

A Chassidisher *Derher*

א חסידישער דערהער



מדי שנה בשנה ווערט ער, נאך מער לעבעדיקער,
און נאך מער שטארקער, און נאך מער אקטיוו...
—ט"ו תמוז תשמ"ה



TAMMUZ 5781
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In This Issue

Tammuz 5781 / Issue 107 (184)



18

With The Rebbe
Pictorial Overview, Year by Year



40

Learning Rambam
A farbrengen

JEM 103928

6 **Peace Now!**
Dvar Malchus

8 **Finish the Job!**
Leben Mitten Rebbe'n -
Tammuz 5742

15 **Find Another
Way to Go Back**
Stories of the Rebbe

60 **Our Own Sifrei Torah**
Der Rebbe Vet Gefinen a Veg

73 **Derher Letters**

On the Cover:
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Peace Now!

רמב"ם הלכות מלכים פי"ב, ה"ד-ה'

The Chachamim and the Nevi'im did not yearn for the days of Moshiach in order to have dominion over the entire world, to rule over the gentiles, to be exalted by the nations, or to eat, drink, and celebrate. Rather, they desired to be free to involve themselves in Torah and its wisdom without any pressures or disturbances, so that they would merit the world to come, as we explained in Hilchos Teshuvah.

In that era, there will be neither famine nor war, envy nor competition, for good will flow in abundance and all the delights will be freely available as dust. The occupation of the entire world will be solely to know Hashem.

Therefore, the Jews will be great sages and know the hidden matters, grasping the knowledge of their Creator according to the full extent of human potential, as stated: "The world will be filled with the knowledge of Hashem as the waters cover the ocean bed."

לא נתאוו החכמים והנביאים ימות המשיח. לא כדאי שישלטו על כל העולם. ולא כדאי שיירדו בעפ"ם. ולא כדאי שינשאו אותם העמים. ולא כדאי לאכל ולשתות ולשמח. אלא כדאי שיהיו פנוין בתורה והקמתה. ולא יהיה להם נוגש ומבטל. כדאי שיזכו לחיי העולם הבא. כמו שבארנו בהלכות תשובה:

ובאותו הזמן לא יהיה שם לא רעב ולא מלחמה. ולא קנאה ומהרות. שהטובה תהיה משפעת הרבה. וכל המעדרים מצויין כעפר. ולא יהיה עסק כל העולם אלא לדעת את ה' בלבד. ולפיכך יהיו ישראל חכמים גדולים ויודעים דברים הסתומים וישיגו דעת בוראם כפי פח האדם. שנאמר (ישעיה יא, ט) "כי מלאה הארץ דעה את ה' כמים לים מכסים":



מחזור הארבעים 40 CYCLES OF LEARNING RAMBAM

לזכות
החיילת בצבאות ה'
חי' מושקא תחי'
לרגל יום הולדתה י' תמוז ה'תשפ"א
נדפס ע"י הוריה
הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל
וזוגתו מרת דבורה לאה שיחיו
טרייטעל

The Rambam concludes the Mishneh Torah by describing the times of Moshiach, how there will be no wars and no jealousy, etc. He explains that the goal of all the benefits of those times will be so that Yidden can spend their time peacefully and undisturbed, acquiring the knowledge of Hashem.

As all aspects of Moshiach depend on our deeds right now, so too does this Messianic state of the world depend on our work. Our current actions need to be such that directly correlate with the reality of Moshiach's times.

When Moshiach comes, the nations of the world will be at peace with no envy or jealousy, which means that the times of Moshiach will not just benefit Jews, it will benefit all of mankind.

The nations will not only benefit physically, they will benefit spiritually as well. When Moshiach comes, all nations of the world will be fully devoted to serving Hashem. They will have the *sheva mitzvos b'nei Noach* to fulfill and be able to do so without distractions.

It is our duty as Yidden to explain to all people of the world how great it will be for them to be able to serve

Hashem and fulfill their mitzvos without disruption of war, hate and jealousy. To appreciate such a time, one does not need to be a great intellectual.

By getting them to look forward to such times, it will lead to them trying to live in a "*Moshiach'dike*" way of peace and harmony with each other (and with the Jews) in the final days of *galus*, which in turn will hasten the coming of Moshiach ממש בקרוב.

(*Shabbos Parshas Acharei 5746*)



15 TAMMUZ 5742

<p>ע"י בנם ר' יקותיאל יהודה וזוגתו מרת פעסל לאה ומשפחתם שיחיו רוהר</p>	<p>טור 'לעבן מיטן רבי'ן' 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'</p>
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Finish the Job!

TAMMUZ 5742*



TUESDAY, ROSH CHODESH TAMMUZ

The Rebbe came to *krias haTorah* today wearing a new hat. I believe he had been wearing the previous hat since Tishrei 5740*.

