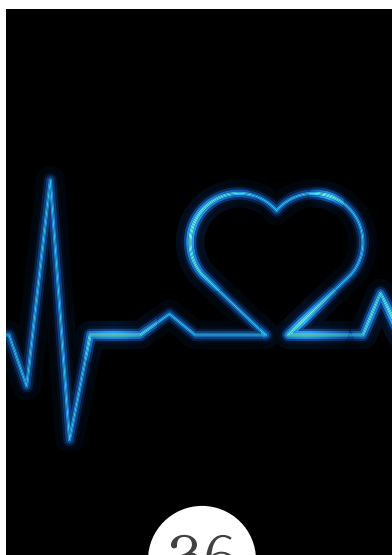
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On the Cover: In honor of Beis Iyar, the birthday of the Rebbe Maharash who originated the approach of "L'chatchila Arib'er"
—a facsimile of the Rebbe Maharash's ksav yad kodesh, against the backdrop of a recent photo of the city of Lubavitch.



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has been made possible

לזכות

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

אייזיקוביץ

ולע"נ זקנינו הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' ישראל
בן הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' שניאור זלמן ע"ה דוכמאן
גלב"ע ו' אייר ה'תשמ"ט
תנ"צ'ב'ה'

30 Years

This month begins with Rosh Chodesh Iyar, leading straight into the special day of Beis Iyar—birthday of the Rebbe Maharash, “*Lchatchila ariber*,” on the *sefira* of “*Tiferes sheb’Tiferes*.”

Thirty years ago, the Rebbe explained in what he later referred to as “*the famous sicha*” of 28 Nissan 5751*, how this auspicious time culminates a succession of special days—27 Nissan, 28 Nissan, Erev Rosh Chodesh, and Rosh Chodesh, leading right into the Rebbe Maharash’s birthday and his motto of “*Lchatchila Ariber*.”

As such, it seems an appropriate time to revisit the content of that famous *sicha* and try to deeply understand and apply its lessons.

Of course, every *sicha* the Rebbe said is *always* pertinent every day, like all of Torah. The content of this *sicha*—the perpetual need to long for Moshiach and do all we can to hasten his coming—is especially a most important part of our lives, every day. Focusing on the specific “anniversary” date of when the *sicha* was said to remember its message almost seems contrary to what the Rebbe was speaking about: That our demand for Moshiach needs to be real and heartfelt; not something we remember about when asked to.

Still, the Rebbe always pointed out that the date of any given occurrence carries meaning. As the *posuk* says, והימים האלה נזכרים ונעשים—we are supposed to relive the experience every year, and draw on the same divine inspiration available on that date.



All or Nothing!

One of the things that the Rebbe mentioned that evening was quite difficult to hear: Everything he had accomplished until that point was for naught—because we are still in *galus*.

Imagine: For anyone, especially Chassidim of the Rebbe, to hear the Rebbe pronounce such a weighty statement is extremely painful. After all the years of the Rebbe’s *nesius*, and after all the Rebbe’s accomplishments in literally every corner of the world, the Rebbe still said such words!

It becomes increasingly difficult to understand when considering how the Alter Rebbe describes in Tanya the everlasting effect of one single mitzvah—(“יחוד זה למעלה” (“הוא נצחי לעולם ועד”). How can it be said that all the work done is for naught?

A possible explanation can be found in the Rebbe’s *maamarim* of *Basi Lgani* that we studied earlier this year, based on *perek* 11 of the Frierdiker Rebbe’s last *maamar* (5721* and 5741*).

The Rebbe explains that the *מדת הנצח*, the innate need for victory, is primarily felt by great people. The greater the person, the more this sense of *nitzachon* is entrenched deep in his soul. That’s why within the greatest of all the people, the king himself, is where the sense of *nitzachon* is in its deepest, truest, and strongest form.

There are two reasons a king might fight a war: Either to enrich his kingdom from the spoils of war, or simply in order to be victorious and win over the opposing nation.

A war fought for spoils is a calculated risk, and it will only be carried out in a manner that makes sense. But the second form of war, a war for victory, defies all logic and reason. For this type of war, the king disposes of all his prized possessions, including the most precious treasures of his ancestors. If that doesn’t suffice, the king is ready to put his very life on the line to ensure that the war ends in victory.

How is such a thing possible? If the king loses his life in battle, then what worth was the whole war to begin with? The answer is that the victory is so deeply entrenched in his soul, it takes precedence even over his regular everyday life on earth!¹

The Rebbe compares these two wars to: 1) The *avoda* of *birur nitzotzos*, elevating and refining the sparks of *kedusha*, like the “spoils” of our everyday Torah and mitzvos, 2) The great pursuit of completely eradicating (or transforming) the evil of this world and bringing Moshiach.

The Rebbe quotes the famous words of the Rebbe Rashab on the *possuk* “אשר חרפו אויבך ה’ אשר חרפו עקבותי”:
“משיח:

There are two stages in the war against the forces of evil at the end of time, before the coming of Moshiach. One is against those who are “enemies of Hashem” and

don’t want anything to do with all matters of Torah and mitzvos. The other is with “those who disgraced the footsteps of Moshiach.”

For the first type of war, it is enough to fight in the conventional manner. But for the war to bring Moshiach, the war for true and final victory, it is not enough to use conventional methods. We need to throw ourselves completely into the fight, giving up on all the pleasures of this world (even those technically permissible by *halacha*), and completely devoting ourselves in order to attain the ultimate victory.²

The Rebbe teaches us that we are not in this fight to reap benefits and gain “spoils”—even the most lofty and spiritual ones. We are in a war for victory! Anything less than total and complete victory is meaningless!

When the Rebbe embarked with us on the journey of *dor hashvi’i*, he set a clear objective: to finish the job and bring Moshiach down here to this world in actuality.

The Rebbe also noted that from the time he arrived on these shores of the United States (80 years ago **next month**), he immediately began to work fervently and incessantly on bringing Moshiach.³

Obviously then, if we measure success against our one and only objective—complete and total victory with the coming of Moshiach—as long as this goal is not achieved, the Rebbe is telling us that we haven’t really accomplished anything at all!

This is the Rebbe’s very life, like the king for whom the need of victory is so deeply entrenched in his soul, that he is ready to put his physical life on the line to achieve it.

And here we stand, all these years after Gimmel Tammuz, still working towards this goal—to finally bring about what the Rebbe set out for us. It is now up to us to complete the job and to give our *melech* the deepest, innermost sense of victory by winning the battle and putting an end to the *galus* and ushering in the *geula*, when we will be reunited with the Rebbe, *teikef umiyad mammosh*.

A Chassidisher Derher
יום הבהיר י”א ניסן

1. Basi Lgani, Leil Shabbos Yud-Aleph Shevat 5721, se’if 6.
2. See *ibid.* se’if 7, 9.
3. Sicha 6th night of Pesach, 5748.



The Neighbor's Want

רמב"ם הלכות מלוה ולוה, א:א

It is a positive mitzvah to lend money to the poor among Israel, as is stated: "If you will lend money to My nation, to the poor among you." Lest one think that this is a matter left to the person's choice, it is also stated: "You shall certainly loan to him."

מִצְוַת עֲשֵׂה לְהִלּוּת
לְעַנְיֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל שְׁנֹאֲמַר
"אִם כֶּסֶף תִּלְוֶה אֶת עַמִּי
אֶת הָעֲנִי עִמּוֹ." יְכֹל
רְשׁוֹת תִּלְמוּד לִזְמַר
"הָעֵבֶט תַּעֲבִיטְנוּ" וְגו'.

LOANS TO THE RICH?

The Rambam opens the *halachos* of *Malveh v'Loveh* with "the mitzvah to give a loan to a poor person."

He makes no mention of whether it is also a mitzvah to lend money to a wealthy person who is in need of liquid cash. The Rambam's reasoning is that the Torah clearly states "אִם כֶּסֶף תִּלְוֶה אֶת הָעֲנִי — you shall loan a

poor person," saying nothing about a wealthy person.

Most other *poskim* rule that while tzedakah is a mitzvah primarily for the poor, the mitzvah of giving a loan is not just to a poor person but also to the rich.

These *poskim* base their ruling on the Gemara that specifically states that the mitzvah of giving a loan is greater

than tzedakah because it includes all socioeconomic classes, implying that the mitzvah of loaning is also to the rich.

The Rambam, however, feels that the Gemara is merely adding a *rabbinical* mitzvah to loan to the rich, but the Torah commandment is specifically for the poor.

To understand why it matters if a loan to a rich man is *miderabbanan* or *min haTorah*, let us first consider a case in which both a poor man and a rich man need a loan. According to the *poskim* that deem rich and poor equal for the mitzvah of a loan, who has precedence in such a case?

On one hand, the poor man certainly needs it more. But the rich person may feel more desperate because he is not used to being in a



מחזור הארבעים 40 CYCLES OF LEARNING RAMBAM

לזכות
הרה"ת ר' יוסף ברוך הכהן
וזוגתו מרת מחלה רבקה
ומשפחתם
שיחיו
פרידמאן

needy situation. So perhaps, based on the entirety of the situation, the rich man should come first, for after all the poor man is accustomed to not having enough money.

According to the Rambam however there is no question. Regardless of their levels of desperation, the poor man comes first since lending to him is a *mitzvah min haTorah* while lending to the rich man is only *miderabbanan*.

WHAT'S YOUR VIEWPOINT?

The Rambam states¹ that every mitzvah has its basic component, the part actually spelled out, but more importantly, it also has a message of character refinement and way of life:

On a simple level, the Rambam omits wealthy people because he is **limiting** the mitzvah of lending to

only poor people. On a deeper level, however, the Rambam is asking us to view another's wants and needs the same way we view a poor person's: Just like we don't think twice before pursuing our own wants, not calculating if they are truly a need or just something we really want and so we feel desperate to obtain it; so, too, we should not scrutinize another person's needs.

To illustrate this point, the Gemara in Kesubos cites a story. Rav Yehuda said in the name of Rav: There was an incident involving the daughter of Nakdimon ben Gurion. When the Sages designated 400 gold coins per day from her late husband's estate for her account of perfumes, she retorted: This is how you should pledge for your own daughters, and they (taking it as

a great blessing...) answered after her: Amen.

The Gemara uses this incident to teach a lesson: While spending this amount on perfumes may have seemed incredibly extravagant for most people, to a point that the *Chachamim* considered it a wishful blessing worth answering "amen" to, for her however—being the daughter of one of the wealthiest Jews of the time—this was a sentence to a life of poverty.

If we will give based on another's feeling and not based on our assessment of that person, we merit that Hashem gives us based on how we feel and want, whether we need it or just want it.

(Yud Kislev 5748)

1. Conclusion of Hilchos Temura



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

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

“We Want Chassidus!”

IYAR 5710*



In the following pages, we present an account of some of the events of Iyar 5710*, just a few months after the *histalkus* of the Friediker Rebbe. Chassidim were yearning for the Ramash—the title by which the Rebbe was then known—to accept the *nesius*, and they did not hide this desire from the Rebbe. Throughout this collection of personal memories and diaries of various individuals as they are recorded in “Yemei Bereishis,” we repeatedly

encounter the efforts made for the Rebbe to finally agree to accept the role of *Nossi*, along with stories and anecdotes illustrating the Rebbe’s care and concern for the *bochurim*, the Chassidim in general, and for all of *klal Yisroel*.

1 IYAR - FARBRENGEN FOR BOCHURIM

Tonight, in honor of Beis Iyar, birthday of the Rebbe Maharash, the Rebbe farbrenged with the



bochurim as he had promised a month earlier on Beis Nissan. Prior to the *farbrengen*, the Rebbe gave five dollars to *hatomim* Dovid Raskin as his personal participation in the *farbrengen*.

When the Rebbe came into the *farbrengen*, he refused to sit in the place that was prepared for him at the head of the table, instead seating himself on a bench at the side of the table.

The Rebbe began by saying that since this is a *farbrengen* especially for the *talmidei hayeshiva*, he is therefore going to talk about matters that pertain to *bochurim*. He went on to *farbreng* for three full hours, with strong words about *hiskashrus* to the Frierdiker Rebbe in these times.

2 IYAR - "M'DARF HOBEN HORAOS"

A few unofficial meetings were recently convened by the *eltere Chassidim* and rabbanim. The purpose of these meetings was to come up with ideas of how to arouse the Rebbe's will to accept the *nesius*, for he is still adamantly opposed to this:

When people appeal to him to assume the mantle of leadership, his answer is: "*M'darf hoben horaos*—We need to have instructions..."

Although for all practical purposes the Rebbe has filled the place of the Frierdiker Rebbe in all aspects, including providing *eitzos* and *horaos* in *avodas Hashem*, as well as *brachos* for material matters—performing numerous miracles in the process—the Rebbe is still resistant with regards to actually accepting the role of the *nesius* relating to the public aspects of it.

During one of the meetings, it was decided that a *minyán* of *anash* will go to the Ohel and read a *pan kloli* on behalf of all Chassidim around the world.

EATING AND DRINKING

In recent days, the third *kovetz* of the Frierdiker Rebbe's letters was published. It contains two letters, both pertaining to a *sefer Torah*: One is about the "Miracle Sefer Torah" that the Baal Shem Tov instructed should be written in response to a plague that had broken out in his town, and the other is about the ceremony of a *hachmosas Sefer Torah*.

In the first letter, the Frierdiker Rebbe relates a story about his father, the Rebbe Rashab. In 5658* (תרנ"ח) he was in Mezibuz, and while there, he went to visit the *tziyun* of the Baal Shem Tov. Afterward, he went to a shul to daven Maariv. The Frierdiker Rebbe adds a detail to the story, that at that point in the day, the Rebbe Rashab still had not broken his fast. In the *kuntres*, the Rebbe adds a *he'ara* with regards to this detail of the Rebbe Rashab fasting, commenting, that he is not sure this behavior of not eating or drinking at all is applicable to everyone, explaining that he heard once from the Frierdiker Rebbe that before visiting an Ohel—while it is customary not to eat, one may drink... The Rebbe concludes that perhaps there are different kinds of visits to an Ohel.

In it, they will ask the Frierdiker Rebbe to affect a change of heart in the Rebbe, and that he should finally agree to be *mekabel* the *nesius*.

Indeed, a *minyán* of *anash* consisting of several respected *eltere Chassidim* and *yungeleit* went today to the Ohel and read a *pan* on behalf of all the *anash* and *temimim*, requesting that the Rebbe finally agree to accept the *nesius*.

7 IYAR - YECHIDUS

Tonight, a group of distinguished *yungeleit* went into the Rebbe's room and declared that they are giving themselves over to the Rebbe with all their heart and soul. The Rebbe responded: "That which I possess, and am permitted to share—I will give; that which I do not possess, or which I am not permitted to share, I can not, nor do I want to, give."

The *yungeleit* requested that the Rebbe say a *maamar* but he refused, explaining that this would be a change in the way things were until now. They persisted and asked that the Rebbe at least *chazzer Chassidus* from the Frierdiker Rebbe. The Rebbe replied that this too will be a deviation from his regular practice.

