

Derher

A Chassidisher

א חסידישער דערהער

Fondest Memories

AN INTERVIEW WITH
RABBI ASHER ZEILINGOLD

Crossing the Line

SHAVUOS AND THE
INTERNATIONAL
DATELINE

America's Matan Torah

80 YEARS IN THE UNITED
STATES—A FARBRENGEN
FOR CHOF-CHES SIVAN



SIVAN 5781
ISSUE 106 (183)
JULY 2021

DO YOU DERHER?

A CHASSIDISHER DERHER

available in stores, or delivered to your door!



» www.Derher.org/subscribe

In This Issue

Sivan 5781 / Issue 106 (183)



18

America's Matan Torah
Chof-Ches Sivan—
Hisvaadus Chassidim



32

Crossing the Line
Shavuot and the
International Dateline



40

Fondest Memories
An Interview with
Rabbi Asher Zeilingold

- 6 **The Ability to Exist**
Dvar Malchus
- 8 **The Bilingual Tanya**
Leben Mitten Rebbe'n -
Sivan 5735
- 17 **Train Them Young**
Ksav Yad Kodesh

- 28 **Stand Tall!**
Essential Themes in
the Rebbe's Torah
- 38 **As Long as I Remember**
Stories of the Rebbe
- 39 **Why Are You
Watching Me?**
A Chassidisher Maaseh

- 50 **The Much Needed
Wake Up Call**
Der Rebbe Vet Gefinen a Veg
- 52 **Sichos**
Moments
- 64 **Derher Letters**



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

Vaad Talmidei Hatmimim
Rabbi Tzvi Altein

Publisher
Rabbi Yossi Kamman

Editor in Chief
Rabbi Mendel Jacobs

Director of Operations
Rabbi Levi Kesselman

Administrator
Rabbi Schneur Druk

Circulation and Marketing
Rabbi Mendy Shishler

Photo Research/Editing
Rabbi Mendel Levertov

Editors
Rabbi Mendel Alperowitz
Rabbi Mendel Misholovin
Rabbi David Olidort

Copy Editor
Rabbi Eliezer Zalmanov

Design
Rabbi Mendy Weg

Printed by
The Print House

Contributors

Rabbi Yanky Bell • Rabbi Yossi Bendet • Rabbi Koppel Chaiton • Rabbi Tzemach Feller • Rabbi Levi Greenberg • Rabbi Menachem Mendel Greenberg • Rabbi Mendy Greenberg • Rabbi Zevi Kaplan • Rabbi Levi Katz • Rabbi Levi Levertov • Rabbi Mendy Shemtov • Schabse Soffer • Rabbi Mendel Vogel

Photo Credits

Jewish Educational Media • Library of Agudas Chasidei Chabad • Pikarski Family

Special Thanks to

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

Reproduction of any portion of this magazine is not permissible without express permission from the copyright holders, unless for the use of brief quotations in reviews and similar venues.

Submit your questions and comments: (718) 305 6859, Feedback@Derher.org

To subscribe, order a copy, or access back issues visit us at www.Derher.org

נא לשמור על קדושת הגליון.

A Chassidisher Derher (ISSN 26411059) (USPS 21880) is published monthly by A Chassidisher Derher Inc, 784 Eastern Pkwy. Brooklyn, NY 11213.

Subscription price \$71 a year. Periodicals postage paid at Brooklyn, NY.

POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to A Chassidisher Derher, 784 Eastern Pkwy. Brooklyn, NY 11213.



A Chassidisher Derher is honored to feature unique and historic photos from **Jewish Educational Media's Living Archive** photo collection. The Living Archive is a project to preserve, and provide access to the video, audio, and photographic recordings of the Rebbe. These photos are copyright by JEM and are available at TheLivingArchive.org



This magazine
has been made possible

לזכות

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

בקשר עם יום הבהיר ב"ח סיון
- שמונים שנה -

80 Years of a Revolution

This month marks 80 years since the Rebbe and Rebbetzin arrived on the shores of the United States, escaping the horrors of war-torn Europe and settling in the “lower hemisphere” — חצי כדור התחתון.

The Rebbe spoke about the significance of this day several times, comparing it in some respects to Tes Adar, the day that the Friediker Rebbe arrived in the United States. It marked a new stage in *hafatzas hamaayanos* by bringing the teachings of Chassidus to the lower hemisphere, as the final step in preparing the world for the *geulah*. In this part of the world, *Matan Torah* did not yet take effect, and it remains our job to perform these final *birurim* in the lowest possible places.

Of course, this day calls for great celebration and gratitude to Hashem for the miraculous salvation and the great new wave of Torah and Chassidus that was revealed in its wake. Let us take a deeper look into the meaning of this new stage and how we can apply ourselves to the story.

Many Chassidim have speculated on the fact that in many ways, the Rebbe followed the path of the Baal Shem Tov in embracing a supernatural approach and allowing for immense *gilui Elokus* to inspire and awaken the Yidden of this generation.¹ (This, in addition to the approach of “Chabad”—that each person toils in a *pnimiusdike* way to inspire themselves from within.)

In a beautiful discussion with a group of college students,² the Rebbe elucidated the role that the Baal Shem Tov played in the history of the Jewish people:

Just before the Baal Shem Tov arose, the Jewish people were struck by terrible tragedies causing many to feel downtrodden and hopeless. The Baal Shem Tov was able to uplift and inspire the Jewish people, showing them how a life of Torah and mitzvos would restore meaning to their lives and give them the answers they were looking for. Likewise, the Rebbe compared this to our time, shortly after the terrible tragedies of the Holocaust when so much of the Jewish nation has been destroyed. It is time to use the light of Torah and mitzvos to inspire and teach, to restore what was lost and awaken our people once again.

The Rebbe offered an example:

An electric lamp can illuminate the room because it is connected to a power plant through the proper cables. The

Baal Shem Tov's job was to show every Yid how they can push the right button or turn on the right switch within themselves, connecting their inner "cables" to *Elokus* and turning on the "light" of their own *neshamah*.

When asked what is the job of a Rebbe, the Rebbe referred back to this example and said that a Rebbe finds the switch or the button within each person and allows their *neshamos* to shine.

It is clear then, that the Rebbe sees his objective, and in a broader sense—the objective of us all as members of the *dor hashvi'i*, to awaken the sleeping souls of the Yidden in our generation and teach them about Yiddishkeit. Teach them about Hashem, about the "Aleph-Beis" of Yiddishkeit and connect them with the warmth and the light of the Torah.

At the same time, the Rebbe also focuses on *hafatzas hamaayanos* and spreading the deepest concepts of Chassidus to everyone.

The Rebbe once pointed out that the Mittlerer Rebbe had a remarkable paradox in his *nesius*: His *nesius* began right after a great war [Napoleon's war with Russia], a war that caused the Alter Rebbe and his family to wander away from their home and seek refuge elsewhere. The aftereffects of the war brought destruction to scores of Jewish communities and wreaked havoc on the whole of the Jewish infrastructure of the time. It would seem that a life against this backdrop would leave no room for tranquility and peace of mind.

Nevertheless, the Mittlerer Rebbe busied himself with teaching and spreading Torah. One of the first things he did was make sure that the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch was published, availing it for study by the general public. And then he printed many *maamarim* of Chassidus and ensured that they were available and affordable for people to obtain. This, despite the fact that the general population was poor and destitute, just getting its bearing and rebuilding after the destruction of the war.

This is a lesson for us as well, the Rebbe concludes. We too find ourselves within living memory of the most recent devastation of the Holocaust, yet we should still busy ourselves with spreading and publishing Torah, especially Chassidus.³

It is amazing to take note of both of these approaches: That of the Baal Shem Tov—a more general strengthening

of Yiddishkeit, and that of the Mittlerer Rebbe—spreading and printing Chassidus. Both came to pass, as the Rebbe points out, after major incidents of devastation for the Jewish people, and both are lessons for our situation in the present day.

When the Rebbe arrived in the United States on Chof-Ches Sivan the Holocaust was still raging. And the Rebbe immediately took to both of these approaches: Spreading basic Yiddishkeit with the founding of Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch and Machneh Yisroel, and spreading Chassidus with the founding of Kehos and Maareches Otzar HaChassidim. Both of these initiatives were headed by the Rebbe himself, and he was involved in the most intricate details of their execution.⁴

This is indeed the great celebration of Chof-Ches Sivan. The Rebbe spoke on this day in 5751*, the 50th anniversary of the Rebbe and Rebbetzin's arrival,⁵ that this day paves the final road towards the *geulah*. This is when Chassidus finally permeates even the lower hemisphere and transforms the whole world to holiness. By coming to the United States and establishing the headquarters of Chassidus Chabad at "770" (the *gematriya* of "פּרצת"*) the teachings of Chassidus reached every corner of the world in an unprecedented manner. With this, 770 has become the focal point of the Yidden in the time of *galus*, and it is the place where the revelation of the third *Beis Hamikdash* will first occur.

This is the greatest accomplishment of our time. We are so close to the *geulah*, that even small children are begging and asking Hashem—"We want Moshiach now!"—with the purest sincerity. And Hashem will surely answer our prayers and bring Moshiach.

Teikef umiyad Mammosh!

A Chassidisher Derher

יג אייר ה'תשפ"א

שנת המאה ועשרים להולדת כ"ק אדמו"ר

1. See *Editorial*, Derher Teves 5781.
2. 8 Adar 5720, *Toras Menachem* vol. 27, p. 394.
3. *Motzei Shabbos Parshas Vayeitzei* 5739, sicha 1.
4. See *The New World*, Derher Sivan 5778.
5. *Sefer Hasichos* 5751, vol. 2, p. 640.



The Ability to Exist

רמב"ם הלכות מלכים פ"א הי"ב

A son who succeeds his father as king is not anointed unless he assumes his position amid a dispute over the inheritance or during a civil war. Under these circumstances, he should be anointed in order to remove all disagreement.

Therefore, they anointed Shlomo because of the claim of Adoniyahu; Yehoash, because of the usurpation of Atalyah; and Yehoachaz, because of the claim of his brother, Yehoyakim.

ואין מושחין מלך בן מלך. אלא אם כן היתה שם מחלוקת או מלחמה מושחין אותו כדי לסלק המחלוקת. לפיכך מושחו שלמה מפני אדניהו. ויואש מפני עתליה. ומשחו יהואחז מפני יהויקים אחיו:

רמב"ם הלכות מלכים פ"ג ה"ח

Anyone who rebels against a king of Israel may be executed by the king. Even if the king orders one of the people to go to a particular place and the latter refuses, or he orders him not to leave his house and he goes out, the offender is liable to be put to death. The king may execute him if he desires, as stated: "Whoever rebels against your command ... shall be put to death."

כל המורד במלך ישראל יש למלך רשות להרגו. אפלו גזר על אחד משאר העם שיילך למקום פלוני ולא הלך או שלא יצא מביתו ויצא חייב מיתה. ואם רצה להרגו ירג. שנאמר (יהושע א יח) "כל איש אשר ימרד את פירי".



מחזור הארבעים 40 CYCLES OF LEARNING RAMBAM

מוקדש לחיזוק ההתקשרות לכ"ק אדמו"ר
לרגל יום הבהיר כ"ח סיון
-שמונים שנה-
נדפס ע"י
הרה"ת ר' לוי יצחק וזוגתו מרת שיינא חי'
ומשפחתם שיחיו
גרינברג

A KING AND HIS PEOPLE

The bond between a king and his subjects is different from other relationships, such as the relationship between student and teacher. The connection a student shares with his teacher concerns only the teachings he receives from him. The connection between subjects and their king, by contrast, involves the totality of their being; their entire existence is dependent on the king.

For this reason, "anyone who rebels against a king of Israel... the king may execute him if he desires." According to Torah law, punishments are meted out according to the nature of the blemish caused by the unbefitting

deed.¹ The death penalty is given because kingship (and the rebellion against it) affects the very essence of a subject's existence.

The third king of Beis Dovid was king Rechavam. Soon after he became king, Yeravam ben Nevat, followed by ten tribes, contested his sovereignty.

A king who is the son of a king must be anointed when there is a controversy over his succession. But there is no mention of Rechavam being anointed, despite the fact that Yeravam contested his sovereignty.

Why indeed wasn't Rechavam anointed?

The reason is that Yeravam's challenge came after Rechavam

had already assumed the throne, at which point he no longer required anointment. With the assumption of his throne, a king acquires the essence of all of his subjects ("בכל עצמותם"). The people can no longer call the king's rule into question, as their very existence is already completely dependent on the king. Therefore, any revolt that happens from that point on does not impede on his rulership over their essence, but rather involves only their external faculties. At their core they are still very much connected to the king.

(*Likkutei Sichos* vol. 4, p. 1050)

1. Tanya, ch. 24.



לעבן מיטן רבין

KOS SHEL BRACHA, MOTZOEI SHAVUOS 5735

RABBI PINNY LEW

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

The Bilingual Tanya

SHAVUOS 5735*



Taken from "My Encounter with the Rebbe, Vol. 2" by PCL Publishing.

"In 5730*, Rabbi Nachman Sudak, head of the Lubavitch Foundation in London, contacted me. The Rebbe had indicated to him that the Tanya should be printed in five countries in which it had hitherto never been printed. The Tanya had never before been printed in the U.K., so Rabbi Sudak assumed that the Rebbe wished to rectify this omission as soon as possible..."

Thus began the long process of a unique and daring endeavor: The very first printing of a bilingual Tanya in which the English translation would be on the same facing page of the original Hebrew text. This innovative idea—initially presented to Rabbi Sudak by Mr. Zalmon Jaffe (author of the above quote)—met with the Rebbe's approval, and merited the Rebbe's constant interest and guidance all along the way, including detailed

directions in how the actual Tanya should look; i.e. the color and thickness of the paper, the type of binding and so on.

The Rebbe also instructed to have this Tanya published by the well-known Soncino Press, by repute one of the best publishers in Great Britain; a detail which prolonged the process greatly. Two weeks before the committee's scheduled departure from England to New York for Shavuot (5735*)—after a long five years of expectations, disappointments and much back-and-forth between the project committee and the printer—the Tanyas were finally ready!

The events of these five years—including some fascinating and detailed *hora'os* from the Rebbe regarding the printing of the Tanya—are beyond the scope of this article. Presented here are excerpts from Zalmon Jaffe's diary, describing his experiences from his visit to the Rebbe for Shavuot 5735*, when these special Tanyas were presented to the Rebbe.

THE TANYA ARRIVES!

Our flight for Shavuot was due to leave England on Monday, Beis Sivan, 5735*. Five days before our departure on Wednesday, 26 Iyar, Hershel Gorman phoned to tell me that he had just picked up the ten leather-bound copies. You can imagine what a relief this was for all of us who had worked and toiled for almost five years with heartache and aggravation throughout.

On Friday afternoon, three days before our departure, we also received, just in time, seventy-four ordinary bound copies.

OUR TANYA IS (AIR)BORN(E)

At the airport in London, we met up with Hershel and we had our first glimpse of the Tanya. It was a beauty! A wonderful piece of workmanship, surpassing anything that we had ever conceived or imagined. It was a classic, a masterpiece!

Everything that had ever been written on the Tanya in English was included in the 900 pages: Explanations, the introductions to each of the five individual English sections, essays, and so forth. It had been well worth waiting for. This Tanya would enhance every library and be of the greatest value to all students of Chassidus.

Now here at last we were on the wings of a Jumbo Jet on the way to the Rebbe with the new Tanya.

Being together on the airplane, Bernard, Hershel, Nachman and I (the Tanya Committee¹), naturally discussed various methods of presenting the Tanya to the Rebbe. Each of us had a different idea.

I thought it an appropriate gesture that we, the four members, autograph the Rebbe's copy and the one for the Rebbetzin. (We already had the Rebbe's copy embossed with gold letters stating that this was a gift from the *anash* of England; and, on the day we arrived in Brooklyn, we had a special wooden case made to hold that Tanya.) I also wanted each of the four committee members to receive one of the leather-bound copies directly from the Rebbe's hands—as per my discussion with the Rebbe (Yud Shevat time)².

We ultimately accepted Rabbi Sudak's suggestion that all the Tanyas which we were bringing with us, the ten leather-bound ones and the seventy-four regular-bound ones, should be handed to the Rebbe “without strings attached.”

CROWN HEIGHTS; HOME AWAY FROM HOME

We arrived at 770 at about 2:30 on Monday afternoon, Beis Sivan. (Shavuot was Thursday evening.) The Rebbe was at the Ohel when we arrived.

We immediately sent a memorandum to the Rebbe stating that we had brought with us a consignment of the first printed bilingual Tanya,



THE NEW TANYA WITH ENGLISH TRANSLATION

RABBI PINNY LEW

comprised of ten leather-bound and seventy-four ordinary-bound volumes.

When the Rebbe returned from the Ohel, I was waiting in the hallway. I immediately received my reward for the journey: One of the Rebbe's most glorious smiles, which is something worth receiving and seeing.

We later received a note from the Rebbe instructing us to send in to him the ten leather-bound copies but to ensure that the other seventy-four were first completed properly [i.e. markers and jackets had to now be affixed as the Rebbe had originally instructed; due to time constraints, these Tanyas were not fully completed before the trip. -Ed.]

THE TANYA PRESENTATION

On Wednesday afternoon, 4 Sivan, the Rebbe went to the Ohel again, returning for a late Mincha.

Following Mincha, Rabbi Hodakov went into the Rebbe's room and came out with an announcement that at 9:30, only a half hour's time, there would be a farbrengen (this would be following Maariv).

A few minutes later, we received a message from the Rebbe, through Rabbi Groner, that at the end of the farbrengen, the Rebbe would like the members of the committee to formally present six of the leather-bound Tanyas to him.

Before the commencement of the farbrengen, before the Rebbe entered, Leibel placed a box with some of the Tanyas under the Rebbe's dais. We were now all ready.

It was quite a short farbrengen—about 90 minutes all told. Towards the end of the farbrengen, the Rebbe gave me a signal. The exciting moment of the presentation had now arrived! I immediately jumped up to move toward the Rebbe's platform and Bernard followed right on my heels. Rabbi Sudak, already on the platform, was a step ahead. Hershel was dragging his feet.

We were now all together on the dais. Rabbi Sudak took a Tanya from the box under the table and went forward to present it to the Rebbe. The Rebbe was literally beaming with pleasure.

The Rebbe accepted the Tanya and said, "*Ah groisen yasher koach* (Thank you very much)." He



later handed Rabbi Sudak some vodka and the Rebbe's pastoral letter published for Shavuos.