WEDNESDAY, 2 TAMMUZ

A Brazilian couple was standing in the corridor of 770 when the Rebbe arrived in the morning. A grandchild had just been born to them, and the

Rebbe gave them a broad smile and wished them "mazel tov."

While distributing coins for *tzedakah* on the way to Mincha, a young boy held out a *tzedakah pushka* as the Rebbe walked by, apparently wanting the Rebbe to put a coin inside. The Rebbe put a coin into his *pushka*, but the child held onto the Rebbe's hand, waiting for the Rebbe to put another coin inside... The Rebbe put another coin into the *pushka*, and when the boy wanted the Rebbe to give

a third time, the Rebbe handed him another coin and motioned with his hand to put the coin into the *pushka* affixed to the wall.

At around 9:25 p.m., just a few minutes before Maariv was to begin, an announcement was made: The Rebbe is going to farbreng after Maariv. As soon as we heard the exciting news, everyone went running; this one to the *mikveh* and that one to the telephone. Some ran home to share the news with their families and neighbors, and others hurried to set up the shul for the farbrengen. The Rebbe came out for Maariv at 9:30 p.m. When the Rebbe said “*Al tira*,” his voice was more audible than usual,

and his face displayed unusual seriousness and concentration.

About five minutes after Maariv concluded, the Rebbe came downstairs for the farbrengen. There were not too many people at the farbrengen, as the news had not yet spread.

During the farbrengen, the Rebbe revealed that Tanyas had now been printed in three locations in Lebanon—Tyre, Sidon and Beirut—and that groups of Yidden have studied from these Tanyas wherever they were printed. The Rebbe referred to the statement the Frieddiker Rebbe made while still in *galus*: The *neshama* of a Yid never went into *galus* to



25 ELUL 5742, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 205991

לזכות
החיייל בצבאות ה'
מאיר שיחי
לרגל הולדתו ז' אייר ה'תשפ"א
נדפס ע"י הוריו
הרה"ת ר' ישראל מנחם
וזוגתו מרת ח'ל אסתר טובא
ומשפחתם שיחיו
ריטשלער



Find Another Way to Go Back

Rabbi Pinchas Weberman, president of the Orthodox Rabbinical Council of South Florida, and founder of congregation Ohev Shalom in Miami Beach related this story.

Adapted from his interview on The Living Torah, and our thanks to JEM for sharing it with us.

In 1967, my wife was pregnant and as her due date approached, examinations found that the baby was in breech position.

We traveled from Florida to New York with a car that was to be delivered at our destination; we would figure out how to get back. We had a *yechidus* with the Rebbe, and among other things, we discussed the breech pregnancy.

The Rebbe asked how we were planning to go back. I said, "We will probably fly." The Rebbe said, "Well, there are clouds and winds; you want to fly?" I knew the Rebbe had something in mind here — there are always clouds and winds! The Rebbe said, "Find another way to go back, and take along a Tanya and mezuzos. Wherever you can, leave them over."

So at first, I thought I would rent a car. We went to an Avis rental car center on Union Street, and began looking for a suitable car. We went into the first car, but the door wouldn't close. The next car's lights didn't work. We tried another one, and this time the window wouldn't close. So I said to myself, "We're not supposed to take a car back to Florida." Instead we decided to take a bus.

We took a bus and made two stops: one in Charlotte, North Carolina, where we spent the night in a motel, and — as the Rebbe had instructed — I left the Tanya for the rabbi of Charlotte. The second stop was in Jesup, Georgia, where we again spent the night in a motel.

The phone book of Jesup, Georgia is about an eighth of an inch thick. Keeping in mind the Rebbe's *hora'ah* to leave the *mezuzos* with someone, I looked for a Jewish name and saw "Weinstein." I called, a young man answered, and I said, "I'm a rabbi from Miami, I'm at this motel, I want to speak to you."

He came by. He said, "I don't know why I came — I got an anonymous call and I thought, 'something's funny here; maybe it's a setup?' But I came." So I spoke to him, and I found out that his grandfather was a member of my shul in Miami and his father's brother is a city councilman there as well. So we got along well, I left him *mezuzos*, and I asked him where he goes for the holidays. He said, "I can go either to Savannah, Georgia, or — and he named another city in Georgia." I said, "Go to Savannah — they have an Orthodox shul there." He said he would, and that was the conclusion of our encounter.