[Apparently, ever since the *pan* asking that the Rebbe agree to accept the *nesius* was read by the Ohel on Beis Iyar, the Rebbe is no longer responding to the Chassidim with the response: "*M'darf hoben horaos*," that there need to be explicit directives. However, the Rebbe still has not agreed to accept the *nesius*.]

Chabad institutions around the world have begun sending petitions to the Rebbe declaring their *hiskashrus* to him, and in which they are asking and pleading that the Rebbe agree to the *mosdos* being under his *nesius*.

Hatomim Berel Junik related that he knocked on the Rebbe's door today, and when he was granted permission to enter, he went inside and told the Rebbe that he wants to have *yechidus*... The Rebbe put on his *gartel*, walked over to the window, and pulled down the blinds. He then sat down in the spot reserved for *yechidus*, and suddenly, he burst into tears... He asked the Rebbe several questions, and the Rebbe answered him.

After a few days, the *bochur* asked the Rebbe if he could have in writing what the Rebbe spoke to him about during his *yechidus*. The Rebbe told him to write down whatever he remembers, and he will look it over. The *bochur* did so, and sure enough, the Rebbe reviewed and edited his transcript of the *yechidus*.

In general, the Rebbe is *mekarev* the *bochurim* tremendously (just as before the *histalkus*), and takes great interest regarding their welfare.

The *eltzer* Chassidim are saying that now is an opportune time to go into the Rebbe for *yechidus*, since the beginning of a *nesius* is always with *chesed*.

Another interesting detail is that during *yechidus*, the Rebbe has a lit candle in his room.

Hatomim Dovid Raskin related that the first time he wanted to have a *yechidus* with the Rebbe, he approached the Rebbe and said that in accordance with the Frierdiker Rebbe's words to him and his friends during his last *yechidus* (on 4 Shevat, just six days before the *histalkus*), that "from time to time they should each come in on their own, and we will talk," he is therefore requesting a *yechidus* with the Rebbe. The Rebbe agreed to his request, and answered all his questions.

15 IYAR - OPEN RUACH HAKODESH

Hatomim Dovid Goldstein related that recently, he went into the Rebbe for *yechidus*, and a week later he went in for *yechidus* a second time. The Rebbe asked him if he also went in for *yechidus* with the Frierdiker Rebbe every week...

Lately, the *seder* has become that after the *tefillos* in the Frierdiker Rebbe's room, those that want to, are able to approach the Rebbe and present their questions to him. After one of the *tefillos*, someone asked the Rebbe a question regarding the measurement for a *tallis katan*, and he mentioned the *shiur* brought down in the *sefarim* of Harav Avraham Chaim Noëh. The Rebbe answered that regarding the *shiur*, we are able to check the *tallis katan* that the Frierdiker Rebbe wore. Regarding the *sefarim* of Harav Avraham Chaim Noëh, the Rebbe commented that the Frierdiker Rebbe held of his style of learning ("*hut gehalten fun zein lernen*"). And although he did not hear anything from the Frierdiker Rebbe with regards to this specific issue, from what he heard in general, he can be relied on ("*az m'ken zich oif em farlozen*").

An incredible story is circulating: A Yid came to see the Rebbe to receive a *bracha* for his young son who was sick, *lo aleinu*, with an extremely serious illness and was in critical condition. Surprisingly, the Rebbe glossed over his request for a *bracha*. Instead, the Rebbe began talking to him about his older son who is currently serving in the army. The Rebbe advised him that since there is a law which states that if a child in the family is not well, the older brother is able to—upon request—be relieved from duty and return home, he should therefore make a request for his son to be discharged from the army and return home.



Obviously, the man was completely stunned and bewildered, and could not understand the connection between what he asked and what the Rebbe answered him. He tried to explain that he had come to the Rebbe for a *bracha* for his son that was ill. Either way, regarding his son in the army—there is no way he would want to leave now. First of all, he is high up in rank, and also enjoys a special relationship with one of the high-ranking generals... But the Rebbe repeated the same advice: To write to his son, and to tell him to come home—not a single word about the sick child.

The man heeded the Rebbe's instructions and wrote to his son instructing him to return home. Sure enough, he came home. Later it became known that unfortunately the son who was sick passed away, *lo aleinu*. It also became known that in the days following the leave of his older son from the army, the unit in which he served was sent on a mission from which no one returned... Because the Rebbe's words were followed, he was the only soldier from his entire unit to remain alive.

FRIDAY, LAG B'OMER

The Rebbe visited the Ohel this afternoon accompanied by several buses full of *anash*. Before they departed to go to the Ohel, each of the *bochurim* and *anash* went over to the Rebbe to hand him their *panim*. This is the first time the Rebbe took *panim* before visiting the Ohel.

The Rebbe read the *pidyonos* at the *Tziyun*, and continued to do so even though it was raining.

20 IYAR - DO NOT POSTPONE

Hatomim Avraham Weingarten related that he recently went in for *yechidus* together with his *kallah* and they told the Rebbe that they want to postpone the wedding until after Yud Shevat (nine months later), in order for the Rebbe to be able to attend the wedding (the Rebbe did not go to any weddings during the year of *aveilus*). The Rebbe completely dismissed this idea. They then told the Rebbe that they were considering scheduling the *chasuna* for the second half of the month of Tammuz. The Rebbe disapproved of this idea as well and suggested that they schedule the *chasuna* for Yud-Gimmel Tammuz, especially, the Rebbe added, since many people will be in New York then for Yud-Beis Tammuz. The *chossan* mentioned that the Rebbe will be farbrenging that night... The Rebbe replied

that he will move the farbrengen to the night before, the night going into Yud-Beis Tammuz, in order for it not to detract in any way from the wedding.

SHABBOS MEVARCHIM, 26 IYAR

Following Shacharis in the Frierdiker Rebbe's room, the Rebbe farbrenged in the *zal* together with *anash* and *temimim*.

28 IYAR - "M'ZOL KENEN LERNEN"

Tonight, *hatomim* Elya Gross had his first *yechidus* with the Rebbe. Later he related that when he entered the room, the Rebbe looked at him with a smile and said: "*Rabbi Gross, du vilst oich fregen epes* (you also have something to ask)?" Elya told the Rebbe about a certain individual he knows who suffers from kleptomania (a condition expressed in the recurrent urge to steal things), and his question is: Should he take this person to a center which deals with such issues, or, should he try to take him to see a doctor?

The Rebbe answered that these days, there are ways to cure illnesses such as this. The Rebbe directed him to a certain Dr. Wilder—who had a close relationship with the Frierdiker Rebbe for some years—to tell him that they are from Lubavitch, and that the Rebbe is the one who suggested that they see him.

The Rebbe further advised him how to go about convincing this individual to see a doctor. It should not be done in a direct way, but rather by mentioning it to him casually in the middle of a conversation. Elya asked the Rebbe what he should do if the man refuses to go. The Rebbe suggested that in that case, Rabbi Yaakov Yehuda Hecht should visit the home of this person and chat with the family. Once there, he should get into a conversation with this person and casually mention to him about seeing a doctor.

The Rebbe emphasized that he should first try himself to convince this person to see the doctor. The Rebbe asked him to report back to him with the results.

Hatomim Yoel Kahn also related a recent *yechidus* he had with the Rebbe. In his *yechidus*, he asked: Since the Frierdiker Rebbe instituted a *seder* that from around the age of 20 and on, *bochurim* should learn in the afternoon the section of *Yoreh De'ah* in Shulchan Aruch—he is therefore asking if he should also begin doing so. The Rebbe answered that he





RABBI YOSEF GOLDSTEIN

CHASSIDIM LEAVING THE OHEL, 10 SHEVAT 5721*

should go to Rabbi Mentlik and “speak with him in learning” and within the next few days, after the Rebbe himself will speak with Rabbi Mentlik, he will give Yoel an answer.

Yoel did as the Rebbe instructed him, and he spoke with Rabbi Mentlik in learning. After a few days, he again went into the Rebbe, and the Rebbe told him that as of now, he should not learn *Yoreh De'ah*, and that at least for the next year to year-and-a-half he should learn Gemara *b'iyun*. The Rebbe said this means with the Rishonim until the actual *psak din* the way it is brought down in Shulchan Aruch—and during the latter portion of the day he should learn Gemara *l'girsā* (meaning just with Tosfos). But the main objective, the Rebbe continued, is to cover as much ground as possible. The Rebbe remarked that the Frierdiker Rebbe very much desired “*az m'zol kenen lernen*” and the Rebbe strongly encouraged him to be diligent in his studies.

The Rebbe also instructed him to study Chassidus *b'iyun*, and noted that when it comes to learning Chassidus, the analyzing and the scrutiny

is crucial, which—the Rebbe continued—is not the case when davening.

The Rebbe explained that with davening, the primary goal is the “*tzutrogen tzu zich*” in *avoda b'poel*; meaning that the main focus of davening is not so much the delving into the concepts of Chassidus themselves, but rather to connect with what you learned that it should have a *practical application and effect on the individual davening*.

At the conclusion of the *yechidus*, the Rebbe *bentched* him that the *brachos* given by the Frierdiker Rebbe should be realized in him, and that he should merit to play a part in carrying out the mission set forth by the Frierdiker Rebbe.

Yoel also related that when he went into the Rebbe for the first time with the intention of having *yechidus*, as soon as he stretched out his hand to give the Rebbe his *tzetel*, the Rebbe put on his hat, and only then did he accept the *tzetel*.

Hatomim Berel Junik related that when he went in today for *yechidus*, he placed his *pan* on the table, and the Rebbe told him: “*Ah pan—besser geben in hant*” (it is preferable to hand over a *pan* directly). **T**

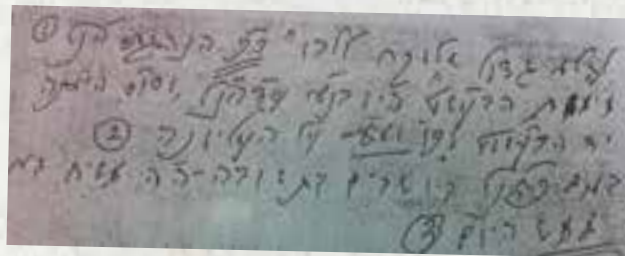


כתב יד קודש

לזכות
מרים מינדל שתחילת בת רייזל
שיקויים בה
ברכת כ"ק אדמו"ר אליה
"...ביחד עם בעלה שי' לגדל
כיו"ח שי' לתחומע"ט מתוך
שמחה והרחבה....וכ"ז באופן
לכתחילה אריבער"

No Offense

The following is a response written by the Rebbe to someone who was apparently being bothered by others for the work he was doing in *hafatzas hamaayanos*:¹



1. It is quite shocking that you would "take **such** offense" from this person's behavior.
2. From the days of the Baal Shem Tov there were people like this, and ultimately the Baal Shem Tov etc. [and all his successors] **until now**, have emerged victorious.
3. If all of these people would do *teshuva*, Moshiach would come **literally** today.

לפלא גדול ש"לוקח ללבו" כ"כ
הנהגתו הנ"ל (1)

מימות הבעש"ט היו בנ"א ע"ד הנ"ל,
וסו"ס היתה יד הבעש"ט וכו' וע"ע
על העליונה (2)

באם כהנ"ל היו שבים בתשובה -
ה"ה משיח בא ממש היום (3)

1. The background is speculation based on the Rebbe's words, as we do not have the original letter written to the Rebbe.

L'Chatchila Ariber!

The Rebbe Maharash

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לזכות
הרה"ת ר' אברהם יהודה הלוי
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ONE OF THE MEGILOS WRITTEN BY THE REBBE MAHARASH

In the Rebbe's *sichos*, a very common refrain is the need to accomplish one's *avoda* in a manner of "*Lechatchilah Aribet*." This line, the Rebbe often explained, originates from the Rebbe Maharash who personified this *sefer avoda*.

The Rebbe often spoke about the Rebbe Maharash and often asked to sing his *niggun*. In fact, the Rebbe personally printed the Rebbe Maharash's biography, *Sefer Hatoldos Admur Maharash* – the only Rebbe for which he did so.

Although comparing and evaluating the conduct of a Rebbe is beyond our purview, Chassidim have often noted the many similarities between the style of the Rebbe and the Rebbe Maharash.

In honor of Beis Iyar, "*Tiferes Shebiteferes*," the birthday of the Rebbe Maharash, A *Chassidisher Derher* presents the following overview and description of his *nesius*.

Ushering In A New Era

“Hashem desired the souls of the *tzaddikim*, my father the Rebbe, on Wednesday evening, 13 Nissan 5626* (תרכ"ו). The *aron kodesh*, the light of the Jewish nation, was taken into captivity. May the dwellers of the dust rise and sing, and him among them, and share with us the wonders of Hashem's Torah...”

With these words, the Rebbe Maharash inscribed the news of the Tzemach Tzedek's *histalkus* on the *pinkas* of the *chevra kadisha* of Lubavitch. After close to 40 years, the sun had set on the *nesius* of the Tzemach Tzedek. The Rebbe Maharash, his youngest son, was chosen to be his successor.

The choice wasn't a simple one.

The Rebbe Maharash was young, not yet 32 years old. He had always kept a low profile, while his five older brothers were each well-known and highly esteemed among Chassidim. One brother was known for his vast knowledge of *nigleh*, another for his deep understanding of Chassidus, and yet another for his passionate and inspiring davening. Indeed, in the years following the Tzemach Tzedek's passing, the brothers moved to other towns where they led Chassidim of their own.

The Rebbe Maharash, on the other hand, was unpretentious in spiritual matters. He didn't profess his knowledge of *nigleh* or Chassidus during his early life, and even when he became a Rebbe and began speaking Chassidus, he rarely spoke *nigleh*. His davening appeared to people as simple, without the external trappings of excitement.

During a discussion after the Tzemach Tzedek's passing, the Rebbe Maharash presented his thoughts on a certain matter according to *halacha*, and his brother Reb Yisroel Noach—

famous for his brilliance in *nigleh*—expressed his shock and amazement.

“Where did you get this? You are so young!” he exclaimed.

“You are old in your own years,” the Rebbe Maharash responded. “But I am old with father's years.”¹

As a youngster, the Rebbe Maharash was known to be somewhat mischievous. Even as an adult, the Rebbe writes in *Reshimas Hayoman*,² he did not conduct himself like his brothers. The Tzemach Tzedek's elder sons would entertain the visitors to Lubavitch and review their father's Chassidus in public, but the Rebbe Maharash would not speak Chassidus publicly, and was known to be a *freilicher* person.

However, in the last years of his life, the Tzemach Tzedek had instructed all of his sons to deliver *maamarim*, and the Rebbe Maharash had begun to do so.³ More and more, Chassidim began to acquaint themselves with ‘the Rebbe's youngest son.’ And before his passing, the Tzemach Tzedek wrote a note to the Chassidim saying, “You should listen to him [referring to the Rebbe Maharash] just as you listened to me.”