I was the next in line. Rabbi Groner was excitedly and hoarsely whispering, "Come on, come on, quickly, quickly." In order to accelerate the proceedings, I took two Tanyas from the box and handed them to the Rebbe.

The Rebbe took them and asked, "Tzvei? *Un einer far vemen?* (Two? And [the other] one is for whom?)"

I replied, "They are both for the Rebbe." The Rebbe smiled and accepted the Tanyas. (He later also handed me the vodka and letter and wished me *l'chaim*.) Bernard and Hershel then followed.

THE REBBE'S BRITISH SUBJECTS

After handing the Tanyas to the Rebbe, while we were still standing on the Rebbe's platform, the Rebbe delivered a six-minute *sicha*.

Following this *sicha*, the Rebbe called upon various "English citizens" (and their sons) to come up to the dais.

The Rebbe called out: "*Vu iz* [where is] *Tiefenbrun? Vu iz Shmuel Lew? Nem dee kinder oichet* [bring your children too]." The Rebbe then asked, "*S'iz doh noch eimitzer fun Eingland?* [Is there anyone else here from England?]" Rabbi Chaim Farro and Mendel Katsch were called up.

As the Rebbe's dais began filling up with all of the Rebbe's (and Her Majesty's) British subjects (the original four—we who had presented a Tanya before the last *sicha*—still remaining on the platform), the Rebbe turned to me and said, "You are the 'governor' of the United Kingdom; *breingt ahertzu alleh Einglisher citizens* [bring all English citizens up here]!"

The Rebbe handed to each adult a letter and vodka, and cake for the boys. It was a most impressive scene. The Rebbe definitely knows how to orchestrate something on a grand scale.

And then, with the English contingent all standing and literally surrounding the Rebbe on his dais, and to everyone's absolute surprise and joy, the Rebbe himself commenced the singing of the "Alter Rebbe's *Niggun*." This was the first time [and the only time –Ed.] that the Rebbe himself commenced the singing of this hallowed *niggun*—at least in public—by singing the first bars of this tune. Everyone present at this historic moment was singing with extra feeling and emotion; it

was the climax of an already unique and exciting farbrengen.

At the conclusion of the *niggun*, the Rebbe handed Rabbi Sudak the rest of the cake, saying: "*Upgeben dee froyen* [distribute this to the women]." The Rebbe then turned and said: "*Farro iz doch oich a rov* [Farro is also a rabbi]," and he gave Rabbi Chaim Farro the rest of the wine and said to him: "*Upgeben dee froyen voss zainen gekumen fun Eingland* [distribute to the women who came from England]."

The Rebbe then began singing his father's Simchas Torah *niggun* and with everyone standing, singing and clapping, the Rebbe left the hall. This entire farbrengen with the presentation lasted less than two hours.

After the farbrengen, I, together with scores of others, waited outside the Rebbe's room. Many hundreds more were lining the walkway and the street. We all wanted to show our thanks and appreciation to the Rebbe. Suddenly, the Rebbe's door opened and we spontaneously burst out singing the Simchas Torah *niggun* as loudly as possible. The Rebbe emerged from his study with a wonderful and happy smile, swinging and twirling the Tanya in tune to the *niggun*, whilst urging us on with his other hand to sing louder and faster. With sprightly steps the Rebbe reached his car and left for home.

OUR YECHIDUS

Our *yechidus* took place on Monday night, Tes Sivan. The great moment arrived at 11:45 p.m.

...I now indicated to the Rebbe that I had a very important business matter to discuss. The Rebbe owed me an account, which has been outstanding for a little while:

Last Shavuos, at the Rebbe's behest, I had arranged a *shidduch* for a young English woman. The Rebbe had promised to (personally) give me the *shadchanus gelt* for this. I admitted that this matter was outstanding only due to my own choice; at that time, I intimated that I would not accept a cash settlement. I had implied that when the time was opportune, I would request payment in kind. It is well known how much the Rebbe dislikes being a *ba'al chov*. I was now prepared to "make a deal." If the Rebbe would personally hand, to each of the four members of the Tanya committee, a bilingual Tanya, autographed by the Rebbe, I would not only

consider the Rebbe's indebtedness to me completely discharged, but would consider that I had made an exceptionally handsome bargain. These Tanyas would become invaluable to each of us.

"I see you are not only a businessman in Manchester, but in America too!" said the Rebbe. He did accept my proposal by agreeing to call on the Tanya committee shortly before we departed for home.

SPECIAL SICHA

At the farbrengen on Shabbos Parshas Nasso, 14 Sivan, the Rebbe requested that those who had participated in the publication of the Tanya should say "*lchaim*" to him.

I was facing the Rebbe in the well of the hall in my usual farbrengen place. I held a large tumbler, half-filled with wine, and the Rebbe nodded to me. I said "*lchaim*" and drank. The Rebbe was unimpressed with this half-filled cup, because he told me to fill my cup again, this time right to the

brim. I thus said "*lchaim*" again to the Rebbe, and drank it all in one shot. The Rebbe also wished "*lchaim*" to Bernard, Nachman, and Hershel.

Following this, the Rebbe delivered another *sicha* about the Tanya, first tracing the history of the Tanya's various translations:

The first was about 75 years ago when Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the youngest son of the Rebbe Maharash³, translated the first chapter of the Tanya into Russian. It was a great success and it was received with acclaim. However, no further progress was made until the previous Rebbe published a Yiddish version [1940s].

Translations into English, French, Italian and Spanish came later [during our Rebbe's reign]. However, now is the first time the translation appears in the same volume as the original Hebrew, page by page. It is the first time a different language is directly opposite the original Hebrew text. This

ENCOUNTERS WITH THE REBBETZIN

One of the highlights of our trip to the Rebbe is our visit with the Rebbetzin at her home on President Street. The Rebbetzin is a very charming and friendly person. She always makes us feel very much at home.

Lately, we have been arranging two visits with the Rebbetzin during each stay in Brooklyn.

On our first visit, after exchanging pleasantries, the Rebbetzin informed us that the Rebbe brought home a Tanya for her to see and she had examined it minutely. She exclaimed how she, too, was enthralled with it. It was well beyond her highest expectations. The Rebbetzin stated repeatedly, during the course of our almost three-hour visit, how much she and the Rebbe loved the Tanya. It was just beautiful—beautiful! Such a lovely production—a classic!

She said the Rebbe had divulged to her that "Reb Zalmon" had been in *yechidus* for an hour and that the Rebbe had thoroughly "enjoyed it." The Rebbetzin said she hoped I would continue to make the Rebbe happy as I have been doing.

That is the *ikar*. Don't take notice of what people are saying.

I asked the Rebbetzin whether she would be pleased to officially receive the members of the Tanya committee, as they wished to present her with a leather-bound Tanya autographed by the board.

She agreed and said she would be delighted, honored and gratified to receive an official delegation representing *anash* of England.

We arranged this next appointment for the following Sunday afternoon, Tes-Vov Sivan.

The Rebbetzin, who is only a small lady, sat at the table, her personality filling the entire large room. No queen receiving her faithful and loyal subjects could have looked more regal and gracious than our dear Rebbetzin.

Rabbi Sudak made the presentation. On the inside cover of the Tanya was a beautifully inscribed parchment that read, "To our gracious and esteemed Rebbetzin, with best wishes from the *anash* of England, presented by the committee." Here followed the four signatures and the date.

The Rebbetzin was tremendously pleased and expressed her warm appreciation.



THE REBBE HANDS A TANYA TO RABBI SUDAK.

placed a heavy responsibility on those who had carried out this pioneering work. It was a bold step. Now, students will be able to much more easily learn and understand the Tanya.

The highest thanks are extended to all those who had taken part in its publication and, since it was now done, it deserves—and will, please G-d, achieve—great success and there will hopefully soon be a second and then a third edition. This third edition would create a *chazaka* and it would become a permanent production. This will help make it possible to translate other Chassidic texts in the same manner, too.

The manner with which they worked was also very commendable: Using their own funds and without requiring constant consultations, advice and guidance at every little stage.

Those who had worked on its publication have a *zechus* for the hard work and dedication, and since they were not functioning on their “own accord,” but were carrying out what they were told to do, the ultimate responsibility is not theirs.

Following this *sicha*, the Rebbe summoned the Tanya committee to come up to the dais. A bottle of vodka was presented to each one of us (Rabbi

Nachman Sudak, Bernard Perrin, Hershel Gorman and me).

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

On Sunday, Tes-Vov Sivan, I had a mini-*yechidus* with the Rebbe outside of 770. The Rebbe further elaborated on yesterday’s *sicha* about the Tanya and emphasized, yet again, that if there were any complaints from whatever people or sources about any aspect of the Tanya, he accepted full and all responsibility. He personally had nothing but praise for all who took part in its publication.

The Rebbe requested that a British delegation comprised of Rabbi Sudak, Hershel, Bernard, Mendel Katsch, Shmuel and me should present a Tanya to as many organizations (in Crown Heights) as time would permit, including Machon Chana and Beis Rivkah; “Mrs. Jaffe and your daughter [Hindy Lew] should join this delegation too.” We should then take this same delegation to the other organizations, like Hadar Hatorah and the library. The Rebbe said we should not take one to the Central Lubavitch Yeshiva, as the *bochurim* there needed to learn Tanya from the original, not the bilingual one.

I had understood, at our *yechidus*, that the Rebbe had agreed to give an autographed Tanya to the committee members at a special *yechidus* in

the Rebbe's private study. I mentioned this (mis) understanding of mine in a subsequent letter to the Rebbe. Where I had written "into *yeichidus*", the Rebbe responded with a handwritten Hebrew note:

*?! For several years now there is no yeichidus during these days [this long after Yom Tov -Ed.]. My intention was to hand the Tanya and sicha [about the Tanya] as last time, **not in my room**—to thus dispel the complaints which I told you about, as to why I differentiate between one person and the next, etc. It will [instead] be outside so that everyone will be able to approach immediately before their journey [home].*

After receiving this clarification, I figured the Rebbe was referring to a ceremony immediately outside his room or in the hallway at the main entrance of 770.

THE BIG SURPRISE

We were due to leave 770 on Monday, 16 Sivan at 5:30 p.m., directly to Kennedy Airport for our flight back to England.

Rabbi Leibel Groner reminded me (not that I required reminding) that the Rebbe had promised to give out the specially autographed Tanya at 5:00 p.m. In the Rebbe's answer to me (mentioned earlier) he had indicated that he would present these "outside" right before we left. Everyone assumed this meant outside the Rebbe's room.

At 4:30 there was suddenly a great hive of activity at the main entrance of 770. The Rebbe's

shtender was brought out and placed right in front of the main doorway of 770. A microphone was also set up. Leibel Groner rushed up to us with new instructions. The Rebbe would be holding a farbrengen outside—in the open air! What excitement!

All the men and boys should form a line at the right-hand side of the walkway facing the Rebbe. Later, after each out of town guest would receive "something" from the Rebbe, they would make a complete turnaround, walk back down the other side of the walkway and enter a car. The instructions for the women were to remain on the sidewalk, behind the men.

Meanwhile, Leibel brought out boxes containing some of the seventy-four Tanyas. He extracted a few books and took them into the Rebbe's room.

A few minutes later there was a "shush" and a "hush" and then complete silence; here was the Rebbe. He was followed by Leibel, who was carrying six of these Tanyas. After him came Rabbis Hodakov, Klein, Wineberg, Harlig and Dr. Nissen Mindel and others. These gentlemen grouped themselves behind the Rebbe. The first open-air farbrengen had just begun.

The Rebbe delivered a five-minute *sicha*.

Rabbi Groner—who had been holding the four signed Tanyas plus two additional copies—then placed the Tanyas on the Rebbe's podium.



THE REBBE RESPONDS TO REB ZALMON'S REQUEST FOR MOSHIACH TO BE REVEALED SPEEDILY.

RABBI PINNY LEW



THE REBBE GIVES DOLLARS TO RABBI WINEBERG TO DISTRIBUTE TO THE WOMEN AND GIRLS.

The Rebbe announced that he would first distribute the Tanya “to those who were involved in the publication of the translated Tanya, followed by the rest of those assembled here.”

The Rebbe then signaled to me with his eyes—and how eloquent are the Rebbe’s eyes!—to come forward. I walked up to the Rebbe’s podium. The Rebbe handed me a Tanya, saying: “*Zol zain b’hatzlacha rabba.*”

While I was still face to face with the Rebbe, I delivered a message that “the British contingent have requested me to ask the Rebbe that Moshiach be revealed soon and speedily!” “Yes, if you can accelerate it [the coming of Moshiach],” replied the Rebbe.

Nachman was next to receive his autographed Tanya, followed by Bernard and Hershel.

Meanwhile, being back in my spot, I surreptitiously opened the cover of my Tanya. Yes—there it was—in Hebrew, of course – the Rebbe’s own handwritten inscription. There was also a photocopy of a compendium of the various *sichos* about the Tanya the Rebbe had delivered during this visit.

I was thrilled, delighted, and overwhelmed with gratitude to the Rebbe. It had been worthwhile “bothering the Rebbe” to do this. Hershel had argued with me on many occasions that it was not fair of me to pester the Rebbe to sign the Tanyas. I had remonstrated with him. I pointed out this was very important to me, but to my children’s children it would be more important still, a treasured heirloom.

The Rebbe presented a Tanya to Rabbi Chaim Farro and one to Mendel Katsch and then to every



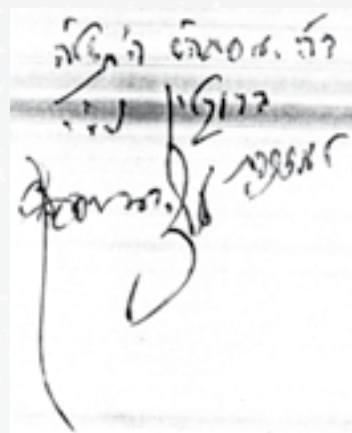
adult male traveler who lived in an English-speaking country.

The Rebbe repeatedly called out, “Who else is here from English countries? Other countries that speak English? Anyone else from England, Australia?” The Rebbe also called up a few individuals by name.

Each male traveler who did not live in an English-speaking country and all boys—even babies like my grandson Sholom Ber Lew, who was only 15 months old!—received a pocket (Hebrew only) Tanya from the Rebbe’s hand.

The Rebbe announced that each woman and girl—even little girls (like my granddaughters Zelda Rochel and Chana Lew, aged two and four years respectively)—would receive two single-dollar bills, one for charity and the other toward the Shabbos candle-lighting campaign. The Rebbe then called over Rabbi Wineberg and handed him a wad of the bills for him to distribute to the women.

The Rebbe called up Shmuel a second time, and gave him his own (the Rebbe’s) original copy of the *sicha* of the Rebbe’s remarks about the Tanya, with the Rebbe’s own handwritten additions and alterations. The Rebbe told him: “*Machen a fotostat*



THE INSCRIPTION FROM THE REBBE IN THE FOUR TANYAS FOR THE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

ב"ה. אסחה"ש [אסרו חג השבועות]
ה'תשל"ה.
ברוקלין נ"י.
למזכרת (חתימה)

in England un opshiken tzurik (make a photocopy in England and send it back).”

I approached the Rebbe and asked for a Tanya for [my son] Avrohom, who was also a member of the Tanya committee but who was in England.

“[But] he is not here!” responded the Rebbe. The Rebbe did give me a pocket Hebrew-only Tanya for him “as commission.”

The Rebbe called me up again and handed me a Tanya for Chief Rabbi Jakobovits of England, together with a personal letter for him. The Rebbe (again) instructed that a delegation present this Tanya to the Chief Rabbi. The Rebbe also gave me an extra Tanya for the airplane home: “In case you find someone who might need one.”

The Rebbe concluded this glorious affair by wishing us all, “*Furt gezunterheit, zol zein besuros*

tovos (have a safe journey and there should be good news).” With the Rebbe clapping and encouraging the singing of “*Ki B’simcha*,” off we went to board our vehicles. Our motorcade moved off. We all waved furiously, singing lustily to the Rebbe, who was still standing on the steps of 770, clapping his hands and giving us a farewell *bracha*.

On the plane going home, Shmuel searched and found the lost soul to give the Rebbe’s Tanya to as instructed. Someone (from our own group of passengers) had gone directly to the airport. He was not aware of the “outdoor” farbrengen and distribution. He would have been most disappointed to have missed receiving a Tanya from the Rebbe’s hand; but the Rebbe notices everything!

We arrived home tired, but still basking in the warmth of a glorious two weeks spent with the Rebbe. ⑦

I had given my camera to a friend, before the Rebbe arrived, with instructions that he take as many photographs as possible of the Rebbe handing out the Tanyas, a view of the crowds and of the overall scene. The Rebbe was now giving us a most wonderful opportunity to take some good photographs; just as I had requested at our *yechidus*!

At this moment, when the Rebbe answered not only verbally but with a gorgeous smile, Louis Tiefenbrun took a most superb and marvelous photograph of the Rebbe surrounded by a group of his most trusted and able lieutenants.

1. Bernard Perrin, Hershel Gorman, Nachman Sudak and the author.
2. As Zalmon Jaffe recounts elsewhere: “During that visit (Yud Shevat 5735*), I went so far as to discuss with the Rebbe the list of people to whom the first twelve leather-bound copies would be presented; the first one would be for the Rebbe, of course, and then our Rebbetzin and so forth...”
3. 1867-1941; passed away in Bastia, Corsica, during WWII.



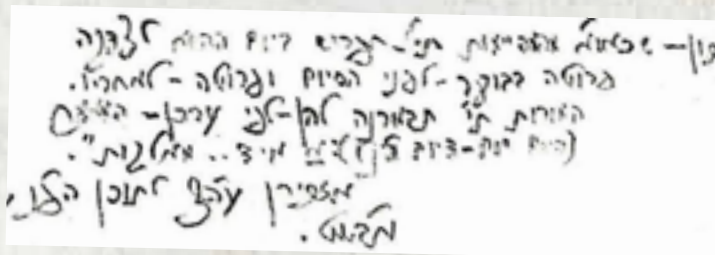


כתב יד קודש

לזכות
החתן הרה"ת ר' צבי לייב שיחי'
והכלה המהוללה מרת שטערנא שרה תחי'
לרגל חתונתם בשעטומ"צ
כ"א סיון ה'תשפ"א
נדפס ע"י הוריהם
הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל
וזוגתו מרת נחמה דינה ומשפחתם שיחיו
בלום
הרה"ת ר' צבי יוסף
וזוגתו מרת חנה ומשפחתם שיחיו
שפאלטר

Train Them Young

The Rebbe's response to a report by the first grade teachers at Beis Rivkah about their students' "graduation" ceremony, which was to take place on 21 Sivan, 5730*:



It would be appropriate for each of the graduates, *tichyu*, to set aside for tzedakah on that day, one coin in the morning before the ceremony, and one coin afterwards.