Having fulfilled the Rebbe's instructions to leave the Tanya and the *mezuzos* with people along the way, we got back onto the bus for the final leg of the trip to Miami. As the bus sped along the road, my wife felt the baby moving and moving and moving. Once we were back in Miami, my wife went to see the doctor and she was told that the baby had straightened out! The birth was normal.¹ **T**

1. Living Torah Disc 85 Program 338. Available at Chabad.org/1441940.

לזכות
הרה"ת ר' יוסף שיחי קאמען
להצלחה מרובה בכל הפעולות
ב' א חסידישער דערהער'
נדפס ע"י
הרוצה בעילום שמו

לזכות
שלוחי כ"ק אדמו"ר זי"ע
ומשפחותיהם שיחי
בכל רחבי תבל
להצלחה רבה ומופלגה
בעבודת השליחות
מתוך בריאות הנכונה, פרנסה בהרחבה
ונחת חסידותי מכל יו"ח
ע"י הרוצה בעילום שמו

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

Witk

THE REBBE

Pictorial Overview,
Year by Year

לזכות
שיינדל תחי'
שוחאט
לרגל יום הולדתה - חג הגאולה י"ג תמוז
ולזכות הוריה
הרה"ת הרב שלום דוב בער
וזוגתו מרת חיה מושקא שיחיו
ולזכות אחיותיה
ברכה ליפשא ועליזה תחיינה

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

In honor of Gimmel Tammuz,

we present this collection of unique photographs of the Rebbe through the years, accompanied by a *vort* from the Rebbe said during or about the activities of that year.

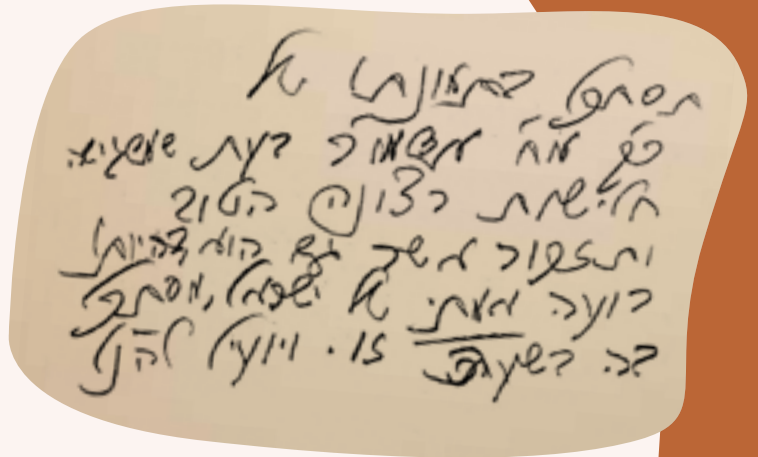
The importance and benefits of looking at the Rebbe's picture are explained in many places (See *Darkei HaChassidus*—Tziyur Pnei HaRav, Derher Shevat 5776).

In the Rebbe's words to a woman who wrote about the challenges she was facing, and how they make her lose her determination and ambition:

”תסתכל בתמונתו של כ”ק מו”ח אדמו”ר בעת שמרגישה חלישות רצונה הטוב ותזכור אשר גם הוא בהיותו רועה אמיטי של ישראל, מסתכל בה בשעה זו. ויועיל להב”ל.”

“Look at a photograph of my father-in-law, the Rebbe, when you feel that your positive willpower is weakening, and remember that he too, as a true shepherd [leader] of *b'nei Yisroel*, is looking at you at the same time. This will help you with the above mentioned [challenges].”

It should be noted that of course, a wealth of Torah from the Rebbe exists from the years preceding the nesius, in Reshimos, letters, and so on. Much of the Rebbe's work began in those years as well, especially after arriving in the United States and being appointed by the Frierdiker Rebbe to head key mosdos for teaching and spreading Torah and Chassidus, and so on. However, we begin this overview only from the year 5710 — due to space constraints.



5662*

The Dawn of a New Generation

Every generation has a unique mission and the Yidden who live in each generation are tasked with its fulfillment. The vitality and energy they need to meet the challenge radiate from the generation's *nosi hador*. Indeed, the *nosi's neshamah* defines the generation's mission and purpose.

The Gemara teaches us about Moshe Rabbeinu that from the moment he was born he began radiating his light, “נתמלא הבית כולו אורה”. Even in his infancy, the radiance of the *tzaddik* begins shining brightly.

In describing a Rebbe's connection with his Chassidim, the Alter Rebbe uses the *mashal* “כמו שמש המאיר מתחת לארץ—Like the sun radiating light from beneath the earth to 600,000 stars...” The same way the myriads of stars reflect the sun's light even when the sun is out of sight, “מתחת לארץ”, so too all Yidden receive the Rebbe's radiant glow even when the Rebbe's presence is not apparent.

The moment a *nosi* is born initiates the new era. The Rebbe begins his mission and his connection to his Chassidim and all Yidden, from the very moment he is born.

(12 Tammuz 5722, *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 2, p. 606.
12 Tammuz 5717, *Toras Menachem* vol. 20, p. 111.)



5710*

Eternal Connection

There are those who feel less obligated to the shlichus after the Rebbe's *histalkus*. After all, previously the Rebbe would have been able to summon him in for a *yechidus* or send a letter and demand accountability. Now he feels that he can do as he wishes.