After the *histalkus*, there were various discussions and disagreements between the Tzemach Tzedek's sons that were brought before a *beis din* of three highly esteemed Chassidim. At the end, the Rebbe Maharash was chosen to be his father's *memaleh makom* to sit on his seat in the town of Lubavitch.⁴

News did not travel fast in those days. On 8 Av, one Chossid in the town of Pleshtzenitz wrote the following in a letter to his friend, Reb Avraham Chaim Rosenbaum:⁵

“We haven't heard much, but last week, we received a letter from Reb Meir Amstizer... He writes that he met Reb Yosef Kremenchuker arriving from Lubavitch, and he showed him *tzetlach* from the Rebbe... from those notes it is very clear that the Maharash⁶ should be the Rebbe.

“Reb Yosef related that one individual came to the Maharash and complained that he was completely destitute. The Maharash attributed his problem to a failing in his *avodas Hashem* based on a certain *possuk*,⁷ and ultimately, the person admitted to that failing.”



ARTIST'S SKETCH OF LUBAVITCH

“After receiving his letter, we felt encouraged and enthused. We said *lchaim*; may Hashem give us the merit to follow the correct path.

“Most of the *olam* is following the Maharash. They are recounting amazing things...”⁸

A Close Connection

As a child, the Rebbe Maharash would spend a lot of time with his father, the Tzemach Tzedek. Aside from his regular studies in *cheder* and with private tutors, the Tzemach Tzedek personally taught him a variety of subjects, such as Kesuvim and Tanya, and when he grew older, they learned Kabbalah and Chakirah for hours at a time.

By the time he was seven or eight years old, he was fluent in the entire Chumash and much of Nach, and was learning Gemara with Tosfos regularly. He started listening to his father’s Chassidus, and soon began transcribing his own *hanachos*.

He also had the luxury of talented older brothers: When he was 10 years old, his brother Reb Yisroel Noach would learn *nigleh* with him, and his brother Reb Boruch Sholom taught him how the Alter Rebbe would *lein* the Torah.

He was first married at a young age, only 14 years old, to Sterna, the daughter of his brother Reb Chaim Shneur Zalman, but she fell ill and passed away only three months after the wedding. To comfort the Rebbe Maharash, the Tzemach Tzedek gave him a room adjacent to his own, allowing him to enter his room at any time. During the years that followed, he spent even more time with the Tzemach Tzedek. His second marriage, to Rebbetzin Rivka (a granddaughter of the Mittler Rebbe), was in 5609* or 5610*, some three years later.⁹

He would also spend time with the elder Chassidim. “Even as a child,” he



THE ROUND TABLE MADE BY THE REBBE MAHARASH

related to his son, the Rebbe Rashab, “I found favor in the eyes of the senior Chassidim, and they would share their stories with me.”¹⁰

One elder Chossid, Reb Yitzchak Aizik of Vitebsk, had been one of the earliest Chassidim of the Alter Rebbe. He paid close attention to the Rebbe Maharash and shared with him his many memories of the previous Rabbeim. Later, this same Chossid gave the Rebbe Maharash *semicha*.

A Smile of a Rebbe

Throughout his life, the Rebbe Maharash suffered from a painful and debilitating illness. Yet, despite his suffering, he always kept an upbeat appearance and never displayed his difficulties.

“I never met anyone that suffered as much as my father,” the Rebbe Rashab once expressed himself, “and yet he always had a smile on his face.” A beautiful smile, the Rebbe Rashab noted, that had G-dly qualities to it; a smile that only a Rebbe has.¹¹

Several interesting artifacts remain from the Rebbe Maharash, such as a beautifully written Megillah and a round table that sits in the Rebbe’s room. The doctors instructed him

to engage in physical activity, and he therefore made those items. In the town of Lubavitch, there was also a large candelabra which was the Rebbe Maharash’s handiwork. It would be set up each year at the bochurim’s *seder*, but it was lost over the years.

The Rebbe Maharash was extremely punctual. Every day had a specific schedule, and he would often be after Shacharis by eight in the morning.

He took two trips to the fields each day. During those trips, Chassidim would sneak into his room and copy manuscripts of Chassidus, while posting a guard at the door to warn them of his return. Among those Chassidim would also be his own wife, Rebbetzin Rivkah. The Rebbe once noted that the Rebbe Maharash definitely realized that people were copying his *ksavim*, but instead of allowing them to copy them legitimately, he preferred it to be in secrecy. “Because certain things need to be undertaken with trickery, like the *brachos* of Eisav by Yaakov...”¹²

A Different Hanhaga

President Zalman Shazar once sent a collection of manuscripts of the Rabbeim to a graphologist to analyze

Numbers

The Rebbe Maharash loved numbers and calculations. Reb Abba Person once asked him how many times we bang our chest during *Al Chet* on Yom Kippur, and from his response, they discovered that you are supposed to beat your chest also in the words “*slach lanu, mechal lanu...*”
(*Reshimas Hayoman* pg. 206. *Sefer Hasichos* 5705 pg. 9.)

Childhood Stories, Recounted by the Rebbe No Surprise

In *Reshimas Hayoman*, the Rebbe writes the following two stories about the childhood of the Rebbe Maharash:

The Rebbe Maharash was born on 2 Iyar 5693* (תקצ"ג), the *sefirah* of *Tiferes Sheb'Tiferes*.

When he was seven years old, the Tzemach Tzedek once tested him on his learning, and he did very well. His teacher was impressed, and said to the Tzemach Tzedek, “Ah, what do you say? He’s doing well!”

The Tzemach Tzedek responded, “Why are you surprised that *Tiferes Sheb'Tiferes* is doing well?”

When he was 10 years old, he learned in a group of four children: The Rebbe Maharash, and his nephews Reb Shlomo Zalman—son of Maharil—of Kapust, and another two grandchildren of the Tzemach Tzedek.

The Tzemach Tzedek once came in to test them, and the Rebbe Maharash posed a question. His friends answered the question, but he refuted their answer. The Tzemach Tzedek answered the question, but the Rebbe Maharash asked a question on his answer.

The Tzemach Tzedek then said, “When you get older...”

“When I get older, I will ask better questions,” the Rebbe Maharash replied.

The Tzemach Tzedek remarked, “It wasn’t for naught that his *bris* was on *Tiferes Sheb’Netzach*.”

(*Reshimas Hayoman* pg. 283.)



the handwriting. When the Rebbe read her conclusions about the Rebbe Maharash, he wrote his comments to Mr. Shazar, noting where the graphologist was correct, and where she had erred:

“I was impressed that in several points she hit the mark, especially where she writes that the author clearly suffered during his lifetime both physically and spiritually, and those experiences strengthened him.

We know from family tradition that he suffered terribly from a young age, but was nevertheless always seen with a smile on his face, receiving people graciously.”

The Rebbe goes on that he was surprised when a most characteristic feature of the Rebbe Maharash was not mentioned:

“From the very beginning of his leadership, the style of his relationships [with Chassidim] was

clearly set out: when asked for his opinion, he would reply with a few short words. This was in contrast to the Rebbes before and after him, who would often explain their directives; along with their regal persona, there were also elements of closeness [with their Chassidim].”

The Rebbe writes a similar point in *Reshimas Hayoman*:

“As a Rebbe,” the Rebbe writes, “he behaved *b’romemus* [elevated



ZITSHREI 5737, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 205043

THE REBBE LEAVES THE SUKKA AFTER A LEKACH DISTRIBUTION WITH THE REBBE MAHARASH'S HEMSHECH "וככה תרל"ז" IN HAND. THE REBBE WAS OFTEN SEEN LEARNING THE REBBE MAHARASH'S MAMARIM ON SUKKOS.

and removed] even with the elder Chassidim, and even with his sons. The Tzemach Tzedek was accustomed to consulting with his sons and with his daughter Devorah Leah, but the Rebbe Maharash did not do so.

"However, there were instances when he had long conversations with people in *yechidus*. There were also occasions that he went out to the courtyard and conversed with the townspeople."¹³

Another unique characteristic of the Rebbe Maharash's leadership was the deep connection the Chassidim felt to him. All his Chassidim were fiercely dedicated. Regardless of their status, they had a strong feeling of *hiskashrus*, in contrast to the Chassidim of his brothers and even the Chassidim of his father, the Tzemach Tzedek. His Chassidim would treasure every word that he uttered; every Chossid, learned or not, was able to repeat segments of

a *maamar* that he had heard during his visit to Lubavitch.

Some Chassidim were great *baalei avoda* and *haskalah*, while others were simple *baalei batim* or villagers (some of whom the Rebbe Maharash would call, "My *baalei ahavah* and *yirah*"). Yet the Chassidus he taught was always relevant to all. Simpletons would be able to understand the basic message, while the learned Chassidim would see



THE MATZEVOIS OF THE TZEMACH TZEDEK AND THE REBBE MAHARASH AS THEY WERE FOUND IN 1944*, WHEN REB BEREL LEVY TRAVELED THROUGH SOVIET RUSSIA ATTENDING TO THE KEVORIM OF THE REBBEIM.



THE OHEL OF THE TZEMACH TZEDEK AND THE REBBE MAHARASH AS IT LOOKS TODAY. A SIGN EXPLAINS THAT THE PLACEMENT OF THE NEW MATZEIVOS, WITH THE REBBE MAHARASH TO THE LEFT, WAS BASED ON ORAL TRADITION, WHILE THE ORIGINAL STONES WERE LEFT AS THEY WERE FOUND WITH THE REBBE MAHARASH ON THE RIGHT.

its profound depth—which even they often had difficulty understanding.

When the Friediker Rebbe was 12 years old, he witnessed Reb Zalman Zlatopolsky and Reb Yehuda Leib Hoffman arguing over the meaning of a *maamar* the Rebbe Maharash delivered 15 years earlier. “They spoke with such excitement,” the Friediker

Rebbe described, “it was as if they had heard the *maamar* just moments earlier.”¹⁴

Ganging Up With the Capitalists

The *nesius* of the Rebbe Maharash coincided with one of the most difficult periods for Yidden in Czarist

Russia. The government constantly created new decrees to hamper Jewish movement and to make life difficult for the Jewish communities. In the years before the Rebbe Maharash's passing, a wave of state-sponsored pogroms spread throughout Russia, wreaking terrible destruction. Indeed, in the decades that followed, hundreds of thousands of Jews fled Eastern Europe and settled in the United States and elsewhere.

Throughout his life, the Rebbe Maharash worked tirelessly to alleviate the suffering of the Jewish people. His communal activism began long before his *nesius*. When the Tzemach Tzedek decided to cease his attendance at the rabbinic conferences called by the government, he sent the Rebbe Maharash—then in his early twenties—in his stead.

He would make frequent trips to St. Petersburg to meet with government officials. He would also travel abroad, to Italy, Germany and France to meet with wealthy Jewish bankers. He developed an interesting tactic: He would ask those Jews to withhold loans to the Czar until he improved the condition of the Jews.

Such endeavors were dangerous, and his trips were always presented as visits to doctors and spa towns. Indeed, when the Russian government heard about his strategy, they were furious. In one conversation with the Minister of Interior, things came to a head when the Rebbe Maharash calmly informed him that the Jewish bankers had written to Lubavitch asking whether to approve loans to the Russians.

“What did you reply?” the minister asked.

“I haven’t answered yet,” the Rebbe Maharash said. “I’m waiting for the government’s response...”

The minister grew angry. “Lubavitcher Rebbe! Are you issuing a threat to the Russian government?”

“You don’t need to see it as a threat, but you should not take the matter lightly. Many non-Jewish capitalists will join them, because the barbarism in this country is an offense to all humanity.”

The minister turned the conversation to the government’s greatest fear—and therefore, the greatest possible offense:

“Will the Lubavitcher Rebbe ignite a revolution together with these capitalists?”

The Rebbe Maharash didn’t take the bait.

“The government will bring this revolution upon itself, as a result of its terrible neglect of the country...”¹⁵

Higher than Measure

In our generation, one of the most famous attributes of the Rebbe Maharash is his renowned statement, “*Lechatchilah Ariber*.”

די וועלט זאגט, אז מ'קען ניט ארונטער, גייט מען אריבער. און איך זאג אז לכתחילה אריבער—People say that if you cannot go under, go over. I say, from the outset, go over.”

The Rebbe repeated this idea countless times throughout the *nesius*, drawing many lessons for a Chossid’s everyday life. During one farbrengen, the Rebbe noted how this theme—the idea of behaving higher than *medidah* and *hagbala*—was apparent in many aspects of the Rebbe Maharash’s *nesius*.

“It is apparent in his Chassidus,” the Rebbe explained. “Each *maamar* is a microcosm of many *maamarim*, containing a vast amount of ideas. However, they are written concisely; the Rebbe Rashab often writes at length to explain just one line of his father’s *maamarim*.”¹⁶

“It is also apparent in his conduct: The Frierdiker Rebbe famously said that the Rebbe Maharash had many *Baal Shem’ske* stories. There were many stories of *baalei teshuva* he made as well.

The Story the Rebbe Chose for Basi Legani

In the Rebbe’s first *maamar*, Basi Legani, he recounted stories about the *ahavas Yisroel* of the Rabbeim. For the Rebbe Maharash, the Rebbe shared the following:

The [Frierdiker] Rebbe recounted a story of the Rebbe Maharash several times.

The Rebbe Maharash was in a healing-spa, and he made a special trip to Paris, spending a significant period of time there, in order to meet an unsuspecting young man in a hotel.

He went over to him and said, “Young man, *yayin nesech* defiles the *neshamah*.”

This young man had been playing cards.

The Rebbe Maharash returned to his room, and the young man found no rest until he visited him. Eventually, he raised a G-d-fearing, observant family.

It is well known that time was very precious to the Rebbe Maharash. His recital of *maamarim* was brief; the [Frierdiker] Rebbe would relate that at times, he would have concluded davening by eight in the morning.

Nonetheless, he traveled to a distant city for the sake of one young Jew who knew nothing about Yiddishkeit, who had no apparent connection to the Rebbe Maharash.

[While relating the story, the Rebbe noted that all the details of the full story are already printed and available. See Sefer Hasichos 5705 pg. 30-31.]

(*Ashreinu Audio, Yud Shevat 5711, Maamar, min. 25:00.*)

“And likewise in his personal life: His home and furnishings were all very beautiful. This was the case even during the lifetime of the Tzemach Tzedek and with his support — even while the Tzemach Tzedek himself lived very simply.”¹⁷

Maamarim of Lechatchilah Ariber

The Rebbe Maharash would deliver a *maamar* each week, either before Kabbalas Shabbos or on Shabbos morning, and would also transcribe his words in writing. In the early years of the Rebbe’s *nesius*, the Rebbe wanted the publication of the Rebbe Maharash’s Chassidus done as quickly as possible, so *sefarim* were published as photocopies of the handwriting of Reb Shmuel, the copyist of Lubavitch. Over the years, those *sefarim* were

typed and redone, and today there is a large set of his *maamarim* which the Rebbe named, “Likutei Torah — Toras Shmuel.”