The teachers, *tichyu*, should explain to the children, in a manner that they can understand (the content of the Hayom Yom for that date):
"A Yid [...does not desire, nor is he capable of being separated from] *Elokus*.

I will mention them at the *Tziyun* for [the fulfillment of the blessings requested in] the *pa"n*. May you bear good news.

נכון - שכאו"א מהמסיימות תי' -
תפריש ביום ההוא לצדקה פרוטה
בבוקר - לפני הסיום ופרוטה -
לאחריו.

המורות תי' תבארנה להן - לפי
ערכן - המאמר (היום יום - דיום
הנ"ל) "א איד .. מאלקות".

אזכירן עה"צ לתוכן הפ"ג, ותבש"ט.

America's Matan Torah

AGE-OLD VALUES
REPURPOSED



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



This month, we mark a historic date.

This Chof-Ches Sivan¹ marks 80 years since the arrival of the Rebbe and Rebbetzin to the shores of the United States. The Rebbe explained that this day commemorates much more than the Rebbe and Rebbetzin's personal deliverance from the hands of the Nazis. It marks the beginning of a new era and a new stage in *hafatzas hamaayanos*.

To get a better grasp on what that means and to understand how it is relevant to us, we sat down for a farbrengen with Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Gourarie of Yeshivas Lubavitch Detroit, and noted author, lecturer and Chabad.org editor, Rabbi Tzvi Freeman.



The New Mission

Rabbi Gourarie: There is an interesting saying that was once popular among Chassidim about the state of spirituality in America:

“*Matan Torah* didn’t occur in *Chatzi Kadur Hatachton*, in the lower hemisphere of the world” (Eretz Yisroel being the center of the upper hemisphere).

The Rebbe repeated this concept on a number of occasions, including in the famous *sicha* of Chof-Ches Sivan 5751.² Among the Rabbeim, it seems to have been first mentioned by the Rebbe Rashab.³

What exactly does this mean? Obviously this is not about the literal location of *Matan Torah*; it clearly means something more than that. It also doesn’t mean that Torah does not reach the Americas and that we are somehow not obligated to fulfill Torah and mitzvos once we cross the Atlantic Ocean. Clearly, there is something far deeper meant.

First, let us examine what *Matan Torah* is all about.

Chassidus tells us that *Matan Torah* is not just the moment we received the Torah. After all, the *Avos* observed Torah as well. Rather, *Matan Torah* was the moment of connection between spirituality and physicality. It was the moment we received the power to draw *Elokus* into this world. To use the most common *mashal*, it gave us the ability to bring holiness into the animal’s skin that is tefillin. This was *Matan Torah*’s accomplishment.

However, there seems to be a caveat: Did *Matan Torah* actually bring *Elokus* everywhere? Did the world reach a state where all the nations serve Hashem? Clearly

not! Had that been the case, Moshiach would have been here long ago.

Obviously, even after the great effect of *Matan Torah*, there is something it did not accomplish. Even though we received the power to draw holiness into this world, it does not compare to the final stage: the actual coming of Moshiach.

To use Kabbalistic terms: At the time of *Matan Torah*, we had elevated 202 *nitzutzos* of the total 288 that we are obligated to collect. In the elapsed time since then, our job has been to finish that process in its entirety and bring *Elokus* everywhere, to every place in the world, and to every person’s state of being — thereby collecting the final 86.

In the millennia since *Matan Torah*, we have had new revelations that brought us closer to that goal. The revelations of Kabbalah by the Arizal, Chassidus by the Baal Shem Tov and Chassidus Chabad by the Alter Rebbe, were all stages in the final revelation — the coming of Moshiach.

The final stage, the Rebbe explained in Basi Legani 5711, is our generation, *Dor Hashvi’i*. Our mission is to complete the *avoda*, to bring the *Shechina* down to the lowest level, and thereby bring Moshiach.

But what exactly is different about our generation’s mission?

Weren’t Chassidim of all generations aware of the goal, as told to the Baal Shem Tov himself — to bring the wellsprings of Chassidus to the furthest *chutza*, and bring Moshiach?

The Final Stage

Interestingly, Chassidim did not always understand *chutza* the way we understand it today.

In the Rebbe Rashab’s *sichos*, *chutza* refers to *sechel enoshi*, the human intellect. The concept of *hafatzas hamaayanos* was seen in terms of the human experience. A person’s heart might be warm to Yiddishkeit but his cold and dry intellect can be very distant, and the goal of Chassidus Chabad is to infiltrate this last stand in the human being and conquer it for *Elokus*.⁴

In describing the new stage that began upon his arrival, the Rebbe used the words “tenufah chadasha.” These words indicate that an entirely new stage had begun.

From that perspective, even a G-d-fearing Jew who doesn't learn Chassidus is the greatest *chutza* possible! But from the beginning of the Rebbe's *nesius*, he demanded that we reach a much farther *chutza*, bringing *Elokus* to every corner of the world, to Jew and non-Jew alike.

America, especially 80 years ago, was not only distant from Yiddishkeit due to its location. America had a unique *kelipa*; the state of Yiddishkeit was far worse than in the old country. So, the *chiddush* of our generation is that we, in the final stage before Moshiach, bring the *Shechina* into the lower hemisphere, both in concept and in location.

The connection between this *avoda* and the coming of Moshiach is quite obvious. The idea of Moshiach, as Chassidus explains, is to make the world a dwelling place for Hashem. As the Navi says, וראו כל בשר יחדיו⁵, all people of the world will serve Hashem in unison.

In the first *maamar*, Basi Legani, the Rebbe made it very clear that this was exactly our mission. Until that moment, while much of the work had been done, *Elokus* still had not reached the lowest level, the lowly *aretz*. This was the unique mission of *Dor Hashvi'i*.

But this did not exactly begin on Yud Shevat.

The Revolution

If we go back to *Matan Torah* for a moment, you will see that it also took place in stages.

Before *Matan Torah*, the early *tzaddikim* mentioned in Basi Legani brought *Elokus* "*lemata*," closer and closer to the world. True, it remained in spiritual form — Yaakov's *maklos* didn't become holy like *tefillin* — but they did bring down the *Shechina* to a certain extent. At the same time, after *Matan Torah* the Yidden still lived in the desert and there were a variety of mitzvos that they could not fulfill until they reached Eretz Yisroel. In other words, the main event of *Matan Torah* did not take place in a vacuum; it was accompanied by 'before' and 'after' stages.

It is fair to say that the same is true for the *Matan Torah* of the lower hemisphere. There were many significant moments throughout the generations of Chassidus and in *Dor Hashvi'i* in particular, but they were all parts of the process. The main event was Chof-Ches Sivan.

In describing the new stage that began upon his arrival, the Rebbe used the words "*tenufah chadasha*."⁶ These words indicate that an entirely new stage had begun. Indeed, shortly after the Rebbe's arrival, the Frierdiker Rebbe instructed him to lead the three new institutions, Merkos, Machane Yisrael and Kehos, which revolutionized the way *hafatzas hamaayanos* is viewed.

Until that day, the focus was limited to establishing yeshivos to draw in Jewish children. But the Rebbe initiated activities that reached much further. The Rebbe's initiatives were directed towards Jewish children who were not going to attend Jewish day schools. Talks & Tales⁷ and Mesibos Shabbos⁸ were among many activities directed to individuals who were much further from Yiddishkeit. As the years progressed, the Rebbe began more and more initiatives that reached beyond the Jewish world. Examples like Sheva Mitzvos,⁹ Moment of Silence, and many other initiatives, focused on the furthest *chutza* imaginable. And that all began on Chof-Ches Sivan.

In the Lion's Mouth

Rabbi Freeman: There was once a lion who had a thorn stuck in his throat. Knowing that the animals of the jungle feared him, he announced that whoever pulled it out would be handsomely rewarded. A bird with a long beak plucked up the courage, stuck her head into the lion's throat and pulled it out.

"What is my reward?" she asked the lion.

"Go tell all the other animals," the lion replied, "that you stuck your head into the throat of the lion and came out alive. That will be your reward."¹⁰

This is a famous parable about the various exiles the Jewish people have undergone. Despite the persecutions, we've





always come out stronger. In fact, according to Chassidus, we are *mevarer* the specific character of that country and we adopt it for *kedusha*. Chassidus explains on the verse “*Vayehi beshalach Pharaoh*,” that when we left Mitzrayim, we took its strength along with us. That is our task in every *galus* — to capture the power of that place and to elevate it. America is the Mitzrayim, the superpower of our day, and our job is to transform that power and to raise it to *kedusha*.

Eighty years ago, this continent was known as a place of assimilation, where Jews flung off the yoke of Torah and mitzvos. After two or three generations, Jewish children would have absolutely no knowledge of their Yiddishkeit. They literally entered the lion’s mouth. On the other hand, America was known as a place to get things done. In Europe, people feel much more limited by convention; they aren’t as quick to change existing methods. In America, you have the freedom to do whatever you want, and people are open to change.

On Chof-Ches Sivan, the Rebbe set out to harness the very power of America and use it to bring holiness to America itself—and by extension to the whole world.

The Rebbe would always say that Moshiach should come “*lemata me’asarah tefachim*—under ten handbreadths.” In other words, Moshiach needs to be a literal reality; it needs to become a part of our lowly world. In Kabbalah terms, in order to reach *atik*, you need to go down to *malchus sheb’malchus*. To bring Moshiach, you need *hisyashvus*. Torah and mitzvos need to become normal in the reality that we live in and it shouldn’t seem like a foreign import. True *dirah betachtonim* is when Torah and mitzvos have a “native” feel to themselves

...Not to recreate a replica of the town of Lubavitch in America. It was to reapply the core principles of Lubavitch in America.

— it should smell, look and feel like it is “made in America.”

Yiddishkeit, Made in America

The Rebbe could have easily created a small corner in America where we would daven the entire day and ignore the rest of society, by transplanting and recreating an exact replica of Chassidus in Europe. Instead the Rebbe took the American attitude and incorporated it. The goal wasn't to recreate a replica of the town of Lubavitch in America. It was to reapply the core principles of Lubavitch in America. As the Rebbe would quote the Midrash, “When you come to a town, follow its custom.”¹¹ Do it the American way. And indeed, the resulting expansion was incomparable to what was accomplished in Europe.

Many of the *mitzvoim* express this exact idea. The Rebbe's Lag Bomer parades and public *mitzvoim* had a very clear function — to demonstrate to America that you could be Jewish and unafraid, and be unabashed about your Yiddishkeit on the street. Go light a big Menorah in front of city hall. Not only is it totally normal, it's even part of what America stands for — as a country founded on the belief in Hashem.

Another example where we see an expression of ‘transformation’ in America is evident in the fact that the Rebbe chose to send shluchim from America to Eretz Yisroel. He didn't take Israelis who had spent years in 770; it was specifically American born kids — not because they were bigger *talmidei chachomim* but because they knew how to get things done in the American style, and indeed, they were very successful.

In general, the Rebbe always insisted that matters of *hafatza* be big and beautiful. In one *sicha* at a Purim farbrengen, the Rebbe said that the lesson from Achashverosh's *seudah* is that when you need to do something, you need to do it big and grand. That is definitely an “American *birur*.”

Some of these concepts don't seem so unique in our day, but somehow, they

weren't possible in previous generations. In earlier times, although Yiddishkeit was taken for granted within the *shtetl* of the Jewish community, it didn't reach out beyond their borders. Specifically in our generation, where we've been pushed out of the *shtetl* and forced to rethink the way we approach everything, we are able to go back to the very essence of Chassidus and live according to its most profound ideals — while also bringing it to the entire world. This is the ultimate *chutza*.

In Our Own Lives

This concept is not only about where we bring Chassidus, but also *how* we bring Chassidus.

In the *maamar* of *V'tah Tetzaveh*, the Rebbe draws a distinction between the *avoda* of previous generations and the *avoda* of our times. Many of our grandparents in Russia lived a life of utter self-sacrifice, where every mitzvah was a struggle. It was a revelation of the *etzem hanefesh*. However, there was one shortcoming: It wasn't *b'hisyashvut*, it wasn't accomplished in a settled way. The Rebbe pointed out that when many of the Russian Chassidim settled in America, their *mesiras nefesh* evaporated. Our task, the Rebbe explained, is to bring *Elokus* downwards, in a settled and permanent way.

In my reading, that means “making Chassidus seem normal.” It should be seamless. The *darkei haChassidus* should seem expected to be a part of our life in this society. That means we cannot just transplant Chassidus from a previous generation; it needs to be tailored for the needs and styles of the new one.

The Mittlerer Rebbe explains in *Toras Chaim*¹² that the children born in each country receive their vitality through the *sar* of the country. Chazal famously said¹³ that Hashem spread us among the nations “*kidei lehosif aleihem geirim*—in order to bring in new converts.” But how many new converts have we brought in? The Mittlerer Rebbe explains that the children born in the new country, being that they receive the *shefa* of that land, are considered *geirim*.

So the unique *avoda* of each country is different, and with it, the method of education. This is especially true of the *chatzi kadur hatachton*, the lower hemisphere. The fact that it is an entirely different hemisphere indicates that it is profoundly different from the upper one. So we definitely can't bring up our children in the same fashion as the old country.

American culture is profoundly different from the culture among Chassidim in Eastern Europe. As the Friediker Rebbe once told Rabbi Sholom Ber Gordon, "You can't tell American Jews to do anything, but you can teach them everything."

Take *kabbolas ol* for an example.

Let's say a Chossid comes from Russia and tries to raise his children with the Russian method. If the child will ask, "Why should I do x, y, and z?" the Chossid will answer, "Because you must."

Obviously, that answer won't go over very well in America. In a different culture, questions may have been unthinkable, but in America, you won't be able to get away with pushing away someone's questions just by asserting your position. In truth, this change has been evident for several generations, going back even 100 years, but in our days it is even more evident.

In a previous generation, *kabbolas ol* was a punchline of a bigger story. A child grew up in an atmosphere of Torah and *yiras Shamayim*. Yiddishkeit was considered life itself. But, the *mashpia* would tell the student, don't do your *avoda* only because you enjoy it; do it with *kabbolas ol*.

In today's America, *kabbolas ol* has a very different connotation. A kid might want to watch TV, play video games, be involved in sports and sit on his smartphone all day. But the parent or teacher tells him, no. You can't do all those things. Why, you ask? Don't ask questions. Do it with *kabbolas ol*.

The terminology is the same — *kabbolas ol*. But the actual implementation — and impact — is profoundly different.

Kabbalos ol needs to be presented as a life-mission. It's the message that you do not live to fulfill your own selfish needs,

Chassidus is telling the person: You are in full control over your mind. You can decide what enters and what doesn't.

rather, you were placed in this world with a much broader mission. Hashem gave you a *neshamah* and has a mission for you to fulfill to change the world for the good.

This is not a boring and meaningless answer. It actually provides meaning in the context it is being used. The questioner will now be more enthusiastic about the pursuit to be a true Chossid.

This was the Rebbe's approach with Tzivos Hashem. When faced with a question, "How do we instill *kabbolas ol* within American children?" the answer wasn't, "Just tell them they need to do it." The answer was, instill them with a sense of pride, a sense of purpose, and make it belong to them. When a child is instilled with a mission and with the knowledge that he is part of an army with a broader mission, it gives him a whole new sense of purpose.

Take another example: Imagine a young *bochur* coming to his *mashpia* with questions that are bothering him, and the *mashpia* answers, "What you need is *hesech hadaas*. Just ignore those questions and they will go away."

Today, the whole world is out to grab your mind. They give you free stuff in return for open access to your mind to manipulate what you're thinking about. If a *bochur* complains that he cannot concentrate, the answer cannot simply be *hesech hadaas*.

We need to go back and remember the core meaning of *hesech hadaas*. Termed better, it means, "Fill your mind with *osios*." Make sure that there are Torah concepts that you understand and know by heart, whether a *perek Tanya*, *Mishnayos*, a *maamar*, or anything for that matter, "so that at all times and in all places he will be able to think and utter the holy letters of

Torah,” as Hayom Yom says. *Hesech hadaas* means that you learn to take control of what is in your mind and use your brain to its true capacity.

Now, that is a much more empowering message than “ignore it.” Chassidus is telling the person: You are in full control over your mind. You can decide what enters and what doesn’t. Create for yourself an arsenal of equipment — *Torah baal peh* — that will allow you to assert yourself in your own brain.

There can be three impediments to carrying this out. One, if you don’t understand what is going on in your mind. Two, if you don’t understand the power that you have. And three — if you have nothing to think about!

I once spoke to *semicha bochurim* about this, and one fellow blurted out, “You can’t control what you think!” Chassidus doesn’t agree; it really does provide the tools to control your thought.

Bittul is a similar issue. A Chossid has to learn *bittul*. So a *bochur* sits at a *farbrengen* and the *mashpia* tells him, “*Du bist gurnisht!* You are nothing! The world is not about you!”

In America, we’re speaking to a 15-year-old kid whose major concern in life is the acne on his face and how he can get the *chevra* to believe that, nevertheless, he’s a cool dude. Because he’s sure that he’s not. He doesn’t feel successful in learning Gemara, he’s not the ultimate Chassidische *bochur*, and so he feels he must be really rotten.

Obviously, by telling him, “*Du bist gurnisht!*,” we’re not being helpful.

So, in a beautiful *maamar*, one of the last to be *mugah*, V’Dovid Avdi 5732, the Rebbe explains *bittul*. *Bittul* is the capacity to get beyond yourself, to transcend yourself. And it’s rooted in the very core of the soul. Because you are a *real something*—you’re not just *about something*—therefore you have the capacity to get beyond yourself.

That’s magnificent. It’s uplifting and encouraging. Who wouldn’t want to achieve that?

In other words, the teachings of Chassidus are timeless. However, they need to be applied within the context of each situation. If the *kelipa* of America is different from Russia, we need to strip away the layers covering those concepts and return to the core idea. And when we do that, the results are much richer.

A Loftier Generation

Rabbi Gourarie: In many of the Rebbe’s *sichos*, it is clear that he saw our generation in a unique light; as a generation with special spiritual *koach*.