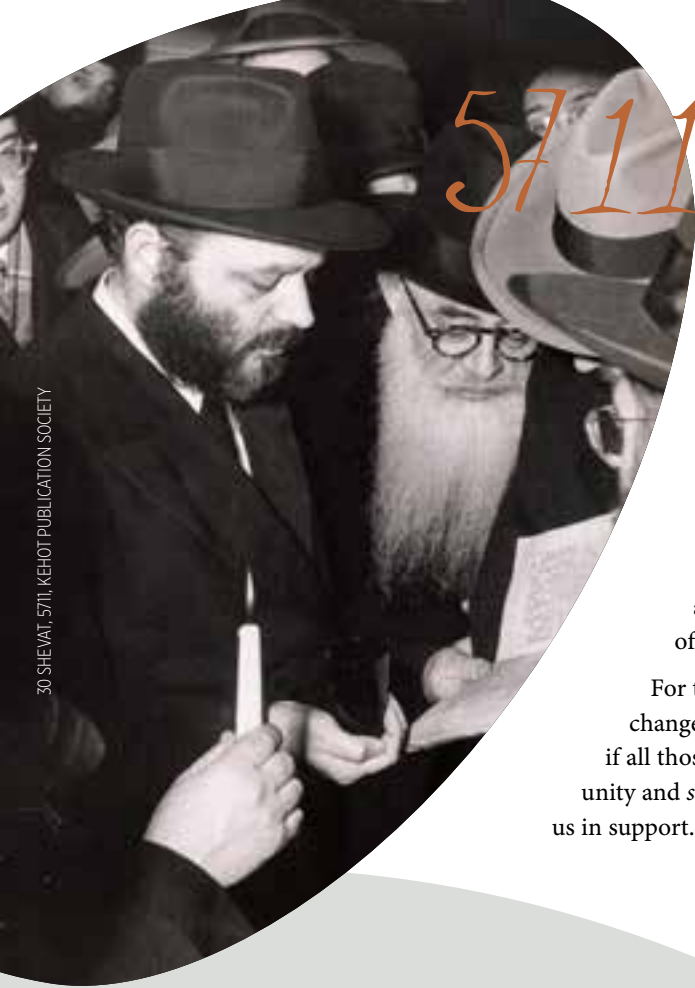
However, this is far from the reality. The Rebbe continues to live on, and the shlichus you were given lives on. The Rebbe continues to give *brachos* and *kochos*, and continues to demand with the same force. Even more so, the Rebbe continues to send out new shluchim.

We must continue our shlichus that the Rebbe expects of us, and the Rebbe will continue to communicate with us. One does not need to worry how; the Rebbe has his ways and will continue to communicate as he wishes.

*(12 Tammuz 5710, Toras Menachem
vol. 1, p. 130.)*

JEM 102414





5711*

A Mission of Love

The Zohar speaks of three intertwined and inseparable loves: love of Hashem, love of Torah, and love of Yidden.

But when relaying his “statement”—as the Rebbe called it—at the farbrengen of Yud Shevat 5711*, he stressed that the most fundamental is the love of Yidden. The other loves, as important as they are, are not fully genuine and will eventually dissipate if they don’t include *ahavas Yisroel*. However, *ahavas Yisroel* alone will eventually lead a Yid to the other two loves.

This created a new paradigm and focus for the mission and activities of *dor hashvi’i*. The love of a fellow Jew is the centerpiece of Yiddishkeit, and is the most important factor in bringing the *geula*.

For this mission we must be ready to leave our comfort zone and change our habits. The mission is within reach, but we will only succeed if all those that have a *shaychus* with the Rebbe stand united in peace. With unity and *simcha*, we will march towards our goal, with the world itself joining us in support.

(Adapted from *Yud Shevat 5711, Likkutei Sichos vol. 2, p. 499, 502*)