To give us a glimpse into the *maamarim* of the Rebbe Maharash, we turned to Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Gourarie, the *mashpia* of Yeshivas Lubavitch Detroit:

“As is true with every Rebbe,” says Rabbi Gourarie, “the *maamarim* of the Rebbe Maharash have their own unique style. On one hand, his *maamarim* are relatively short and quite simple. He cites many *maamarei Chazal* and *Midrashim* and explains them according to Chassidus, and doesn’t engage in lengthy explanations as often as the Rebbe Rashab and Mittlerer Rebbe do.

“At face value, Chassidim would say, it seemed that he was ‘talking

What Did He Look Like?

An age-old question among Chassidim has always been whether there is a photo or painting of the Rebbe Maharash.

No known image exists. Various sketches and paintings have been attributed to him, but none have been proven as authentic.

However, the Rebbe shared the following two stories—one about how he looked, and the second about the impact his image made—that can give us a small taste of his presence.

When a Chossid Fainted

The Frierdiker Rebbe looked very much like his grandfather, the Rebbe Maharash. To the extent that when he came to Eretz Yisrael during his famous visit, decades after the passing of the Rebbe Maharash — there were Chassidim in Eretz Yisrael who had seen the Rebbe Maharash, and when one of them entered for a *yechidus* with the Frierdiker Rebbe he immediately fainted.

He was asked, “Why did you faint?”

He responded, “He looks just like the Rebbe Maharash!” He had fainted from [the shock of] the sight of the Rebbe Maharash — whom he hadn’t seen for many decades.

(12 Tammuz 5745. Ashreinu Audio, sicha 4 min. 3:33. The Rebbe often cried while relating this story.)

A Look of Reverence

People felt in awe of the Rebbe Maharash. It was surprising, because he always had a smile on his face. Even though he suffered terribly [the Frierdiker Rebbe said that it is difficult to imagine how much he suffered], he still always had a smile. Even during the lifetime of his father, the Tzemach Tzedek, when he was less formal than his brothers, people were nevertheless very reverential in his presence. It wasn’t because of something that he did; it was automatic.

This was also the case with non-Jews. He once arrived in a town and the village elders came to greet him with bread and salt, but when they beheld his holy image, they all ran away.

(Toras Menachem 5712 vol. 1 pg. 23.)



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to his crowd.' The majority of his Chassidim were simple people, and the Rebbe Maharash ensured that his Chassidus would always have a clear message which they could understand.

"On the other hand, a closer look at the *maamarim* reveals many amazing *chiddushim* in Chassidus. The Rebbe Rashab once said that he needed to prepare a *hemshech* for the upcoming Rosh Hashanah, and he based it all on a few lines in a *maamar* of his father.

"These profound *chiddushim* are not presented as *chiddushim*, nor are they explained at length. In a very '*Lechatchila Aribet*' style, the Rebbe Maharash seems to 'drop' a thought of Chassidus on the learner, leaving him to figure it out on his own.

"In 5640* (תר"ם), Reb Shlomo Zalman of Kapust and the Rebbe Maharash had a famous argument whether the אותיות הרשימו were affected by the צמצום [the full argument is beyond the scope of this article]. The Rebbe Maharash held that they were not affected. But what is interesting to note is that the Rebbe Maharash's only writing regarding the entire protracted argument is in a small segment of a *maamar*, '*Matzah zu*,' that year. It was the Rebbe Rashab who later discussed it and explained it at great length.

"The Rebbe once noted an interesting fact about the *hemshechim* of the Rebbe Maharash: Other Rabbeim commonly began their *hemshechim* on Rosh Hashanah, but the Rebbe Maharash often begins on Pesach.

"The key to understanding this point lies in the unique *avoda* of Tishrei vs. Nissan. During Tishrei, a person strives with his own *avoda*, but on Pesach, we receive revelations from above. The Rebbe Maharash's *hemshechim* begin on Pesach for a very simple reason, the Rebbe said. Because he personified '*Lechatchila Aribet*.'"

The Niggun of Lechatchila Aribet

The Rebbe Maharash's *niggun*, which the Rebbe often sang at farbrengens, is famously known as '*Lechatchila Aribet*.' This name was actually given by the Rebbe; previously, it was more commonly known as "*Eintz, tzvei, drei, fir*," or "*Niggun ein sof*."

In Reshimos (*Choveres* 14), the Rebbe notes that he learned the song from his grandfather, Reb Meir Shlomo Yanovsky, who had been a *yoshev* by the Rebbe Maharash.

Regarding the source of the tune, the Rebbe Maharash related that he once saw musical notes written in the back of a Kabbalah sefer called *Hon Ashir*, and those notes inspired the tune of his *niggun*.

(*Sefer Hatoldos* pg. 43.)



THE NOTES FROM HON ASHIR

A Firsthand Account

In the early years of his *nesius*, the Rebbe encouraged many elder Chassidim to transcribe their memories from the Rabbeim and Chassidim of old. Even people who no longer considered themselves Chassidim were requested to send in—and publish—their memoirs.

One such request went to Mr. Tzvi Har-Shefer, formerly Lokshin, who grew up in the town of Lubavitch during the Rebbe Maharash's *nesius*.

"I would be very interested to see your memoirs," the Rebbe wrote to him, "because I am collecting historical material about Lubavitch, and especially regarding that era—the times of the Rebbe Maharash and the beginning of the Rebbe Rashab—of which there are no accounts."¹⁸

Almost no firsthand accounts remain of the Rebbe Maharash. In those days, Chassidim considered it unbecoming to transcribe one's personal life story; it was viewed as a *maskilish* thing to do. By the time the Frierdiker Rebbe and Rebbe encouraged Chassidim to write their memories, almost no Chassidim who recalled the Rebbe Maharash were alive. The Rebbe's letter to Mr. Har-Shefer was written over 70 years after the Rebbe Maharash's *histalkus*.

Mr. Har-Shefer wrote one such article about his memories (in 5714*, apparently before the Rebbe's letter).

Remarkably, the vast majority of biographical details and descriptions in his article concur with the Frierdiker Rebbe's *sichos* and with the Rebbe's Reshimas Hayoman.

In the following segment, we bring a selection of his descriptions.¹⁹

My Memories of Lubavitch

Like most remote Russian towns, Lubavitch did not have a train station or post office. However, that was where the similarities ended. Our town had a constant stream of visitors who came to consult with the Rebbe and they brought life and excitement to the Rebbe's courtyard and all the surrounding streets.

The *chatzer* was at the center of the town and it was surrounded by many hostels. It had a large hall, which would be opened for special occasions like Rosh Hashanah or a *chasunah* in the Rebbe's family. Nearby was the regular, smaller *zal*, and the Rebbe's home.

Many years have since passed, but I still remember his noble appearance. He was taller than average, with a wide forehead, a red beard, and piercing eyes that expressed wit and wisdom. He had a broad build that added to his regal image.

The Rebbe was blessed with many talents: a phenomenal memory, an incisive mind, and a quick grasp of

any subject. He was well-aware of public affairs; he corresponded with his wealthy Chassidim and whenever a new *gezeirah* appeared on the horizon, he knew about it immediately.

The [Rebbe] Maharash would speak Chassidus on Shabbos morning,²⁰ in the *zal* adjacent to his home. A table would be set up near his door, and the outer door of the *zal* would be shut; the *shamash* would stand guard, not allowing anyone to enter or leave. At the assigned moment, the entire hall would fall silent, and everyone would rise and crowd closer to the Rebbe's place. The Rebbe would sit on a chair, surrounded by his family members and the senior Chassidim. Silence reigned in the room as everybody held their breath and focused on the Rebbe's words. He would begin quietly, but slowly his voice would rise and cut through the room. He would become more and more animated, as everyone focused intently. At the height of his excitement, he would often repeat these words of Tehillim and explain them:

“מי לי בשמים ועמך לא חפצתי בארץ—I don't need your *Gan Eden Ha'elyon* or *Gan Eden Hatachton*, rather, כלה שאני—I want You, and You alone...”

During Yomim Tovim, the Chassidim would demand an addition between Mincha and Maariv. The Chassidim—especially the young

ones—would sit near the Rebbe’s door, singing the Alter Rebbe’s niggun with passion. If they weren’t answered immediately, they would sing it again and again, until the Rebbe was ‘forced’ to give in and come out to the Chassidim, despite his illness.

Each day, the Rebbe would receive the many guests who came for his guidance and blessing. Many *rabbanim* too, would be among the visitors, twirling their *payos* and waiting nervously in line for the moment that Levik the Gabai would grant them entry.

It was very tiring work. The Rebbe would travel outside the city afterwards, to refresh himself and spend time meditating with his own thoughts.

The Rebbe would personally read the *haftarah*. He would daven in his room near the shul, and would enter the shul to read *maftir* in his special voice.

On Rosh Hashanah, he would blow the shofar. The room would be very packed. The entire crowd would become like one large body, with only heads dividing between them. Everyone stood with the fear of the *Yom Hadin*; the room would fall silent, and then the Rebbe’s voice would pierce the air: “*Min Hameitzar...*”

For *tashlich*, all the guests would accompany the Rebbe with a joyous

song. The young Chassidim would create a large circle around the Rebbe, his family and the elder Chassidim.

Another special moment was the drawing of *mayim shelanu*. Amid great singing and joy, we would go down to the river. The Rebbe himself would lower the bucket into the water. The next day, the Rebbe would personally mix the dough and hand out pieces to be rolled into matzah. In the evening, many Lubavitch townspeople would hurry to finish their *seder*, to watch the Rebbe conduct his *seder* with his family.

One of the greatest moments was Yud-Tes Kislev. The Rebbe would retell the story in all its detail, about the *machlokes* with the *misnagdim*, the Alter Rebbe’s arrest and liberation, and the miracles that occurred throughout. The Chassidim would say *l’chaim* and even grab *shirayim*.

In his final year, the Rebbe became ill, being only 48 years old. Prominent doctors were called to operate, to no avail, and he became increasingly weak. Tehillim was recited in all of the shuls, and the *kivrei tzaddikim* were visited. That Rosh Hashanah, Chassidim were terribly dejected when someone else blew shofar instead of the Rebbe.

On the evening of 13 Tishrei, we heard that the situation was very bad, and the next day he passed away. His

aron was made from the table upon which he would say Chassidus. The *levaya* was very large; no resident of Lubavitch was absent, and Chassidim even managed to come from nearby villages. They broke a wall of the Ohel, and interred him near his father, the Tzemach Tzedek. **T**

1. *Sefer Hatoldos* pg. 37
2. *Reshimas Hayoman* pg. 209.
3. *Reshimas Hayoman* pg. 283.
4. *Reshimas Hayoman* pg. 284. For more about this period, see *Derher Shevat* 5779 pg. 22, “Memaleh Mekomo.”
5. For more about this Chossid, see *Derher Shevat* 5779 pg. 30, “The Life of a Chossid.”
6. The sons of the Tzemach Tzedek were already known by their acronyms during the Tzemach Tzedek’s lifetime.
7. Mishlei 6:26.
8. *Toldos Chabad B’Rusia HaTsaris*, pg. 194.
9. *Reshimas Hayoman* pg. 249.
10. *Sefer Hatoldos* pg. 26.
11. *Reshimas Hayoman* pg. 319.
12. *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 2 pg. 514-515.
13. *Reshimas Hayoman* pg. 209 and pg. 272
14. *Sefer Hatoldos Admur Maharash* pg. 83-84.
15. *Sefer Hatoldos* pg. 60
16. See *Heichal HaBaal Shem Tov*, issue #40, pg. 134.
17. 13 Tishrei 5739, *Sichos Kodesh* 5739 vol. 1 pg. 65-68
18. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 12 pg. 38.
19. The article was printed in *Haavar*, issue 2. Republished in *Teshura Barada-Guberg* 5779.
20. The Chassidus on Shabbos morning was only during the summer months. See *Sefer Hatoldos* pg. 43

A Lesson For All

ביז אפילו דעם פשוט שבפשוטים



The lesson learned this week must be understood by every single Yid, even the most simple-minded. The entire Torah was given to the *Bnei Yisroel* as a whole, but at the same time it was also given to each and every Yid individually, as the Midrash points out: *Matan Torah* was only able to happen when all 600,000 Yidden were present at Har Sinai. If even one had been missing, Hashem would not have given the Torah.

Obviously then, this lesson must be understandable even for the simplest of Jews. Yes, a smarter Yid, one of the “heads of tribes,” can and should delve deeper into the lesson and understand it more comprehensively. But at the base of it, just like every part of Torah, this lesson must be clear and straightforward—accessible to all...

(*Shabbos Parshas Bamidbar, Erev Shavuos 5738, et. al.*¹)

Me Too

When Hashem gave the Torah to the Yidden, the first words uttered were: “אנכי ה' אלקיך—I am Hashem

your G-d,” using the singular term—even though there were millions of people being addressed. The Midrash explains² that each and every Yid heard the words in a personal way; each one said “עמי הדיבור מדבר”—Hashem’s words are being addressed to me specifically.”

Likewise, the Torah was given as an inheritance to every single Yid: מורשה. קהלת יעקב. There is no prerequisite to acquiring an inheritance; according to *halacha*, even a one-day-old child can inherit whatever belonged to his predecessor.

With that being the case, every part of Torah must be accessible and understandable by each and every Yid.

The Rebbe often emphasized this point when teaching a lesson in *avodas Hashem*, stating that it must be understood by everyone—even the most simple of individuals. Similarly, the Rebbe would connect the theme of the various *parshios* and Yomim Tovim with the fact that each and every

Yid, even the most simple, must be included in the order of the day.

The Rebbe would often connect it with the theme of the *farbrengen* and the time of year. For example: Around Rosh Hashanah, the Rebbe elaborated on the *possuk* of אתם נצבים היום כולכם—how all the Yidden stand together on Rosh Hashanah, regardless of their status. We all crown Hashem as king over all of us—as members of the same nation. So the lessons of the day must certainly be appreciated by each and every one.

This is one of the most important founding principles of Chassidus as taught by the Baal Shem Tov and the Alter Rebbe. The Rebbe explains:

Before Chassidus was revealed, there was a great divide between the scholars, the *bnei Torah*, and the simple folk. Then the Baal Shem Tov, the Maggid, the Alter Rebbe, and all the Rabbeim that followed, invested immense effort to show that it is possible, and allowed access, for even the most simple Jews to reach

לזכות
החייל בצבאות ה'
מאיר שלמה שיחי'
ניו
שיגדל להיות חי"ל לנח"ר כ"ק אדמו"ר
נדפס ע"י משפחתו שיחיו



the highest levels of *avoda*. The Alter Rebbe wanted Chassidus to be for everyone, not merely for one group of people or select individuals.