For example, the Rebbe once repeated the famous story of the Rebbe Rashab, where he cried to the Tzemach Tzedek that he doesn’t see a revelation of *Elokus* like Avraham Avinu. The Rebbe said on that occasion that in our day, we can raise a child in such a holy manner that he will cry for not seeing *Elokus*. He will consider it more important than *gashmius*.¹⁴

Think about that for a moment. The Rambam writes that we educate children with candy, because they are too young to appreciate spirituality. But the Rebbe said that the nature of people has changed. In the days of the Rambam, children were closer to materialism. But in our generation, a child is naturally inclined to *ruchnius*, and if he doesn’t receive his *ruchnius*, he cries.

How does our *teva* suddenly change? Why are children suddenly different from previous generations? In the Rebbe’s own words, “This story revealed a new level in *chinuch*, especially after it was retold by the [Friediker] Rebbe.” In other words, the *Shechina* has arrived down here, in our world, and who brought it here? The *tzaddik* of the generation — the Rebbe.

The Rebbe spoke about another similar point on Chanukah 5746*. At that *farbrengen*, the Rebbe spoke about the Baal Shem Tov’s teaching that Hashem constantly recreates everything in the world,¹⁵ and explained that it is essentially already written in Rambam: In the first *halacha*, he writes that Hashem is “*mamtzi*

kol nimtza—he creates all creations” — in present tense!¹⁶

The point the Rambam makes is that every person in our generation has the ability and the obligation to see Hashem’s hand in everything, to see “*koach hapoel binifal*,” because it is a *halacha* of Torah which applies to all equally, not only to those who learn Tanya or are followers of the Baal Shem Tov. The Rebbe showed how this concept is clearly understood from within the words of the Rambam. That is a revolutionary idea.

A third such concept was our relationship to *gashmius*. The Rambam famously says in the final *halacha* that when Moshiach comes, there will be “*ma’adanim metzeyim kafar*—delicacies will be available like dirt.” The Rebbe explained that we will view those *ma’adanim* like dirt; they will be meaningless to us.¹⁷

The Rebbe also said that it is possible to live on that level today. It’s a *darga* of Moshiach’s times, but the Rebbe demanded it from us in this generation.

Now, it could seem that the Rebbe is speaking of high spiritual levels while we are stuck far below in our own materialism. But if you think this means that you are not capable of reaching this level, you should know that there is a precedent.

Imagine the morning after *Matan Torah*. Moshe tells the Yidden to slaughter an animal and fashion tefillin. No doubt, it sounds crazy. Of course, they thought to themselves, holiness is meant to envelop the physical world as well, but now we are going to skin an animal for it? *Matan Torah* is a nice ideal, but “Rabbi, don’t go overboard...”

In other words, this is definitely within our reach, so nobody should disregard it as impractical. This is our mission as *dor hashvi’i*. We need to become Chassidische Yidden who see *koach hapoel binifal*, who view *ma’adanim* like *afar*, and who bring this to others as well.

Our job is to bring the *maayan* itself to the furthest *chutza*. In previous times, these ideas were the purview of a select few. But today, this is meant for every person, Jew



and non-Jew. May Hashem help us that from this Chof-Ches Sivan, we reach the final goal, and merit the literal coming of Moshiach, speedily in our day. ⑦

1. A *Chassidisher Derher* has covered the topic of the Rebbe’s arrival extensively. To read about this special day, see the following articles:

- The story of the Rebbe’s escape: “The complete story of Chof-Ches Sivan,” Sivan 5777.
 - A short overview: “A timeline of the escape of the Rebbe and the Rebbetzin,” Sivan 5775.
 - The Rebbe and Rebbetzin’s sea voyage: “Serpa Pinto,” Weekly Newsletter, Korach 5771.
 - The Rebbe’s revolution through Merkos, Machane and Kehos: “The New World,” Sivan 5778.
 - The Rebbe’s first farbrengen in America: “Boki in Likkutei Dibburim,” Weekly Newsletter, Chukas 5773.
 - A *yoman* of Chof-Ches Sivan 5751: “Kovetz Chof-Ches Sivan,” Tammuz 5772.
 - Moshiach article: “Impacting the World — Bottom-Up,” Sivan 5776.
2. Sefer Hasichos 5751 vol. 2 pg. 651.
 3. Igros Kodesh Admur Harashab vol. 1 pg. 161.
 4. Toras Shalom pg. 112
 5. Yishaya 40:5.
 6. Shabbos Shelach 5746. Likkutei Sichos vol. 33 pg. 274.
 7. See “Talks and Tales,” Derher Teves 5781.
 8. See Derher Teves 5778 pg. 48.
 9. See “Light Unto the Nations,” Derher Shevat 5777.
 10. Bereishis Rabba 64:10.
 11. Shemos Rabbah, Ki Sisa 47.
 12. Maamar Tzidkas Pirzono, Toras Chaim, Shemos II pg. 221d.
 13. Pesachim 87b.
 14. Likkutei Sichos vol. 20 pg. 66.
 15. Shaar Hayichud V’haemunah *perek alef*.
 16. Motzei Zos Chanukah 5746. Toras Menachem 5746 vol. 2 pg. 243
 17. Hadran on Rambam, 11 Nissan 5745. Likkutei Sichos vol. 27 pg. 237.

Stand Tall!

גאון יעקב – שלא ליבוש מפני המלעיגים



Rabbi Zalman Posner related:

I was a young boy when the Rebbe arrived in the United States in 5701. I remember one of the first things we observed of the Rebbe's conduct that made us realize he was of a different caliber than anyone else.*

On the Rebbe's first Rosh Hashanah, a few months after his arrival, the crowd at 770 was getting ready to leave for tashlich, when suddenly the Rebbe stopped them and said: "This is not how we go to tashlich. We need to walk in rows of two, and we should be singing!"

I remember how embarrassed I felt at the time. Eastern Parkway was lined with apartments and homes, all filled with non-frum Yidden. I was so uncomfortable at the thought of parading in front of them while singing in the street...

One year later, I was walking a little further behind the rest of the crowd because I was assisting one of the elder Chassidim. Suddenly, we were stopped by a finely dressed man, who grabbed my elbow and asked, "Why are

they singing?" I started stammering, not knowing what to answer, and he continued, "You should know that deep down inside me I have a spark. When I heard those people singing 'Hurray, I'm a Jew; hurray, I'm a Jew,' that spark burst into a flame!"



This may have been one of the first instances where the Rebbe demonstrated his approach to Yiddishkeit in the United States, an approach which only got stronger and more intense as time passed.

However, this is not an American phenomenon. True, the Rebbe did point out that America is unique in its innate tolerance of Yidden and Yiddishkeit, and thus it presents an opportunity for us to celebrate our heritage openly and unabated. But one of the most important elements of Yiddishkeit has always been, שלא ליבוש מפני בני אדם המלעיגים—never to be ashamed by those who scoff.

Furthermore, the Rebbe asserts that this is the most important challenge

of our time. Whereas in previous generations, Yidden often had to put themselves in real physical danger to keep Torah and mitzvos, today we are mostly not faced with that sort of oppression. Instead, we are tasked with living as proud Jews even in the face of ridicule.

This is our *mesiras nefesh*. Moshe Rabbeinu is said to have humbled himself especially before the Yidden in the last generation before the coming of Moshiach—and it was this *mesiras nefesh* that awed him.¹

It is important to keep in mind at all times that the Shulchan Aruch opens with this ruling—not to be ashamed of scoffers and to always do what is right.

True, there is no *mitzvah d'oraisa* to ignore scoffers. Even Shulchan Aruch doesn't state it as a specific rule which a person is obligated to follow in a certain way — in fact, if someone performs mitzvos while still being ashamed, he most certainly fulfills his obligation. Rather, it is more of a

לע"נ
הרה"ח הרה"ת שמואל דוד
בן הרה"ח הרה"ת יעקב יוסף ע"ה
תנ"צ'ב'ה
נדפס ע"י בנו
הרה"ת מיכאל יצחק וזוגתו מרת חנה
ומשפחתם שיחיו
גורקאוו

general approach to how a person is expected to behave.

This is because it has only become more relevant with the passage of time, and it is most relevant today, at the end of the *galus* as we near the time of Moshiach.²

The Rebbe explains why specifically this point of ignoring scoffers is so important:

If someone presents intellectual arguments to dissuade you from doing something, you can at least have an intelligent conversation and respond with an explanation for why what we are doing is special and important. But if all they can level against you is ridicule, that can be very difficult to combat.

That's why the *first* thing the Shulchan Aruch tells us to do, before we can get into the details of all the other mitzvos and *halachos* we keep throughout the day, is to dismiss anyone who scoffs. This is because if you're not vigilant at dismissing these people, their words might actually have a negative effect.³

But when we stand our ground and maintain our pride of being Jewish and following Hashem's ways, not only will we ourselves be fortified; we will actually have the power to transform the scoffers into admirers who offer assistance. As the *possuk* says, "והי' מלכים אומניך ושרותיהם מניקתיך"—Kings shall be your nursing fathers and princesses your wet nurses.

The Gemara relates a story of Huna Bar Nassan who was once standing in front of Izgadar, the Persian king. The king noticed that the *amora's* belt was a bit higher than where it belonged,

How to Gain Respect

In this letter, written in response to criticism leveled against Chabad for placing menorahs on public property, the Rebbe offers a perspective about what it means to display Jewish pride in America today:

Why is it so important for Jews to have a Chanukah menorah displayed publicly? The answer is that experience has shown that the Chanukah menorah displayed publicly during the eight days of Chanukah has been an inspiration to many, many Jews and evoked in them a spirit of identity with their Jewish people and the Jewish way of life. To many others, it has brought a sense of pride in their Yiddishkeit and the realization that there is no reason really in this free country to hide one's Jewishness, as if it were contrary or inimical to American life and culture. On the contrary, it is fully in keeping with the American national slogan "*e pluribus unum*" and the fact that American culture has been enriched by the thriving ethnic cultures which contributed very much, each in its own way, to American life both materially and spiritually.

Certainly, Jews are not in the proselytizing business. The Chanukah menorah is not intended to, and can in no way, bring us converts to Judaism. But it can, and does bring many Jews back to their Jewish roots. I personally know of scores of such Jewish returnees, and I have good reason to believe that in recent years, hundreds, even thousands, of Jews experience a kindling of their inner Jewish spark by the public kindling of the Chanukah menorah in their particular city and in the Nation's capital, etc., as publicized by the media.

In summary, Jews, either individually or communally, should not create the impression that they are ashamed to show their Jewishness, or that they wish to gain their neighbors' respect by covering up their Jewishness. Nor will this attitude insure their rights to which they are entitled, including the privilege of publicly lighting a Chanukah menorah, a practice which has been sanctioned by precedent and custom, as to become a tradition.

(Letter dated 3 Teves 5742)

so he himself approached Huna bar Nassan and readjusted it. "The Torah says that you are a kingdom of priests," the king explained, and therefore you must be dressed appropriately.

The Rebbe points out the irony: Izgadar was king over a superpower

empire, while Huna bar Nassan was a Yid who was exiled in a foreign land. Nevertheless, when the king saw a person dressed proudly like a Yid, he did everything in his power to make sure that this Yid looks the part, as befitting his illustrious heritage!



This is the proper way to display our Jewish pride, never being intimidated by *goyishkeit*. When we act appropriately, the world recognizes and respects us all the more.⁴

A Lesson in History

Few events of our past teach us more about standing up for what we believe in than the Purim story recorded in Megillas Esther.

Right in the beginning, in describing Achashveirosh's seven-day party, the *possuk* says, "לעשות כרצון איש" ואיש—They would fulfill the will of each and every man..." Meaning, that they provided kosher food and drink for anyone who wanted it.

Imagine: A Yid is in the capital of the civilized world, in the king's palace in front of so many other people. Wouldn't he be better off keeping to himself? Why must he stick out like a sore thumb and show everyone he's eating a different kind of food?

But the truth is, the one and only correct approach is to indeed pride yourself with who you are and not try to hide it.

Your non-Jewish contemporary already knows that you're Jewish. If he sees you attempting to hide who you really are, his respect for you will plummet. How can he trust a person who is not being honest about who he really is? A healthy and confident

person is not ashamed of who they are. If you feel the need to hide your identity there is obviously something wrong with you.

On the contrary, the most sound advice in this situation would be to wear your Yiddishkeit proudly. That's how you will be successful in gaining the respect and admiration of others.

The lesson is clear and obvious:

We need to teach our children to walk proudly with their Yiddishkeit, with "*Ge'on Yaakov*." Not only is this the best education we can give them for their *ruchnius'dike* future; it is actually important for their physical, mental, and material welfare as well.⁵

How?

The way to ensure that we never get intimidated by others when doing the right thing is by finding the sense of pride within ourselves and letting it guide our actions. Remember who you represent—you are on a mission from Hashem to transform the whole world. How can you be distracted by petty talk when you have to be busy with such a great task?⁶

When you feel embarrassed or self-conscious about doing the right thing, tell yourself that these feelings are coming from the *nefesh habahamis* and the *yetzer hara* and you don't have time to pay attention. As the Rebbe said at one farbrengen: "שעם זיך אפ און"

טו וואס דו דארפט טאן—Just get over your embarrassment and do the thing you need to do!"⁷

Additionally, the Rebbe teaches us that by connecting ourselves with the Rabbeim—the אילנא דחיי—and learning their Chassidus, we can be sure that we will not stop at the scoffing of others.⁸

The Result

Throughout the years, the Rebbe pointed at the lack of *Ge'on Yaakov* and the self-conscious feelings of the Jewish people as the cause for many painful problems we face as a nation.

The Rebbe explained many times that it was a lack of taking pride in who we are that led political leaders in Eretz Yisroel to give away portions of the land. Why else would a Yid think of doing something that even the non-Jew would never have thought possible, putting his country and its citizens at risk? It is only because the Yid feels the need to "latch on" to the non-Jew and impress him. This can make the Yid do things that are completely irrational.⁹

And the grave error of registering people who are not Jewish as Yidden is similarly based on this approach.

Conversely, the Rebbe called on people to foster the Jewish pride needed to influence non-Jews in a

positive way, by teaching them about the *sheva mitzvos b'nei Noach*.

Additionally, the Rebbe promoted the concept of pride in your beliefs for non-Jews too, going as far as thanking the then president of the United States for “not being intimidated by the scoffers” and announcing proudly that it is important to allow the name of Hashem in our public schools.¹⁰

Practically:

The Rebbe repeated the need to silence the noise of those ridiculing, especially when it comes to going out on *mitvzoim* and spreading Yiddishkeit.

When there were actual questions on the legitimacy of the *mitvzoim* themselves, the Rebbe would sometimes address those questions, adding that he was doing so primarily, “so as to prevent any discouragement by those who are doing the work.”

But more generally, the Rebbe teaches us to adopt the approach of “אל יבוש מפני המלעיגים.”

“The way to go out on *mitvzoim* is by freeing yourself from all disturbances, breaking through all boundaries, and certainly not being embarrassed by any scoffers, whether real or internal. Instead, go out with a high-held hand (“יד רמה”) and with a *shturem!*”¹¹ **T**

Ripple Effect

Quite a few times, the Rebbe recounted incidents of people who practiced the notion of not being ashamed of their Yiddishkeit and the positive results it brought about.

At the farbrengen of Yud-Aleph Nissan 5743, the Rebbe related a recent incident that illustrated this:

There was a Jew, the Rebbe related, a wealthy person [Chassidim would later discover that this was philanthropist David Chase, but the Rebbe did not mention his name], who among his abundant assets owned a yacht on which he would sail from time to time during vacation. When it came time to *daven*, he needed to know which way was east, and being that, for a while now, he had learned that Yiddishkeit was nothing to be embarrassed of, he did not hesitate to ask the captain to point him in the right direction.

After this occurred a few times, the captain asked for an explanation, and the Yid told him that he needed to face Yerushalayim in order to properly *daven* to Hashem.

This made a profound impression on the captain. “If a successful person like you,” he said, “who owns a yacht with a captain on staff, finds it important to connect with G-d three times a day, stopping everything he’s doing in order to *daven* in the proper way, I too will begin thinking about G-d!”

The very fact that he thought about Hashem is significant in itself, the Rebbe pointed out. It is a form of prayer, and also falls into the category of “not serving idolatry,” one of the *sheva mitzvos*. And surely, the Rebbe said, the story didn’t end here. The fact that he began thinking about Hashem certainly affected him in the following days. If he considered doing a negative act, not in line with *tzedek* and *yosher*, he remembered the “eye that sees” and refrained from doing it!

1. Maamar Kimei Tzeischa 5743, et. al.

2. Maamar Ko Sevarchu 5745.

3. Shabbos Parshas Beshalach, 15 Shevat 5743, sicha 2.

4. 13 Elul 5742, sicha 3.