5712*

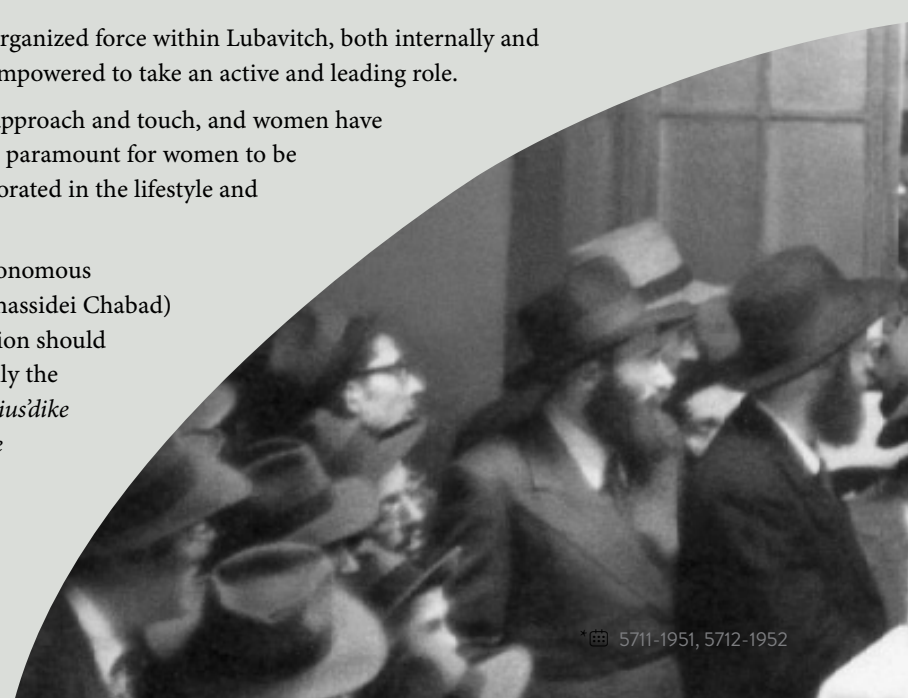
Mobilizing the Women

In our times especially, women need to be an organized force within Lubavitch, both internally and in outside activities. Chabad women must be empowered to take an active and leading role.

Reaching women requires a specific feminine approach and touch, and women have unique talents and capabilities. This is why it is paramount for women to be active, and for their contributions to be incorporated in the lifestyle and programs of Lubavitch.

Chabad women should establish their own autonomous organization (under the umbrella of Agudas Chassidei Chabad) for programming and outreach. This organization should be active in all areas of Chabad’s work, especially the *mosdos chinuch*, ensuring quality both in *ruchnius’dike* matters, as well as in the practical *gashmius’dike* matters.

(*Igros Kodesh vol. 6, p. 346, 226. Vol. 4, p. 346*)



5713*



Chassidus is the Standard

How should one view Chassidus in relation to the rest of Torah? There was a fully active and functional model of Yiddishkeit before the spread of Chassidus. Is Chassidus an absolute must in relation to my Yiddishkeit as a whole?

To answer this question one must look at the general revelatory system and evolution within Yiddishkeit as a whole. The Torah was given to Moshe Rabbeinu on Har Sinai *in full*, but much was still hidden, waiting to be uncovered at a later time. This created a reality

in which many areas of Jewish life have unknowns, differences of opinions, and various customs for many generations. However, once a *halacha* has been revealed and established, it becomes binding and there is no going back to a different opinion, even if it was a legitimate path in previous times.

The same holds true for Chassidus. In earlier generations, prior to Chassidus's revelation, there had been other forms of Yiddishkeit and of understanding Hashem's oneness (and it was a pity on those people, who didn't have the path of Chassidus...), but today the only way to believe in and serve Hashem is through Chassidus. It is simply היפך הדין to consider otherwise.

The early opposition to Chassidus was due to skepticism, a wariness of where this new path would lead. Today, however, Chassidus has been proven to provide a Yid with the energy, warmth, and motivation for Torah and *mitzvos*. In effect, a *halacha* has been established that the ways and teachings of Chassidus are the proper path (including the novel elements revealed in each of the seven generations), and it is binding to all Yidden just as the rest of Torah.

(*Yud Shevat 5713, Toras Menachem vol. 8, p. 320.*)





5714*

Sheitels for the Modern Age

The only proper head-covering for a woman in the modern age is a *sheitel*, and specifically not a *tichel* (kerchief). Wearing a *sheitel* is critical to guarantee *brachos* for one's family, health and livelihood.

This was a campaign that the Rebbe pushed relentlessly in the early years of the *nesius*. It was so critical, that a *kallah* had to agree to wear a *sheitel* for the Rebbe to agree to be *mesader kiddushin* at her wedding.

The reason is as follows: When wearing a *tichel*, one can feel embarrassed or self-conscious of those around her (although most often these feelings are imaginary), and it can be tempting to remove it partially, or even completely. Not so with a *sheitel*: One will not remove it at an event or gathering, and it sends a strong noticeable message that this woman is different—here is a religious Jewish woman.

One must be proud to wear a *sheitel*, and not be embarrassed by what others may be thinking.

(Adapted from Rosh Chodesh Elul 5714, Likkutei Sichos vol. 13, p. 188. Igros Kodesh vol. 16, p. 330)

5715*

Don't Rob your Child's Time

The society we live in promotes educating children from a young age in secular subjects, with the supposed aim of helping them make a living later in life.

Parents have no right to rob a Jewish child's time. From the moment a child begins speaking and learning, their time should be earmarked exclusively for Torah, their inheritance and possession.

In addition, preparing for one's financial future is a futile effort, especially at such a young age, as the Gemara tells us that no one knows from where their *parnassa* will come. This prevalent culture has no place for us and needs to be crushed.