The Baal Shem Tov forged a whole new path and revolutionized the way things are done:

Before the revelation of Chassidus, the great *tzaddikim* and teachers of Torah would stay in their own place and expected anyone who wanted to learn from them to come to wherever the teacher was. Even those *tzaddikim* who had a habit of traveling and moving about, did so mainly for their own spiritual benefit, as a means of experiencing “*galus*” and cleansing their souls. While on the road, they would try hard to hide their true identity, not allowing themselves to be revealed to the Yidden that they met in the cities along the way.

The Baal Shem Tov, on the other hand, traveled extensively from city to city and from village to village. The Alter Rebbe also traveled a lot, and even when he wasn't traveling, he sent

talmidim (*shadarim*, *meshulachim*, etc.) on his behalf. Instead of concealing themselves from the public, these people would engage and educate, spreading the light of Torah and the source of the light of Torah—*penimius haTorah*—to the whole world.

This allowed for the engagement of even the least inspired Yidden, those who did not even know they were missing anything in their lives. They were taught to learn and appreciate the Torah they were missing, and they were eventually transformed into teachers themselves who spread the message even further.

Such are the ways of the Baal Shem Tov and all those who follow in his path—to teach and inspire even the uninitiated, including even very small children. The Baal Shem Tov himself worked as a teacher's assistant, tending to young children, helping them get to and from *cheder*, teaching them to say *brachos* and *Shema Yisroel*, and so on.

This was also one of the primary occupations of the [Frierdiker] Rebbe,

working hard that all Jewish children should have a proper education, not only those who were up to learning Chumash and Gemara, but even those who still needed to learn Aleph-Beis and Modeh Ani!

Even someone who is not yet even ready to learn Aleph-Beis, the [Frierdiker] Rebbe demanded that we should help them and teach them the basics of Yiddishkeit in a language that they do understand.

It is our sacred obligation to teach and inspire all the Yidden in our surroundings, to kindle the fire of their *neshamos*, or to fan the existing flames and allow them to shine ever brighter.³

The Rebbe once explained that while the Baal Shem Tov opened the door for bringing the secrets of the Torah to even the most simple people, the Alter Rebbe carried through with this mission and made it a reality. The Baal Shem Tov dealt with very young children teaching them the very basics of Yiddishkeit, as well as with the



very simple folk, inspiring them to praise Hashem and so on. However, these great and lofty energies were not able to manifest in a proper way. The *giluyim* he was revealing were sourced in *Sefiras HaKesser* and did not come

down in a manner that was palatable by lower realms.

The Maggid, and then the Alter Rebbe with Chassidus Chabad, were able to begin the process of allowing these lofty concepts to sit well within the human mind. Chassidus

Chabad not only teaches us that we can influence the most simple Jew and carry him to the loftiest heights, moreover, it even gives us the *explanation* for how this is possible. How a Yid who is considered by Torah to be a נדח—far from where he needs to be—is truly a Yid who will ultimately not be cast out forever: לא ידח ממנו נדח. We can teach this Yid even the deepest concepts in *penimius haTorah*, thereby bringing him back to where he needs to be, to the ways of Torah and mitzvos.⁴

The Rebbe once explained that since the Torah was given to each and every one of us, it is not enough for us to merely read up on what the final ruling is, what the “*maskana*” is and follow the orders. Each and every Yid needs to try and understand the depth of what lies behind that order, to the best extent possible.

This is in stark contrast to the way things were when the Yidden were still in Mitzrayim: The culture in Mitzrayim was such that only the great scholars, the “*chartumim*,” the sorcerers and stargazers, were well


What Did Chassidus Accomplish?

Many people ask: What did Chassidus accomplish? I never heard anything in this regard from my forebears. I never farbrenged with my father on Yud-Tes Kislev, so I never heard an explanation from him on this.

...What I personally think Chassidus accomplished is that each and every Yid can really understand how Hashem is מלא כל עולמין וסובב כל עולמין—He fills all the worlds and He surrounds all the worlds... Every Yid, even one who doesn't have such a lofty *neshama*, one who didn't work on cleansing his *neshama*, even he can understand and deeply connect with a G-dly idea.

When the Baal Shem Tov was told by Moshiach that he would arrive after the wellsprings of Chassidus reached the *chutza*, the Baal Shem Tov was crying. People say that he was crying because these precious wellsprings were about to be dispersed everywhere, even in the furthest places. It seems that this is what Chassidus is all about: That even those people who did not cleanse their souls should be able to understand and relate to *Elokus*.

(*The Rebbe Rashab, Sefer Hasichos Toras Shalom*, p. 113)



versed in intellectual concepts, and they gave the orders for what the common folk should do. For the Yidden, Hashem wanted the exact opposite: Every Yid is supposed to learn and understand the Torah for himself, appreciating the depth of every Torah concept to the best of his capabilities.

Even a small child is supposed to be taught Torah from the moment he begins to speak. True, he may not understand the concepts at hand as well as an adult, but the obligation to study Torah is real nonetheless. A good analogy for this would be the rays of light from the sun: The sun is indeed the greatest and most powerful luminary in the solar system, yet its reflection can be found at the same time on both a tiny drop of water and on the ocean. Torah, too, is a great and G-dly wisdom, but it manifests itself in the mind of a great genius just as well as it does in the mind of a two-year-old child.⁵

Our job is to bring the waters of Torah to everyone, even the most simple Yid, and explain it in a way that

Everyone

As we search for a lesson from this Chai Elul that we can all apply in our own *avodas Hashem*, one might think that the lesson should be by delving into a very deep secret in the innermost parts of the Torah, or by analyzing a complex subject in *nigleh*.

This is absolutely wrong. It would go contrary to the philosophy of the Baal Shem Tov, the Alter Rebbe, and all the Rabbeim who followed, including the [Frierdiker] Rebbe, to say that a lesson should be a complex thing that only intellectuals can understand but not the common folk.

The Rabbeim taught us that every lesson needs to be accessible to everyone—from the “heads of the tribes” through the “wood-choppers” and “water-drawers,” even the most simple people.

Not only that, but all these people are placed together, **אתם נצבים היום, כולכם**, becoming one entity together.

(*Shabbos Parshas Ki Savo, Chai Elul 5740*)

is palatable and understandable. If the other person still doesn’t understand it, it’s obviously not a problem on his part, because every concept in Torah is, by definition, accessible to all. The problem then must lie on the shoulders of the teacher—it is his responsibility to form a better method of explanation.⁶ ①

1. This same sentiment was repeated by the Rebbe at countless farbrengens, perhaps even hundreds of times. See below.

2. Yalkut Shimoni, Shemos 20:2.

3. Shabbos Parshas Ki Savo, Chai Elul 5711, sicha 1.

4. 19 Kislev 5720, sicha 7.

5. Yud Shevat 5743, sicha 2.

6. Pesach Sheini 5743, sicha 1.

LIVING WELL

A selection of the Rebbe's letters on the importance of maintaining optimal health and instructions for living a healthy lifestyle



הואִיל וְהִיּוֹת הַגּוּף בָּרִיא וְשָׁלֵם מִדְּרָכֵי (עֲבוּדַת) הַשֵּׁם הוּא.
שֶׁהֵרִי אֵי אֶפְשָׁר שְׂיָבִין אוֹ יָדַע דְּבַר מִיַּדֵּעַת הַבּוֹרָא וְהוּא
חוֹלָה. לְפִיכָךְ צָרִיךְ לְהִרְחִיק אָדָם עֲצָמוֹ מִדְּבָרִים הַמַּאֲבִדִין
אֶת הַגּוּף. וּלְהִנָּהִיג עֲצָמוֹ בְּדְבָרִים הַמְּבָרְרִין וְהַמְחַלְמִים.

Since maintaining a healthy and sound body is among the ways of (serving) Hashem—for one cannot understand or have any knowledge of the Creator if he is ill—therefore, he must avoid that which harms the body and accustom himself to that which is healthful and helps the body become stronger.

(Rambam, Hilchos De'os, 4:1)

לעילוי נשמת
הרה"ח הרה"ת הרב יהודה יעקב
בן ר' אברהם אבא ע"ה
רעפסון
נלב"ע כ"ז אדר ה'תש"פ
תנ"צ'ב'ה'
נדפס ע"י
משפחתו שיחיו

Introduction: The Preciousness of a Yid's Body

... My father-in-law, the Rebbe, of blessed memory, related the statement of his father, the Rebbe [Rashab] *nishmaso eden*: “See how precious is the body of a Jew — for its sake has [Hashem] poured forth so much [Torah and mitzvos].”

When Hashem gives each and every one of us something as precious as the body, we are to make every effort and truly exert ourselves to ensure that the body be healthy. In so doing, we make it possible to fulfill Hashem's will [of performing Torah and mitzvos, which is specifically performed with the body].

This is as the Rambam states in *Hilchos Deos*, beginning of ch. 4, that “maintaining a healthy and whole body is an integral part of [one's] *avodas Hashem*.” And then there is the letter of the Maggid [of Mezritch] (printed in *Hatomim*) to his son, the holy “Malach,” [in which he states]: “A small hole in the body causes a large hole in the soul.”

My intent is not to lecture — rather, it is my hope that the above will hopefully have a positive effect on you, and through you [it will also have an effect] upon your husband.

Although the Zohar does state that the “strength of the soul leads to the weakening of the body,” this is to be understood [in the context of the spiritual power and potency of the holy soul] weakening the corporeal demands of the body — not, Heaven forbid, weakening the health of the body.

Indeed, we readily observe that when a person is healthy he can accomplish so much more in all areas [than when he is unhealthy,] particularly with regard to matters relating to love of Hashem, love of Torah and love of a fellow Jew.²

Over the years, the Rebbe quoted these words of the Rambam on numerous occasions, urging his listeners, whether in *sichos*, letters, or *yechidus*, to meticulously guard their physical health. In honor of the month of אייר, the name of which includes the first letters of “אני ה' רפאך”—we present this collection of letters from the Rebbe about maintaining optimal health and healthy living habits.

These selections are culled from the book *Healthy in Body, Mind and Spirit*, volumes 1 & 2, compiled by Rabbi Sholom Ber Wineberg and published by Sichos in English.¹

The Importance of Maintaining a Proper Schedule

I received your letter in which you write about the state of your health:

You should seek the counsel of your *mashpia*, asking him to arrange your course of studies so that it will not in any way negatively impact your health, for there is the known Torah ruling, “Maintaining a healthy and whole body is an integral part of *avodas Hashem*.”

Surely you are also aware of the saying of the Alter Rebbe (quoted in Hayom Yom, entry for Erev Rosh Hashanah): “We have absolutely no conception of how precious the body of a Jew is to Hashem.”

You should therefore follow the doctor’s orders and make sure to follow a proper schedule — in accordance with your health requirements — regarding food, drink and rest. Hashem will then also grant you success that your *davening* and Torah study be accomplished with proper *yiras Shamayim*.

Enclosed is the *maamar* where you will also see that the spiritual deficiency caused by the power of the body only refers to the body being dominated by the *nefesh habahamis*, but not — G-d forbid — regarding the [power of the body] in relation to a person’s health, for that is related to the well-being of the Divine soul.³



Trade Away the Fasting

Over the years, the Rebbe generally discouraged people from taking fasts upon themselves as a way of doing teshuvah or attaining spiritual heights, and suggested other methods instead:

...With regard to fasting:

I have already told you — based on the words of the Alter Rebbe — that it is not advisable to take upon yourself extra fasts in addition to those that are already on the calendar.

One of the reasons offered by the Alter Rebbe is that today's generations are weaker than previous generations and are no longer physically capable of enduring extra fasts. Obviously, my suggestion to you is therefore valid even now [that you are feeling better].

Your impending resolution to undertake fasts should be changed to resolving to serve Hashem with extra measures of joy. Moreover, you should endeavor to inspire others to serve Hashem in this [positive] manner as well.⁴

Alternative Forms of Fasting

I was astonished to learn of your custom to fast from time to time on Mondays and Thursdays and also Erev Rosh Chodesh. Moreover, you do so despite the known directive of the Baal Shem Tov that one should make sure to be healthy so that [ill health] not be a hindrance to the command of serving Hashem with joy, for we readily observe that in this generation frequent fasting weakens one's health and hinders the performance of mitzvos.

Understandably, the above refers to those fasts that the person accepts upon himself (and not those fasts that are commanded by Jewish law).

Should you insist on a form of fasting, then there is the known directive of the Rebbe Maharash that this can be accomplished by refraining from unnecessary speech, even when one greatly desires to do so. This applies not only

to forbidden slanderous speech, but even refraining from speaking extraneous words.

As to food fasts — this can also be accomplished by eating nourishing foods, but not seeking out those foods that are particularly tasty.⁵

Follow Doctors Orders With Joy

It has been some time since I received a letter from you. I hope to G-d that this is a sign that everything is well. Nevertheless, it would be appropriate for you to expressly write [to me] about this.

During these days of Kislev, the “Month of Liberation,” you should act in accordance with the statement of our Sages, of blessed memory, who commanded us to follow doctor's orders and do so with a sense of joy.

It should make no difference to you in what manner and through which means you fulfill Hashem's will — what is of primary importance is that you do so without reservation. Thus, when Hashem commands you to obey the doctor, you should do so and be satisfied at the opportunity presented to you to fulfill Hashem's will.

Consequently, you should do so with a sense of joy. And when you will act in this manner, Hashem will assist you to see with your own eyes that there is indeed much to be satisfied about.⁶

What To Eat

An individual asked the Rebbe what to do about his diet; some of his “health foods” may have had an overall bad effect, etc. The Rebbe responds:

Regarding what you eat and your diet:

What you eat is not so important (as long as they are **properly kosher**); as much as the **reason why** you are eating: Is it only to indulge in pleasure and satiate your hunger, or is it in order to be healthy, thereby enabling you to do good things, etc.

See also *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim*, ch. 231 [where it is explained at length that everything a person does should not be for bodily pleasure, but in order to serve Hashem].⁷

Establishing the Hours Needed for Sleep

In reply to your letter of the 8th of Kislev in which you describe the times that you go to sleep and arise, and you ask my opinion if this conduct is correct or whether it should be changed:

The ultimate criteria for the above should be in keeping with the exposition offered by the Alter Rebbe in *Hilchos Talmud Torah*, regarding a teacher of children. [There the Alter Rebbe states that a teacher] should not stay up so late in the night that [his lack of sleep] will affect the efficacy of his teaching the next day. (See *Hilchos Talmud Torah* 1:12.)

Understandably, the same applies to one's own study of the Torah [— one should not stay up too late if it will keep him from being alert when he awakens the next day].

Since the amount of sleep a person needs is different from one individual to the other, depending on the nature of his body and the amount of sleep he is used to getting, etc., [it is therefore impossible for me to advise you as to the exact amount of sleep you need].

The statements in the various codes of law regarding the amount [of time] a person should sleep is but a median amount and applies to the majority, for Torah speaks to the needs of the majority, [however, individuals may well vary as to the exact number of hours of sleep they require].