5. Purim 5742, sicha 2.

6. Sich'a to N'shei Chabad, 23 Elul 5743, et. al.

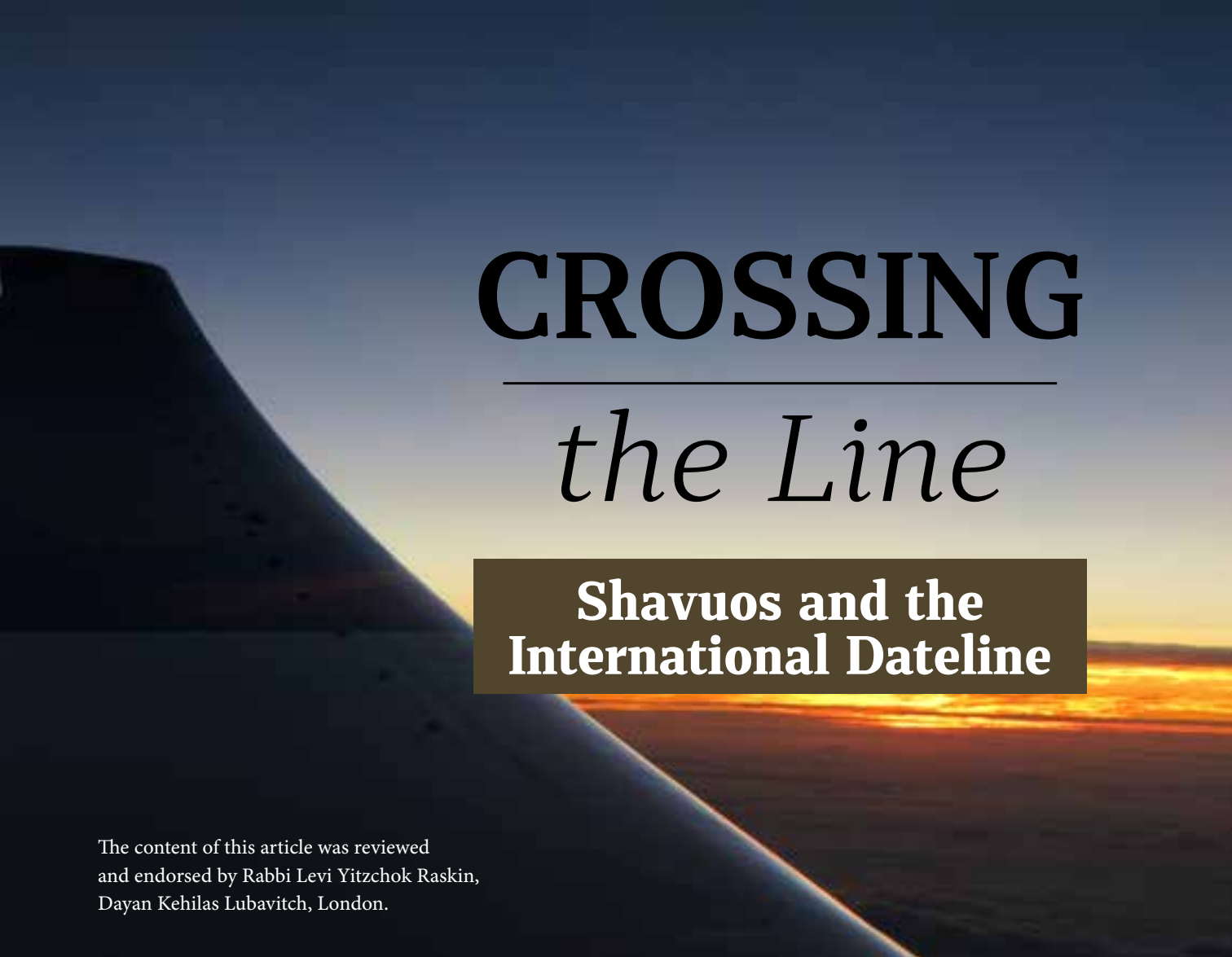
7. Purim 5743, sicha 4.

8. Shabbos Parshas Ekev, Chof Av 5743, sicha 1.

9. Third and sixth nights of Sukkos 5743, et. al.

10. Yud-Beis Tammuz 5743, sicha 3.

11. Acharon Shel Pesach 5742, sicha 3.



CROSSING

the Line

Shavuos and the International Dateline

The content of this article was reviewed and endorsed by Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Raskin, Dayan Kehilas Lubavitch, London.

On Monday night at 10:40 p.m., a flight takes off from Los Angeles International Airport bound for Sydney, Australia. The passengers settle in for the overnight flight and as they prepare for landing approximately 14 hours later, the pilot announces over the intercom: “Local time in Sydney is Wednesday 8:20 a.m.”

Everyone on the plane just missed a Tuesday of their lives.

On Monday morning at 10:20 a.m., a flight takes off from Sydney Airport bound for Los Angeles. 13 hours later, as the flight prepares for landing, the pilot announces over the intercom:

“Local time in Los Angeles is Monday 6:10 a.m.”

Everyone on the plane will experience the longest Monday of their lives. Literally.

For many passengers this anomaly is just another memento of the trans-Pacific travel experience and may cause extra jetlag, but for Yidden this can have serious halachic ramifications. So much of Yiddishkeit revolves around time, and defining time in *halacha* is a big deal.

Since our calendar is defined by days and seasons governed by the sun’s and moon’s rotations, there is no scientific way of determining where

the rotations begin. For thousands of years the issue was purely theoretical, until improved transportation methods brought people to further vistas as civilizations blossomed in newly discovered continents and trade lines formed across the globe.

At the International Meridian Conference in 1884 in Washington, D.C. with the participation of 26 countries, Greenwich, England, was chosen as the central point for time and date calculations (the prime meridian), and the International Date Line was set at exactly 180° longitude from there. By using Greenwich as the prime meridian, the International

לזכות
החייל בצבאות ה'
מנחם מענדל בן מנוחה מינדל שיחי
נדפס ע"י
משפחתו שיחי

Date Line falls conveniently in the Pacific Ocean. In those few areas where it should traverse a landmass, the line was slightly bent to avoid dividing countries.

The dateline is not governed by international law, and it is up to individual countries to choose which side of the line they wish to be on. To illustrate how imaginary this line is, the Samoan Islands shifted back to the west side of the dateline by removing Friday, December 30 2011 from its calendar, to better facilitate trade with nearby New Zealand, approximately 1,600 miles away.

The Kav Hataarich

At a time when most civilizations believed the earth was flat, Torah clearly taught that the earth is a sphere.¹ But before our modern age this had no practical ramifications, other than the knowledge that as the sun was rising, people living further to the east were then experiencing midday, and at an even further point of the globe to the west it was then the middle of the night.

At least two Rishonim, the Baal Hamaor² and R. Yehuda Halevi³ give definitive positions of this imaginary dateline, called the *kav hataarich* in Torah literature. But the issue had no practical halachic ramifications, and was therefore not dealt with seriously by *poskim*⁴ until over 700 years later when Yidden fleeing the Nazis during World War II found themselves in the Far East. While there most definitely is a dateline,⁵ they were unsure where the dateline is according to *halacha* and on which side of it they stood. The question was sent to Eretz Yisroel by telegram, and two major conflicting opinions emerged — opinions that severely impacted their daily lives by determining which day to keep as Shabbos and on which day to mark the fast of Yom Kippur.

Although it is a complicated issue, by now all established Jewish communities have come to a halachic consensus as to how they observe Shabbos and Yom Tov, the details of which are beyond the scope of this article. We will focus on a novel and fascinating halachic issue impacted by crossing the dateline (wherever it is) which was clarified by the Rebbe himself.

Initial Inquiry

In the spring of 5709* Reb Betzalel Wilshansky immigrated from France to Australia as per the directives of the Frierdiker Rebbe in order to strengthen the work of Lubavitch in the country. In his first letter to the Rebbe reporting on his safe arrival and the beginning of his activities, he mentioned that on the way he skipped a day, and asked for an explanation for this and specifically how he should have dealt with *sefiras haomer* in such a situation.

In a letter dated 16 Sivan 5709*⁶ the Rebbe describes in detail the realities of the international dateline, how *halacha* deals with this “quandary,” and concludes that Australia is to the west of the dateline according to most *poskim*, and Shabbos should be observed in accordance with the reckoning of the days followed by the non-Jews living there, as Yidden have been doing since they arrived there.

This only applies to *dinim* that depend on the days of the week or days of the month. The issue with *sefiras haomer* is the fact that it is the counting of the days that a person

experiences, and this leads to a very unique question.

Regarding *sefiras haomer* the Torah states (Emor 23:15):

וּסְפַרְתֶּם לָכֶם מִמּוֹחֶרֶת הַשַּׁבָּת מִיּוֹם הַבֵּיאָכֶם
אֶת-עֹמֶר הַתְּנוּפָה שֶׁבַע שָׁבוּעוֹת תְּמִימֹת תִּהְיֶינָה:

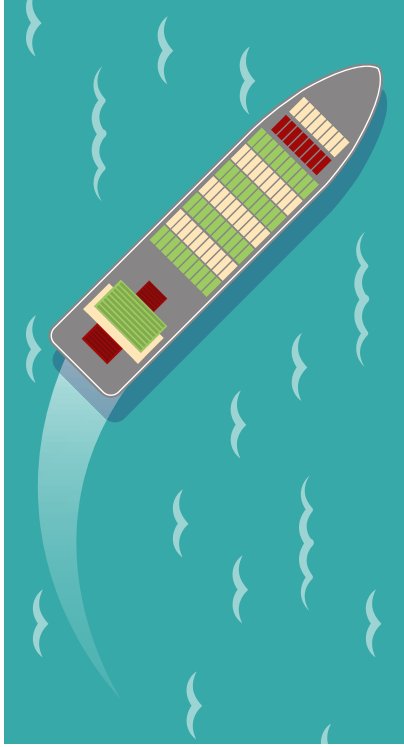
And you shall count for yourselves, from the morrow of the rest day, from the day you bring the omer as a wave offering, seven weeks; they shall be complete.

Unique to *sefiras haomer* is the necessity for the counting of seven weeks to be “*temimos*” —complete.

Imagine someone travels to Australia from the United States on Tuesday the ninth day of the *omer* and crosses the dateline at 3:30 p.m. (wherever the dateline actually is), thereby jumping ahead one day and is now following the local calendar where it is Wednesday. That night at Maariv, local Yidden will be counting 11 days to the *omer* but the traveler has not yet counted 10 days to the *omer*. Can he in good conscience make a *bracha* and declare, “Today is 11 days to the *omer*?”

Even more complex is the fact that the Yom Tov of Shavuot has no defined date on the calendar and depends solely on the completion of 49 days—seven complete weeks—of *sefiras haomer* from 16 Nissan. The traveler’s *omer* counting is one day behind the local Yidden’s and when the locals will conclude their counting of 49 days—reaching the point of “*temimos*”—and start observing the Yom Tov Shavuot, he will have not yet completed 49 days from 16 Nissan, and should begin observing Shavuot a day later, when he will have finally reached the point of “*temimos*!”

A similar issue would arise for someone traveling from Australia to the United States during *sefira*, but in reverse. He crosses the dateline on Tuesday, the ninth day of the Omer at 3:30 p.m. and now follows the local time to set his calendar back to



Monday. When the local Yidden count 9 days to the *omer* that evening, could he in good conscience make a *bracha* and declare, “Today is 9 days to the *omer*,” when he already said that last night?

Since Shavuot happens automatically after counting and experiencing 49 days—seven complete weeks—from 16 Nissan, the traveler from Australia will reach the point of “*temimos*” a day earlier than the local Yidden, and will need to observe Shavuot a day before everyone else has reached the point of “*temimos*!”

In his letter, the Rebbe writes that since he has not seen any *poskim* who deal with this specific question of *sefiras haomer* and Shavuot when crossing the dateline, he will present various perspectives on the matter and different options how to behave “*l’pilpula b’alma*”—for discussion’s sake alone—and in no way to be viewed as a *psak din*.

One of the main points the discussion boils down to is this: Is *sefiras haomer* considered a personal obligation upon every individual Yid or is it a general experience for *klal Yisroel*?

The Rebbe evaluates the different approaches and proposes different results based on them, but clarifies that the question is relevant exclusively to *sefiras haomer* and Shavuot, not to Shabbos and Yom Tov.

There is no necessity to experience six weekdays in order to have Shabbos, and conversely Shabbos does not automatically happen to a person who experienced six weekdays. Therefore, one who traveled from the United States to Australia on Monday, thereby skipping Tuesday, observes Shabbos with the rest of the Australian Jews, even though he experienced only five weekdays. And one who traveled from Australia to the United States on a Monday and now fell back to Sunday will observe Shabbos on the same day as all American Jews even though he is now experiencing seven weekdays in a row.

Regarding Yom Tov, one who travels from the United States to Australia on the first day of Chol Hamoed and skips the second day of Chol Hamoed, because when he landed in Australia it was already the third day of Chol Hamoed, will observe Shevi’i Shel Pesach together with all Australian Jews. This is because the Torah clearly designates the final day of Yom Tov to the 21st of Nissan, and the calendar date is defined by the local reality, and mainly because the idea of “*temimos*” is never used to describe the days of Pesach.

Clearly, with respect to the question of *sefiras haomer* and Shavuot the Rebbe did not arrive at a conclusion at that time.

Clear Conclusion

During the farbrengen of Shavuot 5717*,⁷ the Rebbe explained the issue at length and came to a definitive conclusion.

Here are several important details about *sefiras haomer* and Shavuot that must be emphasized.

↪ The Gemara states that there is no such thing as a communal counting of *sefiras haomer*. Every individual has the obligation to count 49 days from 16 Nissan, and this “*temimos*” triggers the Yom Tov of Shavuot on the next day.

↪ Even if one did not actually count *sefiras haomer*, Shavuot will begin for them 50 days after 16 Nissan.

Whereas many *poskim* rule that the mitzvah of *sefiras haomer* nowadays is only *mid’rabanan*, there is no question that the Yom Tov of Shavuot is *min HaTorah*! Clearly, the “*temimos*” that triggers the Yom Tov of Shavuot is determined by the fact that the individual lived through 49 days—seven complete weeks—from 16 Nissan, irrespective of the actual counting.

Consequently, a person who converts to Yiddishkeit during *sefira* will observe Shavuot 50 days after 16 Nissan, even though he or she did not have the mitzvah of counting a complete 49 days of *sefiras haomer*.

↪ The fact that the Torah does not provide a calendar date for the Yom Tov of Shavuot means that during the era when the Sanhedrin was *mekadesh hachodesh al pi hare’iya*—and Rosh Chodesh could either be on the 30th day or the 31st day—it was possible for Shavuot to be observed either on Hei, Vov or Zayin Sivan.

If both Nissan and Iyar have 30 days, Shavuot is observed on Hei Sivan. If both Nissan and Iyar have 29 days, Shavuot is observed on Zayin Sivan. When one of the months has 29 days and the other has 30 days, Shavuot is observed on Vov Sivan. Today, with our set calendar, Nissan is always 30 days and Iyar is always 29 days, so Shavuot is observed on Vov Sivan, coinciding with the anniversary of *Matan Torah* which happened on Vov Sivan 2448.

The Alter Rebbe writes in Shulchan Aruch⁸ that the only reason we say “*Zman Matan Toraseinu*” in the *tefilos* of Shavuot is that nowadays Shavuot always occurs on Vov Sivan.⁹

In the *sicha*, however, the Rebbe explains that the possibility of Shavuot occurring on Hei Sivan is very real today. If one crosses the dateline from west to east (for example: from Australia to the United States) in middle of *sefira*, he would reach seven complete weeks from when he experienced 16 Nissan in Australia on Daled Sivan in America. Hence, he would therefore need to observe the Yom Tov of Shavuot on Hei Sivan—without mentioning “*Zman Matan Toraseinu*” in davening.

“Gut Shabbos, Gut Yom Tov”

Several¹⁰ years later, in 5721*, Shavuot occurred on Sunday and Monday. The day before Shavuot was Shabbos and Reb Yoel Kahn was hosting a guest from Eretz Yisroel at his home for the three-day Yom Tov. On Friday night as they were having *seudas* Shabbos, the guest mentioned to Reb Yoel that he had come to the United States after visiting Japan.

Aware of the Rebbe’s straightforward and clear *psak* regarding one who crossed the dateline during *sefira*, Reb Yoel advised his guest to daven the Yom Tov Maariv and to make *kiddush* for Yom Tov, and they would clarify the matter with rabbonim the next morning.

Arriving in 770 the next morning, the exotic question caused quite a stir amongst the rabbonim there, but there was no consensus as to how this fellow should deal with Yom Tov.

It was the Rebbe’s common practice on Shabbos and Yom Tov to greet individuals standing along the pathway as he walked out of the main shul after davening. Reb Yoel suggested to his guest that he stand

along the pathway and as the Rebbe greets him he should tell the Rebbe simply, “I was in Japan.”

“I stood next to my guest after davening because I wanted to see how the Rebbe would react to this information,” Reb Yoel relates. “The moment my guest said to the Rebbe he was in Japan, the Rebbe stopped for a split second and said, ‘Gut Shabbos, Gut Yom Tov,’ and as he continued walking, the Rebbe paused and then turned around to my guest saying ‘*A freilichen Kabbalas HaTorah*.’”

“With these words the Rebbe gave him a clear *psak* that since he had crossed the dateline from west to east, he was observing Shavuot a day earlier than the rest of us. This all made perfect sense in light of the Rebbe’s *sicha* from Shavuot 5717*. But I had one question: Why did the Rebbe wish him ‘*A freilichen Kabbalas HaTorah*’ if Hei Sivan is not the anniversary of *Matan Torah*?

“That night, which was the first night of Shavuot in 770, Reb Leibel Groner approached me after Maariv and told me that the Rebbe wished to see me in his room. The Rebbe asked me if this man was a guest at my home and when I replied in the affirmative, the Rebbe said it is important to explain to him exactly how he should behave. Since he was from Eretz Yisroel and would only observe one day of Yom Tov, he should make *havdalah* on the night we were all observing the first night of Shavuot, and to be sure to wear tefillin the next day.

“Since the Rebbe was giving clear halachic direction with regard to this novel situation, I seized the opportunity to somehow express my wonderment at the Rebbe’s wish to him about *Kabbalas HaTorah*. I simply asked. ‘Was he supposed to say “*Zman Matan Toraseinu*” when it was Yom Tov for him?’

“The Rebbe smiled and said, ‘You are asking based on the Alter Rebbe’s Shulchan Aruch? Clearly he was not supposed to say that on Hei Sivan.’ The Rebbe did not elaborate further.

“During the farbrengen on the second day of Yom Tov, the Rebbe explained at length that there are two elements to *Matan Torah*. One is the result of *avodas ha’adam* through *birur hamidos* of *sefiras haomer*, which comes to the person as soon as he completes *sefiras haomer*. This can be termed as **Kabbalas HaTorah**, since it is triggered by the efforts of the person receiving the Torah.

“The second is a revelation from Hashem that completely transcends the efforts of man, which can only happen on Vov Sivan and is not connected to *sefiras haomer*. This can be termed as **Matan Torah** since it is truly a gift from Hashem.

“I then understood why the Rebbe wished my guest ‘*A freilichen Kabbalas HaTorah*’ even though it was Hei Sivan, since this man had already achieved the completion of *sefiras haomer* and was therefore experiencing **Kabbalas HaTorah**, even though he was not yet experiencing **Matan Torah**.”



Rabbi Shneur Zalman Wilshansky relates:

“One of the unique things about the seforim of Likkutei Sichos was the fact that in addition to the Likkutim that had been published on a weekly basis, letters of the Rebbe associated with the parshiyos and the Yomim Tovim were published as *hosafos*.”

There was no Igros Kodesh from the Rebbe in print at the time and the Rebbe agreed that these letters be published in Likkutei Sichos and even encouraged Chassidim to send Igros they had received to the Vaad Lehafotzas Sichos for publication.