(Yud Shevat 5715, Toras Menachem vol. 13, p. 246)



5751*

Eretz Yisroel Here

Our mission is to make the whole world into Eretz Yisroel: Just as in Eretz Yisroel, the best of all the crops were designated and brought up to the *Beis Hamikdash* for Hashem, we too should see to it that all that we do is done in the best way with the best of our energy, and done with full trust and devotion to Hashem, to the point that all of the world will clearly see in everything the hand of its Creator.

(Hisvaaduyos 5751 vol. 4 p. 260.)



7 SIVAN 5751, YISROEL ZEV GOLDSHMID



5752*

Live It!

All the dates and moments that Moshiach was supposed to have arrived, have passed. All the preparations for Moshiach have been completed. We now have to go from *preparing* for Moshiach's arrival to *living* in a "Moshiach'dike" way, and for this we just need to open our eyes.

We will see that the world itself is asking for a Yid to live in a "Moshiach'dike" way. The world today is not an interference to what we need to do and is actually all out to help the Yidden fulfill their mission here on earth through Torah and mitzvos.

The non-Jews themselves are even receptive to the message of Yiddishkeit, we just need to recognize this fact, and live by it, and Moshiach will walk right through the door.

(Sefer Hasichos 5752 vol. 2 p. 227. Sichos Kodesh 5752 p. 409, 483-485)



דער רבי וועט געפינען אַ וועג...

לזכות
שלוחי כ"ק אדמו"ר בכל אתר ואתר
להצלחה רבה ומופלגה בגו"ר

נדפס ע"י
הרה"ת ר' משה זלמן
וזוגתו מרת רבקה מרים
ומשפחתם שיחיו
גרינולד
בית חב"ד, דאוונטאון לאס אנגעלעס

Our Own Sifrei Torah

AS TOLD BY RABBI BENTZION SHEMTOV (NANAIMO, BC, CANADA)
AND RABBI MENDY GOLDSHMID (BAINBRIDGE ISLAND, WA)

Rabbi Shemtov: When we moved out on shlichus to Nanaimo, the second-largest city on Vancouver Island, BC, in Cheshvan of 5776* we did not imagine having a *minyan* for a very long time. Three months later I was contacted by a local Jew who had just had a baby girl and was seeking a baby naming, so we borrowed a *sefer Torah* from a nearby shliach and arranged a *minyan* for this *simcha*. Seeing the interest in regular services we decided to start a monthly

Shabbos *minyan* which *baruch Hashem* became quite popular.

After several months we could not continue borrowing the nearby *sefer Torah* and we were fortunate enough to receive a *sefer Torah* on loan from the Beis Yisroel Torah Gemach, which helps many shlichim around the world until they can procure a *sefer Torah* of their own.

My children very much wished for our Chabad House to own a *sefer Torah*, and when we traveled to New York for

Gimmel Tammuz 5779* my children decided that they are going to ask the Rebbe for a *bracha* that we should have a *sefer Torah* of our own.

They were so excited about the idea and confident that the Rebbe's *bracha* would materialize, that they immediately started soliciting donations for the new *sefer Torah* from family members in New York and managed to raise an impressive \$80. Back home they built a dedicated *pushka* for the new Torah Fund and started giving *tzedakah* into that *pushka* daily.

Several months later when my wife went to the Kinus Hashluchos on Chof-Beis Shevat 5780*, she wrote in her letter to the Rebbe a specific request, that a certain local family we had known for years and had attended our Hebrew School in the past should start participating in our *peulos* more regularly.

Amazingly, a week later the mother of this family reached out to my wife and asked her to start preparing their daughter for her *bas mitzvah* and decided to once again send their children to our Hebrew School. Needless to say, we were heartened to experience the Rebbe's *bracha* materialize so quickly.

This woman's father had recently passed away and she wished to do something special in his memory. On Yom Kippur 5780* she asked my wife what it would take to sponsor a *sefer Torah* for the Chabad House, but then she dropped the subject. After her daughter started learning for *bas mitzvah* and they rejoined our Hebrew School several months later, she broached the idea several more times.

Three days before Gimmel Tammuz 5780* she emailed me asking what it would cost to donate a new *sefer Torah* for the Chabad House. I responded by inviting her for a meeting to discuss the options.

The next day we spoke for close to a half hour and she made a commitment to sponsor a new *sefer Torah* in memory of her father, almost a year to the day that my children asked the Rebbe for a *bracha* that our Chabad House have its own *sefer Torah*!

Aside from our excitement with the realization of the Rebbe's *bracha* for a new *sefer Torah* for our Chabad House, this development was very special to us in a personal way. That year we were unable to travel to New York to be at the Ohel for Gimmel Tammuz due to Covid-19, and we were understandably upset about that. And here the Rebbe sent us the message that what our children requested last year Gimmel Tammuz at the Ohel was coming to fruition within the year, illustrating the Rebbe's assurance of "*Ich for mit eich*—I am with you in your *shlichus*," even when we were unable to be at the Ohel *bgashmiyus* for Gimmel Tammuz.