You should test yourself [to see] how many hours of sleep you require, so that when you awaken you will be able to study with the necessary amount of [alertness and] comprehension. Based on this test, you should establish the hours of going to sleep and waking.

It is self-understood that in any case you are to carefully observe the time of the morning *Shema*, [i.e., that you arise in time to recite the morning *Shema*], a matter that is of particular import during the summer [when there is a greater possibility of missing the proper time for the recitation of the morning *Shema*].⁸

Sleeping During the Day

... It is obvious that one is to sleep at night (in accordance with both the revealed and esoteric portions of Torah, and as is to be observed as well in the nature of human conduct). Only in unusual circumstances should one nap during the day. (That which is cited in the book *Minhagei HaChasam Sofer* requires further examination.)

With regard to [sleeping on *Shabbos* day,] see the *Shulchan Aruch* of the Alter Rebbe, end of chapter 281, as



well as *Pri Etz Chayim*, *Shaar* 16, Chapter 1. This matter requires further investigation.⁹

Follow a Routine

You write to me about feeling weak and also about suffering from insomnia:

It may very well be that both matters are a result of your failure to lead an orderly life, without having set and established times for food, drink and sleep, etc.

Moreover, it is well known how our Rabbeim demanded [from others] and were also exacting and strict with themselves in regard to keeping an orderly lifestyle. They explained and expounded on how lack of routine and order prevents success in the performance of Torah and mitzvos.

...It would be advisable that you consult with a doctor so that he may calm you of your fears [regarding your weakness and insomnia]. Also ask him to establish for you an orderly routine for eating, drinking, etc. You should — as much as possible — make sure to stick to this routine.

May Hashem send His healing words and heal and strengthen you.¹⁰



The Symmetry of Physical and Spiritual Health

The Rebbe teaches us time and again that everything that happens in our physical world is a reflection of occurrences in a spiritual reality. This is especially applicable to the health of the human body, since the life of the body is completely dependent on the chayus it receives from the neshama. The following is a small selection of the Rebbe's words in this regard.

Increase in Torah — Increase in Life

Surely I need not draw your attention to the deeper meaning of the concept that the Jewish people are “גוי אחד בארץ—the one nation on earth” — not only the simple meaning that Jews believe in one G-d and in one Torah, but that they draw down unity [“oneness”] into all aspects of this world.

This is to say that there is no disunity and plurality within this world at all: Just as Hashem is one with an utter

and simple unity, so, too, is unity and singularity found within all worldly aspects, particularly since the physical and the spiritual are not separate entities, but are truly one. It is just that Hashem allowed for the possibility [for man to believe the opposite of the truth] — as our Sages, of blessed memory, say: “Let he who *desires* to be mistaken come and be mistaken.”

This is part of the mission of the Jew: That he himself understand and sense Hashem's unity and make this aspect of Divine unity understood to those in his surroundings, and, to the greatest extent possible, to all those upon whom he has influence.

The same holds true with regard to one's health: When one needs to improve and increase his physical health and well-being, he should do so in conjunction with and with a concurrent and corresponding increase in his spiritual health and well-being — in the words of our Sages: “Whoever will increase, will see an increase.”

In light of the above, I am taking the liberty to bring to your awareness that it would be beneficial for your father *shlita* to increase his study sessions in our Torah, the Torah of Life.

It is through Torah that “He has implanted in us eternal life.” One of the meanings of this passage is that even though we live within this corporeal world, we live a true [eternal] life — something that should be felt within one's physical body as well.

This is also in keeping with the ruling of the Rambam in *Hilchos Deos*, the beginning of ch. 4, where he states that “maintaining a healthy and whole body is an integral part of *avodas Hashem*.”¹¹

Chitas—A Source of Divine Blessings

I received your *pidyon nefesh* in which you ask that Divine mercy be aroused for you so that you should be in good health. I will read the *pidyon nefesh* at the holy resting place of my father-in-law, the Rebbe, for the fulfillment of your heart's desire for good in all that you require.

It is known that in order to receive blessings from on High, we must create here below, [i.e., in this physical world,] the proper vessels into which these blessings will flow. Torah is the [most appropriate] vehicle for receiving any and all blessings.

I therefore suggest that you take upon yourself — *bli neder* — the observance of the three daily lessons [known as *Chitas*], established by my father-in-law, the Rebbe, an observance that applies to all *anash*, our Chassidic brotherhood.

...Observance of the above will surely serve as a fit vehicle to draw down and receive Hashem's blessings.¹²



Strengthening Bitachon

Overall, the Rebbe always encourages us to strengthen our bitachon in Hashem as a means to merit His brachos manifest in our lives for whatever it is that we need, especially good health. Even from a logical perspective, the serenity provided by the feeling of bitachon is invaluable in maintaining good physical health.¹³

Importance of Bitachon for Good Health

...[It is true] medically as well, that the greater one's degree of *bitachon*, the greater one's amount of energy, and the better one's health and spirits — all this increases a person's accomplishments and success.¹⁴

Complete Faith and Trust in Hashem

I duly received the telephone message as well as the letter regarding the state of your health, and I will remember you in prayer at the holy resting place of my father-in-law, the Rebbe, of sainted memory, in accordance with your request.

It is surely unnecessary to emphasize to you the importance of *bitachon* — complete trust in Hashem — not just as an abstract belief, but in a way that truly permeates one's whole being.

For, in addition to this being one of the very fundamentals of our faith and way of life, it is also a channel to receive Hashem's blessings, especially for the success of your medical treatment, which has to be undertaken in the natural order, inasmuch as our holy Torah itself gives authority and power to doctors to heal and cure.

You surely also know that [living one's] daily life in accordance with the will of Hashem is the channel through which Jews receive Hashem's blessings in all needs, and additional efforts in this direction bring additional Divine blessings.¹⁵ **T**

1. Available at chabad.org/2306807. Henceforth in the footnotes, "Vol." and "ch." are in reference to this series.
2. Vol. 1, ch. 1. Igros Kodesh vol. 4, p. 341.
3. Vol. 1, ch. 1. Igros Kodesh vol. 8, p. 141.
4. Vol. 1, ch. 2. From a letter of the Rebbe dated 15 Iyar 5724.
5. Vol. 1, ch. 2. Igros Kodesh vol. 15, p. 177.
6. Vol. 1, ch. 4. Igros Kodesh vol. 8, p. 39.
7. Tzaddik L'Melech, vol. 7, p. 219.
8. Vol. 2, Part I, ch. 4. Igros Kodesh vol. 19, p. 89.
9. Vol. 2, Part I, ch. 4. Igros Kodesh vol. 12, p. 448.
10. Vol. 2, Part I, ch. 4. Igros Kodesh vol. 17, p. 169.
11. Vol. 1, ch. 8. Igros Kodesh vol. 7, p. 141.
12. Vol. 1, ch. 8. Igros Kodesh vol. 5, p. 51.
13. See *Safe and Secure, the Serenity of Bitachon*, Derher Adar 5781.
14. Vol. 1, ch. 5. Igros Kodesh vol. 18, p. 236.
15. Vol. 1, ch. 5. From a letter of the Rebbe dated Rosh Chodesh Kislev 5733.



The Price of a String

"Gone! Completely missing!" cried the distraught Chossid.

For Reb Meir Refoels, devoted Chossid of the Alter Rebbe, the business trip was routine. Sitting in his private wagon with his driver at the reins, things were going as usual, until he looked down and noticed that a full corner of his *tzitzis* strings had torn off.

"Stop the wagon immediately," he called out to the driver up front. "I do not want to travel even four *amos* without *tzitzis*."

What were they to do but wait on the side of the road waiting and praying that a passing peddler would have a pair of *tzitzis* somewhere between his wares.

The minutes turned to hours and still there was no hope in sight.

The sun began to set and twilight colors began to paint the horizon. Just then Reb Meir heard the sound of footsteps well off in the distance and the image of a man began to take shape.

Reb Meir began to scream at the top of his lungs, urgently trying to catch the man's attention. His efforts seemed in vain, however, as the figure began to fade away into the distance.

In one final desperate attempt, he called even louder until this time his efforts paid off and the man came to inquire what they wanted from him.

"Do you have *tzitzis* with you?" asked Reb Meir holding his breath.

"Even if I did have I would not empty my entire sack for a few strings," answered the stranger

angrily. "My goal was to reach the city before nightfall and now you have wasted my time on such a petty matter."

And with those words he turned around and began heading back to where he had come from.

"Even if I pay you well?" asked Reb Meir.

Intrigued, he slowly turned around. "How much? A Ruble! That's not worth it for me." He blurted out and continued on his way.

"However much you want," promised Reb Meir.

"If so..." he began, his greedy eyes lighting up, "Give me all that you have. Everything in your pockets and bags."

Without hesitation, Reb Meir emptied everything he had and handed it to the

peddler who in exchange gladly gave him the *tzitzis*.

Some time later, Reb Meir traveled to the Alter Rebbe for *yechidus*.

As soon as he walked into the room, the Alter Rebbe got up from his seat. To the complete shock of Reb Meir, he began to remove money from between the pages of his *sefarim*. After counting all the coins he was amazed to see that it was the exact amount he had spent on his *tzitzis*.

It later became revealed to Reb Meir that the traveling merchant was none other than Eliyahu Hanavi who was sent to test him. ①

(Migdal Oz p. 177.)

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

The Rebbe Remembered

Rabbi Eli Seidman served as a chaplain in the U.S. Army, retiring at the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. During a visit to Anchorage, Alaska in 2017, he shared the following story with Rabbi Yosef Greenberg, head shliach of Alaska.

In 1985, my wife and I were living in Tucson, Arizona — before I joined the Army. We had been married for about five or six years and we had no children. We tried everything — all the medical technology and all the treatments available then. We were worried. I was talking to my friend, Rabbi Yossie Shemtov, the shliach in Tucson, and he said to me, “Why don’t you write a letter to the Rebbe.” “Well, I’m not a Lubavitcher,” I said. “Where would I come from, writing a letter?”

“No, really,” Rabbi Shemtov said. “The Rebbe cares about every Jew. You tried all of these other treatments; you might as well try a spiritual treatment. It would cost you nothing more than a stamp!” So I sat down, wrote the letter, mailed it — and I forgot all about it.

A year and a half later, I joined the Army. We were first stationed in Fort Louis, Washington, and then later in Frankfurt, Germany. In 1987 we had a son, and then a daughter in 1990.

Later on, in 1991, I had an occasion to come back for a course in Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, and while I was there, I called up Chaplain Yaakov Goldstein — another friend. He asked me whether I wanted to come for Dollars, where I would be able to ask the Rebbe for a *bracha*. “Come dressed in uniform,” Goldstein told me. “Come at this specific time, and meet me at the side door; they’ll call us in. Have a little *kvittel* with what you’re asking for written on it, go up to the Rebbe, and give that note to the *mazkir*. Say to the Rebbe, ‘My name is Elimelech Seidman, a chaplain in the United States Army, and I want to ask for the Rebbe’s *bracha*.’”

So I got dressed in my dress uniform and waited at the door to meet the Rebbe with Rabbi Goldstein. The time came and they called us in. I walked up to the Rebbe, gave the *kvittel* to the Rebbe’s secretary, and said to the Rebbe, “My name is Elimelech Seidman, I’m in Frankfurt as the Jewish chaplain and



I wanted to ask for the Rebbe's *bracha*." The Rebbe said to me,

"איך האב געהאט אמאל א בריך פון איך"

"I once received a letter from you."

I said, "No, I just gave a note." The Rebbe said, "Not today, but a few years ago." And then I remembered. It must have been about six years after I had written that letter on Rabbi Shemtov's suggestion, asking the Rebbe for a *bracha* for children. "A few years ago, when I was in Arizona, I did write," I said to the Rebbe.

"May G-d Almighty bless you to be successful about all the soldiers under your guidance, to guide them in the right direction. It's your responsibility." Then the Rebbe gave me another dollar and said, "For all your family." The Rebbe then gave Chaplain Goldstein two dollars and said to me, "He received two because he's your chaplain."

I didn't know what to say. I was in shock. I was tongue-tied. Rabbi Goldstein helped me finish the time with the Rebbe. When you watch the video of it, it happens so fast. But when it happened, it seemed like a long time, a very long time.

I went out with Rabbi Goldstein, back to his house on Montgomery Street. At his house — this was during the Kinus Hashluchim — who would be there but Rabbi Yossie Shemtov! Rabbi Shemtov exclaimed, "I told you — even if you didn't get a written answer from the Rebbe, writing still makes an impression in *Shamayim*."

I returned to Frankfurt and I picked up the phone to call another friend — also a Lubavitcher — in Zurich: Moshe Rappoport. His wife answered the phone — this was a day after this happened — and she said, "I heard about what happened with you and the Rebbe." "How did you hear so quickly?" I asked. "It's in the Kfar Chabad news," she said. She then sent me a copy: A transcript of what the Rebbe said and what I said, and above it there was a banner headline that read, "The Chaplain forgot but the Rebbe remembered."

I wrote one letter to the Rebbe my whole life, and I didn't remember it. How many letters did the Rebbe get? A million? And the Rebbe remembered my letter. I can't explain it. ①

Service & Discretion

The life and times of
the legendary Mazkir,
Reb Moshe Leib Rodshtein

לזכות השלוחה
מרת פערל גאלדא שתחי'
לרגל יום הולדתה א' אייר,
השליח גבריאל נח שיחי',
לרגל יום הולדתו ט' אייר,
הבחור הת' השליח לוי שיחי'
לרגל יום הולדתו י"ב אייר
נדפס ע"י
הרה"ת ר' דוד ומשפחתם שיחיו
טייכטל



JEW 11263

He was a devoted *mazkir* of the Frierdiker Rebbe and the Rebbe for over 40 years. Charged with handling the Rebbeim's highly sensitive correspondence and important matters pertaining to *Beis HoRav*, he was a "Baal Sod" - the paragon of discretion to the fullest degree. He was a tremendous *talmid chacham* and a true *Chassidisher Yid*, with a gifted sense of humor, exuding an aura of friendliness and kindness to all who knew him. Following are snippets of the life and times of Harav Moshe Leib Rodshtein.

This article was created from interviews with Rabbis Yehuda Krinsky, Meir Harlig, Shmuel Lew, Shlomo Zarchi, Bentzion Chanowitz, Moshe Chanowitz and multiple other sources. וזכות הרבים תלוי בהם

*"It's impossible to describe what the Rebbe and his family experienced since the outbreak of war... The library in Otwock is still intact... Three crates of priceless ksavim, including the Baal Shem Tov's Siddur, that were brought to Warsaw are also still intact... but the rest of their belongings, clothing, valuable gold and silver artifacts and even the Rebbe's Tallis and Tefillin were all lost in fire! Some of the Rebbe's invaluable writings were also burned, and there are no copies of them... I also merited that my belongings, which were together with the Rebbe's belongings, were all lost as well in the fires..."*¹

It was Cheshvan 5700* and Europe was burning. Germany had invaded Poland two months earlier, setting off the worst world war in history and the Jewish world would never be the same.