“During the year of 5733*, Likkutei Sichos volume 7 was being prepared for publication. I had heard from my grandfather Reb Betzalel Wilshansky about the letter he had received from the Rebbe in Sivan 5709* in answer to his question about the *kav hataarich*, *sefiras haomer* and Shavuos.

“My brother Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Wilshansky was on shlichus in Australia that year and was set to return for Pesach. I wrote him a letter asking him to make a copy of the letter and bring it back with him so that it could be published in the new volume of Likkutei Sichos.”

Rabbi Leibel Schapiro was intimately involved in the preparation of Likkutei Sichos volume 7 for print. He relates the following:

“When we received the letter the Rebbe sent in 5709* to Harav Wilshansky in Australia, we realized that the conclusions were different from what the Rebbe had publicly spoken in later years and had published in the *sicha* of Emor in Likkutei Sichos volume 3 based on the *sichos* of Shavuos 5717* and 5721*. On the other hand, the content of the letter was so rich and illuminating that we very much wanted to include it in the *hosafos* of volume 7.

“Unsure how to proceed we submitted the letter to the Rebbe and asked if we should include it in the new Likkutei Sichos. Shortly afterwards the Rebbe responded that we should print it, but with the following statement:

מכתב הנ"ל היא סברא ראשונה ושקד"ט, ולאחרי זמן דן עוה"פ בנדו"ד ובא למסקנא. ולשלימות הדבר הננו מעתיקים רשימה זו אף שכבר נדפסה (בלקו"ש ח"ג ע' 995 ואילך). וז"ל:

This letter was an initial thought and shakla v'tarya. After some time [the Rebbe] revisited the issue and came to a conclusion. For the sake of clarity we are reprinting the sicha here.

“Indeed the Rebbe’s letter was published in the *hosafos* of Likkutei Sichos volume 7 on pages 285-288 followed by the abovementioned *sicha* from vol. 3 with the introductory statement the Rebbe himself penned.”

Brilliant Simplicity

In a letter to Harav Shlomo Yosef Zevin in Sivan 5718*,¹¹ the Rebbe writes that someone had crossed the dateline that year during *sefira* and that he had instructed him to continue his own count and observe Shavuos a day earlier. The Rebbe requests Rabbi Zevin’s opinion on the matter.

Apparently Rabbi Zevin suggested that Yidden in the same location celebrating Shavuos on different days would give off the impression that “there are two Torahs.” That summer the Rebbe responded¹² that on the contrary: If the traveler from Australia would observe Shavuos on the same day as his American hosts, it would turn out that he is observing Shavuos 51 days after *sefiras haomer* began while his hosts are observing Shavuos after 50 days! Such a thing would lead to numerous more questions.

Rabbi Zevin also described the Rebbe’s approach as a “*chiddush gadol*” to which the Rebbe replied that the real *chiddush* is how simple and obvious his approach is!

In a letter from 5744*¹³ the Rebbe elaborates even further: Clearly the Torah does not command a Yid that if he crossed the dateline from west to east (United States to Australia) he should only count 48 days of *sefiras haomer* and then observe Shavuos, while if he crossed the dateline from east to west (Australia to United States) he should count 50 days of *sefiras haomer* and only then observe Shavuos, with the rest of the *klal Yisroel* counting 49 days of *sefiras haomer* and observing Shavuos the next day.

It is also clear that the Torah does not command a Yid that crosses the dateline from east to west (United States to Australia) to skip a day of *sefiras haomer* and that a Yid who crosses the dateline from west to east

(Australia to United States) should **add** another day to *sefiras haomer*!

Don't Do It

Although the Rebbe's position on this matter is crystal clear, the Rebbe was also quite clear that since this situation is very strange one should try as best as possible to avoid it.

In a letter dated 20 Shevat 5721*¹⁴ to Harav Osher Abramson of Sydney, Australia, the Rebbe writes that although he has no doubt as to the fact that one who crosses the dateline must observe Shavuot on his own schedule, he clearly does not approve of making such travel arrangements in the first place.

It should be noted however, that if one, for example, crosses the dateline from east to west (United States to Australia) during *sefiras haomer* and then crosses back from west to east (Australia to United States) before Shavuot—or vice versa—there is no problem at all. They should continue counting on their regular schedule and observe Shavuot at the same time as everyone else. ❶

1. Yerushalmi Avoda Zara 3:1.

2. Rosh Hashanah 20b.

3. Kuzari, 2:18–20.

4. See Shabbos Parshas Bechukosai 5741.

5. Likkutei Sichos vol. 3, p. 998.

6. Likkutei Sichos vol. 7, p. 285. Igros Kodesh vol. 3, p. 117–122.

7. Likkutei Sichos vol. 3 pages 995–1001.

8. Orach Chayim siman 494.

9. When Shavuot was observed on either Hei or Zayin Sivan “Zman Matan Toraseinu” was not said in davening. See Likkutei Sichos vol. 3, p. 997 fn. 15 and Likkutei Sichos vol. 8 p. 21 fn. 3. It should be noted that nowadays we recite “Zaman Matan Toraseinu” during davening on the second day of Shavuot (Zayin Sivan) because of *sfeika deyoma*.

10. JEM Living Torah #613. www.chabad.org/3346483

11. Igros Kodesh vol. 17, p. 265.

12. Ibid. page 358.

13. Likkutei Sichos vol. 27, p. 335.

14. Igros Kodesh vol. 20, p. 148.

הלכה למעשה

1. One should not travel one-way across the dateline during *sefira*.
2. If one needs to travel to a country that is typically reached by crossing the dateline during *sefira*, the trip must be done from the opposite direction. For example, if one travels from Australia to the United States during *sefira*, they should do so by traveling westward through Asia, the Middle East, or Europe.
3. If one did cross the dateline during *sefira*, every effort should be made to return to the other side before Shavuot.
4. One who does cross the dateline during *sefira* continues to count *sefiras haomer* with a *bracha* on the same schedule as their point of departure.
5. If one crosses the dateline from west to east (Australia to United States) during *sefira* and cannot return before Shavuot, he must observe Yom Tov on Hei and Vov Sivan. *Havdalah* is recited on the eve of Zayin Sivan and tefillin are worn during the day of Zayin Sivan. One should abstain from doing *melacha* in public on Zayin Sivan.
6. If one crosses the dateline from east to west (United States to Australia) during *sefira* and cannot return before Shavuot, he must observe Yom Tov on Zayin and Ches Sivan. Tefillin are worn during the day of Vov Sivan and one should abstain from doing *melacha* in public as well. Tefillin are not worn on Ches Sivan and all Yom Tov observances are kept then.
7. One does not recite “Z'man Matan Toraseinu” during davening on Hei Sivan or on Ches Sivan.
8. A Chabad Rav Moreh Horaah must be consulted.

לזכות
החתן הרה"ת ר' שמואל יוסף מנחם מענדל שיחי'
והכלה המהוללה מרת יהודית ברכה תחי'
לרגל חתונתם בשעטומ"צ
י"ג סיון ה'תשפ"א
נדפס ע"י הוריהם
הרה"ת ר' לוי יצחק
וזוגתו מרת נחמה ברוריה גיטל ומשפחתם שיחי'
טענענבוים
הרה"ת ר' חיים ברוך
וזוגתו מרת שטערנא שרה ומשפחתם שיחי'
אלבסקי

As Long As I Remember

The following story was related by Rabbi Mottel Schusterman, the Rebbe's ba'al koreh.

Like all members of *anash*, I would usually go into *yechidus* for my birthday, which was on Erev Rosh Chodesh Elul. In 5735*, we had the opportunity to go into *yechidus* on the occasion of the wedding of my daughter Zissel to Elozor Gurevitch.

As this was not a birthday *yechidus*—as those were no longer taking place in 5735*—but rather a family *yechidus* on the occasion of the wedding, I was uncertain whether it would be appropriate for me to include mention of my birthday in my *pan*.

As I waited my turn in the *mazkirus* office, I asked one of the *mazkirim*, “When I’m standing before the Rebbe, should I mention my birthday?”

“No,” came the response.

I entered *yechidus*, and placed my *pan* before the Rebbe. The Rebbe asked why I hadn’t mentioned my birthday.

“The *mazkirim* instructed me not to mention it,” I answered.

The Rebbe replied,

“זיי דארפן טאקע ... אבער אבי איך געדיינק!”

“Indeed, they have to [do their job] ... but at least I remember!”

Reb Mottel may have thought that he wouldn’t be able to receive the brachos for his birthday that year, but the Rebbe remembered his birthday. Whether we remind the Rebbe or not, the Rebbe remembers each and every one of us. 1



14 ADAR II, 5722. GERSHON SCHUSTERMAN VIA JEM 303/49



לזכות
החייל בצבאות ה'
לוי יצחק שיחי'
לרגל הולדתו כ' אדר ה'תשפ"א
ולזכות אחיו ואחותו
מנחם מענדל, חי' מושקא
נדפס ע"י הוריהם
הרה"ת ר' ישראל
וזוגתו מרת שטערנא שרה שיחי
טרייטעל

Why Are You Watching Me?

Dovid¹ woke with a start. Sensing something was wrong, he instinctively reached for his sack that contained all his possessions and money belt but it wasn't there.

"Gone!" he cried in dismay. "Everything I had was stolen in the middle of the night. What can I do now?"

As he sat down on the bed completely distraught, his mind flooded with the events that led up to this moment.

Dovid, a devout Chossid of the Mezritcher Maggid, had spent a lengthy period of time in his holy presence and felt it was now time to return home. For the past few months, however, each time he asked for a *bracha* to make the trip, the Maggid had insisted that he stay on.

Finally, just the day before, he had received permission and the Maggid's final words were still ringing in his ears. "Go in peace and closely guard all your possessions along your journey so that they are not stolen."

Now on the second day of his journey he turned back to Mezritch to seek the Rebbe's advice.

With a knowing smile, the Maggid said, "Did I not warn you that you should guard your possessions? But don't worry I will have everything returned to you."

The Maggid instructed Dovid to travel back to the hotel and to walk a certain distance where he would then meet a person. Providing Dovid with an exact description of the individual, the Maggid told him to approach him and

to tell him that "the Rebbe instructs you to return all my things," and he will certainly comply.

Dovid carefully followed the directions. He met the man who turned out to be the thief and he did not even try to deny the crime he had committed.

"Yes, I did take your things and I will return them but I want to do it through your Rebbe because I have a small question to ask him first."

The unusual pair traveled to the Maggid.

Upon arrival they were allowed entry into the Rebbe's room.

The thief now spoke what was on his mind. "Indeed I did steal his things and I will return them but first I insist that you answer my question."

He continued, "I see you are a holy man and were blessed with a pure vision that can see across the world. This is precisely my question: Would it not be more appropriate for you to be looking at holy things during this time and not at the lowliness of how a thief conducts a robbery?"

The Maggid replied: "There is a time during the day when I am in a room in which it is forbidden to think holy thoughts. It was while I was in there that I saw the robbery."

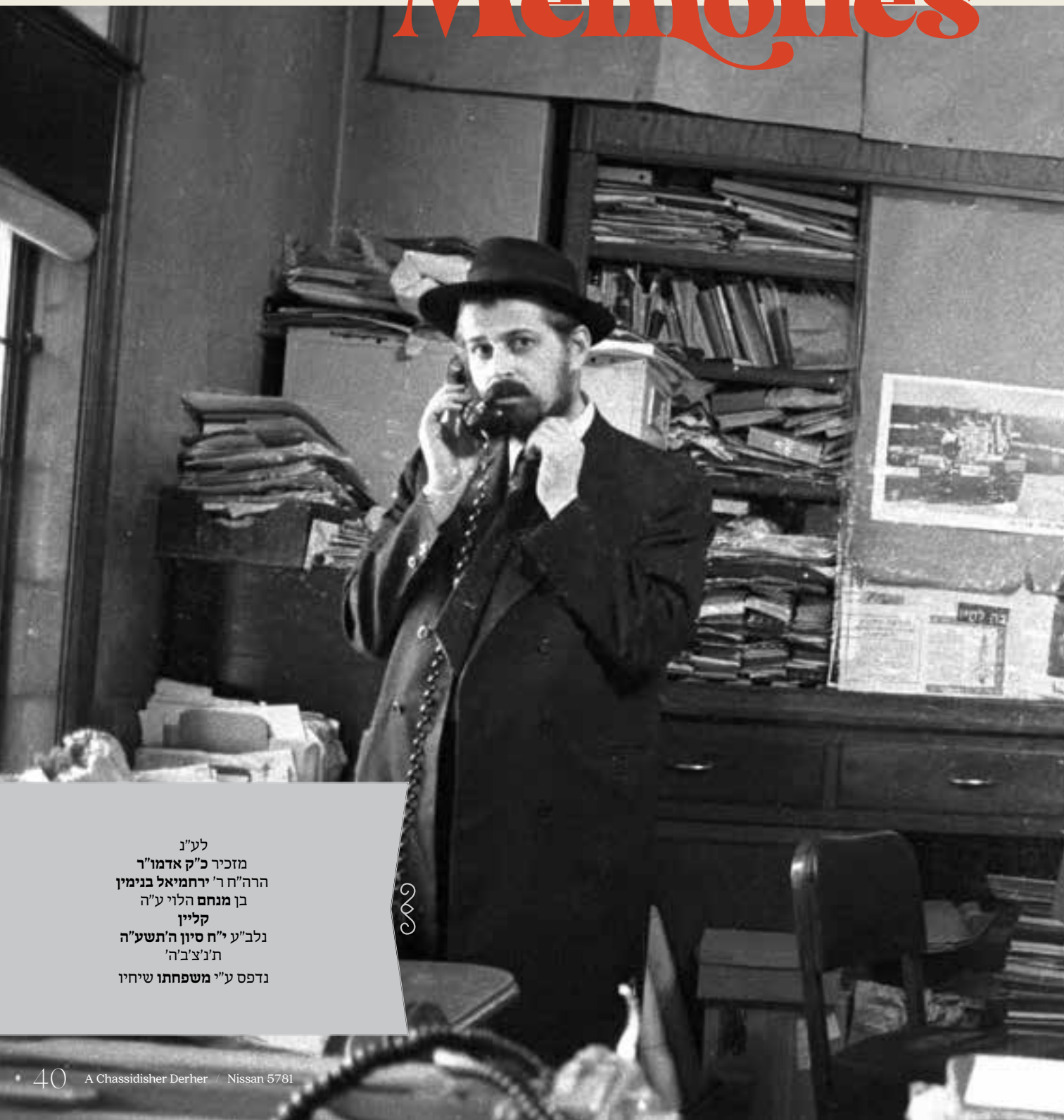
The thief returned every single item back to its rightful owner. ^T

(*Otzar Sippurei Chabad*
vol. 14, p. 264.)

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

Fondest Memories

An Interview with
RABBI ASHER ZEILINGOLD



לע"ג
מזכיר כ"ק אדמו"ר
הרה"ח ר' ירחמיאל בנימין
בן מנחם הלוי ע"ה
קליין
גלב"ע י"ח סיון ה'תשע"ה
תנ"צ'ב'ה'
נדפס ע"י משפחתו שיחיו



Rabbi Zeilingold has served as a shliach of the Rebbe and rabbi of the Adath Israel Shul in S. Paul, Minnesota for over five decades.

In an exclusive interview with A Chassidisher Derher, Rabbi Zeilingold tells us about the early years of his life

when he became a Lubavitcher Chossid and later when he was a *bochur* learning at 770. He shares with us some of his personal stories and recollections, many of which give us a glimpse of what it was like in the Rebbe's presence during the early 5720s* and the close relationship a *bochur* felt with the Rebbe at that time.



MAZKIRUS OFFICE 5736

LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 141250

My Background

My father was from Warsaw, Poland, where he was raised as a Stoliner Chosid. He married my mother in Eretz Yisroel and they settled in London, England, several years later, where I was born in Elul of 5700 (1940). Growing up, we lived in a very Yiddishe neighborhood and my father sent me to study at the famous yeshiva known as Gateshead Talmudical College. For various reasons, my parents wanted to move to America but in those times this wasn't a simple task. The main issue was that you needed to provide proof that you had a steady source of income, after which it could take a long time to obtain visas. My father went alone to try to establish himself first, and we followed about a year or so later. Although he did not have any prior connection to Lubavitch, while he was in New York he went to the Rebbe on a few occasions and spoke to the Rebbe on various matters.

My First Encounter

On a wintery morning in 5714*, my mother and her children, including me, the youngest in the family, came off the boat from England. We joined my father in the United States and settled in New York. It so happened, *b'hashgacha pratis*, that the apartment my father rented for the family was just a few blocks north of 770 Eastern Parkway. An uncle of mine had a store on Kingston Avenue, and as soon as we came I wanted to go visit him, so I walked over with my father. As we were walking on Eastern Parkway, across the street from 770, my father said to me, "Look! You see the man coming towards us? He's the Lubavitcher Rebbe!" I remember very distinctly the manner in which he was walking. The Rebbe then approached us, looking at us very closely. In hindsight, although we

didn't say anything, it seems to me that that moment was the beginning of my "Coming to Lubavitch." On the same day I arrived in America, barely six hours after I got off the boat, I saw the Rebbe for the first time.

Initial Guidance

While living in New York, I went to Yeshiva Torah Vodaath in Brooklyn and didn't have much to do with Lubavitch. My father davened at the Agudah Shul on Crown Street so we would see the Rebbe on occasion but that was the extent of our connection.

When I graduated Torah Vodaath in 5717*, I had no idea what I was going to do. I hadn't made any plans for the future and for whatever reason I didn't feel like I had anyone with whom to discuss it. I spent that summer at Gan Yisroel, where a friend suggested that I write to the Rebbe asking for guidance on what to do next. That's exactly what I did. Little did I know, this would change my life forever. I wrote a letter to the Rebbe that I'm thinking of going to university but I don't know



THE REBBE ENTERS 770 AFTER VISITING GAN YISROEL IN 5717. REB ASHER IS ON THE FAR LEFT.

The Rebbe's Neighbor

While in Torah Vodaath, I had a teacher whose name was Rabbi Isbee. He wasn't a Lubavitcher but he lived at 346 New York Avenue, apartment 3D, which was directly under the Rebbe's apartment, 4D. He would see the Rebbe regularly walking in and out but nothing more than that.

I recall that he once told us with great admiration, "Last night I heard the Lubavitcher Rebbe learning Torah the whole night long!"