Several months later, on Zayin Cheshvan 5781*, five years after we moved on *shlichus* to Nanaimo, we hosted



a grand event for the *haschalas sefer Torah*, with many people participating in accordance with social distancing precautions, and it was an enormous milestone for our community and a tremendous *kiddush Hashem*.

My brother-in-law, Rabbi Meir Kaplan, the shliach in nearby Victoria posted photos of the event on his Facebook page to share the news with his community. The next day a woman reached out to him and said that she was so inspired by the photos and she wants to sponsor a new *sefer Torah* for a community that does not yet own one.

Rabbi Goldshmid: We moved out on *shlichus* to Bainbridge Island, WA, in the summer of 5779* and immediately started various classes and *peulos*, connecting with the local Yidden. After a busy and successful month of Tishrei 5781*, I wondered what our next main project would be. It was already six months into Covid-19 and although we were doing a lot of Zoom classes and events, I felt slightly anxious at the fact that we were entering a period of time that we would not have much opportunity to attract people to our *peulos*.

I wrote a letter to the Rebbe describing the *peulos* of Sukkos and Simchas Torah and asked the Rebbe for direction in how to proceed in the coming weeks.

Out of the blue, Rabbi Meir Kaplan called me saying a woman he knows wants to donate a *sefer Torah* to a brand new community. Would we be willing to take it?

We had never hosted a *minyán* before, and the idea of launching a *sefer Torah* campaign so soon after moving to Bainbridge Island had not entered my wildest imaginations. But we quickly realized that the Rebbe was sending us a clear message of how to move forward and accepted the generous donation and challenge to bring a brand new *sefer Torah* to Bainbridge Island. 📌

YOUR STORY

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לזכות
אסתר רחל תחיל'
לרגל יום הולדתה כ"ח תמוז
לשנת הצלחה בגו"ר
נדפס ע"י הוריה
הרה"ת ר' יוסף יצחק אהרן ו
זוגתו מרת נחמה בילא ומשפחתם שיחיו
בראקמאן



Learning

Rambam

A Farbrengen

This year's Siyum Harambam falls out, quite remarkably, on Gimmel Tammuz, bearing a resemblance to the first Siyum Harambam, which took place on Yud-Alef Nissan 5745. To mark the special day, A Chassidisher Derher sat down with a number of Chassidim, shluchim and baalei batim, to hear about their Rambam experience, and to receive their advice, tips and inspiration.¹ In preparation of this article we were greatly assisted by the resources available at Rambam.today, an online portal with daily shiurim in Rambam, virtual siyumim, and much more.*

Can you tell us a bit about those early days when you started learning Rambam?

Dr. Chaim Hecht: I always had some interest in Rambam, being that he was a doctor, as I am. In fact, a year before the *mitvza*, I began a *chavrusa* to learn a perek of Rambam once a week. At the time, I made a calculation that I would be able to finish the entire Mishneh Torah over a period of 25 years.



Suddenly, the Rebbe came out with a *mitvza* to learn the entire thing in one year. I was shell-shocked. I had only attended yeshiva for one year of my life. Some of the rabbis, who had learned in yeshiva for many years, were intimidated as well. The entire thing? From start to finish in one year?

I got ahold of the only English translation that existed, published by Yale Press in 1949 — some of it was even translated by non-Jews — and I would take it to Kinko's and make copies for the Chicago community, where I live. One rabbi would give a class in shul, and others would try on their own.

We started with *shloscha perakim* because that was obviously what the Rebbe wanted. From the Rebbe's *sichos*, we understood that it would be a *bedieved* for us to learn *perek echad* or Sefer Hamitzvos. Rabbi Shmuel Dovid Raichik was a *shadar* who would visit Chicago, and that year, he convinced a lot of people to learn *shloscha perakim*, even those who have very little formal Torah education.

At first, I assumed that the *mitvza* would be a one-year project; for some reason, I thought to myself, the Rebbe wants us to learn Rambam this year. Alright. But then, Chicago's legendary *mashpia*, Rabbi Nochum Goodman, told us, "Boys, I'm telling you, the Rebbe is not going to let you out of this. Get the thoughts of one year out of your head; this is a forever *mitvza*..."

In the early days, *Sichos* in English arranged for a new technology to be used for Rambam: answering machines. Normally, the recording on an answering machine lasts only a few seconds, but they arranged for special tape recorders which lasted for hours, and they would record the Rambam and people could call in and listen. We, in Chicago, ran the project.

“BOYS, I’M TELLING YOU, THE REBBE IS NOT GOING TO LET YOU OUT OF THIS. GET THE THOUGHTS OF ONE YEAR OUT OF YOUR HEAD; THIS IS A FOREVER MIVTZA...”