The above letter was written by the Frierdiker Rebbe's devoted *mazkir* Reb Moshe Leib Rodshtein to Chassidim in Eretz Yisroel describing the horrors of war-torn Warsaw and how the headquarters of Lubavitch, which had so recently started thriving in the town of Otwock after so many years of exile and wandering, was once again on the run.

As Chassidim in America worked feverishly to save the Frierdiker Rebbe's family from the inferno and to ensure their safe passage to the United States,² the Frierdiker Rebbe prepared a list of his staff and their families that were to accompany him on this journey. Reb Moshe Leib Rodshtein and his wife Kaila were on this list.

The alias that stuck

His birth name was Zushe ben Mordechai Shifrin.³ From his early teen years he learned in Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim in Lubavitch, and later on in Poltava in the late 5670s*. During those days of upheaval in Russia, men from age 17 were forced to go to army training and between the ages of 21 and 25 they were drafted into the army.

In the yeshiva, all *bochurim* who were 17 obtained false papers stating they were 14 years old, and those who were already 21 forged their ages to 25.

Zushe Shifrin was issued false documents and the ruse worked for a while but he was ultimately caught and drafted. It is unknown how he eventually got himself an exemption, but after leaving the army he traveled directly to Rostov to ask the Frierdiker Rebbe what his next step should be.

In *yechidus*, the Rebbe instructed him to leave Russia and then told him

to give him his hand. Chassidim never hold the Rebbe's hand and Zushe declined to do so now as well, but the Frierdiker Rebbe insisted and told him a story of the Baal Shem Tov while holding his hand.⁴

In preparation for his escape from Russia he received forged documents with the name Moshe Leib Rodshtein, and from then on he was called by this name by all who knew him. In writing as well as in conversation he was also commonly referred to with the acronym of this alias - רמ"ל.

He managed to cross the border but was quickly caught and apprehended by the Polish border patrol and later released. In 5684* he married Kaila Chanowitz, the daughter of the Lubavitcher *shochet* of Gluboko, Reb Yisroel Chanowitz, and he was very active in the Lubavitcher community for several years. They eventually settled in Warsaw, where he was



THE WEDDING OF REB MOSHE LEIB AND KAILA, GLUBOKO 5684*.

appointed to be the secretary of Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim in 5687*.

In the summer of 5692*, while the Frierdiker Rebbe was living in Druzhenik, a resort area on the border of Poland and Lithuania, Reb Moshe Leib was appointed to be the Frierdiker Rebbe's *mazkir*. Several days after his appointment he accompanied the Frierdiker Rebbe on a trip to visit the Lubavitcher Chassidim in Ludmir, Poland. He continued to serve as the Frierdiker Rebbe's *mazkir* until the Nazis invaded Poland in Elul 5699*.

From the Rebbe's Reshimos it emerges⁵ that even before his official appointment as *mazkir*, Reb Moshe Leib was together with the Frierdiker Rebbe in Postov, near Vilna, during the month of Adar 5692*. The Rebbe quotes Reb Moshe Leib about which *haftarah* the Frierdiker Rebbe said on Shabbos Parshas Pekudei.

When the war broke out, Reb Moshe Leib joined the Frierdiker



Rebbe and his family as they evacuated from Otwork and spent several harrowing weeks in Warsaw dodging the German bombs.

As mentioned earlier, the initial plan was for Reb Moshe Leib and his wife to join the Frierdiker Rebbe on the escape to America through Riga, but since he was a Polish citizen, there was no way for him to leave Poland to Latvia, so the Frierdiker Rebbe instructed him to travel to Gluboko and find a way to escape to Lithuania.

At the time, the Frierdiker Rebbe instructed all the *talmidim* of Tomchei Temimim to escape to Lithuania and after several weeks, dozens of *temimim* organized themselves in a yeshiva setting in Vilna. Reb Moshe Leib helped the *bochurim* in many ways and farbrenged with them.⁶

When the Frierdiker Rebbe arrived in Riga during the month of Teves, Reb Moshe Leib and Reb Shmuel Zalmanov came to Riga to update the



THE FRIERDIKER REBBE IN RIGA, CIRCA 5690*.

LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASIDEI CHABAD/KEHOT PUBLICATION SOCIETY



WITH THE BOCHURIM IN VILNA

17 ADAR I 5700. LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASIDEI CHABAD.

Frierdiker Rebbe in person about the new yeshiva in Vilna and the efforts to obtain exit visas for the *bochurim*.

At one point during this important operation Reb Moshe Leib provided names and personal information about over 120 *temimim*, Chassidim and their families - all from memory!

Although Reb Moshe Leib and his wife had been included in the Frierdiker Rebbe's list of essential staff to accompany him to the United States, their visas only arrived some time after the Frierdiker Rebbe already

left Europe, and they moved to Riga with the hope of reaching the US from there. Eventually, they were forced to escape eastward through Russia, and from the port city of Vladivostok set off to Kobe, Japan, from where they eventually set sail for America, arriving in New York City, through S. Francisco, in Cheshvan 5701*.

Six weeks later the Frierdiker Rebbe appointed Reb Moshe Leib to be the *menahel* of Agudas Chassidei Chabad in Chicago.⁷ At the time there were four Lubavitcher shuls in the city



and many descendants of Chassidim lived there. He served as the rav of the Agudas Chabad shul and was instrumental in arranging *shiurei Chassidus* throughout the city. He fundraised for the “Keren Hatzalah” to save Jews from the European inferno and was involved in many other projects throughout the Jewish community.

In 5703* he was involved in opening the Yeshivas Achei Temimim in Chicago, which continued to function until the summer of 5706*. At that time, Reb Moshe Leib was called back to New York to once again serve as a *mazkir* to the Frierdiker Rebbe. His responsibilities included handling the Frierdiker Rebbe’s correspondence, presiding over the collection of *maamed*, and handling certain financial aspects of Colel Chabad.

In his capacity as *mazkir*, Reb Moshe Leib became a permanent fixture of the 770 scene and many from that time period remember his kind, warm and gentle personality.

“When I came to 770 as a young *bochur* from Boston, Reb Moshe Leib took an immediate interest in my well



REB MOSHE LEIB (LEFT) ACCOMPANIES THE FRIERDIKER REBBE ON HIS VISIT TO GLUBOKO 5694*

KEHOT PUBLICATION SOCIETY

being,” recalls Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky. “He did not have any children of his own and he was focused on ensuring the wellbeing of a young *bochur* far away from home.”

“He would speak with me at length, always exuding a rich *Chassidishkeit* and dedication to the Rebbe. He was very proud of us young *bochurim* and once said to me, ‘You *bochurim* are the future of Lubavitch!’

“He was a true ‘*baal sod*’ who knew how to keep a secret and never revealed anything connected with his work in *mazkirus*.”

The First Recordings

Following the Frierdiker Rebbe’s *histalkus* on Yud Shvat, he became

instrumental in the Chassidim’s efforts throughout the year to ensure the Rebbe accepted the *nesius*. Rabbi Berel Shemtov relates⁸ that Reb Moshe Leib was so impressed by the tremendous *hiskashrus* the *yungeleit* and *bochurim* had for the Rebbe that he commented to Reb Yitzchok Dubov during that time period, “They cling to him [the Rebbe] like bees around honey, and they pressured me to speak to the Rebbe about the *nesius*.”

He began serving as a *mazkir* for the Rebbe while continuing to handle his previous responsibilities. At one of the many important meetings with Chassidim throughout that year he exhorted the Chassidim to continue giving *maamed*. He was also appointed



WITH THE BOCHURIM IN VILNA

to the committee charged with building the Frierdiker Rebbe's Ohel⁹.

Reb Moshe Leib had a great interest in gadgets and owned a recording device. On the historic day of Yud Shevat 5711*, unbeknownst to the crowd, he connected the Rebbe's microphone to his recording device and merited to record the historic farbrengen of *kabbalas hanesius* and the *maamar* Basi Legani. It seems that the recordings of all the farbrengens in those early years were recorded on devices belonging to him.

In those early years of the *nesius*, the Rebbe had not yet allowed for his Torah to be properly published. The *hanachos* of the *sichos* were transcribed by a team led by the *chozer* Reb Yoel

Kahn and typed with a typewriter on several copies of paper which were of terrible quality.

One day Reb Moshe Leib brought several copies of the *hanachos* to the Rebbe and said, "There is no point in producing better copies of these *hanachos* because very soon they will be published properly. These are just for temporary use." Reb Moshe Leib said this comment with the express intention of seeing how the Rebbe would react to the idea of proper publication of the *sichos*. The Rebbe smiled, and when Reb Moshe Leib reported this to the Chassidim they understood this to be the Rebbe's agreement for publication in better quality.

"I spoke to the Shver..."

"Reb Moshe Leib worked very closely with the Rebbe. He would go into the Rebbe's room every day to take dictation for the Rebbe's extensive correspondence at a schedule that varied from day to day," Rabbi Krinsky recalls. "He worked every day in the office now known as WLCC."

There were times when the Rebbe would return from the Ohel and Reb Moshe Leib would enter the room immediately to take dictation for letters. Rabbi Leibel Groner once related an interesting episode that occurred in connection with this.¹⁰

One time after the Rebbe returned from the Ohel he called for Reb Moshe Leib. After several moments he left the Rebbe's room and uncharacteristically shared with Rabbi Groner what had just happened:

Two weeks earlier, after working in the Rebbe's room, Reb Moshe Leib remained standing by the door silently. The Rebbe looked up and said with a smile, "You cannot go home tonight because your wife wrote me a letter last week and did not yet receive an answer; and she told you not to come home without an answer to her letter." Reb Moshe Leib nodded and smiled and the Rebbe continued, "I have not yet been by the Shver. So please tell her that I give you permission to go home because there is no answer yet."

On this evening (two weeks later), when Reb Moshe Leib walked into the room, the Rebbe said that in the interim he was by the Shver and had a chance to ask the question for Reb Moshe Leib's wife. The answer is that she should not do as she had planned.

Reb Moshe Leib handled the Yiddish and Hebrew correspondence and was understandably involved with the way the Rebbe handled his mail. As is well known, the Rebbe would open every envelope himself. Due to

Reb Moshe Leib's interest in the latest technology he once bought an electric envelope opener and brought it to the Rebbe in order to alleviate the burden of time that it took the Rebbe to open the enormous amount of mail that arrived daily.

The Rebbe looked at the machine for a few moments but refused to use it.

In general, Reb Moshe Leib always sought to create a joyous vibe and made a concerted effort to make the Rebbe happy. He would often do some

"*shtik*" only in order to elicit a smile from the Rebbe.

Rabbi Krinsky relates that once, as Reb Moshe Leib walked into the Rebbe's room to take dictations for letters, he was holding a very tiny pencil. The Rebbe asked him if he was not able to find a larger pencil to write with. The next day he walked into the Rebbe's room with a giant pencil in his hand and the Rebbe laughed in appreciation. It seems he would use this pencil on several occasions just so that the Rebbe would be amused.

Others recall that he would bring wind up gadgets and place them on the Rebbe's desk at times to lighten the mood.

A quiet and unassuming man, he rarely spoke in public, but when he participated in a farbrengen he would often do "*shtik*" to lighten the mood. For example, he had a very long handkerchief that he would slowly pull out of his breast pocket in a way that made a scene that entertained the crowd. There were also times that



AT THE SHEVA BROCHOS OF REB MORDECHAI MENTLIK, OTWOCK 5698*.

R - L REB MOSHE LEIB, REB YEHUDA EBER, REB SHRAGA FEIVISH ZALMANOV, REB CHATCHE FEIGIN, REB MORDECHAI MENTLICK.



LAG B'OMER PARADE 5717*. REB MOSHE LEIB IS STANDING IN THE DOORWAY OF 770.

JEM 286730

he engineered some type of ruckus during Mincha on weekdays just to elicit a smile from the Rebbe.

Far from being a vain clown, he was a *pnimius'diker Chassidisher Yid* who was genuinely friendly and pleasant to everyone and wanted them to be happy - especially the Rebbe.

Transcends all limitations!

There were some unique exceptions to his rule of silence and when he did speak in public he expressed his true devotion and love for the Rebbe. One of them was on Shabbos Parshas Bechukosai 5717*, the day before the major Lag B'omer Parade. After Shacharis he stood up on a bench and made the following announcement.

"All Chassidim must get involved in ensuring the parade is successful. The goal of the parade is so that *Yiddishe kinder* that are not yet *shomrei Torah u'Mitzvos* should see the Rebbe's holy face. The memory of this experience will be engraved in their minds and

will have a spiritual and physical healing effect on them. As the *possuk* states, "ויראה את הכהן ונרפא ונגנע"—and he will see the Kohen and the illness will be healed..."

Another time, on Shabbos Parshas Terumah 5714*, Reb Moshe Leib accompanied the Rebbe as he left the *zal* after Shacharis and soon afterwards returned to the remaining Chassidim. He stood up on a bench and said: "Today we read in the Torah about the mitzvah of building the *aron kodesh*. Chazal teach us that the place of the *aron* was *מינו מן המידה*—it transcended the limitations of space. You all think that this concept is distant history? You should know that in our times there is a Yid, the one who just walked into that room"—he said while gesturing towards the Rebbe's room—"who embodies this special quality. Every day he receives thousands of letters from around the world and I cannot comprehend how he manages to respond to all of them. This is the true embodiment of '*מינו מן המידה*'!"

On the same note he once commented to his great-nephew Reb Aharon Chitrik that whenever he thinks that he's starting to understand the Rebbe's behavior and develop some type of pattern, everything changes and the Rebbe remains as mysterious to him as before. Another time he saw a certain individual taking a photo of the Rebbe. In those years the Rebbe did not approve of Chassidim photographing him and Reb Moshe Leib confronted the man for doing so. The man said he wanted to have a photo of the Rebbe to remember the Rebbe's image and Reb Moshe Leib responded, "By the time you will develop the photograph, the Rebbe will be totally different."¹¹

The *bochurim* in 770 at the time appreciated his *Chassidisher* warmth and humor and he was friendly and approachable to them.

"One Friday during the month of Elul I was in the *zal* of 770 which was completely empty," recalls Rabbi Gershon Mendel Garelik. "Reb Moshe Leib walked into the *zal* and gestured to me to follow him into the *mazkirus* office. When I entered, he instructed me to stand under the air conditioning vent and to listen closely. After a few moments I heard sounds of the shofar. During those years the Rebbe davened Shacharis during the weekdays in his room. The Rebbe had just finished davening and was blowing shofar, as is customary. I cherish this unique memory very much."

A special experience he had only because of Reb Moshe Leib's unique sensitivity to the *bochurim*.

Another experience related by Rabbi Garelik: "Once a group of us *bochurim* followed the Rebbe as he walked home. The Rebbe would walk very quickly and never waited at the curb for the light to change. After the Rebbe crossed the street we followed immediately behind, and it was not a very safe situation... The next day Reb Moshe Leib walked up to our group as we were sitting in the *zal* and after making some small talk said to us, 'You guys need to wait for the green light.' And then with a twinkle in his eye added severely, 'because you could really get hurt!'"