On another occasion, he told us something he witnessed. One day he was standing in the lobby of his apartment building where he noticed the Rebbe waiting for the elevator to go upstairs. Just as the elevator came to the lobby, a woman walked over to enter. The Rebbe opened the door and held it open for her and she walked in, then he turned around and walked up the four flights of stairs (to avoid an issue of *yichud*).

“Look! You see the man coming towards us? He’s the Lubavitcher Rebbe!”

What is the Rebbe thinking about now?

After Maariv of Yud Shevat 5718*, I left 770 and was walking home. I was under this great impression from the davening and on the way I was rethinking to myself everything I had just experienced. Out of curiosity, I wondered to myself, “Tonight is a great holy night for the Rebbe. I can’t even imagine what the Rebbe is busy with at the present moment. He must have reached the most lofty of realms... I can’t help but wonder - what is the Rebbe thinking about at the present moment?”

As I came home, the phone rang. I picked it up and heard Rabbi Groner on the other side of the phone. Rabbi Groner asked me, “Is your father home?” I answered that he was with my sister at the hospital. Rabbi Groner then said to me, “The Rebbe asked me to call your father, and to find out how your sister is doing. When your father gets home please have him call me, so I can notify the Rebbe on the situation.”

This gave me a clear insight into who the Rebbe is. Yes, tonight is Yud Shevat. However, as a true caring father, more important to the Rebbe than anything else, is the situation of each and every single Yid.

what direction to take. The Rebbe wrote me an answer in which he suggested that for now I should study Torah *beschkidah v’hasmadah* (with diligence), and only in a year’s time to revisit these thoughts about what to do moving forward. Obviously I followed the Rebbe’s advice, and I spent the next year, 5718*, at the Lubavitcher Yeshiva in Montreal. I guess I can say that’s where I became a Lubavitcher Chossid. There was truly a phenomenal atmosphere there and it was an amazing year. There was a very solid group of *bochurim* learning together, and together we very much grew spiritually. So much so, that by the end of the year there was no doubt in my mind as to where I’d go in the future. It was clear to me that this is where I would be staying, university was out of the question.

Traveling to the Rebbe

A few months after I arrived in Montreal, the yeshiva was to

be traveling to the Rebbe for Yud Shevat 5718*. This would be my first time coming to the Rebbe as one of his Chassidim, after a “*hachana*” (preparation), understanding a little bit the significance, and so on. That year Yud Shevat fell out on a Friday. On Thursday night I was in 770 and heard the Rebbe daven for the *amud*. It was a first for me, truly an uplifting experience. I vividly recall the crowd that had gathered, everyone attentively standing in the shul waiting for the Rebbe to enter. I was standing across the door, when suddenly the Rebbe walked out of his room and entered the shul. With his holy tone, the Rebbe began davening Maariv. I remember feeling the seriousness in the air. Motzei Shabbos was my first time attending the Rebbe’s farbrengen. It was a very special farbrengen. Although I really didn’t understand very much, the atmosphere uplifted me to a totally different sphere.

Yechidus

Our *mashpia* in Montreal, Reb Berel Mochkin, prepared us very well for going into *yechidus*. He explained to us the significance of *yechidus* and how we should conduct ourselves prior to entering *yechidus*. Among the different things he told us was that each of us should ask the Rebbe a question in ‘*avoda*.’

I entered the Rebbe’s room on Sunday night. The Rebbe said to me in English that he noticed me at the farbrengen the previous night and asked me, “Did you understand anything? Were you able to follow?” I answered that I was able to pick up bits and pieces here and there. The Rebbe then re-encouraged me a bit that I need not worry, saying “*Bezras Hashem* next time you will understand more.”

The Rebbe then went on to answering my “*avoda* question.” I had asked the Rebbe how can I stay concentrated and keep my mind from wandering during davening. The Rebbe instructed that in addition to the regular *sedarim* of learning Chassidus, I should learn Chassidus for a few minutes each night before I go to sleep. He also emphasized strongly that I should be sure to always daven from the Siddur. The Rebbe then went on to tell me a *vort* on this concept to help me remember (I haven’t seen this *vort* written or mentioned anywhere else). The Rebbe quoted a *possuk* from Megillas Esther that reads, *ובבואה לפני המלך אמר עם הספר*, *ישוב מחשבתו הרעה אשר חשב*. Then he translated it to me word by word with his unique explanation in English.

The Rebbe said: “*ובבואה לפני המלך*—when one comes before the King, when someone is beginning to daven to Hashem, *אמר עם הספר*—it must be said from inside the ‘*sefer*,’ meaning the *siddur*, for then *ישוב מחשבתו הרעה אשר חשב*

חשב—the negative thoughts he was thinking will vanish...”

A Student in 770

Towards the end of the following year, the Rebbe said to me in *yechidus* that he wants me to join the yeshiva in 770 from now on. Then, the Rebbe related to me that here in the yeshiva of 770, every Friday one of the *bochurim* says a *pilpul*, naming a few of the *bochurim* who had delivered the most recent *pilpulim*, and that he would like me to prepare one and give it on one of the following Shabbosim. (This was something that usually the older *bochurim* did. It seems to me that the Rebbe wanted to boost me a bit at this new stage in my life.)

I want to bring out to you what it was like to be around the Rebbe in those days, the early 5720s*. There was so much “wealth.” It’s almost painful to think to what extent we took for granted everything we received from the Rebbe. I’m talking about those small moments that in later years people learned to really cherish, we merited plenty of them. Even more so, the Rebbe’s concern for us and his involvement in the details of our wellbeing, both *beruchnius* and *begashmius*. For instance, the Rebbe once saw me in the street on a wintery day without a coat. The Rebbe motioned to me by grabbing the lapel of his coat that I better put on a coat.

On another occasion, I was walking towards 770 on my way to daven Shacharis holding my tefillin and I noticed that the Rebbe was walking in front of me. As the Rebbe went up on the pathway to 770, I ran in front and opened the door for the Rebbe. The Rebbe looked at me and motioned to me that I should walk in before him, explaining “*Du haltst doch a por tefillin*—you’re holding a pair of tefillin.”

One Shabbos morning, I was sitting and learning in the *zal* when suddenly



A “PERMIT” THE BOCHURIM IN MONTREAL WOULD SHOW THE MAZKIRUS INDICATING THEY HAD PERMISSION TO COME.

RABBI PINNY LEW

the Rebbe walked in, went over to Reb Dovid Raskin and spoke a few words, then turned around and left. Immediately thereafter, Reb Dovid announced, “Whoever wants to hear a *maamar* is invited to enter the Rebbe’s room.” Obviously, we all went in for the *maamar*. This was a special *zechus* we merited on several occasions.

Naturally, we felt close to the Rebbe and would write to the Rebbe everything. We would consult with the Rebbe for even the smallest of issues. For example, when the dentist told me I needed to pull out a tooth, the first thing I did was ask the Rebbe, who answered me to first consult with another dentist. Everything in our lives went by the Rebbe first.

Let me tell you how writing to the Rebbe worked back then. When you enter 770 from the main door, on the right is the *mazkirus* office, the Rebbe’s secretariat, in which there was a big desk. On top of the desk was a tray

in which anyone and everyone could walk in and drop off a *tzetel* for the Rebbe without anyone questioning who he is or what he wants from the Rebbe. I remember being in the office on a regular basis and seeing the enormous amount of letters the Rebbe was receiving. The Rebbe would attentively answer every individual who sought his help.

In the morning when the Rebbe would arrive in 770, he would often walk into the *mazkirus* office before going to his room. (We, the *bochurim* learning in the *zal* would rise and remain standing until the Rebbe entered his room. Sometimes that would take up to half an hour if the Rebbe stopped to speak with Rabbi Quint, one of the secretaries.)

Being that so many people were going in and out of that room, the secretaries decided to put up a barrier on one side of the desk in order to keep things orderly. The day they were



THE TALMIDIM HASHLUCHIM TO BRUNOY DANCE ABOARD THE BOAT WHICH WOULD TAKE THEM TO FRANCE. REB ASHER (NOT PICTURED) WAS PART OF THIS GROUP.

building this barrier I happened to be standing in the *mazkirus* office when the Rebbe arrived at 770. He walked into the office and saw what they were building. The Rebbe commented that they should include a small platform on the top of the barrier, for people to have something to write a *tzetel* on.

Shidduchim

In the summer of 5723* I was 23 years old. One day Reb Dovid Raskin called me into his office and said to me that he had a *shidduch* for me. He told me I should ask the Rebbe if it was time for me to look into shidduchim, and the Rebbe answered affirmatively. A few weeks later, just before Simchas Torah, I met for the first time my future wife, Sema, the daughter of Rabbi Moshe Yitzchok Hecht. Over the next few weeks we met several more times.

A few weeks later, I was learning in the *zal* when someone came over and

said to me, “Asher, you have a phone call.” I picked up the phone and heard someone on the other side screaming “Mazal tov! You just became a *chosson*.” Aghast, I responded, “What mazal tov? Who is this? What are you talking about?!” Rabbi Berel Shemtov then introduced himself and began telling me the following story:

“The day after Simchas Torah I was by the Rebbe in *yechidus*. I had asked the Rebbe about a new shul in Detroit, that I wanted to ask the *bochur* Asher Zeilingold to come down and take the position as the rabbi, what does the Rebbe think?

“The Rebbe answered me, talking about you Asher. *‘Ich vil dir epes zogen. Asher hot yetzt eimitzer getroffen. Vi ich tracht, es vet nemen fir vochen biz er vet veren a chosson. Az er vet veren a chosson vet zein “reichaim al tzavaro” vet zein gringer reden mit em. Vart up di fir vochen—I want to share something with you. Asher recently met someone.*

Nichum Aveilim

Speaking of Rabbi Quint, I want to share something interesting I merited to witness. Rabbi Quint lived on Eastern Parkway, about a half a block away from 770. When he was sitting *shiva*, the Rebbe went to be *menachem avel*, and I joined. The Rebbe spoke to him for some time, then Rabbi Quint announced, “We will now be davening Maariv.” He asked the Rebbe, “Will the Rebbe be davening with us? We’re going to daven *Nusach Ashkenaz* though.” The Rebbe answered that he has his *makom kavua* where he davens, and regarding the *nusach* the Rebbe said that each one of the *shevatim* had their own way in serving Hashem. Nonetheless the Rebbe remained there while they davened Maariv, during which he was looking into a *sefer*. I was watching the Rebbe and noticed something very interesting. When the *chazzan* said aloud the words *בשמחה רבה ואמרנו כולם*, the Rebbe answered together with everyone, *ה' מי כמוך באלים ה'* and then again *ה' ימלוך לעולם ועד*.

The way I see it, it will take another four weeks until he will get engaged. Once he will get engaged, he will have the responsibility of a livelihood on his shoulders, so it will be easier to discuss with him. Wait out these four weeks.’

“Today,” concluded Rabbi Shemtov, “is exactly four weeks from then, hence—mazal tov!”

The truth however is, although we were ready to get engaged at that point, it hadn’t happened yet. I was supposed to meet her family in New

A Mother's Care

Once, on a day the Rebbe went to the Ohel, after he davened Mincha in 770, the Rebbe went back to the car to go home with Rabbi Krinsky. On the way, the Rebbe stopped to visit his mother, Rebbetzin Chana, as he would do every single day. To my *mazal*, I was standing at the corner of Kingston and President and merited to see something very unique. Rebbetzin Chana was sitting outside on a bench talking with a few children. As the Rebbe's car pulled up and the Rebbe was getting out of the car, the Rebbetzin called out addressing the Rebbe by name and said "*Gei aheim*—please go home." The Rebbe asked, "*Farvos*—why?" and the Rebbetzin responded, "*Veil du host heint noch nisht gegesn*—you haven't yet eaten today." "*Vi veist du*—how do you know?" questioned the Rebbe. The Rebbetzin smiled, pointed to Rabbi Krinsky and said, "*Krinsky is doh*—Rabbi Krinsky is here." [Ed. note: Rabbi Krinsky would drive the Rebbe to the Ohel, so if the Rebbe was being accompanied by him, that was a clear indication that the Rebbe had just returned from the Ohel, and on a day that the Rebbe went to the Ohel he wouldn't eat.] Both the Rebbe and his mother began laughing. It was a very special moment to catch, to see the Rebbetzin's motherly concern for her son, our Rebbe.

Another particularly fascinating occurrence, which again offers perspective on the close relationship the Rebbe has with us, happened with me when I was a *chosson* in 5724*. Reb Dovid Raskin arranged for me and my *kallah* to visit Rebbetzin Chana. The night before we were to go to the Rebbetzin, I was walking up Kingston Avenue together with a very close friend of mine, Rabbi Shmuel Lew. As we were walking we passed by Rebbetzin Chana. She stopped us and said



REB ASHER AND REB SHMUEL LEW, IYAR 5725

RABBI PINNY LEW

hello, as she would regularly do. I then said to her, "Rebbetzin, I'm looking forward to tomorrow evening when I'm scheduled to come over to see you together with my *kallah*." The Rebbetzin responded while pointing towards Shmuel: "*Ye ye, un du Shmuel vest oichet kumen mit dain froi*—yes indeed, and you Shmuel will come together with your wife too." We both looked at her in surprise. We were coming as *chosson* and *kallah*, why would Shmuel who was already married for some time be coming along? The Rebbetzin smiled and said, "*M'hot mir gezogt az vu einer fun aich iz, geit alemohl der tzveiter oichet*—somebody told me, wherever one of you is, the other always comes along." Who is the one who told Rebbetzin Chana of our friendship? I can only guess it was the Rebbe. The fact that our friendship came up in their conversation is something truly unbelievable.

Haven before we would ask the Rebbe for a *bracha* and officially get engaged. For whatever reason my going to New Haven kept getting pushed off until one day Rabbi Hodakov called me over and said to me, "The Rebbe wants to know why you haven't been to New Haven yet!"

The way the Rebbe took such personal interest in our wellbeing at that important stage of our lives is just

unbelievable. Moreover, what I learned from Rabbi Shemtov was that the Rebbe knew it was the right *shidduch*, and knew each of us through and through and was able to determine exactly how long it will take for things to play out.

A few days later, my father-in-law, Rabbi Moshe Yitzchok Hecht went into *yechidus* on the occasion of our engagement and asked the Rebbe

several things. Firstly, he asked if I should go to Montreal for the weeks leading up to our wedding. (In those days, the *chosson* would usually leave town during the engagement period, in order to not be living in the same neighborhood as the *kallah*.) The Rebbe instructed that I should remain in 770. My father-in-law immediately questioned why, to which the Rebbe answered, "*Di Tzeirei Agudas Chabad*

darf em hoben doh veil er geit tzu a sach pletzer reden in Chassidus—Tzeirei Agudas Chabad needs him here, because he goes to many places to lecture on Chassidus”—something that was of high importance to the Rebbe.

Then, my father-in-law asked the Rebbe regarding a date for the wedding, to which the Rebbe answered that he cannot discuss it with him until he first speaks to me on a private matter. My father-in-law was puzzled; I don't know exactly what he had asked the Rebbe, but the Rebbe said that he will speak to Rabbi Hodakov, who would give over to me the Rebbe's message.

My father-in-law informed me of this, so I went into Rabbi Hodakov's office, who said to me as follows: The Rebbe said that he knows you have an older sister who is not yet married. He therefore instructed that you buy her a gift, send it to her with someone in the family who is most close with her, and request her *mechila* for getting married before her.

This highlights a few important points: First, my family wasn't Lubavitch, yet the Rebbe remembered my older sister. Also, the Rebbe intentionally didn't speak to anyone else about this besides me, out of sensitivity to this personal issue.

Eventually, my aunt went to my sister with the gift and she said she was one hundred percent *mocheles*.

Guidance for life

When we got engaged, both my wife and I wrote to the Rebbe requesting that the Rebbe should direct us exactly on where we should settle after our wedding. (In those days it usually didn't happen that way. The usual custom was that people would find a proposition themselves and ask the Rebbe for his *bracha*.)

The Rebbe answered us saying that I should look into different

suggestions, and then write them all down and submit the list of offers to him. Then, the Rebbe would direct us on which one of these offers to take. Which is exactly what I did. I did my homework and submitted to the Rebbe 12 different suggestions that had come up. I got my letter back with the Rebbe's answer. Some of the ideas the Rebbe simply crossed out, meaning we shouldn't even consider those. Others he left open, and then directed that I should learn in Kollel for two years, after which we should revisit these options (those remaining that the Rebbe had not crossed out).

Roughly two years later I felt it was time to start moving forward. One night I sat down and again wrote a letter to the Rebbe with the (remaining) options. I went to 770 and gave this letter to the Rebbe's secretary. The very next morning I received a letter from Rabbi Moshe Feller of S. Paul, Minnesota, with an opportunity. A shul in S. Paul was looking for a *rav*. Immediately, I wrote down what Rabbi Feller told me, intending to give it in to the Rebbe. At the end of this paper I made note to the Rebbe that this is being written on a separate piece of paper because this idea just came up now, and not because I'm giving it any more thought than the other ideas. The Rebbe answered me by giving back this piece of paper on which he wrote: אם לדעת הר"מ פעלער יש סיכויים בזה, יתעניין—If Rabbi Feller is of the opinion that there is potential in this, [then] examine [this option]).

The rest is history. The Rebbe sent us to S. Paul shortly before Pesach 5726*. Before Tishrei we were back in New York. We went into *yechidus*, where the Rebbe spoke about the importance of my position. (Interestingly, the Rebbe stressed that we should be very careful not to change any of the customs the shul had before we came, as it was not a Lubavitcher shul.)



PIEKARSKI FAMILY

A TZACH ANNOUNCEMENT ABOUT THE TZEISCHEM L'SHALOM FOR REB ASHER BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE TO MINNESOTA.

Over the years, we merited a great deal of encouragement from the Rebbe, who looked after us in every which way. Soon after we arrived, we were suffering from some serious challenges. At one point I concluded that I am no longer capable, and I need to look for another position. But the Rebbe wouldn't hear of it. It is only a result of the Rebbe's encouragement that I stayed put.

In conclusion, I will share one anecdote that gives a glimpse of what I'm speaking about:

I would send a copy of everything we would publish, including newsletters, community announcements, and articles about Yiddishkeit which we put in the local newspapers, to the Rebbe. On two different occasions, it became clear to me that the Rebbe paid careful attention and reviewed everything.