People who were serious about it had to really reorganize their lives. I was chairman of the radiology department in Mt. Sinai Hospital in Chicago, and part of my job was to attend hours and hours of boring meetings. I started bringing copies of Rambam and learning it there. When they developed Palm Pilots, I got Rambam on it, and then iPhones came around, and it became even easier. Now, I have Rambam on my phone, and in between meetings and reading X-rays I learn a few *halachos*. With technology in our day, everything has become so easy and available that there is no excuse not to learn Rambam properly. I myself have several Rambam apps on my phone, and when I have a free moment, I can even learn some Rambam *b'iyun*.

That's not to say that it is an easy endeavor. It was difficult going during the first few years, but as the years go on, it becomes easier and easier. For the second Siyum Harambam in Chicago, we brought Rabbi Adin Even Yisrael (Steinsaltz) to speak. These early events were very special; many new people would get involved in Rambam each time. He encouraged everyone to get involved. Even if the first year you don't understand much, he told us, you will gain new insight in each additional round.

Indeed, each year, we pick up on new things that were never noticed or understood. Today, after many years of learning, when I take a *masechta* for Siyum Hashas, I have a whole new appreciation for the Gemara from the Rambam.

The *mitvza* changed my perception entirely. Today I laugh when I remember my original plan to learn Rambam over 25 years. The Rebbe showed me that I can actually do the whole thing each year, and it has changed the very make-up of my day; it changed my way of life. Every day revolves around Torah. It has

been the biggest blessing in my life, and I know of many others who will testify the same.

How does learning Rambam strengthen our *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe?



Rabbi Shmuel Lew: The Rebbe explained the significance of Rambam on many occasions, but let me share with you something very personal that took place 60 years ago, around Yud Shevat 5721*. It was just before my twenty-first birthday; I went into *yechidus* on Sunday night, around two or three in the morning.

During the Yud Shevat farbrengen the night before, the Rebbe said that sometimes a person has a sudden awakening for *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe, and he must do everything in his power to harness the *hisorerus* and express it in action; to anchor it and give it grounding, so to speak.

Now, in *yechidus*, I told the Rebbe that I indeed had the desire to do what the Rebbe wants, but how, specifically, should I bring it into action?

The Rebbe began his answer by saying, “*Der ikar hiskashrus iz durch Torah*—the main connection is through Torah.” He mentioned Chitas, and explained that when I study what he studies, it creates a tremendous bond unparalleled in the entire world, as explained in Tanya Perek Hei.

That was before the years of Rambam. But in the later years, when the Rebbe instituted the *takana*, there was something unique about Rambam, even in comparison to Chitas. On Erev Yom Kippur 5746*, the Rebbe spoke about the daily *shiurim* of Chitas and Rambam, but he mentioned that Rambam has a “*chavivus meyuchedes*,” it was especially precious to him, “*mitzad di maileh fun kav shelo*,” because this was the Rebbe’s personal initiative and contribution.²

To me, it seems quite simple that if you want to be a Chossid, the first and most basic step is to learn the Torah that the Rebbe tells us to learn in a proper fashion, in addition to learning the Rebbe’s Torah as well.

Dr. Hecht: On a very practical level, learning Rambam each day makes us feel our connection to the Rebbe. Rambam was the Rebbe’s personal initiative. The Rebbe gave it an unbelievable amount of attention — he dedicated a *sicha* to Rambam at almost every farbrengen. In simple terms: If you want to be a Chossid — this is the number one job.

When I feel challenged to finish the daily Rambam, I remind myself that when I learn Rambam, I am with the Rebbe and the Rebbe is with me. I feel this in a very real way.

How does one choose which cycle is fitting for them?

Rabbi Lew: Should I learn *perek echad* or *shlosa perakim*? That is a question one should ask themselves and their *mashpia*. There is no doubt to me that the Rebbe wanted *shlosa perakim* to be the flagship of the *mitvza*, learned by anyone who is capable of doing so.

Rabbi Chaim Farro was the Rebbe’s shliach in Manchester for many years. At one point, he was preparing and delivering a daily shiur in *perek echad*, which was consuming much time and energy, and he found it difficult to learn three *perokim* every day in addition to that. When he wrote to the Rebbe that he was considering to suffice with only one *perek* even for himself, the Rebbe replied:

ה"ז פלא!!! ה"ה רב וצ"ל מעלין בקודש.

This is shocking!!! You are a *rav*, and you must [live by the *halacha* of] ‘*maalin bakodesh*’—ascending in matters of holiness.



Rambam for Joy

Rabbi Zushe Feldman relates:

At one point in my life, I was going through a difficult period and was feeling down. I wrote to the Rebbe, and he answered,

”ילמוד רמב"ם וחת"ת, פקודי ה' ישרים משמחי לב, וכל התוצאות המסובבים מזה כמובן. אזעה"צ שיהיה בהצלחה רבה ויבשר טוב.

“Study Rambam and Chitas — ‘the laws of Hashem [which] are straightforward and bring joy to the heart’ — and all the obvious results will follow. I will mention you at the *Tziyun* for much success, and may you report good news.”