Rabbi Shlomo Zarchi relates that Reb Moshe Leib would often speak with the *bochurim* - already in the 5710s* - about the need to bring the Rebbe to the world and even suggested that they needed to find a way to get the Rebbe on television.

"He was a very friendly man," recalls Rabbi Leibel Alevsky. "When I was working in Tzach, whenever I needed to have intelligent advice pertaining to complicated situations, things I would not necessarily want to bring to the Rebbe and consume his time, I would discuss it with Reb Moshe Leib. He was very close to the



Rebbe and yet so approachable and always tried to help.”

Lubavitch Expansion

The neighboring building to 770 on the western side, 766 Eastern Parkway, was owned by a Jewish dentist named Dr. Schapiro, and it served as his private residence and clinic. He was very friendly to Lubavitch and even treated the Rebbe and Rebbetzin on several occasions.

One day in 5723* Reb Moshe Leib approached Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky with some urgent news. He had just been speaking to Dr. Schapiro who had shared with him that he planned to retire, sell the house, and move away from the neighborhood.

“You must look into buying the building. This is crucial for Lubavitch expansion,” he insisted.

“At the time we were bursting at the seams,” says Rabbi Krinsky. “The Rebbe’s library was overflowing with *sefarim* and there was no room to store them, let alone to arrange them as a proper library. I agreed with Reb Moshe Leib and after consulting the Rebbe, I reached out to Dr. Schapiro about purchasing the house.

“He was very receptive to the idea and we agreed on a good price. To make a long story short, Merkos L’Inyonei Chinuch purchased the home several months later, eventually turning it into the Rebbe’s library.

“In those years, most people, especially non-Lubavitchers, could not imagine that Lubavitch would need to own another building on Eastern Parkway. Dr. Schapiro could have very possibly put the house up for sale, sold it and we would have completely missed this crucial opportunity. It was only due to Reb Moshe Leib’s diligence, attention and vision that we were able to purchase the house when we did.”

Reb Moshe Leib lived for many years in the same building as a shul



THE REBBE LEAVES THE LIBRARY 7 CHESHVAN 5748*

on Rogers Avenue. Rabbi Mordechai Harlig was the rav of the shul and Reb Moshe Leib would daven there often. At the time, the *mikveh* in Crown Heights was not built in accordance with the opinion of the Rebbe Rashab as בור על גבי בור, and Reb Moshe Leib invested tremendous efforts to build such a *mikveh* in that shul. It was the only *mikveh* of its kind in Crown Heights for many years.

Towards the end of his life, he and his wife moved to an apartment in the building on the corner of Kingston Avenue and Union Street.

A Royal Visit

In 5727* Reb Moshe Leib became very ill and it was increasingly difficult for him to continue coming to 770 every day. In an extremely rare occurrence, the Rebbe visited him in

LEVI FREDIN VIA JEM 209410

his apartment on Kingston Avenue during Rosh Hashanah 5728*, an event that indicates what a special person he truly was.

On Motzei Shabbos Parshas Lech Lecha, 9 Cheshvan 5728*, Reb Moshe Leib passed away and was buried near the Ohel the next day. The Rebbe participated in the *levaya*, and in another unique exception, traveled all the way to the cemetery and watched the proceedings of the *levaya* from outside the gate.

Reb Moshe Leib purchased his burial plot in the front row nearest the Ohel and once explained to Reb Aharon Chitrik that since he did not have any children, he wished that those who come to the Ohel and pass by his grave should say a kapitel Tehillim in his memory.¹²

The Rebbe instructed that a *minyan* should daven in his home every day of *shiva* and since Reb Moshe Leib was very instrumental in publishing the *maamarim* of the Frierdiker Rebbe from 5699*, they should learn several lines from the *maamar* connected to the *parsha* of that week after each *tefila*.

Reb Moshe Leib bequeathed all of his possessions to Merkos L'inyonei Chinuch, including his home on Kingston Avenue which served for many years as the Mivtza Neshek office.

His *matzeiva* reads:

Pleasant and beloved to all. He consecrated his entire life to *beis chayeinu* and served there for over 40 years. With utmost humility he fulfilled his mission to draw Yidden closer to the life of life.

Hemshech Samach Vov

On¹³ Beis Nissan 5725* Rabbi Mordechai Shusterman of the Balshan print shop received a phone call from Rabbi Chodokov with the following message. When the Rebbe returned



from the Ohel he instructed that we should start typesetting the *Hemshech Samach Vov* that very night in preparation for print.

This happened despite the fact that Beis Nissan was on a Sunday and not a regular work day at the shop.

Until then this foundational *hemshech* from the Rebbe Rashab was available only in mimeograph, and the time had come for it to be properly published. Over the next few weeks Rabbi Shusterman was encouraged to hasten the typesetting, but to his surprise was told to stop only a few weeks after Pesach.

During the Seudas Yom Tov of Sukkos 5726* in the Frierdiker Rebbe's sukkah, Rashag inquired why the publication of *Hemshech Samach Vov* had stopped. The Rebbe responded that a certain member of *anash* had produced many copies of the mimeograph version of the *Hemshech* and was selling it in Eretz Yisroel. When he heard that Kehos was about to publish the *sefer* he wrote a letter to the Rebbe complaining that he would lose his entire investment if the *hemshech* became imminently available in the format of a proper *Sefer*.

"He regretted writing this to me afterwards, but if I would receive a letter from a Chossid expressing

how important it is to him that the *hemshech* be printed properly I would consider it. In reality I received a letter with the opposite content..."

Despite all this Reb Moshe Leib instructed Rabbi Shusterman privately to continue typesetting the *hemshech*, which he continued doing on a volunteer basis and managed to prepare 50 more galleys¹⁴ of the *Sefer*.

Five years later, when Rabbi Shusterman was in *yechidus* for his birthday on Erev Rosh Chodesh Elul 5730* the Rebbe asked him "Where are we holding with the preparations for printing the *Hemshech Samach Vov*?"

Rabbi Shusterman told the Rebbe that after we were instructed to halt typesetting the *hemshech* Reb Moshe Leib Rodshtein (who had already passed away by then) instructed me to continue and we managed to prepare 50 more galleys."

"When the Rebbe heard this he said in a loud voice: 'ותבוא עליו ברכה' 1

1. Derech Tomim vol 4, p. 41.

2. See *The Miraculous Rescue*, Derher Adar II 5779.

3. See Toldos Chabad Lita, Latvia & Poland p. 357.

4. As heard by Reb Avrohom Weingarten. Teshura Weingarten-Vorst 5761.

5. Reshimas Hayoman p. 253.

6. See *Shadar* p. 37.

7. Toldos Chabad B'artzos Habris page 334.

8. Yemei Breshis p. 85.

9. Chossid Ne'emon (by Shneur Zalman Berger), p. 184.

10. Heard by Reb Aharon Kurant at a farbrengen with Rabbi Groner - Sukkos 5742. Teshura Kurant 5768.

11. Teshura Bar Mitzvah-Nagel 5757. Page 114.

12. Recorded by his great nephew Rabbi Aharon Chitrik (Heoros U'biurim Oholei Torah 929).

13. Lmaan Yeidu Bonim Yivoleidu page 150. Kehos page 232.

14. Preliminary versions of publications meant for review by authors, editors, and proofreaders, often with extra-wide margins.



דער רבי וועט געפינען אַ וועג...

לזכות
הבחור הת' השליח מאיר שיחי'
לרגל הגיעו לעול מצוות כ"ט אייר ה'תשפ"א
נדפס ע"י הוריו
הרה"ת ר' דוד וזוגתו מרת פערל גאלדא
ומשפחתם שיחי'
טייכטל

Aliya in Every Way

AS TOLD BY RABBI SHAYA DEITCH (FORT WASHINGTON, PA)

Matthew and Barbara Zucker had been coming to our Chabad House for several years and were making tremendous strides in Yiddishkeit. Over time they learned more about the *kedusha* of Eretz Yisroel and with their children already grown and out of the house they decided to fulfill their dream and move to Eretz Yisroel before Rosh Hashanah of 5781*.

During the summer of 5780*, while preparing for their move they encountered several serious problems and asked me to join them on a trip to the Ohel to ask the Rebbe for a *bracha*.

I joined them for the two-hour drive to New York and on the way they shared with me the main issues they wanted to write to the Rebbe about.

Firstly, one of their sons is currently in the IDF and stationed at the Lebanon border and they had not communicated with him for several weeks already. They were especially anxious since the last time they were in contact with him he said that he will reach out again in two days when he returns from field duty. Hearing in the news that there was an exchange of hostilities involving his base only added to their worry.

When he was previously stationed in Chevron they were in constant contact with him. In addition, they were very appreciative of the work that Rabbi Danny Cohen and the other shluchim there do on behalf of the soldiers, and now that they weren't even getting the periodic WhatsApp messages from him, they were becoming very nervous.

With regard to their anticipated move to Eretz Yisroel they were having trouble with some of their documentation, which was being exacerbated by the Covid shutdowns and they were nearing a certain deadline that would impact the financial aspects of their *aliya*.

A third problem that came up was the fact that a major part of their decision to move to Eretz Yisroel was based on Barbara's job in the pharmaceutical industry which allowed her to work from anywhere in the world. Due to Covid, her specific specialty had become obsolete for the foreseeable future, and they were now facing a major life change without a reliable source of *parnasa*.

Another topic that came up in our conversation was their concern for their older son who was staying in the United States. He had started researching Eretz Yisroel for a college paper and had become extremely disillusioned once he discovered the secularism that characterized the establishment of the modern state and developed a sense of apathy for their move there. His attitude deeply concerned them, especially since they sensed that his apathy extended to all of Yiddishkeit.

At the Ohel I guided them in writing their letters and what *tefilos* to say, and they had a very moving experience.

We continued on to Crown Heights, ordered take-out and spent some time at my mother's home. We discussed their upcoming move and I explained to them that since Eretz Yisroel is a holy land, it is important to live a holier life there. I encouraged them to commit to observe more mitzvos and to be sure they will connect with a community and a shul when they settle in. Matthew committed to putting on tefillin daily and together, Barbara and Matthew committed to keeping kosher.

After a two-hour drive back to Fort Washington they dropped me off at my home and continued on to their home which was approximately 15 minutes away.

Five minutes after walking through my front door, I got a call from Matthew.

"Rabbi," he said full of emotion, "I needed to pull over on the side of the road and call immediately to share with you what just happened."

Minutes after leaving my home their son in the IDF called. This was the first phone call from him in weeks and he shared with them that all is well, and in addition, he received permission from the army to take off a month when they arrived in Eretz Yisroel to help them settle in.



"This is the best news we could have wanted to hear from our son, and we got it so soon after praying at the Ohel," Matthew said. "I'm sure the rest of the Rebbe's blessings are on the way."

When they arrived home Matthew shared with his other son the amazing miracle that just occurred and to his astonishment, his son pulled out a photo of the Rebbe from his wallet and said, "What are you so amazed about? This is what the Rebbe is all about!"

It became clear to them that his apathy towards the Israel issue had nothing to do with his attitude to Yiddishkeit.

Within a week or so, all their documents were in order and they were able to make the move in a smooth and easy fashion. Once they arrived in Eretz Yisroel, Barbara's career started picking up again, so their *parnasa* troubles were taken care of as well. ❶

YOUR STORY

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Moments

לזכות
החייל בצבאות ה'
ישראל ארי' לייב שיחי'
לרגל הולדתו ר"ח שבט ה'תשפ"א
נדפס ע"י הוריו
הרה"ת ר' משה פינחס
וזוגתו מרת עלקא
ומשפחתם שיחיו
וואלף



OUTDOOR GREETINGS

Iyar 5747*



En route to the Ohel, the Rebbe greets former chief rabbi of Bat Yam in Eretz Yisroel, Rabbi Yosef Bar-Shalom, followed by a brief conversation and a bracha.



LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 4779

LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 4782



LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 4781

Letters

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

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

“Hama’ase Hu Haikar”

Dear Editors,

I’d like to comment with two points on the article about “*Hama’ase hu ha’ikar*” in the Teves magazine [“Do It!”, issue 101 (178)].

1) In a *yechidus* the Rebbe had with a group of *talmidim-shluchim* before embarking on their *shlichus* to Australia, the Rebbe gave them the most recently published volume of Likkutei Sichos. The Rebbe explained that the reason he is giving it to them is because the *sefer* discusses “*hama’ase hu ha’ikar*.”

2) We know that Gimmel Tammuz 5754* took place on Motzei Shabbos Parshas **Korach**. Twelve years earlier, at the farbrengen of Gimmel Tammuz 5742*, the Rebbe spoke about the fact that Korach fought against “*hama’ase hu ha’ikar*.” The Rebbe explained how the shapes of each of the letters that make up Korach’s name—ח ק ר ח—symbolize different struggles in the *avoda* of “*hama’ase hu ha’ikar*” which is truly expressed with the letter ח (Toras Menachem 5742 vol, 3, p. 1714).

Rabbi Leibel Altein
BROOKLYN, NY

The Rebbe As Executor

Dear Editors,

In the recent article about Professor Paul Rosenblum [“The Rebbe’s Man in Mathematics”, issue 102 (179) Shevat 5781], you wrote that the Rebbe once suggested to the professor and his wife that they write up a will and that in a subsequent *yechidus*, Mrs. Rosenblum asked the Rebbe to be the legal guardian in case of death, and the Rebbe agreed.

Here is an additional detail:

When I was learning in 770 in the early 5730s, Professor Rosenblum, who was a friendly man, once sat down next to me in *zal*. I used the opportunity and asked him if he had anything interesting to share.

He shared this story with me: He and his wife had asked the Rebbe to be the executor of their will and the Rebbe agreed on condition that it would be shown to him first.

When they gave it into the Rebbe, the Rebbe made various notations which greatly impressed the attorneys involved. The Rebbe was very meticulous that everything should be properly written legally.

Rabbi Aron Lieberman
FT. LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA

Haggadah for Each Child

Dear Editors,

I read the article last month titled “Education From the Womb” — the Rebbe’s insights and instructions on early-childhood education, beginning well before birth [“Education from the Womb”, issue 101 (178)].

At the end of the article you write that the Rebbe encouraged that every child have various *sefarim* in their rooms, including a Haggadah.

Upon looking at the sources you cited, I haven’t been able to see where Haggadah is mentioned, I did however find that Chumash was mentioned in the *sicha*, but that was not included in your article.

Please advise.

Thank you for a beautiful informative magazine every month.

Avraham Super

RODNEY BAY, S. LUCIA

Dear Avraham,

Thank you for taking interest and reaching out with your invaluable feedback.

The Rebbe spoke about the Haggadah at the end of the farbrengen of Purim 5747*. Thank you for bringing this to our attention.

Please continue enjoying the Derher.

The Editors



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