Once, I prepared a brochure to send out before the *Yomim Noraim*, in which I was inviting unaffiliated Yidden to come to shul for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. A few weeks before Rosh Hashanah I happened to be in New York so I



A Q&A SEGMENT ON THE "JEWISH LIFE" TV PROGRAM, HOSTED BY RABBI HENRY OKOLICA IN NEW BRITAIN, CONNECTICUT. L- R RABBIS ASHER ZEILINGOLD, SHMUEL LEW, MEIR GREENBERG, YAAKOV YEHUDA HECHT, SHOLOM BER GORDON, YITZCHAK SCHWARTZ. CIRCA 5722



REB ASHER GIVES A PESACH WORKSHOP. MINNESOTA 5727

submitted a copy to *mazkirus* for the Rebbe to see.

Shortly thereafter, I was notified by one of the *mazkirim* that the Rebbe wanted to see me. This took me by great surprise as being called in to *yechidus* 'out of the blue'—so to speak—was very uncommon. I walked

into the Rebbe's room and noticed my brochure sitting open on the Rebbe's desk right in front of him!

The Rebbe said to me, "I want to tell you something. Since you moved to Minnesota, I have received and read every piece of material you send out. Now, this is the first time you printed

...This Yid should tell his employer that the mayor of S. Paul, George Latimer, who isn't a Yid, has a beard!

something that doesn't have *Baruch Hashem* written on it."

"I want you to know," the Rebbe continued, "that it is very important to start everything you write with *Baruch Hashem*. With this you're acknowledging Hashem, giving you a special *bracha* in what you are doing."

I said to the Rebbe that I will throw out all of these printed brochures and print new ones. The Rebbe said not to do that. Rather, in order to fix this, together with this brochure he suggested that we should send out a *shanah tovah* card and on the card include *Baruch Hashem*.

The second occasion was years later. At one point I was studying Torah with a particular individual who did not consider himself a Lubavitcher Chossid, but he would follow many of our *minhagim*. This fellow worked as the regional manager for a department store chain, a very prestigious position. At that point in time, this fellow decided to begin growing his beard. However, his employer told him that he must cut it off. He was obviously very disturbed by this and asked me for advice. I said to him, "Look, In a few days I will be traveling to the Rebbe and I will ask him what you should do. However, just to be clear beforehand, I highly doubt the Rebbe will tell you to cut off your beard. On the contrary, I believe that the Rebbe will say that you should keep it." Nevertheless, he agreed.

When I came to New York, I wrote down the whole situation in a letter and gave it in to the Rebbe. The Rebbe

answered that this Yid should tell his employer that the mayor of S. Paul, George Latimer, who isn't a Yid, has a beard! This fellow indeed brought this point up to his employer and he got his permission to keep his beard.

How did the Rebbe know this? Together with this letter, I gave the Rebbe a stack of printed material, including newspaper clippings. Among them was a clipping from a local newspaper in which there was an article with pictures printed about an event that we held a few months earlier in which the mayor had participated. Of course, the mayor was identified in one of the captions to a photo. This again showed me how carefully the Rebbe reviewed our newsletters, bulletins and newspaper clippings that I had sent in; even the photo captions! T



THE NEWSPAPER ARTICLE PICTURING A BEARDED MAYOR LATIMER.



JEM 6369



דער רבי וועט געפינען א וועג...

לזכות הורינו
הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' משה
וזוגתו מרת פערל שיחיו הערסאן
הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' אברהם
וזוגתו מרת ח' בלומא שיחיו אזדאבא
לכבוד ימי הולדתם ולהצלחה רבה ומופלגה
בשליחותם הק' לאורך ימים ושנים טובות
מתוך נחת חסידותי אמיתי, בריאות הנכונה,
ומתוך שמחה והרחבה!
נדפס ע"י בנם ובתם
הרה"ת ר' אשר זעליג
וזוגתו מרת שרה - ומשפחתם - שיחיו
הערסאן

The Much Needed Wake Up Call

AS TOLD BY RABBI YITZIE MAGALNIC (PALOS VERDES, CA)

My wife and I got married in 5750* and we were blessed with twins, a boy and a girl, on 18 Adar II 5760*. Needless to say it was a tremendous *simcha* for us. That summer was our first opportunity to bring our twins to the Ohel.

The night before we visited the Ohel, I received a call from a member of our community with whom I had just recently begun to develop a close relationship. "Rabbi, my daughter is turning twelve in November and we would like you to help prepare her for her bas mitzvah and officiate at

the celebration." As his wife had not done a proper *giyur*, I knew it was impossible for me to grant his request.

When we first met, they had wanted to enroll their kids in our Hebrew school. As with all parents in that situation, I try to be as transparent as possible. I told them that I could not do any bar or bas mitzvah for their children as his wife did not have a proper *giyur* and therefore their children are not Jewish. At that time, it seemed to me that they were very understanding of our decision and they did not

enroll their children in our Hebrew school. The issue was never raised again. Therefore, I was quite surprised when I received this call. I realized I was being tested, especially as he had recently given a substantial contribution to our Chabad House.

I was at a loss of how to respond to him.

I needed to figure out how to respond without distancing him from Yiddishkeit. I explained to him that I was traveling and that I would call him the next day. This would hopefully buy me some time.

That night I hardly slept, thinking that once I spoke with him, I would most likely be losing a big supporter. At this point I did not discuss this with anyone. I hoped I would find the right words to keep up the friendship and maintain his involvement in Yiddishkeit without causing any hard feelings.

The *yetzer hara* always has a way to create doubts and rationalizations. I came up with what I thought might be a solution and decided that I would ignore that this was a bas mitzvah and would consider it a twelfth birthday party and nothing more. Obviously I knew this was a very bad idea and it was completely wrong on every level, but nevertheless I hoped for a resolution.

The next morning we left for the Ohel. It was a hot and muggy summer day. We wrote our *panim* and entered the Ohel. As we entered the *Tziyun* my wife realized that she forgot the babies' hats which she had prepared to protect them from the extremely hot sun. My wife asked if I could go back to the car to retrieve the hats and of course I did so. When I returned, I used the entrance of the house which welcomes all visitors to the Ohel. In the first room there is a big screen where videos of the Rebbe are continuously playing. Typically I don't stop to watch the videos. Especially now, as I was in a hurry to get back to the *Tziyun* to bring the hats for the babies and to read my *pan*. As I was getting ready to leave the first room to go into the tent, I heard the Rebbe speaking very passionately. The Rebbe seemed to be very pained by what he was saying. This of course caught my attention and I wanted to hear what the Rebbe was talking about in this unusual manner.

I returned to the screen to listen to the *sicha*. I was shocked to the core! I heard the Rebbe saying, "You are fooling them, their children and grandchildren for all eternity." It felt as though the Rebbe was speaking directly to me. The Rebbe was speaking about *Mihu Yehudi*, addressing rabbis who tell people who aren't Jewish that they are Jews, misleading and thus harming them for all generations.

I could not believe my ears! Here I was, entertaining foolish thoughts of putting up a charade of a bas mitzvah



and the Rebbe was sending me a direct wake-up call. What was I even thinking?!

When I walked into the Ohel moments later, I was on an entirely different plane. I had never felt such a strong *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe and I tearfully thanked the Rebbe for the much needed clarity.

That evening, I phoned my *baal habos* to clarify and boldly tell him the truth. In a nice but firm way I told him I could not have any part in the so-called bas mitzvah celebration. I explained to him that since his wife is not Jewish, neither is his daughter. I was expecting him to hang up the phone and sever his ties with me. Of course I had made peace with that, were that to be the case. Yet after I finished explaining everything, he said in a polite way, "Then why don't you call my wife and please explain it to her." Of course, I took the time to call her and explained everything in a most compassionate way. I wasn't sure how she would react so I again expected the worst. To my surprise, she said, "Rabbi you are absolutely correct. When I completed my conversion I never really did anything to be Jewish, I knew it was not a real conversion."

A few months later after the party, which I was not a part of, the family started taking very big steps towards accepting more mitzvos including *kashrus* and Shabbos. We explored the possibility of doing *giyur kehalacha*!

Baruch Hashem we have remained close. Together with his family, our friend continues to be instrumental in the success of our shlichus. I am forever grateful that I was able to summon the courage to overcome this *nisayon* with the Rebbe's direct intervention. ❶

YOUR STORY

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



תורה צוה לנו משה

A common scene in 770 over the years were the weekday *sichos* the Rebbe spoke at rallies, special occasions, and דברי כיבושין on fast days. We present a beautiful photo collection from these special moments of the Rebbe speaking to his Chassidim over the years.



לע"נ
 הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' שלום דובער
 בן הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' חיים משה ע"ה
 אלפרוביץ
 נלב"ע ד' סיון ה'תשע"ה
 ולע"נ
 הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' נחמן
 בן ר' פנחס ע"ה
 סודאק
 נלב"ע י"ז סיון ה'תשע"ד
 ת"נ צ"ב
 נדפס ע"י
 הרה"ת ר' יוסף יצחק
 וזוגתו מרת חנה שרה
 ומשפחתם שיחיו
 אלפרוביץ







3 TISHREI 5746, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 267744

In earlier years the Rebbe would inform the *mesadrim* if there would be a *sicha* and a microphone would be brought to the Rebbe's *shtender*.

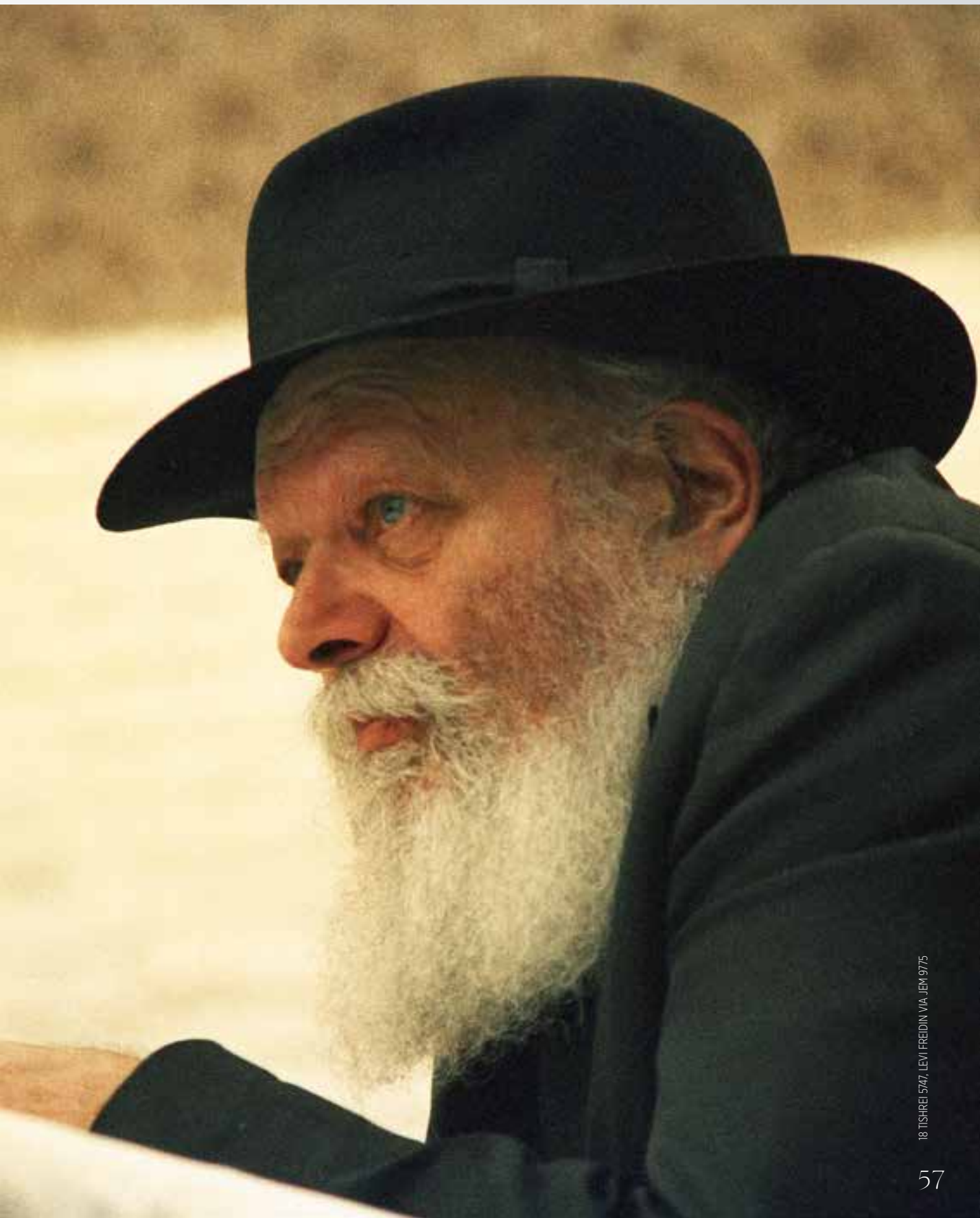


8 TISHREI 5746, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 267907



19 TISHREI 5751, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM175007

After Chof-Beis Shevat 5748* these *sichos* became more frequent following *tefillas* during the week. A separate *shtender* would be set up specifically for *sichos*.





15 SHEVAT 5752, LEVI FREDIN VIA JEM 221825



Before or after *Mincha*/*Maariv* the Rebbe would indicate if there would be *sicha* and if it would be followed by *dollars*, or on occasion the distribution of a *kuntres*.



19 TISHREI 5751 LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 175651

While the Rebbe no longer farbrenged on weekdays after Chof-Beis Shevat 5748*, he would speak for *yomei dipagra* during these weekday *sichos*. The Rebbe saw them as farbrengens and would often refer to them as such.



28 ELUL 5749 LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 223715

The Rebbe would often start off with a *bracha*, and continue to talk about the significance of the time and the week's *parsha*, speaking strongly about how it all connects to Moshiach and how the world and everything in it stands ready to bring the *geulah*. May we indeed be *zocheh* תיכף ומיד to hear these *sichos* once more with the Rebbe, תורה חדשה מאתי תצא.



18 TISHREI 5752 LEVI FREDIN VIA JEM 219673



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.

The Name Gilah

Dear Editors,

Thank you for your beautiful publication replete with enrichment for the Chassidic home! In the article “What’s In A Name,” [Nissan 5781 issue 104] there is a (partial) list of names that the Rebbe gave to individuals who had not yet received their Jewish names. Another name to be added to the list is גילה which was given by the Rebbe to a woman named Jill. As stated, the Rebbe expounded upon names of individuals and related it to their persona (including before the *nesius*) in his holy writings and in farbrengens. Indeed as we find in Chazal רבי מאיר היה דורש בשמות וכולי!

With prayers for the *geulah* and to merit the מעדני מלך באור פני מלך חיים,

Menachem Mendel Feller

MINNESOTA

Special Invitation

Dear Editors,

Thank you for the great article with interviews about Professor Paul Rosenblum [“The Rebbe’s Man in Mathematics,” issue 102 (179) Shevat 5781].

I was recently reading a few letters from the Rebbe in Igros and came across a letter from the Rebbe to President Shazar in 5726*, where the Rebbe writes about Professor Rosenblum.

The Rebbe writes as follows: “With much interest, I read what you wrote about inviting individuals who stand at the forefront of the work of Chabad on college campuses. By the way, Professor Rosenblum who visited Eretz Hakodesh last summer and also visited you, is one of them.”

The Rebbe goes on to write about inviting Professor Velvel Green from Minnesota, pointing out that he likes to be called by his name “Velvel.”

Interestingly, this letter was written in Adar 5726*, less than four years after Rabbi Moshe and Mindy Feller moved on shlichus to Minnesota and were *mekarev* these two world famous professors.

Sender Lazerson

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

The Russian Boy

Dear Editors,

In the recent article about F.R.E.E. [“Transplanting the Warmth,” Adar 5781] a story was included about a woman that worked in the Rebbe and Rebbetzin’s home, whom the Rebbetzin had advised that she take along *sefarim* when visiting her family in Russia. Later, upon the family’s arrival in New York, one of the family members sought out a yeshiva and went on to become a full fledged Lubavitcher *yungerman* as a result of these *sefarim*.

This woman was my great aunt Leah (Elizabeth) Yahilevich, and I am the Russian boy mentioned in the article.

Here are some additional firsthand details to the story:

My aunt Leah (who is *ka"n* 96 years old today) used to work for the Rebbetzin and they had a close relationship. The Rebbetzin showed much empathy to my aunt who had lost her entire family in the Holocaust (the Rebbetzin also lost her sister Rebbetzin Sheina).

In 1987, when travel to the USSR became a little less complicated, our aunt wanted to visit us in Gomel (Homel in Yiddish), having not seen my parents and grandparents in decades.

A thirteen-year-old boy at the time, I was very excited and eagerly awaited the arrival of my American aunt, because in my teenage mind I thought she would bring me a pair of sneakers or American jeans, and I would be the coolest kid in my school.

On the day of her arrival, we went to greet her at the airport and we saw her walking out with suitcases after suitcases. Of course, I was sure they were filled with gifts and I would be in the spotlight among my friends with all my American goodies.

When we arrived at my grandparents' home, she handed me a large suitcase. With great excitement I opened it and found dozens of books. There was a Siddur Tehilas Hashem and a Haggadah Shel Pesach in Russian, as well as many of F.R.E.E.'s brochures and magazines on *kashrus*, *mezuzah*, and everything else about Yiddishkeit.

These piqued my interest, and very quickly I forgot about the jeans and sneakers.

Even though I grew up in a Communist country where practicing Judaism was dangerous, our family was fairly traditional. My grandfather had *siddurim* and other *sefarim* in his house, but these were all in Hebrew which I didn't understand. Now I had a *siddur* and other books with translation and instructions, enabling me to appreciate the meaning of the words I was saying and greatly enlightening so many areas of Yiddishkeit to me.

For my aunt, bringing all these books with her was actually somewhat dangerous. But the Rebbetzin had told her that since her husband, the Rebbe, always tries to send Jewish literature to Yidden in Russia and it's usually not done in a very legal manner, this was a great opportunity, since my aunt was a visitor and could take whatever she wanted and give it to her family.

This had tremendous influence on me because I was doing self education and nothing was accessible to me. With my new *siddur*, I read all the notes very seriously, standing and sitting exactly where it says to do so. With time I became quite well versed in Yiddishkeit.

As a result of this suitcase of books, when we arrived in New York two years later, I wasn't too far behind my age group in Lubavitcher Yeshiva Ocean Parkway. At that point I got to know the Okunov brothers in person, who helped my family tremendously.

The Rebbetzin reached out to me from ten thousand miles away, and the rest is history!

Herschel Friedman

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

